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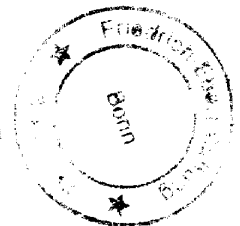
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The Democratic Process in Jordan ... Where to ?

Deliberations of the Conference on the
"Democratic Process in Jordan-Realities and Prospects"
held in Amman from 31 May until 2 June 1994

**Edited by: Hani Hourani
Hussein Abu - Rumman
Translated by: George A. Musleh**



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NAMES OF PARTICIPANTS

- 1- Mr. Taher Al-Masri, speaker of the House of Representatives Former Primeminister.
- 2- Mr. Hani Hourani, director general of the Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, researcher in Jordanian affairs.
- 3- Dr. Andrae Gaerber, representative of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Jordan.
- 4- Dr. Dhiyab Makhadmeh, professor of Political Science, University of Jordan.
- 5- Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber, member of the Upper House of Parliament, former foreign minister.
- 6- Dr. Mustapha Hamarneh, director of the Strategic Studies Center, University of Jordan.
- 7- Mr. Mu'nis Razzaz, president of the Jordanian Writers Association, adviser to the Minister of Culture.
- 8- Dr. Yossef Al-Hassan, president of the Emirates Center for Developmental and Strategic Research, United Arab Emirates.
- 9- Mr. Jamil Al-Nimri, former chief editor of the weekly newspaper Al-Ahali.
- 10- Dr. Abdallah Naqrash, professor of Political Science, University of Jordan.
- 11- Dr. Musa Al-Kilani, chief editor of the daily newspaper Ad-Dustour.
- 12- Mr. Muhammad Fares Tarawneh, Attorney, former parliament deputy and minister.
- 13- Mr. Bassam Haddadin, member of the Jordanian House of Representatives.
- 14- Mr. Hosni Ayeshe, writer, educator, former member of the Jordanian Upper House of Parliament.

Important Note : This list of names has been prepared in accordance with the time sequence of the participants' intervention in the conference. The above-mentioned titles of the participants were the titles held when the conference was held in May 1994.

- 15- Dr. Suleiman Sweiss, sociology researcher at the Contemporary Middle East Studies and Research Center, human rights activist.
- 16- Mr. Samir Habashneh, agricultural engineer, member of the Jordanian House of Representatives.
- 17- Mr. Ziyad Abu Ghanimeh, writer and researcher in Islamic affairs, former member of the Executive Bureau of the Islamic Action Front.
- 18- Dr. Zaid Hamzeh, physician, former Minister of Health.
- 19- Mr. Yossef Hourani, former president of the General Union of Bank Employees in Jordan, former member of the Central Council of the General Federation of Labor Unions in Jordan.
- 20- Mr. Ghassan Abdul Khaleq, writer and literary critic, rapporteur of the Novel and Short Story Committee at the Jordanian Writers Association.
- 21- Mrs. Raja' Abu Ghazaleh, poet and writer.
- 22- Mr. Suleiman Al-Qudah, president of the Jordanian Press Association, chief editor of the Al-Rai' daily newspaper.
- 23- Mr. Ayman Masanat, lecturer at the Jordanian University for Women, Amman.
- 24- Mr. Abdallah Hasanat, deputy chief editor of the English daily Jordan Times.
- 25- Dr. Eidah Al-Mutlaq, member of the teaching staff at Yarmouk University.
- 26- Mrs. Asma Khader, attorney, president of the Jordanian Women Union.
- 27- Dr. Lori Brand, assistant professor at the University of South California, author of several books on Palestine and Jordan.
- 28- Dr. Muhammad Ajalani, Syrian researcher at the Sorbone University, Paris.
- 29- Dr. Jihad Odeh, president of the Political and International Development Studies Center, Cairo.
- 30- Dr. Muhammad Uwaideh, member of the Jordanian House of Representatives, former Sharia professor.
- 31- Dr. Muhammad Ibn Mahfouz, dean of the School of Islamic Studies, University of Tunis, Tunisia.
- 32- Dr. Fahd Al-Fanek, economist, columnist at Al-Rai' newspaper.
- 33- Dr. Fadiyah Kiwan, professor of Political and Social Sciences, Saint Joseph University, Beirut.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE ROUNDTABLE

- 1- Mr. Taher Al-Masri, speaker of the House of Representatives, former prime minister.
- 2- Mr. Ahmad Obeidat, member of the Upper House of Parliament, former prime minister.
- 3- Mr. Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, member of the House of Representatives, Minister of Education, and secretary general of the Al-Yaqzah Party.
- 4- Mr. Ibrahim Izzulddin, former minister.
- 5- Mr. Salim Al-Zu'bi, attorney, parliament deputy and former minister.
- 6- Mr. Abdul Hadi Al-Majali, parliament deputy, secretary general of Al-Ahd Party.
- 7- Dr. Muhammad Uwaideh, parliament deputy, leading member of the Islamic Action Front.
- 8- Mr. Samir Habashneh, agricultural engineer, parliament deputy.
- 9- Dr. Hosni Al-Shayyab, professor of Political Science, University of Jordan.
- 10- Mr. Issa Mdanat, secretary general of the Jordanian Socialist Democratic Party, former parliament deputy.
- 11- Mr. Mazen Al-Saket, political writer, member of the Jordanian Democratic Arab Party.
- 12- Dr. Fahd Al-Fanek, economist, newspaper columnist.
- 13- Dr. Eidah Al-Mutlaq, member of the teaching staff, Yarmouk University.
- 14- Mr. Azmi Khawaja, secretary general of the Jordanian Democratic Popular Union Party.
- 15- Dr. Musa Al-Kilani, chief editor of the daily newspaper Ad-Dustour.
- 16- Mr. Hani Hourani, director general of the al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center.

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INTRODUCTION

Hani Hourani

Director General,

Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center

Since mid-1989, Jordan has entered a new phase of its political life. The most distinctive feature of this phase is that the government has begun to follow liberal policies towards the opposition forces and civil society organizations. An election has been held and parliamentary life has been restored. The formation of political parties has been allowed, and the principle of political and party pluralism has been consolidated. The manifestations of political openness and liberalization have been reflected in the legal spheres and in numerous aspects of political, cultural and social life. Nevertheless, all these transformations with their tangible signs cannot conceal the vast disparities that existed in trying to explain the nature of these transformations, whether in terms of their causes, motives, profoundness and comprehensiveness, or in terms of their ability to continue and grow. There are circles in Jordan that have complained that the degree of liberalization given is much more than the nature of our conservative society and traditions can accommodate. They are also of the opinion that the exercise of public liberties is being misused and was turning into chaos. Meanwhile, other groups feel that the political liberalization and openness are still of a limited scope, that the liberalization policies dealt with form rather than substance and do not affect, to any significant degree, political life in Jordan or the institutions of the government.

Representatives of the executive branch of government have repeatedly asserted that the government will uphold the democratic option and that this option will never be reversed. The various opposition forces, however, do not conceal their suspicion about the intentions of government authorities. The opposition forces believe that departure from democracy is not only a possibility in the future, but is actually a process that has been going on since the government dissolved the Eleventh Parliament and introduced amendments to the electoral law unilaterally without the counsel of the legislative branch of government concerning these amendments. These amendments are called the "one man, one vote law." Opposition forces also believe that the departure from the democratic option has gained momentum following the last general election of 8 November 1993.

This question has been politically and intellectually controversial since mid 1989. In fact, it was behind the convening of the conference entitled "The Democratic Process in Jordan--Realities and Prospects" held from 31 May to 2 June 1995, the fifth anniversary of the launch of the democratic process in Jordan. The conference sought to provide an opportunity for researchers and political parties to discuss the democratic experiment in Jordan and to present their different notions on its progress and on the local, regional and international conditions governing its march. The conference also sought to highlight the achievements of the democratic process and the performance of the various state and societal institutions, the obstacles they are encountering and the opportunities that lie ahead.

This book represents the outcome of the conference, which was organized at the initiative of the Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. The conference consisted of six main focuses, which are presented in this book. The first focus was devoted to the discussion of the background, circumstances and contents of the democratic process in Jordan. Dr. Diyab Makhadmeh, professor of political science at the University of Jordan, discussed in his background paper the international factors affecting the democratic process in Jordan. Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber, secretary of the World Affairs Council, and Dr. Mustafa Hamarneh, director of the Strategic Studies Center at the University of Jordan, were the two discussants of the paper. On another level, Mr. Muannas Al-Razzaz, the then president of the Jordanian Writers Association, discussed the effects of the regional environment on the democratic option in Jordan, with special emphasis on the inherent factors that influence the

Jordanian political system. Dr. Yossef Al-Hassan, director general of the Emirates Center for Developmental and Strategic Studies, was the discussant of the paper. On a third level, Mr. Jamil Al-Nimri, former chief editor of the weekly newspaper Al-Ahali, discussed the impact of local factors on the democratic option in Jordan, arguing that these local factors have given momentum to the democratic process in Jordan. Dr. Abdallah Naqrash, professor of political science at the University of Jordan, was the discussant of the paper.

The conference devoted several subsequent focuses to the evaluation of the democratic performance in Jordan. In the second focus, Dr. Musa Al-Kilani, former chief editor of the daily newspaper Ad-Dustour, discussed the performance of the three governments that held office in the five years from 1989 to 1994. The discussant of the paper was parliament deputy and former cabinet minister Muhammad Fares Tarawneh. Parliament deputy Bassam Haddadin presented an evaluative and critical review of the performance of the Eleventh Parliament, and Mr. Hosni Ayesh, former member of the Upper House of Parliament, commented on the review. The second focus was concluded by a presentation made by Dr. Suleiman Sweiss, a specialized researcher on human rights, on the judiciary system and the human rights situation in Jordan.

The Third Focus highlighted the performance of the political parties, professional and labor union organizations and cultural associations in the years of democratic relaxation. Mr. Samir Habashneh, member of the House of Representatives, presented an analytical review of the conditions of political parties and the problems they encountered. The well-known Islamist writer, Mr. Ziad Abu Ghanimeh, commented on the review. Former Minister of Health, Dr. Zaid Hamzeh, made a presentation on the experience and performance of the professional associations and the prerequisites for the promotion of their performance under the new political conditions. Mr. Yossef Hourani, a former trade union leader, discussed the conditions of the labor unions, detailing a comprehensive coverage of all aspects of the situation. He also asserted the need for these trade unions to adjust and to open their doors for the winds of democracy and the winds of change. Cultural associations, particularly the experience of the Jordanian Writers Association, were discussed in a paper prepared by Mr. Ghassan Abdul Khaleq, a literary critic. The paper was commented on by Mrs. Raja' Abu Ghazaleh, member of the Administrative Board of the Jordanian Writers Association, who passed away a few months ago.

The Fourth Focus dealt with two important issues closely associated with the transformation towards democracy, namely the media and women. Mr. Suleiman Al-Qudah, president of the Jordanian Press Association and chief editor of the daily newspaper *Al-Rai'*, presented a review of the performance of the Jordanian press in the last five years. Meanwhile, Mr. Ayman Masanat, lecturer at the Amman Women University, made a presentation of the performance of the state television and state radio. Mr. Abdallah Hasanat, deputy chief editor of the English daily newspaper *Jordan Times*, commented on the two papers. Similarly, the issues of Jordanian women and democracy were discussed in two background papers, the first submitted by Dr. Eidah Al-Mutlaq from Yarmouk University, and the second by Mrs. Asma Khader, president of the Jordanian Women Union. Dr. Lori Brand, assistant professor at the University of Southern California and a researcher specialized in Jordanian, Palestinian and Middle East affairs, commented on the two papers.

The Fifth Focus was devoted to tackling two categories of issues: the first was the Arab outlook on the democratic experiment in Jordan, which was presented in a background paper by Dr. Muhammad Ajalani, a Syrian researcher at the Sorbone University in Paris. Dr. Jihad Odeh, president of the Center for Political and International Development in Cairo, was the discussant who commented on the paper thoroughly. The second category of issues dealt with the mutual relationship between the democratic process and the other challenges that are facing Jordan and the region. Dr. Muhammad Uwaideh, a parliament deputy from the Islamic Movement, submitted a background paper that dealt with the position of political Islam towards democracy. Dr. Muhammad Ibn Mahfouz from the University of Tunis commented on the paper. Jordanian economist Fahd Al-Fanek submitted a working paper on economic reform and democracy in Jordan. Meanwhile, Dr. Fadiyah Kiwan, professor of political science at Saint Joseph University in Beirut, presented a different type of experience, based on the events that have engulfed Lebanon for the last two decades.

The Sixth and final Focus reviewed the obstacles obstructing the democratic process and the prospects of its future development. This was discussed in a Roundtable chaired by Mr. Taher Al-Masri, former prime minister and the then speaker of the House of Representatives, and Mr. Ahmad Obeidat, former prime minister and the then member of

the Upper House of Parliament.

Several observers have regarded the "Conference on the Democratic Process in Jordan" as an unprecedented phenomenon in terms of preparation of the background papers submitted to the conference and the comprehensive coverage of the various aspects of the democratic process. Some 160 participants from Jordan, Arab and other friendly countries took part in the conference's deliberations. They included about 35 cabinet ministers, former ministers, members of the House of Representatives and the Upper House of Parliament, and leaders of 10 political parties. Furthermore, 20 academics from Jordanian, Arab and other friendly countries' universities, researchers, intellectuals, trade unionists and leaders of social and women organizations, newspaper editors, human rights activists and media representatives attended the conference. It was also attended by representatives of dozens of foreign embassies in Jordan as well as representatives of active regional and international organizations, who were impressed by the candid and frank atmosphere that prevailed during the deliberations of the conference. Experienced academic and political figures were also active in the conference.

The Preparatory Committee of the conference consisted of people with special theoretical and analytical capability in the various aspects of political, social and cultural life. The Preparatory Committee was eager to tackle the democratic experiment in Jordan from a comprehensive perspective that is not restricted to the government, parliament and political parties, but goes beyond that to include the judiciary power, human rights and the experiences of the major unionist and social establishments in the country, such as the professional associations, labor unions, women organizations and cultural associations. The Preparatory Committee of the conference also made sure that there would be an evaluation of the Jordanian democratic process from individuals and bodies outside Jordan, an evaluation that would necessarily be balanced and objective. The Preparatory Committee felt that an external evaluation would help participants avoid exaggerating achievements or downplaying gains of the processes in Jordan.

It is noteworthy that the diversified political and ideological backgrounds of the participants in the conference and the all-embracing

Arab countries presence, where representatives from Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon, Syria, and the United Arab Emirates attended, have given the conference a broad national and regional dimension.

While we would like to commend the efforts of the members of the conference's preparatory committee, we would also like to pay tribute to the members of other technical committees for their dedication and significant contributions. I would like to cite in this regard the commendable efforts made by Dr. Taleb Awad, program director at Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, Mr. Mark-Powers Stevens, visiting researcher at the Center, Dr. Andrae Gaerber, former director of the Amman Office of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, and our colleague Mr. Mazen Al-Saket.

In my own name and on behalf of the staff of Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, I would like to extend my deepest thanks and gratitude to the sponsor of the conference, his excellency the Honorable Taher Al-Masri, to the chairmen of the session: their excellencies Mr. Abdul Latif Arabiyat, Mrs. Laila Sharaf, Mr. Ibrahim Izzulddin and Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber, and to all those who used their precious time and effort to draft the background papers or to discuss or comment on them. Certainly, without their direct and fruitful participation, the conference would not have been able to score this impressive degree of success.

Special thanks go to Mr. Hussein Abu Rumman for his unique contribution to the editing of the book, to Mr. Hamed Dabbas, Mrs Suha Muhammad and Ms. Zahira Al-Jammal for their extremely useful help on the technical aspects of typesetting, layout and printing. Special thanks also go to Mr. George A. Musleh for the persistent and tireless efforts he has made in translating the Arabic version of the book into English.

There are two areas to which we should admit that we have not paid sufficient attention to. The first is the mutual relationship between the democratic process in Jordan and the peace process in the Middle East. Unfortunately, the person whom we designated to prepare a background paper covering this important area apologized at the last minute, leaving us no time to seek another alternative. The second area involves the relationship between social conditions and democracy. We

must admit here that under the pressure of time and congestion of the conference with other working papers, we have not discussed the relationship between social justice and democratic development. Needless to say, Jordan is a developing Arab countries with a middle income. Thus, we cannot overlook the social dimensions of democracy, or act as if the democratic development could take place without first dealing with the major social imbalances and income disparities among the various categories of the population. We have also to tackle the phenomenon of the deterioration of the position of the middle classes which usually have the ability to achieve stability and social peace and defend democratic values. Hopefully, we will offset these two shortcomings by holding a seminar or a specialized workshop to deal with them.

I would like to point out that the timing of the publication of this book comes at a historic moment in which the democratic process seems to be undergoing a very precarious crossroads. It is all the more difficult for any observer to understand the true motives or real objectives behind this development. Are we, for example, undergoing a phase of self-review or self-criticism that will enable us to make a rational assessment of all the dimensions of the democratic process and consequently, rectify our course? Or, are we witnessing developments that are a prelude to reversing democracy as the opposition forces are saying, citing official government pronouncements on the amendment of the Press and Publications Law and the need for the "professionalization" of the professional associations?

Amid this confusion and legitimate concern, we can only say with certainty that the defects that may exist in the democratic process can only be rectified from within democracy itself and through democratic means, if we are to protect democracy as a national option and a social commitment that has been voluntarily contracted among all various Jordanian political and intellectual forces.

Perhaps this will lead us to ask again about the future of the National Charter, which was the fruit of a broad political and intellectual dialogue and was, by the testimony of all parties involved, "a new social contract governing Jordan's political life." Although the Jordanian National Charter is not legally binding, it still can serve as a general guide for the new phase of the life of Jordan, because it has the moral

power that can rectify our course. Why do we not go back to the National Charter and to the constitution to find out what is wrong and then resume our democratic march? Various schools of thought in Jordan should pause to make a responsible assessment and review of the democratic process so as to correct mistakes and resume the forward march stronger than ever before.

This book, *The Democratic Process in Jordan: Where to?* derives its importance from the questions that were raised at the conference of the democratic process about one and a half years ago, questions that are still pending to-date. It also constitutes an important reference to the diversified political forces in Jordan. Above all, perhaps this book constitutes the proper ground for a nationally needed review that can provide the much needed answers for the shortcomings and defects that have been associated with the exercise of democracy in our country.

Amman, 16 December 1995.

INAUGURATION

**Speech by his excellency, the Honorable Taher Al-Masri,
Speaker of the House of Representatives
and Sponser of the Conference**

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning, and I welcome you all on this occasion which I hope will be a fruitful and constructive one. I do appreciate the initiative taken by Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center to hold this conference and the enormous effort it has made to organize this important seminar. I hope that the Center and the other organizers will repeat such meetings and seminars.

We in Jordan are currently witnessing an important movement towards democratization. Therefore, we should strive with an open mind and exert serious endeavors to consolidate the democratic process day after day and year after year. Certainly it is not enough to hold seminars and theorize about things. What we should do is to embark on proper and effective measures to strengthen and consolidate the democratic process.

Needless to say, such seminars are usually attended by the elite. Nevertheless, we are duty-bound to go beyond this circle and enter other circles. Specifically speaking, it is the circle of the masses which we should try to reach.

The democratic process is not restricted to a certain group of people. It is not a theory, but an actual practice. It is a state of mind and way of life. Democracy can only come gradually, and this dictates us to build and consolidate its foundations. Fortunately enough, this will be discussed on the last day of the seminar, when we start our discussions on the future prospects of democracy in the region.

I would like to point out here that one of the main factors for the consolidation and advancement of democracy is a healthy economic and social situation. But unfortunately, none of the working papers submitted deals with the significance or impact of the socio-economic conditions on the democratic process. I am one of those who believes in the motto which says: "Hunger is the enemy of democracy." Therefore, it is very important for us to discuss these aspects, maybe in the future, if not at the present time .

In any case, I hope that the topic of the political parties will be one of the main issues which will be discussed in this seminar , particularly the ways and means needed to support and strengthen the parties so that they can play their proper role in the Jordanian society. I must say that if the political parties remain static as they are now, they will certainly make no contribution to the democratization of the country.

I also hope that this activity will go beyond the elite to embrace the masses so that the masses can benefit from these discussions , because we do not want to keep democracy as a mere slogan, we want to make it a way of life and a state of mind. Government institutions should participate and contribute towards the achievement of this goal.

Again, I want to thank everyone for attending, and I want to thank every individual for the effort and contribution he has made, and I wish you success in your deliberations.

Thank you

Speech by Dr. Andrae Gaerber, representative of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation

Your excellencies
Dear guests
Ladies and gentlemen

Allow me, ladies and gentlemen, to begin this address of mine by welcoming you on behalf of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, and to express my pleasure for presenting this speech in your beautiful Arabic language, which I came to admire and appreciate during my stay in a number of Arab countries and association with my good Arab friends.

It also pleases me to present a brief summary on the Foundation and on the life of the late President Friedrich Ebert, the first president of the first German Republic from 1919 to 1924. President Ebert has made an enormous contribution to the advancement of Germany towards a new era of democracy and social equality. It is probably appropriate to begin my address by quoting the president's famous words: " Freedom and social justice are twins."

President Ebert came from a poor family and an underprivileged social class. His father was a shoemaker. He tasted poverty and deprivation and knew what they meant. When he grew up, he became a member of the ruling Democratic Socialist Party, which was one of the strongest parties in Germany after World War I. As a result of his experience and suffering at the beginning of his life, President Ebert realized that individual freedom can only be achieved by a just and comprehensive system that can guarantee the freedom and human dignity of every man and woman. What meant here was not the judiciary-based justice only, but social justice in particular.

The Friedrich Ebert Foundation is a private, non-profit institution functioning within the framework of commitment to the basic values and concepts of democracy and social justice and inspired by the work ethics and spirit advocated by Friedrich Ebert.

It was President Ebert's wish to establish the Foundation in 1925. Today the Foundation is represented in Germany and in 74 other countries in the different parts of the world. The Foundation gets the necessary funds for its projects and activities from various government sources in Germany, and specifically, from the federal ministries and institutions. The German foreign ministry, for example, supports the activities of the Foundation in the industrial countries, while the Ministry of Economic Cooperation supports the Foundation's activities and projects in developing countries.

The assistance offered by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation to developing countries is done through its partners in governmental and non-governmental sectors and covers projects in the areas of science, culture, arts, the environment, human resources development, and other vocational and professional projects.

The Friedrich Ebert Foundation has been operating in Jordan since 1986 in collaboration with the Royal Scientific Society, which is its major partner. The Foundation has been able in the past years to consolidate ties of friendship and cooperation with other Jordanian institutions, such as the Arab Thought Forum, the National Committee for Population, Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center and the University of Jordan. The cooperation between the Foundation and these governmental and non-governmental institutions was focused on research projects in the economic and social domains, which in turn made a significant contribution to Jordan's developmental effort. These projects included the following in particular :

- Unemployment in Jordan, 1987 and 1992.
- Sources of water in Jordan and the future prospects, 1992.
- And finally, economic relations between Jordan and the European Community.

The conclusions and recommendations of these studies and research activities have significantly contributed to the political decision-making process in Jordan.

Ladies and gentlemen

We are looking forward with a great interest to the results of this seminar. Tomorrow we will hear a number of important addresses by various experts and specialists. We hope that the seminar will contribute to the expansion and further consolidation of relations

between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Republic of Germany, bridge the gaps that exist between their two peoples, and play a constructive role in opening the door for dialogue and mutual understanding, irrespective of origin, race, ethnic affiliation or religion. God says in the Holy Koran: "O people! We have created you male and female and made you peoples and tribes to know one another. The closest of you to God are the ones who heed His words."

In conclusion, I would like to thank Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center for its constructive cooperation in organizing this conference, and to also thank our dear guests for attending this conference.

God's peace, mercy and blessing be upon you.

**Speech by Hani Hourani,
Director General
Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center**

Your excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen guests of the conference

Brothers and colleagues, participants in the conference

It is a great honor for us to have the conference on the Jordanian democratic process held here in the presence of this noble gathering of leading thinkers and politicians in our country and with the participation of Arab brethren and colleagues. We are proud of their intellectual and scientific contributions to the works of this conference. It also pleases us to see in this conference guests from the various continents and countries, including scholars who are well known for their scientific research and objective books about Jordan and the great Arab Homeland.

I would like to pause for a while to pay tribute, not only to the size and number of the participants in this conference, but to their impressive quality as well. This political and cultural diversity and richness represented by your presence and this large-scale Arab and international participation can only make us proud of your confidence and interest in the deliberations of this conference. We have no doubt that the great meaning of your presence here, representing various leanings and trends, is an indication of your profound interest in the reality and prospects of the democratic process in Jordan. This experiment, though we may differ on its evaluation, remains the hope of the widest categories and segments of our people. I even dare say that it is the focus of observation and examination by a significant portion of our Arab nation's peoples and many freedom, progress and democracy loving forces in the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, guests of the conference

Brothers and colleagues

Jordan's march on the path of democracy has entered its fifth year now. You may perhaps agree with me that five years is not a long time

if measured by the time needed for democratic transformations. However, these five years have been crucial years in the life of our country and people. They were five eventful years impregnated with difficult tests and enriched with valuable experiences.

Therefore, we pin hope on this conference to place this experiment, with all its richness, complications, points of strength and weakness, frustrations, hopes and aspirations, under the microscope of research, discussion and dialogue.

I do not want here to intrude on the right of the participants to run the activities of the conference in the way they see fit. Nevertheless, I believe that the task of this conference is not to pass judgment in favor or against this experiment, but to objectively analyze its progress and outcome and to conclude the necessary lessons in an attempt to explore better horizons and opportunities in order to consolidate and develop this experience. This experiment, as I see it, is the outcome of circumstances in which local, regional and international factors were interlocked and Jordan was encountering parallel political, economic and social problems and challenges of no less complication than the complications encountered by the process of transformation towards democracy. We can now say that since 1989, our country has entered a new phase of its political life characterized by successive turbulent changes on the regional and international levels and by a domestic economic, social and political crisis with far-reaching dimensions. All these factors have left their strong impact, not only on Jordan's march towards democracy, but on its overall domestic and foreign policies and conditions.

Our dear guests
Ladies and gentlemen
Brothers and colleagues

Five years ago, the Arab region had far-reaching aspirations and hopes, because the wheel of democracy had moved forward. We in Jordan thought of ourselves, and we still do, as one of the tributaries of the general change in our Arab Homeland towards pluralism, democracy, liberalization and popular participation. In fact, several Arab countries did start their democratic process at the same time we did. Now that we have reached the fifth year of our democratic process, we can only express our feeling of regret and pain for the failure of numerous similar Arab experiments, which were promising at birth, but later fell by the dictatorial oppression of the ruling regimes, or by

the fact that they have been victims of civil wars or wars of attrition. While we are pained by this retreat, we feel here in Jordan that we have a special responsibility to shoulder if we are to protect, reinforce and consolidate our experiment, not for the sake of Jordan only, but also for the sake of making a modest contribution signaling to the Arab World that it still has alternatives that are harmonious with the aspirations of our people towards participatory democracy and the achievement of a better quality of life, alternatives that are civilized and that are compatible with the spirit of the age which we are living in.

We would like to speak frankly in this regard. Jordan's democratic process, which started with a strong momentum in the first two years, lost momentum in recent years in view of the surrounding regional circumstances, Arab divisions and failures and retraction of promises made for the attainment of democracy. While we realize that the march of our country towards democracy cannot keep the same momentum all the time and also realize the difficulties involved in democratic transformation including the cultural, political and social obstacles and the deeply-rooted traditions that obstruct efforts made by our society to build its institutions and to chart its democratic future, we view with extreme concern the current downward trend in our democratic gains. What is more serious than all this is that democracy has become the scapegoat to which the various aspects of failure in our public life is attributed, as if what is being sought behind this is to create a popular consensus that democracy is a failure or that our society is unworthy of enjoying basic human rights, liberties and democratic freedoms.

This conference of ours is an opportunity to pause and think profoundly and responsibly about the difficulties and obstacles that stand in the way of the consolidation and promotion of the democratic process. Meanwhile, the conference is also requested, as a basic duty, to make a critical pause to discuss the mistakes and shortcomings that have affected the performance of the various state and social institutions. Needless to say, this conference is advantaged by its comprehensive focuses and by its large number of participants with their diversified experiences and the high level of their political, professional and social representation. This is certainly a rare opportunity for reaching a healthy and constructive assessment of the various levels of this experiment so that we can make the necessary conclusions and devise the needed concepts and trends that are capable of giving momentum to the democratic process.

Ladies and gentlemen
Dear guests
Brothers and colleagues

We realize that the changes Jordan has witnessed on the road to democracy remain politically and intellectually controversial. We also realize that the conference will not come out with a unified view on the assessment of this experiment. We do not believe that it is the duty of the conference to do so or that this is one of its objectives. What is important in this conference, we believe, is that opportunity should be given to the representatives of the various political trends to engage in an open and candid discussion on the experiment of democratization in terms of where it stands now, the difficulties hindering its progress, and the chances and prospects of its success in the future. I would like to emphasize here that one of the most basic objectives of this conference is to provide an atmosphere of candid and open dialogue among the various political leanings and representatives of our society.

Finally, I would like to renew my welcome on behalf of Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center and to express our happiness for your active participation in the deliberations of this national conference. Please allow me also to extend my thanks to the Friedrich Ebert Foundation for its sincere cooperation which has facilitated the convening of this conference. We hope that similar conferences will be held on periodic basis in the future so that we can pause to evaluate and assess our achievements and shortcomings, improve the performance of our institutions and social organizations and continue on the path of democracy in firm steps. But all these hopes will perhaps primarily depend on the efforts exerted to make this conference succeed and to transform it into a large-scale national platform for democratic dialogue.

I thank you again, and wish you success in your deliberations. Peace be upon you.

Focus Number One

- **Jordan's democratic process: International factors and circumstances**
- **Regional and internal factors and their impact on Jordan's democratic process.**
- **Jordan's political system and local factors**
- **General discussion**

JORDAN'S DEMOCRATIC PROCESS INTERNATIONAL FACTORS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

Dr. Dhiyab Makhadmeh

Introduction

The technological revolution in communication has introduced basic changes, not only on the level of contact among people but also on the various aspects of life, particularly international communications, and consequently, on international relations themselves. The impact of these changes has been reflected in many social, economic and political concepts and ideas.

Sovereignty in its traditional sense, which meant the state's monopoly of power over its territories and population, is no longer possible in view of the communication revolution. The various mass media can now reach the citizens of any country despite the borders and the sovereignty of the state. The radio, television, telephone, etc., are now traveling across the borders without any permission and are influencing various citizens inasmuch as they are effective and acceptable to these citizens. Thus, interference in the internal affairs of any state is now possible despite the sovereignty of the state in its traditional sense. Energy sources are viewed in the same way. According to the concept of sovereignty, it is the state which owns the oil or energy resources and can use them in the way it sees fit. However, this is no longer acceptable as the quantities produced are now fixed and

each party is given its share of production. The same thing applies to prices. There are some who are now calling for the internationalization of oil. The same thing applies at present to human rights which are no longer the absolute purview of the concerned state. This in itself is a form of interference in the domestic affairs and an intrusion on the traditional concept of sovereignty. The same principle applies to various other subjects.

What we are trying to say here is that the world is becoming smaller and smaller with more technological discoveries and innovations, particularly those related to communications. The world also becomes smaller and smaller whenever its relationships and interests become more closely interlocked and it becomes difficult to separate one political entity from the other. In fact an internal event affecting a certain political entity now causes direct impact and interactions on the international arena. This also means that the domestic conditions of states are in turn directly influenced by the events that take place in the international arena. Consequently, this dictates on us to examine the development of democracy in Jordan within the context of the events and developments taking place in the international arena so that we can determine the degree of impact of these events and developments on the democratic process currently taking place in Jordan.

It is true that there are domestic and Arab factors which have played an important role in the democratic process. But what this paper is concerned about is the international dimension, as other papers will deal with local and Arab dimensions.

International Developments and the Democratic Process

A series of developments and changes have taken place in the world in the last decade and reflected either directly or indirectly on the domestic conditions of numerous countries of the world. Various countries have been influenced in one way or the other by this or that factor. Jordan has been influenced by these developments more than other countries in the region. The following are the most important of these developments:

I - The collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the Soviet Union :

It was evident when former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev

assumed power in the Soviet Union in 1985 that this man had new ideas and concepts in his head, which did not constitute a continuation of the status quo, but at the same time did not replace it. The overall ideas and concepts Gorbachev forwarded were some kind of a mixture between the socialist and capitalist systems, as if he wanted to create some kind of association between the two, particularly in the political field. This trend was widely welcomed on the local and international levels. However, these political ideas and concepts were not accompanied by parallel economic changes.

Among the most prominent of these new ideas and concepts were human rights and political pluralism. These two questions have always distinguished liberal systems from socialist systems. Therefore, the impression was that Gorbachev wanted to transform the Soviet Union from communism to democratic capitalism in stages. This trend was widely welcomed by the various member-states of the Communist-led Warsaw Pact. This kind of welcome was not strange, because most countries of the Soviet bloc had tried several times to free themselves from Soviet influence, particularly after the death of Stalin. Several attempts were made by Romania, Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia to move towards democracy and to burst out of the circle of Soviet hegemony. Conditions were ripe in these countries for such a move. When the Soviet leader Gorbachev himself gave the green light, these countries acted quickly to jump out from the circle of Soviet hegemony. But it was like jumping into thin air. The important issues to these countries were democracy, pluralism and human rights. Thus, human rights became the first and foremost political issue on the international level, and Western democracies hastened to give momentum to this trend by exerting enormous efforts and resources, particularly in the early phases of this trend. The outcome was the collapse of the various existing communist regimes under the motto of "human rights and democracy."

Non-communist countries

It became evident to all observers that the historic traditional struggle between the Eastern and Western blocs was now decided in favor of democracy under U.S. leadership. The non-communist countries were now facing two options. Either catch up with democracy and keep pace with the dictates of the age and consequently, continue to survive, or maintain the status quo, which meant rigidity, retreat, failure and continued living in alienation from the spirit of the age.

Thus, first option was selected. It was the acceptable option since it was first, the option of the age, and second, it could ensure the political continuity of these countries. However, the regimes of these countries were captive of their old environment, mentality and interests, and could by no means take democracy seriously, because such a trend was not in their interest. Therefore, they had to devise some kind of association or link between democracy and human rights on the one hand, and the continuation of the status quo on the other.

Consequently, a new kind of association or link appeared. On the one hand, these regimes could not abandon their tight political grip by which they ruled their countries and peoples, while, on the other, they knew they could not survive if they continued to live outside the age, the age of democracy. There had to be a matrimony between these two phenomena, with the balance remaining in favor of those who held power. If the opposition upset the balance of power in its favor, these regimes could call off the whole thing, even if it angered the big democracies, as was the case in Algeria, where the Islamic Salvation Front scored significant victories in the general elections. When the ruling regime in Algeria noted that the Islamists were achieving this kind of success, it pushed democracy aside, dissolved the elected parliament and unleashed war against fundamentalists who constituted the opposition to the ruling regime. This measure was blessed by the defenders of democracy in the West because democracy in the Third World is usually viewed by the West as a threat to Western interests in the region. The same thing is happening in Yemen, Tunisia and Egypt. The result has been the appearance of what could be described as controlled democracy.

The Jordanian Experiment

Despite the fact that the Jordanian experiment is still young, it is not an exception to the rule. There have been modest spots of democracy in Jordan's political history, but these spots did not constitute a phenomenon that was lasting. They appeared for some time, and then quickly withered away. Jordan, before other states in the region, realized that developments in eastern Europe were motivated by aspirations to attain democracy. Jordan has also realized that this age is the age of democracy and that political life in any nation should respond to and interact with the spirit of the age. It is noteworthy to point out here that Jordan's declared political principles are close to those of the Western democracies. However, the nature of the local and Arab

conditions did not allow Jordan to proceed far in this direction.

The non-democratic opposition sought, as a priority goal, to change the entire system, not to reform it, contrary to the democratic opposition, which sought to reform, not to overthrow. The Jordanian regime could not face such a situation without a crackdown on the opposition as an act of self-defense and survival. What was offered afterwards was either the opposition or the regime, with no room for coexistence between them. The outcome was that democracy was sacrificed.

But when the opposition realized that there is a possibility for coexistence with the regime and declared so in more than one private occasion held to support the Palestinian uprising in the occupied Arab territories, some kind of a mutually cautious confidence began to develop between the two parties. The confidence of the opposition was enhanced by the fact that it was citing the Jordanian Constitution and political legitimacy to advance its cause. This approach has appeased the regime, and consequently, democracy has become the only outlet and solution for the new situation.

The Gulf War

The various political forces, including the regime, were in complete harmony vis-a-vis their position towards the Gulf War. Jordan looked unprecedentedly united. The regime and the opposition, the public and trade unions were standing in one trench and speaking the same language. This situation eliminated many barriers that were standing between the regime and the opposition and enhanced the mutual confidence between the two.

This was clear during the popular processions and marches organized by the opposition. These were peaceful processions and marches, organized well and were careful not to break law and order or to assault public property or cause disturbances, although there were some isolated incidents.

This mutual confidence was also evident when the National Charter's Royal Commission was formed. All opposition groups actively participated in the commission, not only in terms of numbers, but in terms of roles as well, thereby allowing the birth of the Jordanian National Charter. It should be noted here that the opposition also actively participated in the parliamentary elections of November 1989, when members of the political parties were allowed to nominate

themselves to parliament, although these parties were illegal and officially banned. The party members, however, nominated themselves in their personal capacity, not on behalf of their parties.

What I want to say is that the Gulf War with all its interactions has strengthened the confidence between the regime and the opposition, thereby consolidating the democratic experiment which still needs to be strengthened further and further.

In the post-Gulf-War period, attempts were made to make Jordan pay the price of its position vis-a-vis the Gulf War, and a blockade was imposed on the Port of Aqaba. Jordan realized that the best reply to such actions was to further consolidate the democratic experiment and to safeguard national unity so as to cope with any attempt aimed at exerting pressure on the country.

The outcome of the Gulf War and the collapse of the Eastern Bloc brought the United States to the forefront as the unipower of the world and heralded the end of the cold war. The United States will certainly try to impose its system and values on the world and present these values and system as the ideology of the age, where democracy and human rights will occupy a prominent place in the American advocacy, and consequently, in the service of the new world order.

The Political Settlement in the Region

The question of basic solutions to the Arab-Israeli dispute is not a new one. There are dozens of Arab, Israeli and international political initiatives and schemes to resolve this question. Jordan had called for a political solution of this dispute since its earlier phases. Jordan's policy, contrary to the policies of other states in the region, was characteristically clear. It was based on the acceptance of the resolutions of the United Nations as the body representing international legitimacy for the purpose of settling this dispute. Meanwhile, the Israeli position was ambiguous and the position of some Arab states was often contradictory. Nevertheless, Jordan continued its consistent political line despite the fact that some Arab voices were occasionally advocating a military solution to the conflict rather than a political one.

Jordan had a unique role to play in this conflict in view of its geographic location and the fact that it has the longest Arab borders confronting Israel. Furthermore, there was the occupied West Bank which continued to constitute part of Jordan's territories until Jordan declared the disengagement of the West Bank from Jordan Proper.

Moreover, a high rate of Palestinian refugees and evacuees live in Jordan, and this fact had an enormous political, economic and social impact on the life of the country.

Jordan's position towards the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict was based on a comprehensive Arab solution, and was opposed to unilateral solutions. Therefore, Jordan supported the resolutions issued by the Arab Summit Conference held in Baghdad in 1979 rejecting the Camp David agreements and announcing a boycott of the Egyptian regime, because the Egyptian regime concluded a unilateral settlement with Israel. Furthermore, despite Jordan's agreement to attend the Madrid Peace Conference, it was the last to announce this agreement. Although Jordan had completed a significant part of the negotiations with Israel and could have completed them still earlier, it withheld the signing of a unilateral accord with Israel despite the enormous pressure exerted on it. The domestic circumstances of Jordan did not allow the country to conclude a unilateral agreement with Israel, particularly if this agreement was rejected by the Palestinian leadership. Such an agreement, if it had materialized, would have made Jordan vulnerable to a harsh media campaign and could have sparked domestic disturbances. Furthermore, such an agreement would have been contradictory to Syria's official and declared policy, and this could have created a conflict between Jordan and Syria.

However, when Syria, which is known for its hardline political position, announced that it was willing to attend the Madrid Peace Conference, and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, followed suit, then there was no problem for Jordan to declare a position adopted earlier, namely, its agreement to the political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Thus, the opposition in Jordan, whether sympathetic with Syria or with the PLO, could not object to Jordan's agreement to attend the Madrid Conference as long as the long-standing rejectionists were willing to do so, and announced that they would, before Jordan did.

Consequently, Jordan went to Madrid with a renewed feeling of strength, because it was now supported by the opposition, or at least the opposition was not objecting to Jordan's attendance of the Madrid Conference. This was evidently clear from the fact that despite the lapse of well over two years from the initiation of the Arab-Israeli negotiations, not one single procession was staged in Jordan rejecting the negotiations. But had Jordan been the first to agree to attend the Madrid Peace Conference, or had gone there unilaterally, large-scale

riots would have erupted in the country. To be able to proceed with the political settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute, Jordan had to consolidate its domestic front. Democracy, under the circumstances, was the strongest protection for the domestic front.

There is still a significant opposition to the political settlement, but this opposition would have been more effective had Jordan gone to the negotiations without having a democratic process. Here one could probably raise a legitimate question: Why did Syria go to the negotiations when in fact it did not have a democratic process, and without this action constituting a danger to the ruling regime? The situation here is different, and conditions in Jordan are different from the conditions in Syria which is ruled by a single party controlling all aspects of life, contrary to the situation in Jordan which is pluralistic and there is no one single dominant party. Furthermore, one could probably note that Syria's current policy is to try to balance between traditional hardline policies and the willingness to engage into negotiations. This explains the slow pace of negotiations on the Syrian track on the one hand, and the complex nature of these negotiations on the other. Needless to say, we should realize that the political settlement in itself is primarily in America's interest. America has become a unipower, and is acting as if the world is its own house, and wants to put this house in order and keep it peaceful and stable. This is what really prompts us to say that the democracy we are talking about is linked in one way or the other to the political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

One might say that the political settlement, which started with the Madrid Conference in 1991, was a follow-up phenomenon of the democratic process, which began in 1989. It is true that the negotiations concerning the political settlement were subsequent to the democratic process. However, it is important for us to understand that the actual negotiations began in Madrid in 1991, while the contacts between the various parties, which were made through different channels, were much older than that. Thus, the Madrid Conference crowned a long series of secret Arab-Israeli contacts.

Conclusions

This age of ours is the age of compromise. It is also the age of democracy and human rights, despite the political motives which are sometimes concealed behind these slogans. Peoples should take

advantage of this age and regain their rights from those who have denied them these rights. The colonialist powers colonized the Third World under humanitarian slogans such as helping the poor, developing and backward countries to stand on their feet and run their own affairs, protecting persecuted minorities and sects, safeguarding the rights of weak nations against the hegemony of their strong neighbors, etc. All these were humanitarian slogans which the colonialists raised, but in fact they were intended first and last to be utilized in the service and interests of the colonialists. No colonial state has ever admitted it was so or that it wanted to colonialize other people. The general disguise has always been a humanitarian one.

Under the disguise of "Human Rights", schemes were occasionally devised to undermine these rights, and this was evident from the events involving the Kurds in northern Iraq, from the events in Somalia and in Bosnia, etc. In fact, the drive to proclaim the internationalism of human rights is intended to create a legal and humanitarian cover for interference in the internal affairs of other nations.

Despite all this, democracy and human rights should remain the main focus of the goals which the various peoples of the world should strive to attain. Democracy means the rule by the will of the people. This contradicts the subjugation of peoples to colonial or imperialist rule. Thus we can note that the United States calls for democracy in certain countries, while failing to make the same call on countries that are pro-American.

Irrespective of the various motives and factors which prompted the emergence of the democratic process in Jordan, one could say that democracy has been a Jordanian demand for the last six decades. However, the interaction of a number of local, Arab and international factors has prompted this old demand to re-appear and re-emerge on the surface once again.

Regardless of the degree of impact of international factors in this, we should realize that the main responsibility rests with the Jordanian people with all their categories and segments, because democracy is not a gain restricted to one group of people at the exclusion of others. Rather, it is a gain for all without any exception, and above all, it is a gain for the nation and the state.

International factors are usually a follow-up of local factors, not only as regards the question of democracy, but as regards many other questions and issues. If the domestic front becomes strong and can

protect and give momentum to the democratic process, the impact of the international factors, whether in favor of or against democracy, will continue to depend on the strength of the domestic front irrespective of the strength of the international factors. In view of all this, the fortification of the domestic front, the protection of national unity, and proceeding with democracy with firm and confident steps slowly and surely will certainly lead the country to the shores of safety and foil the desperate internal or external attempts to undermine or reverse the democratic process.

Discussant Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber

Ladies and gentlemen

I regret to say that I have not received the paper beforehand, but have listened to it just like you did. Therefore, the remarks I am going to make are based on my attendance of this session only. Again I want to apologize if the remarks are not in order.

Dr. Makhadmeh has spoken about the international and regional factors, about the collapse of the Soviet Union, about the Gulf War, and the impact of the political settlement currently taking place in the Middle East. I would like to say first that the Arab nation is living through a crisis and that this crisis has been going on for the last two centuries since the landing of Napoleon's armies in Egypt at the end of the Eighteenth century and the beginning of the Nineteenth century. Ever since that time, the Arab nation has been undergoing a constant crisis. In fact, this is what we should take into account when we speak about the kind of the political regime which any nation or people seeks to have.

Jordanian democracy did not rise from a vacuum, but rose under local, regional and international conditions. Most important of these conditions was the crisis which I referred to above. We have been undergoing crises in every single day of our lives, whether in Lebanon, Palestine, the Arab Maghreb, the Arab East, the Arabian Peninsula, etc.

I am saying this because this situation should serve as a prelude for thinking about the democratic process in Jordan. Democracy in Jordan was not the by-product of the collapse of the Soviet Union, but began

before this collapse. Nor was democracy in Jordan a by-product of the Gulf War, but began before the outbreak of the Gulf War.

The State of Jordan was established in 1921, and in 1923, Prince Abdallah formed a Jurists Committee headed by Ibrahim Hashem to draft a system or a constitution based on the principle of participation.

Here I want to draw the difference between democracy and participation, because we often mix between the two, as if democracy was a cure for all diseases. The intention to build Jordan as a democratic state was there from the beginning, and this intention was translated into successive councils which existed in the country from 1929 to 1946 and into the twelve successive parliaments which existed from 1947 to-date.

One more remark: It is true that Jordan has undergone crises in its history that have obstructed at least twice the institutionalization of democracy or the democratization process. But the intention was always there to involve people in the decision-making process. This intention in fact stems from the conscience of the nation.

However, we are overlooking two things: the first thing is that democracy, even in the Western world, is relatively new. Democracy is not a historic process which started thousands of years ago. Furthermore, the mechanism of participation was always available to the Jordanian state ever since the foundation of the state. There has always been openness between the ruler and the ruled. It is true that at certain historic moments throughout the past seven decades, the level of democracy that has existed was less than institutionalized democracy. But the doors of all officials, from the highest to the lowest, were always open for people to express their views.

In the final analysis, the question which may be raised is : what are the citizens concerned about ? The citizens want their rights to be respected. While there were circumstances when people were taken to prison, the state never resorted to torture, murder or political violence. The evidence of this is that many Jordanian state officials throughout the last seven decades were at one time or the other active in the ranks of the opposition to the ruling regime, but no one was killed or executed for a political crime, and there has never been any large-scale political violence.

My last remark is that we often forget that participation is deeply rooted in the heritage of our Arab and Islamic society. Until the 1950's, 80 per cent of the people in Jordan, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Sudan

were dwelling in rural and desert areas, where there was participation and where women's rights were respected, if we view them from the social perspective. From the religious perspective, the intention was always there for political participation, because this is part of the Islamic Faith. We may differ on the terminology: Some might call it democracy, some might call it Shura, and some might call it Shuracracy, or any other name.

Thus, the intention in our Arab society, including the Jordanian society, was always there. The concept of participation was also there in our heritage. Unfortunately, this heritage which advocates the Shura (consultation) has not been institutionalized, nor has it taken the form of a parliamentary institution or any other institutionalized form. I hope that I have not held you for too long.

Thank you .

Discussant Dr. Mustapha Hamarneh

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My remarks will be very brief, because we are hard pressed for time, and I am going to concentrate on the pronouncements made by Dr. Makhadmeh. Some of my remarks involve the methodology, and some involve certain facts which have been cited. I think that Dr. Makhadmeh's paper was good. This is the first time we are sitting down together as academics and politicians to examine the impact of international developments on Jordan's policies.

The question of foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Third World countries is an old question and was not one of the by-products of the communication revolution. In fact when we came in contact with Western Europe after Napoleon came to our region and the capitalist system was introduced to our economies, the economic structures of our societies suffered from a number of distortions. We have been living at least nominally what the West has been living in actual practice. We have seen the age of prosperity, but we did not witness any prosperity in our countries or in the societies of Third World countries in general.

Therefore, to describe this age as the age of democracy and human rights is exactly like describing the earlier age as the age of prosperity. Foreign intervention has not only undermined the economic structures of the Third World countries, but their political structures as well. When Arab countries and Third World countries as a whole were ruled by capitalist systems, we were not the idealist model of the capitalist system as it existed in the West. The same thing happened vis-a-vis the political domain. We have imported the ideas of the parliament, the party and elections, but the parliament in its European form does not exist in our country, nor was it the party which the Honorable Taher Al-Masri spoke about this morning when he said that political parties came to us from abroad as a historic, political, economic and social experiment completely different from what existed in our societies.

Therefore, I believe that it will remain distorted, as are all the other various aspects of life.

However, this relationship may help and actually did help Jordan under certain circumstances by the import of some types of small technologies that can support decentralization, such as the facsimile, the photocopier, the computer, etc.

In Jordan, and as part of its endeavors to surge forth in the area of services and to occupy a distinguished position in the region, the nature of the political system has helped introduce this combination of technology that has made the Jordanian regime non-repressive when compared to the regimes around us. Meanwhile, there are countries around us which have no facsimiles or other means of advanced communications to help decentralization in these countries. Therefore I say that the international situation affects local conditions, but a combination of local factors should be present if this impact is to be effective.

The second important point I wanted to make is that the historic struggle between the Western and Eastern blocs was not motivated by democracy and did not end up in favor of democracy. What I mean is that the victory which the United States has achieved does not mean that we have entered the age of democracy or that this democracy will reflect on our Third World countries.

Needless to say, the United States has historically used democracy and human rights as an instrument of foreign policy. The last example of this is the change of its position towards China. Had the Americans been democratic, they would have rewarded Jordan or increased their aid to it instead of imposing a quarantine on it. However, US aid to Jordan is constantly declining. An American government official visited Jordan recently and told Jordanian officials that US aid to Jordan for this year will not be above nine million dollars. This means that the Americans are not committed to the advancement of democratic values and human rights outside their own country. In this connection, their historic position has always been selective.

The third remark I would like to make is in the form of a question: Has Jordan, as Dr. Makhadmeh said, embarked on the policy of political liberalization out of its realization of the events that were taking place on the international arena, or was this liberalization due to domestic factors stemming from Jordan's objective circumstances? One might add to this that Jordan was no longer vulnerable to external pressures

from communist and socialist forces and other forms of Arab nationalism which came from abroad and were tantamount to constant pressure on the Jordanian regime.

One can also note that every now and then a spark of liberalism appeared in Jordan, causing a conflict between the liberal forces, which had their roots in the political and social life of the country, and the ruling regime. The result of this conflict was usually the total collapse of these forces; in other words, the loss of their credibility. However, with the Gulf War and the position which the ruling regime took towards this war, Jordan has reached a different situation: People began to make a review of the history of the Hashemites, or what was called "revisiting history."

The necessary ground was laid, in my view, for the resolution of the problem of bilateral Jordanian-Palestinian relations as a local, domestic issue. The Jordanian-Palestinian dispute has never been a historic, racial, ethnic, or religious difference. Rather, it has been a political and ideological difference. The Gulf War indeed laid the proper ground for the basic review of these historic positions, and consequently, the bilateral differences could be resolved in a much better way. However, Jordan did not seize this opportunity to resolve this dispute.

I believe that we should not overlook an important combination of domestic factors, and I am referring to them only because they are linked to the external factors. What I really wanted to say is that the rule of the Hashemites has been neither absolute nor totalitarian, and at a certain historic phase, it has managed to reform itself, while other neighboring regimes could not do the same. My question here: Doesn't the international environment affect them as it does affect us? This is why I believe that the impact of the international environment is limited.

We have also spoken briefly about the market economy and other external factors manifest in the communist, socialist and Arab nationalist forces. This is not to suggest that one is taking sides, for or against, because we are talking here about forces that were there, forces that were active, forces that could mobilize the masses and steer them in the direction of achieving a certain political goal.

Finally, I believe that we should re-study the role of the individual in history. We have belonged to ideological schools of thought for a long period of time, and avoided the talk about the role of the individual in history. The political, social and economic conditions which any ruling regime may create necessarily depend on the alliances this regime is

capable of fostering, and it is these alliances in turn which are capable of shaping the form and nature of social development.

We did ask our academic colleagues in the West: Why hasn't King Hussein resorted in 1989 to the same tactics which the Shah of Iran used in his country in 1979, or more specifically speaking, why has the king not resorted to violence? The answer is that violence was not one of the options considered. Furthermore, the personality of the ruler and other psychological, social, economic and political factors should be taken into account.

Regional And Internal Factors and their Impact on Jordan's Democratic Process

Mu'nis Al-Razzaz

At the outset, I would like to extend my thanks to Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center for the efforts it has been making to examine and document the problems of our lives and to strive to find solutions for these problems, despite the meager financial resources of this center.

In any case, I understand that the topic I am requested to discuss involves democracy in Jordan and the external and internal factors that have influenced its growth and development throughout the past decades.

To start with, I might say that among the factors which have prompted a resort to the democratic option, or the option of relative democratic liberalization, as I prefer to call it, are the following crucial factors:

First, the process of the peaceful resolution of the Palestinian problem and Jordan's role in the peace process that will eventually lead to the settlement.

Second, the rise of a new type of politics calling for liberalization, frankness, candidness, and protection of human rights with the rise of former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and his advocacy of the policy of Prostroika, or reform, although Prostroika was introduced as a combination of measures intended to be in harmony with an international movement which focused on democracy and human

rights. It is important to indicate here that the objective conditions were ripe for advocating both of these. An example of this is the famous meeting called for by a number of Arab intellectuals and strugglers on democracy. No Arab state allowed this meeting to be held on its territory. So the organizers were compelled to hold the meeting in Cyprus. The event coincided with the birth of the Arab Organization for Human Rights in a non-Arab capital and the opening of branches of the organization, after a hard struggle that has been waged. It is noteworthy that the above-mentioned meeting did not discuss the Palestinian issue or the question of Arab unity, as other meetings or conferences usually do, but focused on the question of democracy as the key to the resolution of other problems and issues.

Third, the decline of the strength of the leftist and Pan-Arab opposition forces, particularly after the failure of leftist and Pan-Arab and perhaps Islamic authoritarian models of government, including the Islamist experiments in Iran and Afghanistan. What I mean here is that the Pan-Arab and leftist forces were no longer a source of threat to Jordan as they were in the fifties, for example.

Therefore, we should take into account the impact on events of the following regional powers: The Soviet Union, which is a major regional power in the area in terms of influence, not in terms of geographic location; Israel and its position towards the peaceful settlement; Iran and the influence it exerted during the rule of the Shah and the changes that followed after the Islamists seized power; and finally the stumbling Pan-Arab nationalist models which have a bad record on human rights and democracy.

It is noteworthy that in the fifties and early sixties, most political parties in Jordan were merely echoes of voices that had their origins and roots outside the country. Consequently, the regime felt that it was threatened, particularly during the era of leftist and Pan-Arabist successes. However, after the failure of the models which presented themselves as alternatives to the regimes described as bourgeois, backward, and allied with feudal systems, the influence of the Jordanian branches of Pan-Arabist parties declined and were no longer viewed as a threat to the regime. It is very important to point out here that Arab intellectuals attributed these failures to the absence of democracy at the center and to foreign conspiracies and plots concocted against the Arabs.

As far as domestic factors are concerned, I can think of the following:

1-The personality of King Hussein Ibn Talal.

2-The economic challenges.

3-The Jordanian-Palestinian relationship, which is simultaneously a domestic and external factor.

I would like now to talk, with some detail, about the importance of the peaceful solution of the Palestinian issue and the impact of this solution on the democratic option in Jordan. I still recall well the article published by British columnist David Hurst in the Guardian after the Madrid Conference. The article said that a large number of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) members, which is the Palestinian parliament affiliated with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), supported King Hussein's rule of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip if he could liberate them from the Israeli occupation. But all these members made their acceptance of the Jordanian regime conditional to the consecration of genuine democracy in Jordan. We could probably recall that in this context, the Israeli Likud, headed by Yitzhaq Shamir, was refusing to deal with the PLO, and that the maximum concession Shamir was willing to make was to accept Palestinians who hold no sensitive positions in the PLO provided that they were part of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. This led to the conclusion or impression that any solution to the problem of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip could only take place through Jordan, not through the PLO which Shamir labeled as terrorist. Decision makers in Jordan realized, long even before the Madrid Conference, the basic role which Jordan could play in regaining the Arab territories that have been occupied by Israel in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. They also realized that to regain the confidence of the Palestinians, particularly those living in the occupied territories and in the diaspora, the Jordanian regime had to embark on a policy oriented towards democracy, pluralism, human rights, justice and the equality of opportunity.

Jordanian politicians, like other politicians in the region, were of the firm belief that Israel would not deal directly with the PLO, and that any solution to the problem of the Arab territories occupied during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war could only take place through Jordan. In other words, Jordan was thought to be the party which Israel could have talks with vis-a-vis the handing back of parts of the occupied territories and that any settlement, irrespective of its detail or form, could only be concluded with Jordan, not with the PLO.

The Israeli position towards this issue was instrumental in introducing a relative democratic liberalization in Jordan. Furthermore, the changes that were made on this position later on clearly affected the

process of democratic liberalization in Jordan. When the Israeli Labor Party assumed power, it began to make secret, direct contacts with PLO figures and departed from the essential role of Jordan on which the Likud had insisted. Thus the democratic process in Jordan retreated a step. The change in the Israeli position generated a change in the way Jordan handled its parliamentary elections. I dare say here that this change in the Israeli position was a factor of more significance than the containment of the Islamists, although the desire to contain the Islamists was always there. I also dare say that the change in the Israeli position in this context not only affected the way the parliamentary elections were handled in Jordan, but also affected the way the rulers in Jordan viewed the function of the relative democratic openness and liberalization.

As for the other factors, they may look like internal factors, but they are, nevertheless, linked with the external environment, since Jordan is the Arab country that is most affected by the events in neighboring countries. I also believe that the personality of King Hussein played a major role in the choice of the democratic option.

The April 1989 events in southern Jordan were caused by economic difficulties, and in such cases, the Arab World rulers in particular and Third World rulers in general have two choices. Either resort to a bloody confrontation or react with a surprisingly gracious attitude. No doubt you are aware that the general orientation in Jordan is moderate, non-extremist, and that King Hussein personally abhors bloody violence and ruthlessness. Thus, the king reacted to the events by a call for democracy, and I believe that he was thinking along these lines for sometime before the outbreak of the riots. I recall that at one time the king was meeting media men, and one of those attending told the king: "You can go ahead, Your Majesty, and we will follow you." The king replied smilingly: "No, sir. I do not want you to march behind me, but to walk with me side by side."

Some people may want to ask why I insist on describing our democracy as a relative democratic liberalization. My answer is that I am using this phrase for the purposes of comparison between democratic life in Jordan and other countries in the region. When we make this comparison, I dare say that we in Jordan are ahead of these countries. However, this comparison is relative. It is like comparing the performance of an average student with the performance of a flunking student. In this comparison, the average student is certainly in good shape. However, if we compare our democracy with the democracies that are functioning in Turkey, Cyprus or Israel, we will soon discover

that we are still at the beginning of the road. Moreover, it would be irrelevant for us to compare our democracy with the old established democracies of the West. This is why I am describing our democracy as relative. I have no doubt that one of the major objective reasons why we lag behind some of the Middle Eastern democracies is the absence of civil society institutions in Jordan. I have no doubt also that the "one man, one vote" law aggravated trends that were neither desirable nor useful, such as the trends towards clanishness, sectarianism and loyalties on the basis of geographic localities within the one country.

I must here refer to a peculiar phenomenon although it could be explained and analyzed: Jordan's democratic relaxation began with a national reconciliation between the ruling regime and the various political forces. National reconciliation was all the more evident in the way the Charter Royal Commission was formed. The Commission included communists, Arab nationalists, Islamists, centrists, conservatives and government officials. The objective behind the National Charter was noble, namely, to build a modern, democratic, Pan-Arab Jordan. The only thing wrong was that the instruments chosen to translate this goal into reality were persons from the previous "Martial Law" school. Thus, there was a contradiction between the nature of the goal and the nature of the instrument. In fact, this was a predicament.

Even if the presence of such people could be reluctantly acceptable at the initial, delicate, transformatory phase, it would be intolerable in the phase that follows. If I had to explain this peculiar phenomenon, I would say that the process of the peaceful settlement with Israel is perhaps one of the important reasons. Genuine democrats qualified to translate the goal of democracy into reality were reluctant to participate in a compromise government which lacked the basis for international legitimacy. This was perhaps the reason which prompted a number of cabinet ministers in the government of Prime Minister Taher Al-Masri to resign, although the government was not born from the womb of the "Martial Law" school.

In view of all the foregoing, we probably could say that Jordan is the Arab country that is most affected by events that take place in neighboring Arab states. It is vulnerable to influence much more than it can influence events in view of its size, meager resources and young age compared with countries like Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria and Egypt. No doubt, the expansion of the parties that originated in Damascus, Cairo and Beirut in the early fifties to Amman was the best evidence of this.

This also explains why large numbers of Jordanian youth went to study at the universities of these capitals since the first Jordanian university was only established in 1962. Needless to say, we also have to take into account the Arab nationalist movement that was nurtured and sponsored by the late Egyptian President Jamal Abdul Nasser.

Nevertheless, the most serious factors that affected the process, nature and transformations of the Jordanian relative democratic liberalization were those involving the developments of the Palestinian issue, since the anticipated Jordanian role in the peace process was an essential and decisive factor in the emergence of this democratic relaxation, as I have said above.

Finally, I have few remarks which I will discuss briefly:

Observers note that Jordan's experiment on the reinstatement of political parties is stumbling, and some reasons for this failure are well known. However, there is no room to elaborate on these reasons here.

This process of liberalization has suffered several shocks, and some parties could not survive these shocks without the King's personal intervention, such as the decision by the Interior Ministry not to license socialist parties in Jordan.

The participation of enlightened intellectuals, who were instrumental in building the process of national reconciliation, diminished and they could no longer hold sensitive positions in the institutions that were paving the way for the formation of the organizations of civil society. These institutions themselves have suffered a setback, such as the Center for Human Rights Studies in the Arab World, established in Jordan by a Royal Decree.

The momentum of the slogan of a democratic, Pan-Arab modern Jordan eased, and the powers of the local governors were consolidated and enhanced.

Though party leaders and patriots were at the beginning in the ranks of the opposition, they took part in the charting of the future of Jordan after the democratic liberalization and the national reconciliation process was started, including participating in the drafting of the National Charter. These party leaders were eventually alienated. At the beginning of the relaxation period, the authorities encouraged them to get involved on the grounds that the "crew of the ship" will not be restricted to the officials who supervised the Martial Law phase.

Perhaps the dramatic developments that have involved the recent

Palestinian issue and the fact that social democracy was not being built up parallel with the relative democratic relaxation could offer the explanation for this retreat and these setbacks.

Finally, I would like to thank you for listening, hoping that you will take into consideration that I have drafted this paper in a hurry.

Thank You.

Discussant Dr. Yossef Al-Hassan

I am very happy to participate with this elite group in the discussion of a focal issue that represents one of the basic problems of current and future Arab life. I would like at the outset to voice my appreciation of the Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center for its daring initiative in convening this conference and to the Friedrich Ebert Foundation for supporting this initiative.

When I was requested yesterday to comment on the background paper of Mr. Mu'nis Al-Razzaz, I asked my friends at the Center to relieve me from this difficult task, not only because we were hard pressed for time, but also because the task is not easy in view of the rich ideas contained in the background paper. Such rich ideas usually invite dialogue and discussion, particularly in a conference such as ours.

The background paper focuses on the questions of practice and the views relevant to this practice and on the intrinsic factors that have contributed to the democratic transformation process in Jordan which I believe should have been discussed in other focuses. I wish the panelist had devoted sufficient time and effort to the discussion of the regional Arab environment with some detail. Before I start presenting my views in an effort to complement this focus, I would like to make the following remarks vis-a-vis the Jordanian scene :

The Jordanian Scene:

Democratic transformation in Jordan can only develop within its Arab framework, interactions, laws and trends. One of these is a trend that totally rejects the democratic experiment. Another is a trend that is reluctant to undergo such an experiment. A third is a trend that is cautiously or neutrally responsive to the democratic experiment. The

issue then is not one of regional democracy. Jordan is located in the middle of the Arab nation, and is normally affected by the developments that take place in neighboring countries. It has neither the time nor the opportunity to grow quietly in the exercise of democracy without any obstacles or barriers.

Jordan is a small country with a small area and limited resources surrounded by four major regional powers. It strives to neutralize one or more of these powers whenever they appear to become potential sources of threat. It is the country that knows how to find its way even when it is under a quarantine. It is now open to democracy, which places restrictions on the conduct of foreign policy. Such restrictions should not, however, be viewed as a bad thing because it makes the conduct of foreign policy rational, transparent and stable to a very large degree. Meanwhile, the relationships of mutual dependence and alliances among unstable Arab states are constituting a pressure, at least against the freedom of expression.

We should admit that democracy was not in the last four decades one of the factors of conflict among the various Arab regimes despite the diversified nature of these factors and the alliances that ensued. There is more than one interpretation for this phenomenon. Most important of these interpretations is that the Arab World was totally absorbed with urgent issues such as national liberation, independence and Arab unity. Phenomena involving the democratic process only appeared in the last few years. These phenomena were enhanced by the process of the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the first and second Gulf wars, the escalation of cross-border, systematic, Islamist political action, and regional and international democratic changes and transformations. All these phenomena served to either obstruct or enhance the process of democratic transformation.

Before I conclude my remarks about the Jordanian scene, I would like to say that I agree with my brother Mu'nis Al-Razzaz on the significance of the civil society in the democratic process. But I disagree with him for giving so much weight to the "Israeli factor" in the process of democratic advancement or retreat. He says that democratic relaxation started to materialize when the Israelis and most Arab politicians realized that the settlement of the question of the occupied Arab territories could only be attained through Jordan; and to gain the confidence of the Palestinians, as he says, in the occupied territories and in the diaspora, democracy became essential. But, when the process was reversed in Oslo, the style and function of democracy either changed or retreated, as he concludes.

Such a view needs to be examined more closely. If we go back to the Arab Summit Conference held in Rabat in 1974, one could recall that the Arab states participating in the summit exerted pressure on Jordan to recognize the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. If we could also recall the statements and documents issued since the summit on Jordanian, Palestinian and Arab positions, as well as the Israeli position, whether Likud or Labor, particularly the idea of the "Substitute Homeland," it will be easy to see that the conclusions of Mr. Mu'nas Al-Razzaz in this connection are not realistic.

I would like to present the last point in the Jordanian scene in the form of a question: Is it possible for genuine democratic transformations, with all their pluralism, tolerance, acceptance of alternation of power, and codification of liberties, to occur by purely constitutional proclamations and laws that allow the formation of political parties, while the prevailing political culture, particularly among the elite, is a patriarchal and paternal culture that refuses to settle differences or conflicts of interest by peaceful means?

It is important to assert here that the basic duty of all the active forces of the community is to consolidate and represent the democratic values, and this in itself is a guarantee for the rise of a stable, rational authority capable of coping with challenges. In Arab experiences, it has been noted that some Arab countries that have parliaments are no better off politically or economically than countries that do not have parliaments at all.

The problem then is in the structure and culture of the society concerned. The problem is in the political and intellectual elite who have authoritarian leanings, and consequently, they do not promote dialogue with the ruling regime or even with one another, nor do they exercise democracy even within their own political parties.

It might be too early to judge the political parties' experiment in Jordan. However, the legitimate questions which an observer from abroad could ask are the following: Has the experiment enriched Jordan's political system? Has it created consensus on the basic issues? Has it enabled the political system to rejuvenate itself and act with strength, efficiency and achievement? It seems here that the problem is that political parties become peripheral if they do not constitute a political force within the community.

A quick remark on the Jordanian scene is related to the fact that the political position of some forces, elite groups or individuals is still

interlocked with the democratic process in the form of traditions, a way of life, a human value, an institution and methodology. This was evident in the background paper of Mr. Mu'nis Al-Razzaz, particularly when he said: "Qualified democrats are reluctant to participate in governments that seek a settlement with Israel." I must say that participation in the government or opposing the settlement with Israel by Arab political elite groups is not based on one's attitude towards democracy. Needless to say, democracy has been absent throughout the last four decades in thought and actual practice of the organized Arab political forces and of the various Arab schools of thought.

There can be no peaceful transformation towards democracy unless the culture of dialogue prospers, unless the rules of democratic practice and the sovereignty of the law are respected, unless the values of collective action and achievement are encouraged, and unless the system of education which is based on instruction is abrogated. It is a system of education which has no room for thinking, research or exploration. The result is intellectual paralysis and premeditated terrorization of the learners. What we need is a popular and elitist culture that respects democracy, not a culture that accepts despotism and tyranny as long as it involves others and does not affect us. If this culture does not change, the peaceful development of democracy will remain deadlocked. Rulers in this part of the world have an addiction to power, and the opposition has an enormous lust to reach power. Only when such phenomena of addiction and lust disappear, only when the culture of dialogue and tolerance becomes predominant within the community, only when this dialogue becomes capable of influencing the process of decision making, which is one of the prerequisites of democracy, only when all these shortcomings are rectified, only then we can say that the our "national well-being" is good.

Brothers,

Parliamentary democracy in Jordan is the product of a local need as well as the revised ideas and concepts that have prevailed in Arab politics throughout the last four decades. Moreover, it is not alienated from the general democratic trend that is now appearing in most Third World countries, particularly that post-independence regimes have failed to generate a comprehensive economic development or to introduce social justice, because they have not used the mechanisms of democracy. Rather they have run their countries on a dictatorial, cult of personality basis, or on the basis of the rule of the civilian or military

elite. The result has been backwardness and corruption.

The Arab Scene

The Arab World has paid significant attention to the issue of democracy since the beginning of the Twentieth Century. This interest has been manifest in four distinct phases.

The First Phase :

The first phase started with large numbers of Arab intellectuals joining the Reform Movement during Ottoman rule. The Reform Movement led to the Syrian revolution of 1908 and ended up with the formation of an Arab government in Damascus which was monarchical, civilian and parliamentary. However, after the downfall of this government and the domination of the region by the colonial powers, the interest of most Arab intellectuals and elitists turned to the struggle for independence, while only a few were interested in democracy and constitutional life as a means of resistance to colonialism.

The Second Phase :

The second phase was the phase of post-independence characterized by a lack of experience, meager resources and struggle for power. To make things worse, there was also foreign pressure which eventually led to the Arab defeat in Palestine in 1948.

The Third Phase :

The Arab public in this phase showed no interest in parliamentary democracy and the idea lost ground. The ruling elite, particularly republican-minded politicians, began to build regimes and societies based on Leninist and Stalinist theories and non-democratic approaches and programs. The trend in this phase was towards totalitarianism and dictatorship. However, by the early seventies, these models of government came under fire, particularly after the Arab defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

The Fourth Phase :

The fourth phase began at the end of the seventies, with the growth

of a general consensus that democracy could offer a better system of government than the systems then existing. However, it took some time for major schools of thought in the Arab region to accept this trend, as they argued at the beginning that representative democracy offers erroneous answers to questions related to power, government and Arab unity and several well-known justifications to this effect. Nonetheless, the anti-democracy culture began retreating under political, economic and social pressures and tensions and major structural changes in the international situation and in the aftermath of the discovery of serious loopholes in Arab regional and national security.

By the end of the eighties, Arab regimes, irrespective of their ideological affiliation, began reluctantly to accept the significance of pluralism and the constitutional reforms of the government. However, this acceptance remained limited or restricted in more than one way and could not absorb all the existing political and ideological trends. Most Arab regimes enacted laws regulating pluralism. These laws were often rigid and were passed under the illusion of the threats posed to the state. The experience of the last seven years has indicated that the political pluralism which emerged was fragile because the experience was not old enough yet, and because the elite demanding pluralism were not influential enough. Furthermore, the prevailing political culture was in no way helpful to the cause of democracy. Though Arab political regimes shouldered part of the responsibility, one must say that systematic and non-systematic Arab thought showed no interest and made no effort to promote the culture of tolerance or to institutionalize democracy in Arab culture. Even if some efforts were made, they were on a very limited scale. Furthermore, at a time when Arab elitists were showing significant interest in democratic values, the public was not showing the same interest.

Despite this weakness in the roots of political pluralism and democratic values on the Arab government and popular levels, a combination of factors have acted to introduce certain democratic transformations in many parts of the Arab World. These include the following:

Political and ideological pressure by political elites not participating in government.

Pressure by ethnic and religious groups to express themselves in the form of autonomous organizations that have a pluralistic nature and objective presence in the community.

The widening social disparity within the Arab societies as a result of the expansion of the modernization processes and the failure of independent development.

Arab regimes were no longer capable of continuing to rule their people with the same traditional methods. These regimes developed a certain degree of conviction that guaranteeing an appropriate foundation of political stability and functional effectiveness requires a certain degree of democracy.

In any case, building a whole democratic political system is not an easy task. It is a long-term goal that will continue to depend on the degree of stability and acceptance of democratic values and on amending the balance of power in favor of the forces advocating democracy and the expansion of its base. This balance of power is normally affected by the overall social, political and economic changes as well as domestic and external factors .

Scenes of Transformation

Syria and Iraq: In the last two decades, Syria and Iraq were critical of liberal democracy. However, they were advocating centralized democracy, if we may call it so. There were no flexible formulas for the sharing, alternation or peaceful transfer of power. In theory and practice, the concept of the "front that is led by the pioneering party" was the prevailing concept .

The Arab Maghreb: Arab Maghreb countries are still encountering the problem of the re-distribution of power within the democratic system of alternation. The opposition in the Arab Maghreb countries is strong, and the regimes there are still acting with the mentality of the calculated doses of democracy or the exclusion of the opposition.

In Morocco, the opposition proved that it can endure. In Algeria, democracy was introduced as an experiment in 1988 and the scopes of public liberties were expanded. But in the first real test of legislative elections, democracy suffered a severe setback culminating today in a state of semi-civil war. The problem was triggered by the lack of harmony between the major forces governing Algeria, namely, the army on the one hand, and the National Salvation Front, on the other, in the aftermath of the boycott declared by democratic parties in Algeria of the municipal elections that were conducted there.

Other Arab Countries: Relative reforms and transformations have been introduced to South Yemen. The ruling party adopted a decision on December 1989 introducing a system of party pluralism in the aftermath of along controversy and the bloody events of 1986. The transformations that have involved Eastern Europe and pressure from within, particularly the trend towards the unity of the two Yemens, were very instrumental in this change.

Reforms and transformations have also been introduced to the Gulf region, to Lebanon, Mauritania, Djibouti, and Egypt which had an older experience in this regard.

The Jordanian Scene: The changes that have taken place made it difficult for Jordan to continue on the basis of the old traditional formula with the same degree of effectiveness, unless it introduced political reforms. On one hand, it was impossible to maintain the same level of economic prosperity that had existed earlier at a time when new generations of the middle class had entered the market. On the other hand, the Islamist ideology had succeeded in mobilizing the masses . The Islamist trend was gaining more strength and consequently expanding in Jordan and in the region. Moreover, developments involving the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict made it difficult for the regime to cope with the challenges of the settlement without recognizing the domestic political forces.

One of the hard facts that has appeared in this regard is that it is difficult to barter development for freedom or human rights. Nor is it any longer acceptable for a minority elite, which has reached power by one way or another, to unilaterally monopolize decisions on the most important of issues for Arabs, which is peace and war, in the absence of the popular participation and without mobilizing their resources and forces to cope with the challenges and to get involved in the process that aims at the further modernization of the countries concerned.

Finally, I would like to say that democracy is a human value, a way of life, and a method of rule dictated by the peaceful coexistence of society's members and forces with the aim of resolving their disputes peacefully and of keeping the sources of violence and tension under control. It is a gradual historic process, which cannot be born by a mother other than its own. Mankind has struggled to develop democracy in the direction of creating a balance between the government as a necessity and freedom as a basic demand by the

people. The most important thing about democracy is not its theory, but its applications and their mechanisms, and this is an issue closely linked with the distinct social and cultural history and the history of values of each society.

JORDAN'S POLITICAL SYSTEM AND LOCAL FACTORS

Jamil Al-Nimri

Like other Third World countries, Jordan has undergone the difficult birth of the phase that immediately followed the end of the colonial era. Although power did not move from one hand to another in Jordan as was the case in most Arab countries, the situation in Jordan remained far from being stable as a result of domestic and foreign challenges and threats. Some of these challenges and threats stemmed from the fact that the peoples of the region inherited geo-political entities that were not up to the aspirations they have nurtured in the period falling between the two world wars, or between the end of the Ottoman era and the end of the immediate colonial era.

But, what about Jordan's uniqueness vis-a-vis the famous problem which the Egyptian journalist Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal spoke about, namely, the legitimacy of political power? This legitimacy in Jordan is manifest in the fact that the political regime, the state and society were all born and formed simultaneously. The political regime played a central role in the consolidation of the unity of the political entity and in highlighting its identity, which did not enjoy any unique position in the geographic or human realities of Bilad Al-Shamm?

The Legitimacy Of The Political Regime

The army has played the role of inheritor of political power in many Arab countries which won their independence from the colonial powers.

It was the only disciplined and cohesive institution that had at its disposal the necessary instruments of repression and subjugation deployed in the absence of the democratic institutions that could act as the arbitrator for the entire society.

The Arab masses have overthrown the first line of pro-colonial rulers who assumed power immediately at the end of the colonial era. The institution of the army was the only institution capable of running the government. The subsequent military coups and changes were within the framework of the continuation of the army institution in power. The colonial power did not encourage democratic institutions in its colonies, because it knew that popular will can definitely be expressed through these institutions, and that it would necessarily be anti-colonial. The army raised the slogan that it represented the expression of popular will, but as time went on, the army was no longer prepared to hand over power to civilian institutions that could express this popular will. At a later phase, the army's monopoly of power was justified on the grounds that civilian governments were corrupt and did not serve the interests of the people, and consequently their right to rule should be questioned. Even their legitimacy should also be questioned.

In Jordan, however, the absence of democracy at earlier phases did not reflect on the legitimacy of the regime or its ability to hold the Jordanian society together, simply because traditional figures were allowed to participate in governing the country. In Jordan, there were no other options.

The army has never held political power in Jordan, and has never been more than an instrument in the hands of the political regime. Perhaps the use of the word "legitimacy" here is ambiguous and gives no specific meaning or content. What we mean here is a situation where political power is forcibly seized by an individual or a group of individuals who are not accepted by the whole people. This means that the situation will remain unstable and could be changed at any time. Legitimacy can only exist within the framework of a democratic system, which can serve as the solid foundation for the continuation of this legitimacy. Revolution can create a legitimacy of a certain type, such as the Soviet legitimacy, which collapsed when it became evident that the justification for its existence and style of governance had proven to be null and void. Inheritance of power can constitute a continuation of legitimacy.

People in Jordan have always drawn the difference between the legitimacy of the government and the legitimacy of the regime. The

opposition to the government of Prime Minister Zaid Rifai a few years ago, for example, was clearly explained on the grounds that it was not an opposition to the king. In fact people voiced the opinion that this government was an enemy of the people and an enemy of the king. It was a repressive government which sought the liberalization of the economy and the squeezing of the public sector according to a formula that would divide the war booty to the beneficiaries from the government. It was thought of as a government which had no regard for democratic principles. This was the factor that has brought the downfall of the government. It is noteworthy here that the bureaucratic sector of the government was more interested in the social dimensions of the economic measures rather than the security dimension.

Thus, the Rifai government became cornered. When the installments on foreign debts became due, the government could not pay. Aid from Arab countries to Jordan declined as Jordan's central role in the Palestinian issue diminished. So the government resorted to pressuring people financially to cope with the deficit. The trend towards privatization did not succeed. People's anger exploded. The protest was specifically directed against the government, as if the people were saying: "We are the support and protector of this regime. So what right has this government to starve and humiliate us?" The people began to view the government as an enemy of both the people and the king, and as an illegitimate government. By instinct the people directed the fire against the governmental institution not against the political regime, and made sure that they explained in clear terms that they were part of the political regime, not against it.

The new element in this episode was that the people drew the line between the legitimacy of the regime and that of the government. They were willing to send a strong and clear message to the head of the state in this regard. This message was very effective. Others followed and continued to explain the message and its details. Soon the message assumed the form of an integrated program supported by political, unionist forces and organizations and enlightened public figures. All these social forces were operating in harmony and unity. The message continued to be stressed for several weeks, and called for the respect of the constitution, the abrogation of martial law, conducting parliamentary elections, recognition of the freedom of political parties, respect of the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press, introducing legal guarantees for citizens, etc.

I believe that this political movement was complimentary to the

violent movements of protest which alone were not sufficient to make the regime reach the conclusions it later reached. A review of the documents of that period confirms the views I am presenting. This is also confirmed by the statements made by Crown Prince Hassan and by the speech made by King Hussein immediately after his return home from a visit abroad as well as by the statements and memos issued by the trade unions, political forces and clans, and finally by the statements of King Hussein on the eve of the parliamentary elections. The regime first gave an ambiguous promise that it would conduct a review of the situation, noting that the events in southern Jordan were a black spot in the history of the country. Parliamentary elections followed in 1989, and afterwards, phrases such as human rights, democracy and pluralism became part of the official language the regime was speaking and part of its constant policy.

The new phase coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union, with the prevalence of democracy and pluralism as a world issue, and with a strong feeling that a democratic system of government is preferable to other systems of government. The experiences of the adjoining countries came to confirm this view. We are not trying to give credit to one institution and deny the other vis-a-vis the question of the rise of democracy in Jordan. Democracy was never given as a gift. Nevertheless, the regime has followed the proper path in its answer to the people's demands by doing the following :

It has acted with caution, without haste or arrogance in replying to the events in southern Jordan and the consequent demands of the people.

The regime recognized the message distinguishing the people's confidence in the regime from the people's confidence in the government. Therefore, the king dismissed the government of Prime Minister Zaid Rifai. The regime studied the politicized movement and tried to restrain it without overlooking the contents of the message.

The regime responded positively to the people's demands, one after the other, without this leading to uncalculated consequences. It moved from one step to another carefully. For example, it decided to conduct parliamentary elections without lifting the ban imposed on political parties or lifting martial law. The regime was content with the application of the Election Law which prohibited the nomination of party members in the elections.

The principle of pluralism and the abrogation of martial law were the

two overwhelming requests which dominated the atmosphere of the elections. Within two years after the parliament was elected, the demands were met. In other words, the regime chose a rational approach represented by a cautious response to democratic openness while maintaining the existing structures of the regime. This approach proved to be a success.

Evaluation of the New Trend

Many individuals and forces reacted naively to the events, describing them as a "honeymoon which would not last long" or a "tactic to expose the party members" etc. Only a few people tried to dig deep for a factual analysis of these events. Personally, I was one of those who said that the new trend was real and serious. It was very important to evaluate these events properly so that the conclusions would be proper. The historic legitimacy of the regime was in need of fresh momentum from forces that can nourish and prolong the regime. History records no point where events stopped and remained at a standstill.

The events in April were an indicator of a situation that had entered the phase of crisis. Of course there was no threat that the regime might collapse. Perhaps this was what made some people fail to understand why the political relaxation was taking place. The regime itself was best qualified to explore its position at any given point. Therefore, the regime paused to introduce amendments on the style of government, and this was expressed by Mr. Adnan Abu Odeh when he said that the regime and the people met half way.

A realistic outlook on the circumstances of the state and society confirms this fact. This approach was the only alternative available to deter the continuation and escalation of the crisis between the ruler and the ruled. The ingredients of the social segments of the community had changed, and consequently, the method of governing had to be changed. Modern bourgeois was the weaker partner in power along with bureaucracy and the clannish aristocracy. The state acted in this case as an instrument to unify the people. As time went on, the bourgeois and the middle class grew along with other segments of society while power relationships and internal dynamics remained static. Sooner or later, a situation like this was bound to create a crisis. The enlightened bourgeois could no longer see any serious threat that radical movements may pose to the regime and that might justify lack of action to free political life in the country. Thus, democracy has served to renew the

legitimacy of the regime and transformed the political struggle to another level and another title.

Struggle Over the Contents of Democracy

The title of the new phase was concerned with the contents of democracy and who had more power in the political, economic and social decision-making processes. The basic issues of democracy were recognized and respected. These included the lifting of martial law, the abrogation of the seizure of passports and arrests at random, separation from the job, etc. But as soon as this was done, some forces sought to contain the effects of the new situation in order to keep the decision-making power within the same traditional framework. Not because of security considerations this time, but in defense of existing interests and privileges of the forces that sought to adapt to the new situation without sacrificing any of their interests or privileges or paying any price at all. Perhaps the institution of public security was the most significant center of influence.

The statement made by the head of state to the effect that democracy is an irreversible option is a serious statement. Democracy can provide the regime with a strong sense of stability and legitimacy, and there is no reason why the regime should abandon democracy. The criticism voiced by the opposition is based on the fact that the current democracy is closer to a state of political relaxation, but does not allow a genuine alternation of power. One can say that the consensus reached in the National Charter is much more advanced than the actual situation really requires. Furthermore, there is an extreme caution about the introduction of substantive developments which could make the alternation of power possible. One cannot overlook the fact that Jordan began to enact the laws of political pluralism after two years of active movement coupled with a patriotic trend generated by the Gulf crisis. But soon enough, the regime started to deal rigidly and inflexibly with popular activities, such as demonstrations, processions, seminars and festivals and with the mass media. The basic laws of democracy were enacted, but they were chained with restrictions (the Political Parties Law, the Press and Publications Law, the State Security Court's Law, and finally the Electoral Law). There are provisions in each of these laws which place the initiative in the hands of the executive branch of government. In application, one could notice that these provisions were used to enable the executive power to restrain the political movement's trend towards liberation. A legal provision was used to suspend the

licenses of some political parties that had been licensed after a long give-and-take with the government. The State Security Court's Law was used to conduct trials which have been controversial, such as Al-Nafeer and Mu'tah. The Press and Publications Law was used to sue newspapers in court for publishing material which can only be regarded as falling within the very substance of press rights and liberties. Meanwhile, the government mass media restricted its activities to the coverage of the official line. Finally, a provisional law on elections was enacted and endorsed. The law, as the results confirmed later, was a retreat, instead of consolidating party and political pluralism.

All these developments have prompted the people to refrain from involvement in democracy or participation in public life. They have also led to the weakening of the party life in the country. This of course is not in the interest of the democratic and social growth of the country. There is always an inclination to accuse the political parties of being responsible for the failure of the democratic experiment. However, this accusation is unfair. Although we do not deny the responsibility of the political parties in this regard, this topic is not the theme of this background paper.

The present status quo is a transitional situation located somewhere between democracy and the phase that preceded it. The longer this status quo continues, the more harmful it will be. The country is facing economic pressure, the standard of living is declining, class differences are widening, the middle class is failing and disappearing. Meanwhile, the forthcoming phase is impregnated with enormous political challenges. If the old instruments of power are maintained, the rule of democracy may collapse, because the political parties are becoming ceremonial institutions incapable of introducing any change. Moreover, the electoral vote is also incapable of introducing the required change. But this electoral vote will certainly condemn the acquiescence of political parties, will open the way for radical changes, and will lead our society to an acute crisis similar to the one that is taking place in Egypt now. Perhaps what we need is to revive a national dialogue based on the spirit of the National Charter and to explore ways and means to promote democracy and national dialogue between the country's political leadership and the political, unionist and public figures, parties and forces. Perhaps what is needed is a historic understanding among the parties involved in the political process reflecting everyone's acceptance of the political system and the desire to introduce serious amendments to it. The most serious amendment which should be introduced is the revision of the constitution, as stipulated in the

National Charter, in order to establish in Jordan a modern democratic state as close as possible to the democratic monarchies in Europe. However, there is no need to revise the structure of the legislative institution, its purviews, the balance of power between the three branches of government and their relationship with the head of state. Moreover, basic laws pertaining to democracy should be revised so that they could be freed of the restrictions and apprehensions that have curtailed the progress of democracy.

I will try in this background paper to restrict myself to the limited and narrow scope specified for the paper. Therefore, I want to refer to one last point which the political leadership in the country should decide on: The promotion of party life is a prerequisite for the creation of a stable and constantly developing society of political pluralism . Efforts should be made to remove the feeling that the ruling regime is still hostile to the political parties. A concrete program for the promotion of party life should be adopted, and this in itself will help the political parties to develop themselves as democratic institutions and as part of the entity of the state and society. This question has been highlighted on previous occasions, and I want to reassert it here as one of the main conclusions of this paper.

Discussant Dr. Abdullah Naqrash

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would like to thank Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center and the other participants. Please allow me to make some remarks first to explain what I intend to say later on. At the outset, I would like to say that the brief social, political and economic analysis which Mr. Al-Nimri presented was based on a specific methodological approach, and this warrants some remarks on my part. First of all, when we speak about the system, we mean a specific pattern of relationships, not a specific body or institution. Consequently, the political system is the pattern of the political relations of the regime in Jordan. As for democracy, I understand it to be the democratic trend or the domestic political relaxation, and I draw the difference between the climate of tolerance that has historically existed in Jordan, as referred to by Dr. Kamel Abu Jabber, and democracy as an institution, state and law.

I would like to start with a main hypothesis : I dare say that democracy in Jordan is closer to a political process than an ideological option. Why ? Because democracy in the world in general is being spoken of as an integrated ideology and a style of government. However, in Jordan, democracy is a reflection of two states: the first is a response to the liberal option which the state itself has earmarked ever since the early stages of the formation of the state, exactly like the other states which have been subject to British domination, and this domination was reflected in the constitutions of these states as Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber also points out. The second is that democracy in Jordan seems in its final shape, to be a political process rather than an ideological option, and this is dictated by the fact that Jordan's

democracy should be harmonious with the international trend, serve as a regional model capable of maintaining a diminishing regional role, be compatible with the dictates of the local situation, and contain the negative consequences that have accumulated throughout the recent decades.

This is why I dare say that democracy is a trend rather than an ideology, and is a process of reconciliation and compromise rather than decision and decisiveness. It is also relative rather than absolute, and intrinsic rather than objective or genuine. In other words, it is an attempt to explore an acceptable formula for running power relationships in the state without causing surprise, dramatic or uncalculated developments, while the country continues to be governed by the dictates of the local circumstances and to be sensitive to foreign influence. Meanwhile, it strives hard to attain a certain level of goals and to present a model which could be adopted by the regional parties.

Some colleagues might ask: Why have I made this presumption, and how can I prove it? I believe that up to this moment, the political system remains the strongest changing factor in the domestic political movement, without of course overlooking the relative importance of the other factors. If we want to touch on these other factors, we will certainly need to discuss political, economic and social developments, and this paper is not the right place for such a discussion. However, as far as the factors involving the political regime are concerned, they may be summed up in the following points.

As the regime grew alongside the state and the people, it had a recognized historic and religious reference. Therefore, it managed to define some sort of political ideology for the state and upheld this ideology. The elements of this ideology are religious, national, liberal and geographic, i.e. in terms of defining the borders with other states. Though the regime made enormous efforts to attain the goals that are commensurate with this ideology, its political movement was more conciliatory and balance seeking. In the final analysis, the regime made a general conclusion that it was what is called the "middle-of-the-way approach" that it was trying to institutionalize as an ideology, although it could be no more than a description of the political conduct.

The regime did not stop at the point of creating the identity or unifying the territory, as Mr. Al-Nimri noted, but also sought to distribute roles, and consequently, interests among the various groups of society. Although some segments of this society are complaining, they are not willing to give up these roles and interests, particularly those

that have been consolidated. This has left the regime's leadership outside the circle of competition over interests. It has also prompted Mr. Al-Nimri to speak in terms of drawing the difference between the legitimacy of the government and that of the regime, although the relationships between them are organic. However, it is the people of Jordan, before others, who want to highlight this distinction.

The regime has managed to safeguard the foundations of the state and its institutions. Specifically speaking, it has managed to maintain the army as a professional force loyal to its commander. It has also managed to strengthen the bureaucracy, not only as a pure administrative machinery, but also as an employer from which the people can derive benefits and gains.

The regime has managed to deal with the Palestinian issue as a Pan-Arab national issue. The regime's support of the Palestinian cause has provided some kind of Pan-Arab national legitimacy to this regime. In the first place, the Palestinians could become an opposition which should be contained, and in the second place, they are human beings whose needs and interests should be met.

There was no convincing alternative for the regime. There is little chance that a convincing alternative that can replace the regime in activating the country's political movement, particularly the political parties which can in no way become the alternative to the regime. Therefore, what have been called the "April disturbances", which the panelist and others focused on as a main reason for the choice of the democratic option, are really a symptom rather than a cause, although the reaction of the regime to the disturbances was positive.

As for the other reasons which have prompted the regime to embark on the democratic option, they could be summed up in the following:

First, the Khomeini revolution in Iran, which rocked a country that was an ally with the West, convinced the Jordanian regime that it should have local support it can depend on.

Second, it was futile to try to build an integrated ideological structure with local patriotic dimensions in the midst of the prevailing schools of political thought in Jordan, including the Islamists. This raised the question about the need to revive other ideological schools of thought; in other words, pluralism.

Third, the updating of the Jordanian political role was accompanied with an attempt to turn Jordan into an Arab regional model for democracy at a time when Arab intellectuals were questioning the

political legitimacy of Arab regimes and decision makers throughout the Arab World.

As for the domestic conditions, there was what one could call an economic crisis manifest in a decline in the rate of economic growth, the rise of foreign debts and the expansion of the scope of administrative and financial corruption. There was a feeling that Jordan could not cope with the outputs of modernization. Consequently, the clear choice was political freedom rather than threatened prosperity, or the freedom of expression rather than consumer commodities. This has necessarily meant a change in the style of the management of the state. The priority was shifted from security to efficient management. Both are conducive to stability and the consolidation of the regime, and consequently, the enhancement of its legitimacy. This was clearly manifest in the warm welcome the king received from the people when he returned home from abroad where he was undergoing medical treatment.

The development of the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship and the events that have involved the peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict could become the basis for the absorption of the Palestinians in the Jordanian state. Nothing can be better than a democratic approach to this absorption process.

For all these reasons, internal and external, the democratic trend in Jordan gained momentum. The initial steps that were taken were the elections, the party pluralism, and the civil laws. If there are any differences of views over the democratic process in Jordan, these differences necessarily involve the approach to democracy. In other words, are we approaching democracy as an instrument to achieve stability, or are we approaching it as a method and technique to manage the stability of the state? What are we required to do under the current circumstances of the Jordanian state? Perhaps the hypothesis I made at the beginning needs more convincing proofs, but there is no room to elaborate on these proofs here. However, I agree with the panelist on the paragraph in which he spoke about the struggle over the contents of democracy. This is certainly one of the proofs that can be cited for my hypothesis. I would like to add here that democracy is not a decision to be made or a dream to be sought, but is a developmental process reflecting the social, political and economic realities of our society and proceeding with the help of mechanisms that are oriented towards the attainment of democracy's goals. I do hope that democracy in Jordan will be that way.

Thank you for listening.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Dr. Musa Kilani

May I suggest, at the beginning of this conference, that we address questions only pertaining to the topic of the conference and exclude questions about the April events, which require specialized answers.

Senator Ahmad Obeidat (Chairman of the session) :

Mr. Musa, I cannot say that we should avoid the April events. However, the discussion should be focused on the papers as a whole and the political issues and various dimensions these papers have dealt with. Perhaps the April disturbances could be one of these, but their discussion should not take more time than the time given to any other issue. Therefore, let us write down the names of those who have comments to make, and I hope that we honor the time given to each of us.

Dr. Husni Al-Shiyyab

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have one or two remarks to make. Local, regional and international factors could be cited as reasons for the democratic relaxation. There is nothing wrong with that. What is more important is that we should determine the influence of these factors, an influence which differs from one time to another. I do agree with many of the ideas raised by Mr. Mu'nis Al-Razzaz: the leftist and nationalist forces have retreated and the Islamist trend has grown bigger; Jordan's role towards the peaceful settlement and the April events has changed; and the gracious personality of King Hussein who has dealt peacefully

with the incidents and did not suppress them by brute force. I would like to say here that this analysis raises a problem rather than presenting a solution.

If democracy is essentially based on the participation of the various forces, if Jordan is organically linked with the Palestinian issue, and if the decline of the standards of living and the deterioration of the conditions of the bulk of the social classes, are all associated with the democratic process, how can we ever see a future for democracy in our country? Can democracy be built on the weakness of leftist and nationalist forces? Is the democracy that is based on the weakness of the political forces a democracy that is capable of growth? Is democracy based on the change of positions and roles vis-a-vis the peaceful settlement of the Palestinian issue? And is democracy, under the deteriorating social and economic conditions in Jordan and the domination of the World Bank and the social consequences of such a domination, something that can grow or is it vulnerable to a serious setback? I hope that I will receive answers to these questions, particularly from Mr. Mu'nis Al-Razzaz.

MP Dr. Muhammad Uwaideh

I would like to thank everyone here. In some of the analysis made, more than one aspect of the Palestinian dimension was discussed. Some of these presentations of the Palestinian dimension were contradictory, i.e. one of the participants said that democracy was introduced because the Palestinians wanted to become separate from the Jordanian regime, and they did so with the disengagement of the occupied West Bank from the Jordanian regime, while another participant said that democracy was introduced to please the Palestinians, because Jordan was entrusted with the settlement that would regain the West Bank and the Gaza Strip from Israel. But when Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin changed policy in Oslo, democracy retreated. I believe that both views are wrong. Even to say that democracy has retreated because of the peace process is tantamount to involving the peace process in the question of democracy, and this is irrelevant, particularly since the democratization of Jordan began before these changes, and even before the Madrid Conference.

I agree with Dr. Husni that the combination of the factors influencing democracy differ in the degree of their influence. However, the presentation of the Palestinian dimension and the Middle East peace

settlement was not credible. It is about time that we start to view the Palestinian dimension within the Jordanian entity in a completely different way, at least different from the way presented by the PLO or from conditions of Palestinians in the occupied Arab territories. The Jordanian and Palestinian dimensions within the single Jordanian entity are certainly different in their structure and the pattern of their association than any other relationship. Furthermore, to say that the disturbances in southern Jordan were influenced by this or that school of thought is irrelevant. Jordan is certainly much bigger than to be influenced by one single school of thought.

Mr. Mu'nis Al-Razzaz spoke about the failure of the Iranian and Afghan experiments. I admit that Iran has presented a bad example. Nevertheless, the Iranian revolution was one of the factors which reinforced the process of democracy, because it drew the attention of people in a significant way to the rights they are entitled to. As for Afghanistan, democracy surged forth at one time and retreated at others. I do not believe that the Afghan experiment left any significant impact on the region, with the exception of the beginning when the people of Afghanistan stood up to demand their freedom and won.

Mrs. Muna Shqayr

There are some people, like Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber, who are speaking about democracy in this country as if it began only with the foundation of the Emirate of Trans-Jordan and consequently, as if democracy is only seven decades old. These people base their views on the line charted by the Hashemite dynasty whereby there were open channels between the leader and the people. They also base their views on the unique personality of King Hussein, his tolerance and generosity. Although these factors are important, democracy was absent from the country for several decades. The democratic process has not been a continuous process in the last 40 or 50 years. Thus, there was the repression which Dr. Abu Jaber described as a special case. In fact, this repression was not a special case but a general phenomenon whereby public and individual liberties and the freedom of expression were suppressed. Party organizations were banned. The regime exercised terrorization and intimidation tactics against the people, and prisoners were tortured.

The National Charter dealt with this issue with maturity and understanding, and it managed to understand the facts of the current phase much better than former or present veteran politicians. This

phase, the phase of democratization, is a new one. It is a phase that cannot be related to any historic background, with the exception of the short turbulent events of the fifties.

Mr. Salim Al-Zu'bi

Thank you , Mr. Chairman. I wish that each paper would have been commented on separately so that our comments would be more objective and more accurate. The first and second papers presented by Dr. Makhadmeh and Mr. Al-Razzaz spoke about democracy without really indicating what democracy mean to them in specific terms, while the representative of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation explained clearly what democracy meant to him, and was successful in his presentation, because he asserted that democracy does not mean political freedom only, but also social democracy which can guarantee to citizens a minimum of living standards that can enable them to exercise their democratic role. As for Mr. Al-Nimri, he spoke about his personal understanding of political and social democracy.

I would like to have discussed in this conference our understanding of democracy. The whole world is now talking about a model of democracy. But what kind of model is it? Is it the model of the receiver, whereby we copy one whole model from another country without taking into account the different factors concerning our culture, heritage, values and the phase of our development? Or do we want a model specially tailored to our needs? This is an issue which we should discuss thoroughly. I am not saying that there is a standard model of democracy. Not at all. Even Western democracy itself is now undergoing a process of self-criticism. In France, people are saying that the democracy they are exercising is not right, and they should give it a second thought, particularly after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The success of the Western model of democracy was measured by the degree of its ability to confront the Soviet Union. Now that the Soviet Union has collapsed, Western democracy will certainly have something new to say. Why don't we speak about this matter, why don't we discuss this issue?

May be I can sum up my understanding of Western democracy by quoting Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who once said: "We do not want the rich to become rich to the point where he could buy the poor, and we do not want poverty to aggravate to a point whereby the poor will be compelled to sell himself to the rich. This is a question of a great importance."

Another point. I have noticed that the panelists raised the question of our retreat from the democratic process. I agree with them on that. The process of retreat began after the initiation of the process of the Middle East peace settlement. The retreat has also strongly affected the political parties. One of the most important mechanisms causing this retreat was the "one man, one vote " law. Evidently, this is a workable law in a country, like the United States or Britain, which has reached an advanced phase of development. In our part of the world, we have to think carefully: Is this law suitable for us? We have all seen the consequences of this law. Even the political parties requested their candidates to acquire the consensus of the clans of these candidates before they could run for elections, and this is an indication of how serious the matter is. Another indicator of the retreat was pointed out by Mr. Al-Razzaz : the law on the Center for Freedom and Human Rights Studies. The draft law was endorsed a long time ago, and it is now at the Prime Minister's office. The law has been discussed thoroughly by the various political groupings, and there is a great enthusiasm for it. Why is it that no one is talking about the draft law at present? Everyone said at the time that the law was submitted so that it could serve as a good Arab model. Many Arab intellectuals are asking us about the law. They are saying to us, "you have a good model and we want to copy it." Finally, I would like to voice my agreement with the remarks made by Mrs. Muna Shqayr in her reply to Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber.

Dr. Fahed Al-Fanek

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have two remarks to make on the paper presented by Dr. Makhadmeh, who referred to the opposition several times in his paper without defining this opposition, as Mr. Al-Nimri did. There are two types of opposition : An opposition to the regime and an opposition to the government. Furthermore, the processions staged by the opposition in support of Iraq during the Gulf crisis cannot be classified as opposition to the regime or the government. It was the civic institutions, trade unions and the Popular Committee for the Support of Iraq which organized and led these processions, and all these are not part of the opposition, which was not defined by Dr. Makhadmeh.

The second remark involves the question of democracy and its relationship with the Middle East peace settlement. Dr. Makhadmeh believes that democracy came to pave the way for the settlement. I believe that this is untrue. He also said that democracy began before the

initiation of the process of the peaceful settlement and before the Gulf crisis, although this was a time when the peaceful settlement was out of question and did not stand a chance any more than it did from 1967 up to 1990.

In the aftermath of the Gulf crisis, the question of the peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict began to surface. It was democracy which could have been sacrificed on the altar of the peaceful settlement, not the other way around. This means that democracy held fast despite the settlement, not because of it, because entering the settlement process did not require democracy, but a decision of a different orientation.

Dr. Makhadmeh has also cited another justification for democracy and its timing, namely the April 1989 events. In fact the disturbances were sparked by the economic crisis, or the crisis of foreign debts. There was a precedent not in Jordan only, but in all countries of the world which have had to face a debt crisis, where the remedial action for the debt crisis was to call for general elections. In Latin America, military rulers stepped out of power when the debt crisis came to a head and called for general elections. Jordan should not be different from other countries in this respect. Before the eruption of the debt crisis, there was lavish and often unnecessary spending which required no democracy. But after the debt crisis, sacrifices had to be made, and the people's sharing of these sacrifices required democracy, because it is the people in this case who will have to decide what burdens and sacrifices they can afford.

Finally, I would like to say that the "one man, one vote" elections were more democratic than the previous elections, and the evidence of this can be mathematically proven in figures. Those who won in the 1989 parliamentary elections represented 27 per cent of the total votes cast, while the present parliament represents 39 per cent of the total votes cast. Thus the present parliament is closer to democracy and the representation of the people than the previous parliament.

Dr. Eidah Al-Mutlaq

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The truth is that Mrs. Muna Shqayr was speaking on the same line I was thinking of when she discussed the question of the origins of democracy in Jordan. I must say that background papers have dealt with the relevant questions in a selective and a democratic approach. But, they were tantamount to the expression of a reaction rather than an initiation of action. In other

words, the panelists did not discuss the realities and prospects of democracy in their background papers.

When we come to the question of institutions, the question here is: Are the existing institutions fit for the development of democracy? And when we come to the question of instruments, the question that imposes itself is: Are the existing instruments capable of consolidating democracy? Furthermore, when we come to the question of the methodology of democracy, whether the methodology followed by the political parties or the regime, the question here is: When will democracy become an action, not a reaction? In other words, when can democracy answer the questions we raise, not the questions raised by political sociologists who seek to inject us with their own concepts, instruments and methodologies?

Thank you.

Mr. Yasser Abu Hilaleh

First of all, I would like to thank the organizers of this conference. Commenting on a statement made by Mr. Jamil Al-Nimri, I would like to say that our problem is not the origin of the ruler, because some persons whom we expect to be democratic in spirit and action may encounter local or external conditions that will force them to behave in a non-democratic way.

If I were to compare between the 1989 and the 1993 elections, I might say that the 1989 elections were run by a man who came from the institution of the military, but they were fairer than the 1993 elections. The appeals submitted to parliament are evidence of this. In 1989, only three appeals were submitted to parliament, while the present parliament has almost consumed its first ordinary session looking into the many appeals submitted to it. I dare say that many violations were committed by the government of Prime Minister Abdul Al-Salam Al-Majali, who is known as an academic and a scholar who has spent most of his life in universities.

I also believe that there was no need to draft a National Charter as long as we have a constitution. Within the framework of the constitution, we could institutionalize practices or create institutions capable of contributing to the development of society. The National Charter was tantamount to the confirmation of provisions which had no real role to play. Thus the National Charter remains ink on paper. Otherwise, what about the freedom of expression and the freedom of the

press stipulated in the National Charter ? Aren't the recent trials of journalists an indication that the question was not one of a publications law issued by an elected parliament, but of the application of the law itself ?

We have not yet reached the phase of the sovereignty of law, and I believe that this should prompt us to abrogate the State Security Court so that citizens could be equal before the laws under which they are tried.

Dr. Muhammad Ibn Mahfouz

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Naturally I do not want to be drawn in to the controversy currently going on between Jordanians on the democratization of the country, because Jordanians know their country better than others. However, I want to talk about some concepts which apply to Jordan and other Arab countries as well. I think that the basic problem is the definition of democracy. It is true that democracy has undergone phases of development ever since it was known among the Greeks, and finally reached a point where it has become a system governed by certain social criteria and checks and balances . We cannot say that democracy is a mechanism of governing or a way of governing, as Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber has suggested whether directly or indirectly in his interventions in the conference or the articles he has written in the *Political Science Magazine* because this would mean progress or retreat in democratic life. In other words, when regimes face pressure, they acquiesce to allowing progress in democratization. But, when the heat is off, the democratization process retreats.

To have a useful dialogue, I think we should first define democracy. I believe that democracy can be defined as a set of values and is not restricted to participation only as has been mentioned today, because when we speak about participation, what do we mean by that, and who is participating with whom? Is it the participation of certain political parties with the ruling regime? If so, it is an inequitable participation at a time when democracy presupposes equity in rights and equity in duties. If we were to define democracy's criteria and checks and balances, we could probably say that democracy is a cultural system to which we are committed. However, the same problem will continue to exist, namely, what are the forces which can defend democracy? It is true that the forces defending democracy in our Arab Homeland are still young and just starting. However, the idea of democracy lives with us,

not only because it is based on Islamic cultural heritage, but also because of the interaction of our culture with the other cultures of the world and of our own experiences which have confirmed to us that the more we distance ourselves from the democratic system, the more we fall victim to repression and persecution.

Dr. Dhiyab Makhadmeh

We have now reached a point in our dialogue where the questions that are being raised are specific and direct. First, Dr. Fahed Al-Fanek raised a direct question about the concept of the opposition. Opposition is all the political forces and parties that are not in the government, whether the system of government is democratic or non-democratic.

Concerning the role of the Jordanian opposition during the second Gulf war, it is clear that we cannot deny the basic role of the Jordanian opposition in leading the masses, whether this opposition was represented by political parties and forces or various trade unions and associations. Dr. Al-Fanek realizes that there is a basic dispute going on within the trade unions, and that elections within the trade unions have a political dimension rather than a pure electoral dimension.

As for the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its relationship with democracy, I have explained that in a certain aspect, democracy is linked to the settlement. I have pointed out that democracy began in 1989 while the Madrid Peace Conference was held in 1991. However, I also pointed out that the Madrid Peace Conference was a crowning achievement of secret Arab-Israeli contacts. There are books which have been published on this question, including a book in French entitled: *The Palestinian-Israeli Secret Contacts*.

As for the April 1989 events which he referred to, I think that he mistook me for another colleague, because I did not talk about the April events at all. My paper specifically dealt with the international dimension of the Jordanian democratic process.

The question which Mr. Yasser raised about democracy is a genuine one. Arabs have been fond of democracy for centuries. The famous pronouncement of the Muslim Caliph Omar Ibn Al-Khattab: "How can you enslave people when they were born free," is a confirmation that men are born free. This is a natural thing for the Arabs. So we are talking here about a situation in which democracy was absent or made to be absent, but various factors and circumstances have restored

democracy to our society.

Thank you.

Mr. Mu'nis Al-Razzaz

Democratic life cannot really develop without the serious participation of the major political forces in the country, i.e. the nationalist, leftist and Islamist forces which collaborated to produce the National Charter. Political parties were not licensed yet. So the collaboration was on the level of individuals. I believe that democracy in our country faced a real crisis when it came to the question of the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. I cited as an example the government of Prime Minister Taher Al-Masri. More than one cabinet minister resigned from his government because they could not accept the settlement. Meanwhile, democracy cannot really continue without political parties. So, the withdrawal of certain political parties from the government would jeopardize the democratic process.

The second point is that in answering my remarks, some colleagues focused on a single factor I mentioned rather than the combination of factors which I have explained. It is the combination of factors, not the single factor, that has produced the situation we are talking about.

The third point: I have said that the minimum of political relaxation has been attained, but also said that it was attained with haste. Social democracy did not keep pace with the minimum of political relaxation. Thank you.

Mr. Jamil Al-Nimri

I would like to reply to the specific remarks made on my statements. They are related to two sensitive issues: the Palestinian issue and the historic context. On the Palestinian issue, I am not biased in favor of one view or the other. In other words, as has been explained by Dr. Muhammad Uwaideh earlier, the disengagement or the separation of the Palestinian factor led to democracy, or if we may say it the other way around, democracy attracted the Palestinians to join the peace process. Whichever way we say it, it is to a certain degree true.

However, when we discuss the question within its historic context, we will find out that it is possible for us to reach an understanding. In other words, this question was not a problem in the fifties, because Arab

nationalism was on the rise. We have seen how Dr. Yaqoub Ziyadeen (who is from southern Jordan) won in the general elections as the parliament deputy representing the Jerusalem seat, because Pan-Arab nationalism was the dominant force at that time, and the conflict was one between the regime and the nationalists. It was an era when Pan-Arabism gained momentum in the Arab World with the rise of Jamal Abdul Nasser in Egypt and the Socialist Arab Ba'th Party in Syria first and in Iraq later on. However, after 1967, there was a change in the nature of the conflict. It became a conflict of competition between the Jordanian regime and the PLO, and the Palestinians began to chart an independent course.

Perhaps the April 1989 incidents in Jordan have not been thoroughly analyzed. In fact the most important thing about these incidents was that they opened the way for the democratic transformations in Jordan. The incidents were an indicator that the regime was undergoing a crisis dictating that it make a review of its style of governing.

I spoke about two schools of thought on government in Jordan: The school of Prime Minister Zaid Rifai and the school of Prime Minister Mudar Badran. I think my remarks in this regard have been misunderstood. I was not speaking here about two different schools of thought, but about two different styles of government within the one regime. The difference here was one of style not of content. Nor was the conflict between the two styles an ideological one. The two schools were part of the system, and a change of persons was sometimes necessary to achieve some movement forward, whether economic or otherwise.

What actually has happened in Jordan is that a governments came about for a specific purpose and they were disbanded after their assignment or role was completed. The same trend continued after democratization. For example, the government of Prime Minister Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker was the first government after the democratic process was initiated. It had a certain assignment to do, and it had its own style of government. This was followed by the Badran government and then the Al-Masri government. Each of these governments had its own features and style. The same applied to the earlier Rifai government, which was a total failure. The Rifai government moved toward the liberalization of the economy and privatization. Consequently, foreign debts rose enormously. This was coupled with harsh economic measures which were difficult to swallow. Ironically enough, the policy of economic liberalization was not accompanied by political liberalization. Many people are convinced that if the economic

liberalization drive had been coupled with parallel political liberalization effort, the April incidents would not have taken place. In other words, political liberalization should have been carried out at that point, but the government of Prime Minister Zaid Rifai did not follow that course. Therefore, it eventually found itself face to face with the April incidents, and the only solution for the predicament was democratization.

Thank you.

Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber

While listening to the interventions of colleagues commenting on my remarks this morning, I really asked myself whether I should have been in this seminar in the first place, because I raised too many questions. But perhaps these questions are relevant. Dr. Muhammad Ibn Mahfouz objected in his intervention to my use of the term "participation" and to my statement that democracy is a style of government. I would like to remind you here that every political philosopher and thinker and even every religious reformer has sought to find some kind of a style for social appeasement and stability and a healthy relationship between the ruler and the ruled, the governor and the governed, and this in fact is the origin of the quest for democracy.

Thus, the term "participation" does not mean that we share with the ruler in the decision making process concerning a certain issue. It means that we share with the ruler the power to make decisions related to the various aspects of life, whether political, social, intellectual or even religious. Therefore, I chose the term "participation" because I wanted to express a specific meaning, as we often focus on the form rather than the content, and I did not want to let this happen for our purposes here. This is why I did not use the term "democracy" in this context, because when we talk about democracy, the first thing which might come to our minds is the American, French, German or Italian democracy. Therefore, let us focus on the concept of participation in the sense that it means sharing in decision making concerning all aspects of life, particularly social peace and stability. In this case, we have to forget the idea that there are absolute standards, because there is no absolute standard in government. Plato says that politics is the science of kings. What is meant here by "king" is not the person of the king, but the regime, and the government's style, thought, concepts, heritage and sources.

Therefore, if we take all this into consideration, we can say safely that the Jordanian experiment was not of form, but one of substance, and that since the twenties, this experiment was on the path of constitutional development, liberalization, and popular sharing. It is true that this trend of openness or liberalization has occasionally suffered a setback and that there have been periods of retreat. This is something which we can never forget. But we should remember that from 1958 to 1993, political parties were banned, but they existed. We used to know that this fellow was a communist, and that fellow was affiliated with the Ba'th Party, Islamist, etc. In fact, there were attempts by the state to communicate with these groups and parties. Crown Prince Hassan arranged several meetings with the so-called "opposition forces" during the period of the government of Prime Minister Ahmad Obeidat.

I am saying this because I have been accused of arbitrary analysis this morning, perhaps because I wanted to go back to the roots. I think it is very necessary to go back to the roots. To Mrs. Muna I would like to say that participation is part of our social heritage, i.e. the Mukhtar, the sheikh of the clan, etc. I said in my remarks this morning that most people in the Arab countries up to the 1950's lived in the rural and desert areas where participation was a way of life in the real sense of the word. I am saying this not to remind ourselves only of this fact, but to remind our rulers as well. Participation is part of our social heritage. It is also part of our intellectual heritage, whose origins can be traced to the Faith of Islam, which commands the adoption of the Shura (consultation) on questions related to government. The intention here is not to justify ourselves or to judge whether we are better or worse than others, but to remind our rulers that participation is an essential element and that it has its roots in our society. Finally, I would like to call on you to forget that the term democracy is a Western term. It is not so. It is an ancient Greek term.

FOCUS NUMBER TWO

- Democratic performance of governments in Jordan (1989-1993).
- Evaluation of the performance of the eleventh parliament (1989 -1993)
- The judiciary, human rights and democracy
- General discussion

DEMOCRATIC PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENTS IN JORDAN 1989 - 1993

Dr. Musa Al-Kilani

Introduction

It may not be objective to say that successive Jordanian governments bear the responsibility for the failure of the democratization process in Jordan without referring to some provisions of the Jordanian constitution and practices based on traditions and customs that have stripped some of these governments of the powers they are entitled to. It also may not be fair to blame Jordanian parliaments for not taking a firm stand to compel these successive governments to broaden their democratic performance. Parliaments in Jordan have been the target of successive dissolution by the executive branch of government. Successive governments have acted arbitrarily to dissolve elected parliaments. Out of twelve elected parliaments since 1947, only one parliament completed its constitutional term, the ten other parliaments were dissolved. The last was the 11th parliament which was dissolved on 4 August 1993 only a few weeks before the expiration of its term.

The intrusion of the Executive Power has also effected the Upper House of Parliament (Senate). The current Upper House is the 16th. Only seven senates have completed their terms, six others were dissolved, and two resigned.

This study will try to make an objective evaluation of the democratic performance in Jordan for three governments: the government of Prime Minister Mudar Badran, which took office on 2 December 1989, the government of Prime Minister Taher Al-Masri, which took office on 19 June 1991, and the government of Prime Minister Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker, which took office on 21 November 1991.

Prime Minister Zaid Ibn Shaker is to be credited for defining the course of Jordanian democracy because he supervised the fairest elections ever witnessed by Jordan in 1989. Some scholars say that it is not true that democracy was given to Jordan as a gift, nor was it a charity given to the Jordanian people by someone. Other scholars say that it is not true that the April 1989 incidents in Maan, in southern Jordan were the reason for revoking martial law and the application of democracy. Field studies, including a study conducted by Dr. Ali Mahafzeh, have indicated that the Maan incidents were a protest against raising the price of fuel, not bread. The government failed to handle this specific fair demand wisely and raised public transport charges by the same ratio and on the same date. The protest was not large enough to include northern Jordan, Irbid, Zarqa, the streets of Amman or densely populated areas of the capital, but there were processions staged at the University of Jordan campus. Thus the largest population centers mentioned above witnessed no protests. During the processions staged at the University of Jordan, students called for an end to government corruption and for the trial of corrupt cabinet ministers. One of these cabinet ministers was mentioned by name as having accepted bribes. Other than that, no slogans were raised against the king or against the throne. The Maan protests did not target the throne or the regime. On the contrary, demonstrators cheered King Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan and affirmed their loyalty to them.

Other scholars say that the democratization of Jordan was a response to the waves of democratic change which have swept the entire world. These waves of change have uprooted all those who have stood against them, whether Romania's Ceausescu, Sudan's Numairi, the Philippines' Marcos, the Shah of Iran, or the Chinese leadership after the Tiananmen Square student protests in Peking. The following international events coincided with the parliamentary elections in Jordan:

One month before the Jordanian parliamentary elections on 8 November 1989, political forces in five countries, namely, Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Hungary staged protests calling for political changes, freedom of expression and the abrogation of the one-party system.

Only three months before these elections, the forces of change in Poland, represented in Lech Walesa and Solidarity managed to secure the post of prime minister of Poland for a Solidarity member.

During the same week of the elections, the Berlin Wall was demolished. In other words, the atmosphere of change was international in character, sweeping and uprooting anyone standing in its way.

In January 1987, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev announced his democratic measures of *Perestroika*, the freedom of expression, allowing immigration and travel and a package of other measures known as the *Glasnost*.

To be fair in our criticism of the record of Jordanian governments concerning democratization, we should admit that there were obstacles standing in the way of these governments had they intended to proceed with the democratization process. Most prominent among these obstacles were the following :

The emergence of the Palestinian national identity and its influence on the Palestinians residing in the East Bank of Jordan. In the view of some Jordanians, this should have caused the loss of Palestinians' right to participate in the Jordanian political system. In the view of some opposition leaders, basing democracy on a joint Jordanian-Palestinian foundation would have, in the final analysis, led to conflict.

The rise of political parties that were organizationally linked with bodies outside Jordan and consequently, subject to external political influence and decision.

The fact that Jordan is surrounded with neighboring countries that are apprehensive of the democratic experiment. These countries are also willing to harass Jordan by the exercise of their financial, economic, military and demographic superiority and the use of ideology as a weapon. I can recall here that the April 1989 incidents in Jordan were preceded by a crucial meeting in Jordan between Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad in November 1987. This was followed by another meeting in December 1987. These crucial meetings meant that Jordan has gone beyond the "red line" in its regional policies.

Part One

Since the Emirate of Trans-Jordan was founded in 1921 until 1946, there was no elected legislative power, and it was the government, or

the executive power, which ran the country. At the beginning, some 70 per cent of the state's expenditures were allocated to the army. However, this ratio began to gradually drop until the Defense Ministry appropriations have recently become about one quarter of the State's general budget. In other words, the philosophy of the state was whoever possesses the power is in control of everything. This may explain the relative weight of the legislative and judiciary powers in the Jordanian state.

Although Article One of the Jordanian Constitution states that the "system of government is a parliamentary hereditary monarchy," and that Article 24, Paragraph (A) states that the "nation is the source of powers," the legislative power has managed only once in the history of Jordan to withhold confidence in the government, when it vetoed the government of Prime Minister Samir Rifai in 1963.

By the end of 1988, Jordan's foreign debts had reached dangerously unprecedented levels and the Central Bank of Jordan only had enough foreign currency to cover Jordan's imports for two weeks. This development was a prelude to the April 1989 protests. Fortunately, we have with us in this conference Professor Lori Brand, who wrote her thesis on Jordan's foreign policy and has made an elaborate study on this question. I dare say that the local, regional and international factors combined were the reasons that sparked the April 1989 protests. Jordan's leadership responded to the April protests in a very intelligent way by going along with the international democratic trends and embarking on a democratization process that was crowned by the November 1989 elections, which were fair elections by the testimony of the various political forces and parties in Jordan.

The National Charter

The Jordanian National Charter which was endorsed on 9 June 1991 was warmly welcomed by the Jordanian people as a document tantamount to a "social contract" through which Jordan could surge forth in the direction of political pluralism. We should not forget to commend here the efforts made by Mr. Ahmad Obeidat, chairman of the Royal Commission in charge of drafting the National Charter, and the distinguished working team which drafted the charter. However, unfortunately, we cannot say that the charter has become a people's charter, because it was not endorsed by the House of Representatives, and the way the charter was passed does not give the impression that it

was constitutional. Strangely enough, successive Jordanian governments have not made efforts to execute the National Charter or to use it as a guide for their policies. The reason is, perhaps, that the executive power was not represented on the Royal Commission which drafted the charter.

Foreign Debts, Unemployment and Poverty

Successive Jordanian governments have inherited three liabilities for which none of these governments could find satisfactory solutions. The democratic process had already begun when these problems began to surface, and the government was only content with making promises and expressing goodwill towards legitimate grievances. These problems were the foreign debts, unemployment and poverty. Although foreign debts dropped by two billion dollars (from nine billion to seven billion dollars), the rate of unemployment dropped from 20 per cent to 14 per cent, and there was a substantial drop in the poverty level, it looked as if all of us were approaching the poverty line. I do agree with the figure cited by the Arab Bank for the poverty line. The Arab Bank said that taking the cost of living into consideration, any Jordanian family with less than JD 150 as a monthly income is below the poverty line.

Political Pluralism

The concept of political pluralism was institutionalized with the adoption of the Political Parties Law no. 32 for 1992. Pluralism means the freedom of multiplicity of opinions on political and economic questions and issues and allowing various ideas to interact with the aim of reaching a higher level of harmony and accord. However, the executive power still does not allow the various opinions to be aired in the mass media under its control. Consequently, political parties are denied the opportunity to express their views on the various issues and to be heard by the larger segment of the people.

One of the strongest weapons that government has is its control of the mass media, including the radio and the television and the official Jordanian News Agency Petra. All government media are utilized for promoting the achievements of the government and justifying and supporting its decisions and actions. When it comes to the press, the government controls 39 per cent of the shares of Ad-Dustour newspaper and 65 per cent of the shares of Al-Rai' and the Jordan Times as well as

75 per cent of the shares of Al-Shaab newspaper.

Government control of media was evident when the issue of the sales tax was raised. The media hastened to support the government trend to impose the sales tax and justified this new category of taxation on the grounds that it saves 160 fils per each JD 100 for every limited-income family in Jordan. It was no secret that the media support of the sales tax was a product of government pressure. In many cases the government instructed the press what to write verbatim about the sales tax. As for newspapers which show some kind of opposition to government policies, they are usually punished in a number of ways. It suffices to know in this regard that regular courts are currently looking into 52 cases brought by the government against the press. One of these cases was against George Hawatmeh, chief editor of the *Jordan Times*, who, together with another colleague at the newspaper Ms. Sana' Atiyeh, was sentenced to a fine in accordance with the arbitrary Press and Publications Law.

According to the Constitution, it is the executive power which drafts the bills, and parliament can either accept, amend or reject these bills. Peculiarly enough, the legislative power is not entitled to present bills on its own, but can suggest bills to the executive power. Furthermore, the executive power enacts provisional laws, if the parliament is not convened, whenever it is deemed necessary. The most famous of these provisional laws enacted by the government was the law amending the Election Law, called the "one man, one vote" law. The law was enacted in the aftermath of the dissolution of the House of Representatives before the completion of its constitutional term. It was evident from the law that the government was seeking to curb the relative power of the Islamists in the House of Representatives.

A reflection on the role of the successive Jordanian governments leads us to conclude that these governments were conservative in nature and that they sought to maintain the status quo. They also sought to make people indifferent to what goes on around them, and consequently, inactive on the political scene. They were primarily concerned about keeping popular discontent at levels that could be controlled.

Activities by opinions leaders, political activists and trade unionists were also thought of as activities that should be kept under control.

Part Two

At its best definition, democracy means the separation of powers. The French thinker Montesquieu stressed the principle of separation of powers among the legislative, executive and judiciary branches of government. It is noteworthy that none of the constitutions of any country in the world has mentioned anything about the fourth power. However, the press has gradually come to be known as the fourth power. Freedom of the press is one of the cherished freedoms which should be protected and guaranteed, particularly when there is a conflict between the other three powers. In the American system, there is a clear-cut separation of power between the executive and legislative powers. But in the British system, the government is regarded as part of the legislative power because it constitutes the parliamentary majority.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the relative weight of each country in the world changed. It was evident that the features of a new world order were being formed. The following are among the characteristics of the new world order:

- It focuses attention on human rights.
- It seeks to promote the system of the free market economy.
- It stresses the need for the protection of the environment.
- It also stresses democracy and political pluralism.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States has become the unipower of the world, or as Yasser Arafat put it "the bull that is futile to wrestle with." In Jordan, it looked like the aim of the democratization process was to assert the legitimacy of the regime and safeguard the highest possible level of popular satisfaction. Nevertheless, popular dissatisfaction was evident in the April 1989 protests. A movement surged in the southern part of the country against the government's economic policies. Though the democratic process has been going on in Jordan for several years now, the country is still proceeding slowly on the path of democracy, simply because change takes time.

Jordan is known as a country where the clan system exists. In fact, this system is still strong in Jordan. There are still forces in Jordan also which were apprehensive that the influence of the clan system might be transferred to the political parties. Centrist forces hastened to join the democratic process, not because of their love for democracy, but



because they were seeking a new role to play in the changing situation. In fact, these very same centrist forces were the instruments for the implementation of the martial law regime in the country.

Political parties were banned in Jordan in 1957 in the aftermath of a short-lived experiment during which political parties exercised power for the first time in the history of Jordan. Suleiman Al-Nabulsi, secretary general of the National Socialist Party, formed a government in 1956 following the victory of his party in the general parliamentary elections with 11 seats in the 20-seat House of Representatives, although Nabulsi himself did not win in his constituency. However, it seems that external factors brought the experiment to its fatal conclusion at a rapid pace. The Martial Law regime was imposed on the country, and for the last 33 years, the experiment has been portrayed as the worst event ever in the history of Jordan.

Despite the issuance of the Political Parties Law which restored political pluralism to life, the impetus for joining political parties is still weak. The reason is perhaps that more than two thirds of the Jordanian people were born after 1957 and have had no experience whatsoever with political parties. As for the older generation, they suffered a great deal as a result of their party activism and ended as victims of a negative image that has been formed about the political parties. The difficult economic conditions, particularly a foreign debt of some seven billion dollars, was another barrier for the progress and advancement of the political parties on the local scene. Needless to say, the negative experiences of political parties in neighboring countries did not make these parties an example to be followed in public life. However, the main difficulty which the parties were encountering in Jordan that it was not easy for people to change loyalty from the clan or tribe to political parties that try to transcend the clannish or tribal affiliation of the citizen into a more advanced level of loyalty to the party.

The Settlement of The Arab-Israeli Conflict And Democracy

Jordan has often declared its commitment to the peace process in the region. Therefore, I think that the peace process will continue as long as there are no political forces which could stop the peace process or exercise decisive influence on it. Centrist parties in particular are expected, not only to support the peace process, but to participate in government as well.

The West is afraid of the growth of the Islamist movement in Jordan. But I can confidently say that the Islamist movement in Jordan will remain under control and can always be contained. Needless to say, no Islamist movement can ever contest the religious legitimacy of the Hashemites. Moreover, the emergence of active leftist and nationalist forces is out of the question for the time being. These forces are at best looking for a role by which they can maintain their survival. Briefly speaking, one can say that the Jordanian political parties, with the exception of the Islamic Action Front Party, are pressure groups rather than political parties in the real sense of the word, or parties that seek to reach power.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that the democratization process in Jordan will be steady but slow. It will be like a slow bicycle race. Nevertheless, Jordan will maintain its image in other Arab countries as an oasis for democracy and as a center for democratic attraction and enlightenment.

Part Three

Despite the obstacles I have mentioned, previous Jordanian governments can be accredited with the following achievements :

The Political Parties Law no. 32 of 1992, which was the staging point for the surge of political pluralism, because it allowed any political group to form a political party, provided that it did not violate the provisions of the Constitution. Under this law, well over 20 political parties were licensed and ran for parliamentary elections in complete freedom.

The Press and Publications Law no. 10 of 1992 : The most important thing about this law is that the government banned the publication of any new political daily or weekly newspaper or magazine. It also limited government participation in the capital of any press corporation to no more than 30 per cent of the capital of the publication.

The Defense Law no. 16 of 1992 : This law was issued in accordance with Article 124 of the Constitution which deals with extraordinary situations and states of emergency. It is not associated with instructions pertaining to the Martial Law regime, but is a legislation intended to deal with states of emergencies which might arise in the country.

The Illegal Profits Law: This law was proposed by members of the 11th House of Representatives to control financial and administrative corruption in government departments and state corporations and enterprises. According to the law, each senior civil servant had to disclose the movable and immovable property in his possession as a measure intended to protect public funds.

The Economic Crimes Law: This law was proposed by members of the 11th House of Representatives. According to the law, the House is entitled to question or make accusations against officials in the public and private sectors concerning crimes that involve the economic security of the country, such as forgery, smuggling, etc.

Moreover, a democratic spirit was instilled in the judiciary system. The Supreme Court was separated from the Court of Cassation in accordance with Law no. 12 of 1992, which made the Supreme Court a completely independent body from the Cassation Court, defined its purviews and gave it the power of abrogation and compensation. Earlier, the judiciary had the power of abrogation, but not compensation. But, after the formation of the Supreme Court, a person could appeal any administrative decision to the Supreme Court which was viewed as the highest judicial body in the country. The most important thing about the new law was that it abrogated administrative immunity, and all administrative decisions have become subject to appeal to the Supreme Court. Earlier, these decisions were not subject to appeal. To make them subject to appeal was a major qualitative step forward.

The State Security Court was also established and its purviews were specified according to Law no. 6 of 1993. The most important thing about the law is that it gave a civilian status to the State Security Court, which was earlier linked with the military courts. It also made decisions issued by the State Security Court subject to appeal at the Court of Appeals and the Court of Cassation. Earlier, decisions issued by the State Security Court were not subject to appeal. The new law abrogated the Special Court Law no. 7 of 1952 according to which defendants accused with tampering with the security of the state were tried. The new law also abrogated Law no. 54 of 1953 according to which defendants accused of espionage crimes were tried before military tribunals. The Court of First Instance also recovered its full powers vis-a-vis minor criminal offenses stipulated in the Penal Code No. 16 of 1960. The Higher Criminal Court also recovered its full powers vis-a-vis this type of minor criminal offenses stipulated in the above-mentioned

Penal Code.

The statement of Prime Minister Mudar Badran on December 19, 1989 declared for the first time that principles of democracy and public liberties would be respected. The government statement was followed by these measures.

The government announced that it had the political will to revoke the Martial Law regime and to eliminate all its consequences. This was manifest in the following measures which the government took:

- Passports of citizens seized by the state security departments were returned to these citizens.
- The government announced its commitment to guarantee the freedom of work, travel and movement to all citizens.
- The government released detainees held on political grounds.
- The government reinstated the elected boards of directors of the three Jordanian daily newspapers.
- It also revoked the decision dissolving the Jordanian Writers Association.

Furthermore, the government revoked the Martial Law regime. It also declared its commitment to respect and execute the Constitution in letter and spirit.

The statement of Prime Minister Taher Al-Masri announced on June 11, 1991 the following guarantees for citizens:

The government will strive to consolidate the foundations of the sovereignty of the law and the respect of human rights.

The government emphasize the principle of legitimacy and the separation of powers.

The government assert the supremacy of institutionalization, the sovereignty of the law and legislations that can protect constitutional liberties, such as the Political Parties Law and the Press and Publications Law.

The government also began to take the necessary measures to end the Martial Law regime and to study the cases of political prisoners.

The reply of the democratic grouping in parliament to the statement of Prime Minister Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker called on the government to take the following steps:

- To immediately abrogate Martial Law.
- To establish an association for teachers and another for artists and a

national federation for the Jordanian youth to advance the cause of youth in the fields of education, culture, thought, sports, defense of the homeland and national affiliation.

- To reinstate to their jobs all those who had been discharged from these jobs for political reasons, to refrain from seizing passports of citizens and to allow the return home of all Jordanians willing to do so, as a gesture of commitment to the provisions of the constitution.

Excesses of the executive power

The democratization process in Jordan has always been characterized by slow motion and inferior performance in view of the recurrent conflict between the executive and legislative powers which has always been settled at the expense of the latter. The following can be noted in this regard:

The period extending from 1929 to 1947, which is the pre-independence period, witnessed a higher relative stability than the post-independence period. Out of the legislative assemblies of the pre-independence period, four of these assemblies completed their constitutional terms, and the fifth was dissolved for lack of cooperation with the executive branch of government.

Out of eleven Houses of Representatives from 1947 to date, only one House completed its constitutional term, while the ten others were dissolved. The last House of Representatives to be dissolved was the 11th. It was dissolved by a Royal Decree on August 4, 1993.

As for the Upper House of Parliament (Senate), six of these Upper Houses were dissolved, seven of them completed their constitutional terms and two of them resigned. The 16th Upper House is still in office to-date. It is evident from this comparison that the performance of the Upper House of Parliament has been more stable than the performance of the House of Representatives. Perhaps there are three logical reasons for this phenomenon: First, members of the Upper House have more experience with the political process and are more flexible in dealing with the executive power, contrary to the House of Representatives, which has sought confrontations with the executive power. Second, there is an essential difference in the structure of the two houses. The Upper House of Parliament is formed by a Royal Decree at the recommendation of the executive branch of government, and consequently, there is a special relationship between the two, while the

House of Representatives is elected by popular will that reflects the real needs of the people and their consistent demands. This has necessarily placed the House of Representatives in a position of confrontation with the executive branch of government

The afore-mentioned experience, which was intended to forge a relationship between the legislative and executive powers, reveals that the executive branch of government did not understand democracy in the objective way it should have been understood. The executive power dissolved one legislative assembly, six Upper Houses of Parliament and 10 Houses of Representatives on the pretext of their lack of cooperation with the executive branch of government. This is a further evidence that the executive branch of government dealt with the legislative power in an undemocratic way. This is why cooperation and integration must constitute the basis of the relationship between the two powers for the good of the country and its people. The time element is also a decisive factor for the continuation of any government in office. The time the 79 different governments have remained in office ranges from days to months or years. This is one of the major causes for the poor performance of the government. Some administrative decisions issued were contradictory to previous decisions, and no government ever stayed in office for a sufficient period of time to execute its programs and policies and to have its performance evaluated.

The present election law is being criticized for dividing the country into electoral constituencies which allocate the number of seats in a fashion disproportionate with the demographic weight of the constituency. This situation applies to most governorates of the Kingdom. There is an imbalance between the share of each governorate in seats and its population size, whether plus or minus. For example, the governorate of Amman (the capital) constitutes about 41.5 per cent of the total population of Jordan, while the ratio of seats allocated to it is only 28.5 per cent of the total number of seats. The governorate of Tafleh has 1.48 per cent of the total population of Jordan and is allocated a ratio of 3.75 of the total number of seats. Furthermore, the election law does not use the same criterion in the division of the electoral constituencies. For example, while the electoral constituencies were divided on the administrative basis of the governorates, it divides the population on geographic basis, i.e. urban dwellers, rural dwellers and bedouins. So, it allocated a number of seats to the bedouin population, i.e. two seats for each of the central bedouins, the southern bedouins, and the northern bedouins. It also applied a sectarian criterion in division, i.e. it allocated 9 seats to the Christians and 91 seats to the

Muslims, including three seats to the Circassians and Chechens.

Final Remarks

The solution of the problem of the imbalance between the number of parliamentary seats of the electoral constituency and the size of its population can be reached by introducing certain amendments to the constitution.

I also suggest that giving a vote of confidence to the government by the parliament should cover a specific period of time only, and should not be open to covering a period of four years.

Further, if the legislative power is excluded from participation in the government on the basis of the principle of the separation of power, then this should apply to the Upper House of Parliament as well. In other words, Upper House members should not be allowed to participate in the government.

Discussant Muhammad Fares Tarawneh

At the outset I would like to thank the organizers and the participants in this conference, Such conferences are important in the process of building democracy. Secondly, Dr. Musa Kilani's Paper included a great deal of facts and figures, and that commenting on it thoroughly would may take more than 15 minutes. Therefore, I feel a bit embarrassed, because my comments would not be thorough.

I disagree with Dr. Kilani about the title he chose, namely, Democratic Performance of Governments in Jordan. This question is necessarily controversial, because we are talking about government performance for an era which has not settled down yet. Are we witnessing a state of political liberalization, or are we undergoing a democratic experiment ? Or have we chosen a democratic option which will never be reversed? Furthermore, has the performance of the successive Jordanian governments from 1989 till 1994 been homogenous and within the context of the dictates of the democratic process ?

The paper also discussed the different views concerning the democratic option. I agree with Dr. Kilani that democracy is a popular demand and that many peoples and nations, have fought for it and have given enormous sacrifices. I also agree with him that arbitration between the government and the people is the only means for building the state on the principles of the sovereignty of law with the final aim of achieving the supremacy of civil society institutions.

As for the April 1989 protests, they were a manifestation of economic and political crises which have been going on for several decades. The incidents uncovered the evils of the martial law regime and the repression and denial of freedom of expression that were associated

with it. Therefore, these protests were a truthful expression of the conscience of all the people in the northern, southern, and central parts of the Kingdom and of all the sectors and segments of society and its political forces. The number of pamphlets and statements distributed in various parts of the country supporting the movement is evidence of this fact. Secondly, I must assert here that the Islamist movement and the Palestine Liberation Organization were sympathetic with the movement, but did not participate in it in actual practice. This in turn gave the impression that the movement was restricted to one part of the country only. Thirdly, the regional and international winds of change, beginning with the "Bread Revolution" in Tunisia and ending with the changes that have dismantled the Socialist Bloc, were apart of the factors which sparked the riots. Finally the state needed to renew and rejuvenate itself, and this necessitated the choice of the democratic option which was based on political pluralism and the respect of the rights of all citizens, whether political, economic or social, in order to achieve the final goal of partnership in government and participation in building the country as well as presenting a respectable image of the state to the international community. Consequently, the democratic option was a product of all these factors, not single factor alone.

Dr. Kilani noted in his paper that the legislative power has been overwhelmed by the executive power and cited in figures the number of parliaments which have not completed their constitutional terms. I agree with him on this. However, he did not mention the reasons why the legislative power has been overwhelmed. I may add that the reason is that the Constitution allows the dissolution of parliament by the executive power. This is why it is important to review some constitutional provisions and amend them in a way that would not allow the executive power to dissolve parliament, if the democratic option is to be irreversible. This is the only way to give meaning to Article 24 of the Constitution which states that the "people are the source of power" and Article 68 Paragraph A which states that the term of the House of Representatives is four calendar years.

The paper also discussed obstacles which the successive governments have encountered. I must totally disagree with the views of Dr. Kilani in this regard. The emergence of the Palestinian national identity was never and will never be an obstacle. Jordan, as a state, is dealing with its citizens on the basis of the sovereignty of the law. When rights and obligations are spelled out clearly, several complicated issues will be resolved. The exercise of democracy is the only guarantee for doing things the right way. Dr. Kilani also cited the rise of political parties

organizationally linked with countries abroad as a second obstacle encountering the successive Jordanian governments. However, I would say the government could have enacted a law governing the relationship between political party members and the state institutions. It certainly could have done that, because it had the power to revoke martial law and activate Article 16 of the Constitution which gave citizens the right to gather and organize parties. But in the absence of such a law, political parties were operating underground. When political parties were allowed to operate, 20 parties applied and obtained licenses to operate within the limits of the law No. 32 of 1992 which prohibits organizational or financial subservience to a country other than Jordan. The third obstacle which Dr. Kilani pointed out was harassment by countries neighboring Jordan. I must assert here that each country has its own philosophy and way of government. It is true that neighboring countries were harassing Jordan, but the reply to this harassment can only be through democracy which gives the broad base of the people the opportunity to defend their gains and counter harassment from abroad, not by isolating the government from the popular base. A magnificent example of this was the state of harmony which existed between the government and the people in their joint effort to cope with the state of siege imposed on Jordan and Iraq simultaneously after August 2, 1990 (Iraq's occupation of Kuwait).

Dr. Kilani also discussed the period falling between 1921 and 1946, and the fact that parliament gave a no-confidence vote to the government of Prime Minister Samir Rifai. I must explain here that the first parliamentary election bill in Jordan was adopted in 1923 and the first law on parties in 1928. At the first meeting of the representatives of the people, they issued the 1928 Charter. However, the Jordanian-British Treaty was an impediment for the people in exercising their role in government. In fact, the inequitable treaty made Trans-Jordan a satellite of Great Britain. As for the no-confidence vote in the government of Prime Minister Samir Rifai, his government resigned after the vote, the parliament was dissolved and several of its members were arrested.

As for the figures cited for foreign debts in 1988, I must say with regret that none of those who were in government assumed responsibility for the debt and that the people alone payed the price. Of course this is a wrong policy. The people were not consulted one way or the other about the foreign debt. One government after the other borrowed, and the foreign debt was accumulated, and eventually it was the people who had to face the facts.

Dr. Kilani's paper also discussed the National Charter. In this regard,

I would like to say that the National Charter would have a social contract and an integrated intellectual structure had its contents been applied as a document of reference binding to legislators and decision makers. Unfortunately, the National Charter has remained a mere slogan, only referred to in order to justify government decisions that are made separate from the integrated policies that were recommended in the charter and which successive governments should have applied as an alternative to the personal whims of government officials contrary to the spirit of the charter.

Dr. Kilani's paper also noted that the foreign debts and the rates of unemployment and poverty have dropped. On the question of unemployment, I might say that the successive governments have failed to deal with this phenomenon as an economic and social problem. The reason is not that these governments could not alleviate the severity of the problem, but that they did not deal with it as a problem or try to examine its roots, dimensions and impact on the social and economic levels. Graduates of universities and colleges in liberal arts and humanities are now unemployed. We have 80 or 90 universities, colleges and other higher education institutes which annually graduate some 30,000 to 50,000 young people who cannot find jobs. Each graduate costs his parents thousands of dinars, and after his graduation, he has to wait for a job and to keep waiting. We are exaggerating when we say that our universities and higher educational institutes are an advanced cultural phenomenon. The truth is that we are no longer capable of finding jobs for these graduates, neither in Jordan, nor in the oil-producing Arab states. Consequently, if we must be truthful with ourselves, we should close down a significant number of these educational institutes whose number is unprecedented in the region.

In any case, this is what I believe, and I may differ with many of my colleagues. But how can we deal with this problem if the educational investments are in the hands of non-educational decision makers? And when we come to political parties, I say it is true that the media, including the radio, television and the news agency, are in the hands of the government. However, continuing differences among the political parties preclude the possibility of forming a pressure group capable of influencing government policy in this regard. I must admit that the state of weakness in the ranks of these party organizations has enabled the executive branch to exert more power in a direction that does not serve the cause of the political parties.

On the question of the sales tax, I must disagree with Dr. Kilani. I support the sales tax, because I believe that the state treasury reflects on the pockets of its citizens, and if the state treasury is full, the citizens of the state will be in a good condition.

I must say that I disagree with Dr. Kilani on the issue of the press. It is true that 50 journalists have been referred to court, but the arbitrator in these cases has been the judiciary and the law, and we respect the judiciary and trust its judgment. Sentences and decisions made by the judiciary are usually made in accordance with the laws in force. As for the right of the executive power to issue provisional laws, Article 94 of the Constitution gives the executive power this right. But I disagree with Dr. Kilani on his views concerning this matter. Certainly, the House of Representatives could at the first session it convenes revoke the entire provisional law, provided that the gains accrued are protected and agreements concluded are respected. Furthermore, Article 95 of the Constitution allows ten deputies and senators to submit any proposal, and the government to submit its proposals within the term of the House of Representatives or the term that follows. This is a constitutional provision binding to the government.

In the third part of the paper, I have a small comment on Dr. Kilani's remarks about tribalism and clanism. I can say in this respect that if the political parties have clear national programs and if the leaders of these parties are up to the slogans they raise, I believe that it is possible for the political parties to reduce the tribal and clannish influence. However, tribalism and clanism are not something which we should be afraid of. It is natural for people to meet and deal with one another on the basis of their own interests.

I agree with Dr. Kilani's remarks on the performance of the previous governments. However, we should admit that these governments have scored the following successes: The government of Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker succeeded in convincing the opposition that it was serious about embarking on the democratic trend through fair elections that took place in 1989. The government of Prime Minister Mudar succeeded in containing the tension that characterized the period falling prior to 1989 and the period after it. It also succeeded in easing the tension between the government and the opposition forces to the point that it attracted the Islamic Movement to participate in the government. It also succeeded in ending the martial law regime. The government of Prime Minister Taher Al-Masri succeeded in issuing numerous legislations aimed at consolidating the principles of the sovereignty of law and

political pluralism. It also attracted a number of nationalist, leftist and independent forces. And the second government of Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker succeeded in improving relations between the government and the parliament deputies and in participation in decision making.

EVALUATION OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ELEVENTH HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (1989 - 1993)

Mr. Bassam Haddadin

Introduction

The Eleventh House of Representatives assumed office after a disruption in parliamentary life lasting well over 25 years. There were political, economic and social motives behind this disruption. The vacuum was filled by the State of Emergency laws and the Martial Law regime, which became the alternative to the Legislative Power. Needless to say, the Legislative Power is the primary constitutional power from which the regime itself derives its legitimacy. The Martial Law regime has inflicted a great damage on the country's political, economic and social life and the pace of development and progress which the country had been witnessing. It has also caused severe crises which found their expression in several ways, most importantly the April 1989 incidents.

With the reinstatement of parliamentary life in Jordan, the rehabilitation of the Legislative Power, and the lifting of martial law, the executive branch, or government, began to search for ways to expand its base and to involve new segments of the population in government. Nevertheless, the socio-economic balance in Jordan's society was still lacking, although the new phase was characterized with relative political liberalization.

In any case, this liberalization has opened the way for the possibility of large-scale political, economic and social reforms, clearly expressed in the National Charter that was enacted later. Needless to say the House

of Representatives has a major role to play in carrying out these reforms and consolidating the new trend as it is the main legislative instrument that controls the executive power and the various government policies. Therefore, when judging the performance of the House of Representatives, we should take into account the nature of the preceding phase and the extent of the ability of the House to respond to the requirements of the new phase.

Before we start assessing the performance of the House of Representatives, it is worthwhile to note that the Eleventh House of Representatives was elected in accordance with an electoral law that was short of the truthful expression of the will of the people. When we talk about the fairness of the elections and the non-interference of the executive power in these elections, it does not mean that the executive power did not interfere prior to the elections to influence the results of these elections. Actually, it did so by enacting a law that undermined the foundations of democracy and equality among citizens. In fact, this was reflected strongly in the political composition of the House, in its will for change and its ability to decide on the priorities of the House.

It is noteworthy that the House of Representatives is part of the Legislative Power, which consists of the House of Representatives and the Upper House of Parliament. His Majesty the King is the head of the legislative power. In other words, the will of the House of Representatives alone is not enough to introduce change, as the House is governed by constitutional provisions which restricts its ability to act and express its will.

The Political Composition of the Eleventh Parliament

The 1989 House of Representatives had to face up to grave political realities and an electoral law that fell short of expressing the will of the people. These factors influenced the political composition of the House. Most members of the House were elected either on individual or clan basis. The only political party which was qualified to run for elections was the Muslim Brotherhood Party. Twenty-two members of the Brotherhood won in the elections. The Brotherhood also helped a number of other candidates win, and when these candidates became parliament deputies, they continued to be closely linked with the Brotherhood. This has given the Brotherhood a parliamentary weight of some 30 deputies in the 80-member House. The Brotherhood was also

influential with a number of other deputies.

The Muslim Brotherhood Party, or the Islamic Movement, acted conservatively in the Eleventh House. It did not employ its numerical power for confronting or changing government policies or for bringing about serious reforms. Their political behavior was subject to special calculations which made them lose the initiative. On some occasions, they were partners with the government policies or part of these policies.

The second political bloc in the House was called the Democratic Parliamentary Alliance which consisted of twelve deputies. However, the alliance was not united, and deputies of the alliance acted as individuals rather than members of the alliance. This alliance could have had a prominent political role much beyond its numerical strength. However, because of its disunity, it fell short of translating its vocal opposition into political initiatives. Moreover, it did not play any role in uniting the opposition or testing the seriousness of other deputies concerning change.

The third bloc in the House consisted of a number of non-politically based parliamentary blocs. Most of its members were wealthy businessmen, landowners, previous senior government officials and retired army officers and former ministers. This bloc was an instrument in the hands of the government, as the members of this bloc always volunteered to defend government policies and the status quo.

Outside these three blocs there were a very few deputies who could not influence events one way or the other. It is evident from the above quick reading of the political composition of the House that it had enormous capabilities to effectively influence the life of the country and to institute the new phase of development. It is very important to note that the various government machineries did all that they could to marginalize the role of the House and to shape public opinion against it in order to limit its ability to deal with the tasks dictated by the new phase as well as its role in introducing serious changes in the style of the government and the policies in force. The government was eager to avert a head-on clash with the House, particularly after the government's participation in the Madrid political process on Middle East peace. The government also tactfully succeeded in containing the large-scale opposition to its policies. The government of Prime Minister Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker, in particular, succeeded in maneuvering and gaining time until the Fourth Parliamentary Session ended. It obstructed the convening of the Fourth Extraordinary Session, and

finally dissolved the House prior to the end of its constitutional term, at a time when the political players outside parliament would not do anything to support the House or encourage it to embark on any specific democratic reforms.

How did the Eleventh House exercise its role ?

On the level of democracy, the first ordinary session of the House played a prominent role in asserting the significance of the democratic option and exposing the defects and shortcomings of the martial law regime. Popular pressure forced the deputies to prove themselves , particularly since they were elected by the people. The deputies tried to prove themselves by criticizing the practices of the martial law regime and sought to occupy positions in the political life of the country.

It is noteworthy that the government was in a defensive, confused state. When it could not contain the House, it hastened to offer concessions in favor of political and democratic liberalization. The government of Prime Minister Mudar Badran announced before or after each parliamentary session successive measures restoring public liberties and the observance of the rights of citizens. However, it continued to evade the question of the martial law, because it was a weapon it could not easily abandon after 25 years in which the government had lived so comfortably under its protection. Nevertheless, it was impossible to continue procrastination forever. The government began a process of dissolving the martial law regime. Most important of the government measures in this regard was the law restricting the powers of the State Security Court, whose decisions and sentences were immune to appeal to any higher court.

One should note here that the fact that the House of Representatives returned to functioning meant that the people had achieved genuine gains vis-a-vis public and democratic liberties. Political detainees were released, government personnel who were dismissed from their jobs on political grounds were reinstated to their jobs, thousands of passports seized by the security departments were returned to their owners, citizens were allowed to move from one place to another or return home if they were living abroad for political reasons, and finally martial law was lifted.

In the area of legislation, the House enacted the Parties Law, which moved a step backwards when compared with the earlier law. However, the House's main blunder was the endorsement of the Press and Publications Law. The law was arbitrary and victimized almost

everyone who practiced the profession of journalism. The most striking injustice of this law is the fact that dozens of journalists were referred to court for trial on trivial charges which are not even worth mentioning. It is important to note here that the government pressed for the enactment of this law after it succeeded in unifying its parliamentary base in the House.

As for enacting laws to secure the right of popular and professional associations to form trade union organizations, the House failed to achieve any gain in this respect. Even when it came to the debate of a law that would create an association for Jordanian teachers, the government succeeded in its procrastination tactics until the fourth year and finally killed the bill.

The House of Representatives could certainly have done much more in the area of public and democratic liberties had it known how to utilize the elements of strength it possessed. In its first session, the House formed a Committee for Public Liberties and the Rights of Citizens. In view of the composition of the House, the role of the committee was restricted to the review of citizens' complaints only. But, the committee could not move farther than this .

The House's position towards the political settlement

The successive governments of Prime Ministers Badran, Masri and Sharif Zaid won the House's confidence, including confidence in the government's political orientation. The three governments managed to deal with the House in a very clever way. They averted confrontation with the House which included 35 deputies who were opposed to Jordan's participation in the Madrid negotiations. The opposition could not influence the official policy in this regard. Strangely enough, the House made no attempt to withdraw confidence from the government despite the fact that there was a significant number of deputies who were in opposition to the peace process which started in Madrid. This is perhaps a clear indicator of the limitations of the Eleventh House of Representatives. As for the Gulf crisis, the position of the House was clear. It supported Iraq almost unanimously. Perhaps the reason for this unanimity was that the Jordanian government and people supported Iraq without any reservations.

Economic and Social Issues

The House failed to introduce any significant change on the government's economic and social policies. The state budget was geared toward the so-called "economic adjustment program" which was recommended by the International Monetary Fund. Economic analysts were unanimous in viewing the prescriptions contained in the recommendations of the IMF as measures that could only solve problems at the expense of the middle and lower classes, that they would create profound distortions and deformities in the structure of the national economy, cause the national economy to lose its ability to put its priorities in order and make the economy subservient to others. Thus, the services offered by the state to citizens continued to be reduced. Subsidies applied to main staples were gradually lifted. The privatization process and the liberalization of foreign trade continued. Taxation and customs legislations are currently under review in a manner that would serve the government's economic interests, not in the manner that would secure a fairer distribution of the national income or the protection of the national industry and markets.

The House was biased in favor of the banking sector on issues of investment and import at the expense of the issues that were of interest to limited-income segments of society, such as the Social Security Law, the Labor Law, and others. This does not mean that I oppose the amendment of legislation that facilitates the growth and development of the economy. But we are talking here about priorities and interests. In fact, such a bias was in line with the political and class composition of the House.

Exercising Control on the Executive

Since it assumed office in 1989, the House was keen on exposing the corruption of the previous martial law era. Although the political composition of the House did not allow it to go all the way and refer government officials accused of financial and administrative corruption and violation of public liberties to courts, a public and embarrassing hearing was conducted for many officials of the martial law regime. The House has been criticized for not referring these officials to court for trial. However, the big lesson learned from the House's exposure of financial and administrative corruption and violation of public liberties was that martial law was a cover for committing crimes and violations by a few public officials at the expense of the country and the people. No one could any longer justify or defend the continuation of martial law.

The political message which the House sent in this regard was strong. As a result, brakes were placed on the squandering of public funds, a sweeping societal awakening on human rights has emerged, as well as an enhanced conviction of the usefulness of democracy in the life of the country.

These developments have prompted the enemies of democracy to unleash a systematic campaign to marginalize the House of Representatives and to undermine its role as an institution and as individual members with the aim of curbing its role, even the moral part of this role. This was coupled with systematic government action to neutralize the gains that were achieved for the country by the House.

The Eleventh House of Representative started a process of questioning public officials for violations committed and enlisted the help of the government's Audit Bureau to expose financial and administrative corruption. The House also started a public debate on these issues. However, the political composition of the House, as we have noted earlier, did not enable the House to go all the way in the procedures and measures governing financial and administrative corruption and violation of public liberties. One can note that since 1989, no no-confidence motion has been submitted to any of the governments that ruled the country. Even a no-confidence petition signed by more than 50 deputies against the government of Prime Minister Taher Al-Masri fell short of success in the House. The House, with all its parliamentary blocs and alliances, was incapable of using this weapon, which is the criterion for the serious opposition of the government's political, economic and social policies.

Under the pretext of protecting the current phase and denying the opportunity to those who seek to abort democracy, parliamentary opposition to the government was further weakened. The questions deputies addressed to the government were general in nature, and few involved specific policies. The questions addressed to the government have never become a questioning of the government. The sad result was that the opposition lost its political credibility. The House's debate of public issues was restricted to highlighting the shortcomings of the government and pinpointing certain negative aspects in its management of the affairs of the country. The House failed to indicate what it specifically wanted from the government, when it came to public debate. Consequently, the government managed to select whatever it wanted of the deputies requests and neglect the others. Furthermore, the government coined the phrase the "request for the debate was made for the purpose of exchanging views." Government supporters at the

House reiterated the phrase, and consequently, public debate at the House lost its real meaning. It was nothing like public debate which highlights the differences between the government and parliament and could lead to the withdrawal of confidence in the government.

Nevertheless, I might say that public debate was useful in certain aspects such as auditing, accountancy and the appointment of civil servants where a fairer system was introduced for the appointment of civil servants. Progress was also achieved in dealing with certain extraordinary laws and measures. Nevertheless, public debates, such as the debate on the agricultural situation in the country, did not produce any benefit and did not change anything in the status quo. Furthermore, reports by the Audit Bureau were not given sufficient attention by the House, although they could have been useful for various forms of control and auditing.

Finally, I believe that there is a dire need for introducing political and constitutional reforms that could give the legislative power a more effective role in the life of the country and in planning for its present and future. I believe that as long as these reforms are lacking, democracy in Jordan will continue to be in crisis, and the country will again become a victim of the political, economic and social bottlenecks that it had experienced earlier.

The ruling regime insists on non-adherence to the National Charter and is obstructing progress towards the implementation of its contents. This means, in practical terms, that the regime is absolving itself of commitment to this social contract. Therefore, I would like to call for the following :

- A new electoral system.
- Providing immunity to the House of Representatives against dissolution.
- Review of the way in which the Upper House of Parliament is formed as well as review of the relationship between the House of Representatives and the Upper House of Parliament.
- Recognition of the right of popular and professional associations to organize trade unions
- Review of the Political Parties Law and the Press and Publication Law to make them more democratic.

It is difficult to see our country heading towards a serious form of democracy unless we achieve progress in this direction. Otherwise, our democracy will be one of form, not of substance, a democracy that does not serve as a means for resolving problems, but a foe which should be exposed and disarmed.

Discussant Hosni Ayesh

At the outset, please allow me to express my appreciation for the cultural-political role being performed by Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center and for its constant endeavors to chart the new features of democratic Jordan. Please allow me also to apologize for my brief remarks, in form and contents, on the assessment which MP Mr. Bassam Haddadin made on the parliamentary performance, although my remarks are going to be very frank.

I received his background paper and the conference's program belatedly, and consequently, I did not have the sufficient time to appropriately comment on this vast and important question. Furthermore, I was confused about the title or the limits of the topic I was supposed to comment on. While the title of the background paper is "Evaluation of the performance of the House of Representatives 1989 - 1993," or the Eleventh House of Representatives, I was asked to comment on the parliamentary performance for 1994 also, or the performance of the 11th and 12th parliaments. Therefore, my remarks will be restricted to the performance of the parliament only, not the government, because the performance of the government was discussed in another paper.

I agree with the panelist that the 11th House of Representatives assumed office amid extraordinary circumstances. Perhaps we should add the Gulf War and the Madrid peace conference to these extraordinary circumstances whenever we try to assess the performance of the 11th and 12th parliaments.

I also agree with the panelist that the legislative power is the primary power from which any regime derives its legitimacy. However, this

legitimacy remains incomplete unless it is crowned by the democratic legitimacy. The concept of democratic legitimacy is currently being widely accepted by Arab political thinkers. Most prominent among these thinkers is Dr. Muhammad Al-Jabari, author of the paper entitled : "Problematical Aspects of Democracy and the Civil Society in the Arab World."

I also agree with the panelist about the need to rehabilitate the legislative power within a democratic context and the new phase of political liberalization, as he puts it. However, I find myself compelled to draw attention to the hostility which the 11th House displayed to the National Charter in general, although this charter is a progressive one and a significant number of the members of the 11th House participated in its drafting. The result was that the National Charter was aborted, or at best, became a purely moral force non-binding to anyone, exactly like the Center for Freedom, Democracy and Human Rights in the Arab World is currently being aborted.

The panelist cites the Electoral Law as the reason for many of the shortcomings and defects in the performance of the 11th parliament. The law was charted according to sectarian, clan and demographic influence in an undemocratic and unfair way. After the House was elected, it did not make any serious effort to change or amend this law. The government, in turn, acted unilaterally in the absence of the House to enact an amending law much worse than the previous one.

The panelist suggests that the Upper House of Parliament obstructed the role of the House of Representatives and was, perhaps, an obstacle in its way. However, this was not always true. The Upper House at times outdid the House of Representatives in performance, as was evident in the cases of the Supreme Court Law, the Youth Welfare Law, and the Law for the Care of the Disabled. However, the Upper House obstructed the role of the House of Representatives at other times, as was the case with the Law on Illegal Profits and the Teachers Association Law. I would like to take this opportunity to say that although the Jordanian parliament consists of the two houses, contact and cooperation between them is poor. Perhaps if we added a member from each committee in each house to the similar committee in the other house, without these additional members having the right to vote, we would bridge the gap between the two houses and saving a great deal of time and effort which is wasted whenever bills are discussed by the concerned committees.

Did I understand from the panelist that the members of the Upper

House of Parliament should be elected by popular referendum, just like the members of the House of Representatives in accordance with the conditions stipulated in the constitution? Or, is he suggesting the abrogation of the Upper House and compensating for this abrogation by increasing the House of Representatives deputies by a similar number?

It is true, as the panelist noted, that various government machineries tried to marginalize the role of the 11th House and turn public opinion against it. However, the result was completely the opposite. The House performed effectively and was always on the forefront. The public hastened to support the House on many issues. Perhaps the inclination by a significant number of deputies to hold cabinet posts was the factor which damaged the image of the deputies in the eyes of the public. The inclination by parliament deputies to hold cabinet posts necessarily weakens the parliament and puts the government in a position of strength when dealing with it, especially in a country where the number of deputies is relatively small and the number of cabinet ministers is relatively large. Furthermore, the inclination by the deputies to hold cabinet posts creates jealousy and animosity among the deputies themselves, and this phenomenon is harmful to parliament.

I agree with the panelist that the political players outside the House, with the exception of the Islamic Movement, did not support the House or encourage it to undertake basic reforms. In order to interpret this phenomenon, I would like to remind the panelist of the extraordinary circumstances under which the House assumed office and the mammoth events that were associated with these circumstances. But this point which he mentioned is very important, because the parliament in every country is a major part of the democratic process. In other words, parliament cannot succeed unless the other elements of the democratic process, such as the press, trade unions and civil society organizations, are supported and their influence enhanced.

I do not agree with the panelist in his divisional presentation of the state vis-a-vis separating the parliament, even the opposition, from the institution of the state or the executive power. The institution of the state embraces both the legislative and executive powers, and they are not in a different or a separate world. They are the two faces of the same state and the same people. What is in fact lacking is a sufficient degree of cooperation, participation and interaction between the legislative and executive powers. We have to look for peaceful means to enhance this cooperation, promote participation and further develop interaction. This

is the phase of political development we are undergoing, and we have to proceed from this point. I would like to see a constructive opposition that is bent on resolving problems and overcoming difficulties so that we can proceed to tackling other issues concerning the country.

Talk about history may condemn many who are condemning others. In the period when the country was governed by martial law, a number of banned Jordanian political movements and parties had connections with countries other than Jordan and received financial and moral support from the leaderships of these countries which often were undemocratic. Though they raised democratic slogans as a vehicle for reaching power, when they reached power, they monopolized it and denied it to others. I remember the times when we were living under martial law, and I recall that any form of peaceful expression, such as criticizing a public official, was regarded as slander of high-ranking state officials and was punishable by law. Conviction on charges of slander usually led the defendant to prison. I have personally suffered from this situation. Nevertheless, despite all this, I feel satisfied every time I compare the case of Jordan, despite its defects and shortcomings and the retreat of democracy in the country, with the example of many Arab, Islamic, eastern and African countries. These countries were operating via the Jordanian political parties to shape the features of Jordan in their own image. The Algerian Salvation Front, for example, did not wait till the elections were over to declare its intentions to monopolize power forever. This is the way these other parties think and act.

Significantly enough, Jordan's escape from falling into the same trap where others had fallen was the factor which made it possible to resume the democratic process. The evidence of this is that none of the people who went along with these leaderships was willing to work under these leaderships for even one month. Moreover, we should realize that the way to perfection is long and hard, and that one or two or three parliamentary terms are not sufficient to teach us how to proceed on the path of democracy. Western democracies took hundreds of years to settle down, and under certain circumstances, challenges and dangers, these democracies acted with confusion and helplessness. I do want to apologize for these remarks, and I hope that you will understand that I am not looking for a cabinet post, but seeking objectivity in my analysis of the situation.

As the panelist has said, the 11th House of Representatives succeeded in achieving realistic gains for the people. Nevertheless, it did

not put a final end to human rights violations in Jordan. The violations are continuing, although they are now presented in public and we deal with them through a number of parliamentary, judiciary and civil channels, such as political parties, trade unions, Amnesty International, the Arab Association for Human Rights, and the press.

In the field of legislation, I must admit that the parliament has completed work on a number of good laws, particularly the Supreme Court Law, the Law for the Care of the Disabled, the Copyright Law, the law abrogating the Law on Combating Communism, and many other laws. However, it has failed in other areas as a result of the reluctance of the Upper House to endorse a number of laws, such as the Illegal Profits Law and the Teachers' Association Law. As for the Press and Publications Law, it was drafted in the two houses, and one must admit it is much below the standard dictated by the current phase. The two houses also distanced themselves from the spirit of democracy and equality when they amended the Law on Immovable Property and State Lands at the expense of women.

I would also like to take this opportunity to draw attention to the 12th House of Representatives and to the persistent and vicious attempt sponsored by a very limited number of deputies, who are encouraging the government to declare the professional trade unions and associations unconstitutional. If this were ever to happen, it would be a setback to democracy no less serious than the June 1967 military setback. It would also be reactionary action and would take the country back to ancient times. These professional trade unions and associations have derived their constitutional legitimacy from their legal status, social norms, and the successful exercise of their duties for a long period of time. If those who are seeking to deny the constitutionality of the professional trade unions and associations are really constitutional minded, let them demand from the Jordanian governments that have ruled the country since 1952 to reimburse all the fees they have collected from citizens from that year to-date. They were levied unconstitutionally as is evident from Article 111 of the constitution.

Such a trend is unconstitutional, because it seeks to take the country backward, not forward. It is also an attempt to undermine democracy, although it is one of the most important factors of stability in Jordan and of the impregnability of its regime. These people are unfairly blaming democracy for all the corruption that is taking place in the country and for all the problems and difficulties it is encountering. Salam Al-Hassan wrote recently in the Al-Muharrir magazine: "Some people in Morocco

are trying to utilize the domestic conditions to preclude all forms democratic practices or to protect the privileges given in the defunct ages by making them look as good as new."

As for the political settlement of the Middle East crisis, the government views should not revoke the right of parliament to oppose them or even question them. The panelist supports the peaceful settlement of the Middle East dispute. I too, support the settlement. However, if we opposed the settlement and did not succeed in our opposition, it would not mean that we have not succeeded. Many deputies and senators support the peaceful settlement on the grounds that it is a political, not a historic settlement. They support it because they feel it is necessary in order to halt the total judaization of Palestine in a manner that would force future Arab generations to deal with judaization as a fait accompli, exactly like we are dealing now with the grandchildren of the Spaniards who expelled our forefathers from Andulsia. In fact, rejectionists are not more patriotic or nationalistic than those who accept and negotiate. On the contrary, it takes much more courage to accept and negotiate than to reject. It is a very comfortable thing to reject, because the only thing one has to say is no. Such an attitude of rejectionism has cost the Arabs Palestine and other territories, and the rejectionists have not been held accountable for their rejection. The same thing applies to the questions of foreign debts, the economic adjustment program and relations with the World Bank. It is as if those who are calling on poor, weak and economically dependent Jordan to confront the World Bank and the International Creditors do not realize that they are asking Jordan to commit suicide. Instead they could offer Jordan funds to repay its debts and this would strengthen Jordan's position with the World Bank and international donors.

I must say that the World Bank has replaced imperialism in its relationships with the various countries of the world. But what can poor and weak countries do? The only thing they could do is to go along with this trend until they become stronger, until they can produce more than they consume, until they reach a stage of economic self-sufficiency and repay their foreign debts, until the time comes when corrupt officials and squanderers of public funds are held accountable.

It seems to me that the panelist believes that the House of Representatives must be socialist or in the hands of a socialist party if it is to be a proper representative of the people. I must emphasize here that it was the failed socialist policy and the mentality associated with it that obstructed the progress and prosperity of the economies of the

countries which adopted socialist policies before they could reach the phase of economic, social, cultural and moral maturity which is a prerequisite for the success of the socialist system. They should have learned from the experiences of the Scandinavian countries which reached this phase of maturity before they started to apply the policies of the welfare state. What we really need in the Arab countries is a free market system, increased savings and investments, and an investment climate that can attract investors, provided that the quality of the products we manufacture are up to the required standards, that we do not allow monopoly and the continuing progression of taxation, and ensure minimum wages for laborers.

I agree with the panelist on the need for the legislative power to act as a check on the executive power. This was evident when the House began examining the cases of financial and administrative corruption in the state bureaucracy. Nevertheless, this initiative did not eliminate corruption because the House was incapable of continuing until the end in dealing with these cases. Any neutral observer will probably notice that corruption is growing at present, because of the deliberate attempt on the part of the government to associate democracy with anarchy and mismanagement. One respectable newspaper columnist even publicly cited democracy as the reason for corruption, overlooking the fact that democracy in already established democratic countries is the best means to restrain corruption and eliminate the corrupt. I must say here that the 11th and 12th Houses have unwittingly allowed the prevalence of tribal, clan and political party interests over democracy in more than one domain, particularly as regards the acceptance of students at state universities. The same phenomenon is evident in the state bureaucracy where it looks as if certain segments of the population have no chance for employment with the government and their only option is to look for jobs in the private sector.

The new electoral law, despite the goodwill of those behind its enactment, has consolidated the tribal and clan trends in the country, thereby aggravating corruption in public office. Thus, the unconstitutional and anti-managerial phenomenon of tribalism and clanism replaced the constitutional and efficient managerial inputs in the state bureaucracy, and mutual tribal or clan deterrence replaced the legal deterrence in public management. It was no longer possible for a senior government official to refer a corrupt junior official to the courts out of fear that such action would involve their two tribes or clans in an all-out tribal or clan conflict. Therefore, I might say that democratic legislations and laws do not necessarily create a healthy democratic

system, because if public officials do not respect these legislations and laws, they will certainly not apply them. Needless to say, a democratic state is not known by its laws and constitution only, but also by the democratic climate prevailing in it. Unless our attitudes and behavioral patterns are democratic, we will never succeed in creating a democratic system regardless of the legislations and laws we have enacted. Equality among citizens at the polls does not mean that each voter should be given one vote always. It means the equality of voters in the number of votes. Perhaps if we give each voter another vote to elect a candidate outside his electoral constituency, we would be heading on the right path in terms of neutralizing the tribal or clannish features of the elections and consolidating national unity.

At this point, it would be the first time in Jordan that the deputy acted as a representative of the whole people, and consequently, the constitution would achieve its sublime objective. I believe that the 11th and 12th Houses have failed to consolidate the spirit of equality and justice among the various social segments of society because they have gone along with the clannish trends vis-a-vis appointments to public posts and acceptance at state universities. I have known deputies who even opposed the appointment of public officials in their constituencies if these public officials come from outside these constituencies, though if the choice was given to people, they would have chosen the better teacher, physician, engineer, or governor over the less qualified official from their constituency. People who sponsored this clannish trend and opposed the appointment of officials from outside their own constituencies overlooked the fact that other constituencies could retaliate and do the same, and consequently, their own sons and daughters would not be employed in other constituencies.

The 11th and 12th Houses of Representatives overlooked the importance of deleting the blanks designated for the place of birth and religion on the applications for appointment to public jobs and forms for acceptance at universities. The deletion of these blanks would be a step forward towards more justice and equality among citizens and a positive contribution to the enhancement of democracy. The 12th House of Representative also recorded another failure when it decided the composition of the Greater Amman Municipality. The mayor and half of the members were appointed and the other half were elected. I am not trying here to discredit the performance of the Greater Amman Municipality. In fact, I know of several mayors who have been outstanding in their performance and the service they offered to Greater Amman. But, I am talking here about the democratic principles which

should govern our institutions.

The achievements of the Public Liberties Committee of the 12th House also fell short of expectations. In the end, it could no longer hold its meetings or follow up its assignments and tasks. This committee, which was one of the most active committees of the House, became almost paralyzed. Another point which might be recorded against the 12th House is that the House did not oppose the government measures which require the approval of the state security departments for appointment to certain sectors of public management.

Hand-raising at the two Houses so far has been the typical method of voting, and the houses have not sought seriously to begin keeping a record of the deputies who voted for or against this or that issue. Therefore, no scholar or researcher can examine the results of voting unless the voters were aware of the position of their candidates on these issues.

Finally, I would like to say that the assessment of any institutional performance could be done by one of the following methods :

The evaluation of performance as measured by comparing input with output. The higher the ratio of output to input, the better the institutional performance is. Therefore, we should examine the political, economic and social input of the 11th and 12th Houses and compare them with the output of the House in order to determine performance.

The evaluation of effectiveness as measured by objectives sought or objectives anticipated. The higher the ratio of achievement of these objectives, the higher the effectiveness of the institution is.

Horizontal and vertical comparison: In the evaluation of the performance of the 11th House, for example, its performance could be compared with the performance of similar Houses in other Arab and Islamic countries, or with the performance of similar Houses in advanced countries. In the first comparison, we will discover that we enjoy a good standing and we are proud of what we have achieved, while in the second comparison, we will find out that we still have a long way to go.

The vertical comparison of the House's performance should be based on the aspirations and expectations of citizens, and here, we have to go back to the evaluation of effectiveness.

THE JUDICIARY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

Dr. Suleiman Sweiss

Democratic liberalization, which began in Jordan in late 1989, was supposed to pave the way for serious and profound discussion and dialogue on the question of democracy and on how can we rehabilitate public liberties and human rights in the aftermath of many years of extraordinary circumstances. Discussion and debate on this question remain poor and limited. We are very hopeful that this seminar will help us overcome this barrier. This is why Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center deserves commendation for its initiative to convene this seminar.

We have perhaps sought an excuse in the mammoth events of the years of democratic liberalization which are still leaving their impact on us. Most important of these events were the Gulf War and the crisis in January 1991 and the initiation of the Arab-Israeli negotiations which have not been concluded yet. However, these events have lost their glimmer in the eyes of the public, as people are more concerned now about the high cost of living, unemployment and the sales tax. These questions are given priority in the thinking of the people much more than developments in Iraq and the suffering of the Iraqi people or the developments in the Palestinian-Israeli or Arab-Israeli negotiations.

However, the simultaneously exciting and perplexing developments which are worthy of discussion are the following: the participation of citizens in the general parliamentary elections held in late 1993 declined when compared with the 1989 elections. The majority of the people distanced themselves from the political parties. Attempts were made to obstruct the basic rights of important segments of society, such as

teachers, on the grounds that the associations which embrace these professional groups are "unconstitutional" or "undemocratic." Politicians who were prominent in the preceding phase continued to hold key positions in the current phase, and important political personalities of the past phase known for their animosity to democracy were returned to leading posts in political party and parliamentary life. Some of them, for well known reasons, have become key defenders of democracy and human rights, without having reviewed their past attitudes and practices critically.

The election was also harmful to the principle of separation of powers. It even led to the misuse of the powers granted to the executive branch of government according to the constitution. It also led to the large-scale confiscation of citizens' rights.

The big surprise was that the executive branch dissolved the House of Representatives in September 1993 before it could complete its constitutional term. The dissolution could not be justified by any means, unless some undemocratic measure was intended to be taken. In fact, the undemocratic measure that followed was the enactment of a provisional electoral law by the government which denied the right of the people to enact such a law. Needless to say, the electoral law is one of the cardinal laws of democracy. Most people thought that the executive power would not allow itself to go so far as to commit such a violation of the principles of democracy and human rights. These and other decisions confirmed that there were still serious obstacles encountering the democratic process and human rights in Jordan.

The political history of Jordan indicates that political factors and decisions have often played a decisive role in determining the constitutional and legal trend that identifies the relationship between the citizen and the state when the matter involves basic issues. The concern about the security and stability of the regime was given prominence over freedom and justice for the citizens when laws were enacted or regulations were issued. The security and stability of the regime was also given prominence over the re-introduction of parliamentary life to the country. This order of priorities often led to the expansion of the executive power at the expense of the legislative and judiciary powers, to a transgression on the principle of separation of powers, to the misuse of the powers granted to the executive branch of government, and to the large-scale suppression of public liberties and rights, particularly in the periods covered by the martial law regime, the state of emergency and the extraordinary laws. (1)

The starting point of a genuine democracy lies in the restoration of balance between freedom and justice for the citizens on the one hand and state security on the other. We believe that the ideas contained in Chapter Three of the Jordanian National Charter under the title: "The National Security of Jordan," constitute an appropriate basis for creating such a balance. Any imbalance in this equation will either weaken the regime or cause the violation of public liberties and rights.

Amendment of the Jordanian Constitution

If we are to advance the cause of democracy and human rights, the constitution should be amended, as the constitution itself stipulates in Article 126. Parliamentary, political and popular quarters strongly support the amendment of the constitution. They view this amendment as a basic step toward building an institution-based and law-based state and toward consolidating the domestic stability of the country. However, traditional governments, which have successively ruled Jordan opposed such an amendment on the pretext of "awaiting the results of the political developments in the region." If what is intended by this is the final settlement of the Palestinian issue, which may still take a long time to achieve, I do not believe that the amendment of the constitution will do any harm. The consolidation of democracy and the creation of the institution-based state will certainly be a great service to the country.

The Jordanian constitution was endorsed some four decades ago. In these four decades, Jordanian society has developed on the political, economic and social levels, and there is an urgent need at present to change or amend some articles of the constitution. The most significant initiative made on this level was the proposals submitted by Mr. Najib Al-Rashdan, the former president of the Court of Cassation. (2) The proposals call for major amendments vis-a-vis public rights and liberties. One of the most important proposed amendments is the right of Jordanian citizens to form trade unions, since these trade unions should be viewed as "peaceful associations" exactly like the political parties (Article 16). This will probably put an end to the futile debate which has been going on for the last 10 years on whether public school teachers are entitled to form a trade union of their own or not, not to mention other groups who would like to form trade unions for their professions or trades. With this proposed amendment, the Jordanian constitution would be in harmony with the Jordanian government's

endorsement of the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights.

There is another necessary amendment. The parliament must share in the decision about whether to declare a state of emergency or apply the provisions of the Defense Law. Such steps should not be taken without parliament's approval (Article 124). Among the amendments which the country is now in dire need of and which were stipulated in the National Charter is the creation of the Constitutional Court which will have the power to decide the constitutionality of the laws in force or the laws that will be enacted.

Finally, Jordan's official and declared commitment to human rights and the increased interest in these rights dictates that Jordan introduce a clear provision to the constitution affirming the supremacy of the international conventions on human rights over national law. By so doing, Jordan would give another evidence of the credibility and seriousness of its commitment to the principles of human rights. On this occasion, I must point out that Jordan still has to endorse some important international conventions. Among these are the agreement on trade union freedom and the protection of the right to organize trade unions, issued in July 1948 and the voluntary protocol attached to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights issued in 1966.

Amendment of Laws relevant to Human Rights

There are laws that have a direct impact on the rights of the Jordanian citizens. These laws have provisions that are contradictory with the principles of human rights. With Jordan's endorsement of some of the international conventions in this regard, parliament should amend these laws, or at least eliminate from them the provisions that are harmful to human rights. The following are the most prominent of these laws :

The Electoral Law: The electoral law is the basic law that governs the election of the representatives of the people. These representatives play a major role in enacting the laws and legislations that regulate the lives of citizens and maintain control on the activities and functions of the executive branch of government. The provisions of the current electoral law are contradictory to the constitution. Furthermore, the procedures governing elections should be simplified, and guarantees should be made to ensure that the elections are fair, neutral and democratic.

The Anti-Crime Law no. 7 of 1954: Perhaps this is the worst law ever enacted. Under this law, many citizens have been victimized. The law entitles the district governor or the subdistrict governor to arrest any citizen for mere suspicion. The law does not provide guarantees to the arrested citizen to defend himself. It is in the public interest to revoke such a law. Other laws in force could handle such a situation.

The Prisons Law no. 32 of 1953: Article 53 of this law concerning discipline leaves the prisoner almost breathless and speechless and deprives him of all his human rights. The law consists of 40 provisions which are called "prison crimes." Many of these provisions are no longer fit, particularly since prison authorities are now operating under the concept of reforming and rehabilitating of prisoners. The law also provides for the penalty of whipping. This penalty contradicts the model instructions on the treatment of prisoners issued by the United Nations and endorsed by the government of Jordan. I would like to recommend here that prisons be placed under the supervision and purview of the Ministry of Justice, not the Ministry of Interior as they are now. I would also like to recommend that a comprehensive review of the instructions on the treatment of prisoners and detainees be conducted to examine the extent of compatibility of these instructions with the minimum stipulated in the model instructions of the United Nations. (the model instructions were ratified by the United Nations Economic and Social Council's two decisions issued on July 31, 1957 and May 13, 1977) .

The Press and Publications Law for 1993: This law includes provisions that contradict the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights which had been endorsed by the Jordanian government. The law imposes legal and material restrictions on the freedom of the press and the freedom of journalists. Of particular urgency is article 3 of the law related to the definition of the journalist as well as Article 5 D, Article 8, Article 9 and Article 40. They should be reviewed because they are drafted in generalized terms that allow the executive branch of government either to exploit or misinterpret them with the deliberate intention of placing restrictions on the freedom of expression and freedom of opinion.

The Labor Law: Since 1975, successive Jordanian governments have been making promises that they will update this law or replace it with a new one. Nevertheless, these promises have not yet been honored. Workers are still victims of arbitrary dismissal from their jobs, exploitation and denial of many of their rights simply because this law

lags behind the current realities governing the relations of production in the Jordanian society of 1994.

The Jordanian society needs a new law on civil status in order to protect women's rights as Jordan views these rights at present. This is particularly necessary since Jordan has ratified the International Agreement for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The 1966 Associations Law, the Public Gathering Law no. 60 of 1953, and the Penal Code no. 16 of 1960 should also be amended. These laws lag behind the current realities governing the Jordanian society. They impose restrictions on the rights of citizens to peaceable assembly, expression of views and other rights.

Development of the Judiciary System

The continuous growth and development of the law-based state is one of the prerequisites for the success of democracy in the country. This dictates us to conduct a review of our laws and to eliminate from them the articles that contradict principles of human rights and international conventions and to provide guarantees to protect the rights of defendants.

In the last three decades, Jordan has undergone significant and profound developments on the economic, social and demographic levels, both horizontally and vertically. The scope of economic, trade, financial and administrative relations among citizens has expanded. Disputes in court among people are also on the rise. There is an increasing demand for the judiciary. Thus, the development of the judiciary system, in quantitative and qualitative terms, has become an urgent need well understood by the state and the people alike. Particularly that Jordan's monarch, government, people and National Charter are publicly committed to human rights principles and to the endeavor to build the law-based and institution-based state.

The state has in fact initiated important steps to develop the judiciary system. These steps included the opening of the Judiciary Institute, the building of a new and modern palace of justice, which is still under construction, and the plan to increase the salaries of judges which has been referred to the cabinet for discussion. Although we appreciate these steps, we believe that there are urgent aspects of the functions of the judiciary system which need to be tackled if we are to raise the efficiency of this system and to achieve justice for all. These aspects

include the following :

The number of active judges should be doubled in view of the huge number of cases referred to court. This overload creates pressure on the judges as they cannot find the time that is necessary for viewing all these cases nor can they issue decisions on these cases expeditiously.

Special courts, such as the state security court, should be formed of civilian, not military judges, because people are more at ease with civilian judges than they are with military judges, as Mr. Najib Al-Rashdan puts it.

A center for documentation and judicial studies should be opened in order to promote judiciary thought and practice and store the various previous decisions and sentences passed on the various issues so that judges can refer to them for advise. The center should use information technology and the computer in its operations. In this connection, it could cooperate with the Jordanian Bar Association, the Judicial Institute, the Jordan Judicial Council, the Ministry of Justice and the law schools at Jordanian universities.

Jordanian women should be allowed to enter the judiciary and become judges, and a specialized judge for adolescents should be appointed. Another judge to be called "the liberties judge" should be appointed in view of the large number of accumulated cases in this domain. These cases are filed with the Palace of Justice and with the Council of Ministers by various citizens.

Towards the Formulation of A National Strategy for the Care and Development of Human Rights

During the years of democratic liberalization, numerous positive steps were taken enabling citizens to regain their rights. Many restrictions imposed on the rights of movement, work and the acquisition of passports have been wholly or partly lifted. Hundreds of political exiles have returned home. A new law on political parties has been enacted allowing the legal operation of numerous parties of various ideologies. Two general parliamentary elections have been conducted. Political parties participated in the second elections for the first time since 1957. Martial law and the state of emergency were finally lifted in April 1992. The Defense Law of 1939 was revoked and replaced with a new law. The new law of the state security court allows the right to legal appeal. A national charter was adopted. The charter proposed

the establishment of a constitutional court and the introduction of reforms to the constitution. Above all, Jordan has declared its commitment at the highest level to the principles of human rights and democracy, and this was explicitly contained in the National Charter. The Jordanian government also ratified the International Conventions on Human Rights. The Arab Organization on Human Rights--Jordan Branch-- was licensed by the Ministry of the Interior. Amnesty International-- Jordan Branch--was also licensed by the Ministry of the Interior. Furthermore, official and popular delegations from Jordan participated in the International Conference on Human Rights which was held in Vienna in June 1993. In fact, Jordan's achievements in the field of human rights in the last few years are significant and worthy of commendation.

Although we view these achievements with satisfaction and appreciate their importance for the democratic process in Jordan, we cannot overlook the fact that human rights violations are still being committed. We are also concerned over the indicators that show Jordan retreating from its democratic process. Examples of this retreat can be found in the proceedings of the Islamic Nafeer case, the trial of the university of Mu'tah students. In the first case, there was a blatant falsification of facts, and in the second case, the defendants were tortured. Furthermore, arbitrary arrests have not disappeared completely. The government is still limiting the freedom of public gatherings, banning processions, referring journalists to court for trial, banning the publication of certain political books, as well as preventing entry to Jordan of certain books dealing with thought. The government practice of banishing citizens from the country has not disappeared either. The government has also dissolved the previous House of Representatives before the end of its legal mandate and enacted a provisional electoral law in the aftermath of the House's dissolution. It has also referred bills to the Supreme Council for the Interpretation of the Constitution to determine the extent of their compatibility with the constitution in order to block the enactment of laws that are undesirable to the executive branch of government. Rights of citizens are being daily violated, and these citizens find no one to complain to. In the files of the Arab Organization for Human Rights, there are hundreds of complaints made by citizens about the violation of their rights. All the information pertinent to these complaints has been sent to the proper authorities.

Government officials may reply to a great deal of these violations and excesses by saying that we are a state governed by a constitution and laws and the measures taken were within the sovereignty of the law.

However, it is worthwhile to consider this expression, "sovereignty of the law." It is a noble principle often used for a vicious end. It is very important for us to know the basic rules governing the principles of the sovereignty of the law. A proper knowledge of these rules will help many people to stop believing that this principle demands respect for law, no matter what the law says. The basic rules explained by conferences of jurists and jurists strongly insist that the entire society, whether individuals, institutions, organizations or government, should be governed by basic collective rules such as justice, fairness, equality, respect of the fundamental rights of all members of society. What then if the law itself is illegal and contradictory with the principle of the sovereignty of law?

In our review of the positive and negative aspects of the human rights situation in Jordan, we have sought to objectively describe this situation in preparation for examining the possibility of development of the conditions of human rights on the medium and long terms.

The Jordanian government's official and public commitment to human rights is still a slogan which will take a long time to apply. In fact, human rights activists are apprehensive that citizens might view the restoration of some of their fundamental rights as the ultimate end for the struggle for human rights in our country and that the democracy which we are proud of will stop after the parliamentary elections are conducted, and together with it will stop the television presentations of speeches by parliament deputies as well as the activities of the political parties and other liberalization phenomena. Here I would like to raise a justifiable question: Why is there a blackout on the National Charter, and why is it being overlooked? The general impression of citizens, despite the positive aspects we have enumerated, is that statements by officials on human rights and democracy are some kind of public slogans, because citizens feel the great difference between what they hear from officials and what they see in actual practice. Thus we are in a dire need for practical, serious and comprehensive steps and measures and a firm political will to translate the official commitment to human rights into a practical reality. This will certainly require the formulation of a national strategy for the care and development of human rights on the official and popular levels. Such a strategy could include the following elements:

The formation of a Jordanian national institution to care for and protect human rights. This institution should include governmental and non-governmental members similar to the dozens of other

organizations in countries, including several Arab countries. The creation of such an institution would be harmonious with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Commission No. 54/1992. This institution should act as a reference for formulating plans and programs for the care of and development of human rights, with special emphasis on vulnerable groups such as children, women, workers, the aged and the disabled.

The proper government authorities should reply to the complaints they receive from citizens via human rights organizations, take speedy action on these complaints, and appoint an official to be "the supreme comptroller" of human rights.

School textbook material on human rights should be developed and enhanced. Special interest should be given to teaching the subject of human rights in schools. Qualified teachers should be trained to teach the subject of human rights in schools. Efforts should be made with the Ministry of Justice to introduce the subject of human rights to the circular of the Jordanian Judicial Institute and the Police Academy. Furthermore, public officials should be instructed to respect human rights, particularly in reform and rehabilitation centers (prisons), centers for the rehabilitation of adolescents, police stations and other organizations.

Centers for research and studies on freedom, democracy and human rights should be expeditiously established and human rights organizations should be supported and encouraged so that national human rights organizations will not fall under the influence or containment of foreign human rights organizations through financial aid offered or other forms of support and assistance.

A comprehensive plan of legal reform should be drafted. The plan should include a thorough review and examination of the laws in force to determine whether they are compatible with the spirit of the age or contradictory with other laws. Attempts should also be made to simplify laws and combine them into a lesser number of laws, as we are suffering from an inflation in the number of laws resulting from the issuance of a large number of laws by the executive branch of government at earlier phases. Attorney Hanna Niddeh asserts in his book entitled *The Jordanian Legal System* that 91 percent of the Jordanian laws are provisional laws. This in itself is an indication of the enormity of the legal yoke which Jordanian citizens are carrying on their shoulders. Needless to say, the operational system and slow procedures of the parliament would not enable the country to get rid of these provisional

laws before perhaps one century, during which Jordanian citizens would continue to be governed by these provisional laws. I must emphatically say here that the implementation of any strategy for the care and development of the human rights of Jordanians is a responsibility which cannot be shouldered by the government alone. The successful implementation of this strategy depends on the active participation of the Jordanian NGO's and all the institutions of the Jordanian civil society, including the political parties, the trade unions, human rights organizations, cultural, social, religious, and jurist societies and associations, and educational and media organizations. All these civic organizations along with the government should jointly assume responsibility for the protection of the human rights of Jordanian citizens.

While popular effort is crucial for the success of this strategy, a clear expression of the government's will in words and deeds is no less crucial or decisive. The executive and legislative powers and the regime in general cannot continue to delude the people that the country is continuing on the path of democracy and human rights while the state is not doing enough to eliminate the provisional laws and to combat the wide-spread corruption, to universalize the principle of election and the representation of the will of the people on the local level, with emphasis on the election, not the appointment, of the chairman and members of the Amman Municipal Council. Nor will the people believe the government if it continues to procrastinate in granting teachers, youth, students and agricultural workers their right to form their own trade unions and associations. Speeches, statements and affirmations by government officials that "we are living the democracy and enjoying human rights" will not persuade the people that the government is serious about the democratic process or human rights. It is the real feeling of freedom and the positive change in their economic and social life and standard of living that will convince them that the government is serious. When the government starts following a policy that is oriented towards the achievement of the national goals and aspirations of the people and introduces measures stipulating firm accountability vis-a-vis administrative and financial corruption, then the government will be taken seriously by the people. Otherwise, no amount of rhetoric will convince people that the government is serious or has goodwill towards its citizens. Only real action can convince them.

Both governmental and non-governmental partners are invited to collaborate in introducing this change to the life of the people and society. Without this change, we will continue to move in a vicious

circle, raising beautiful slogans such as human rights, democracy and pluralism without really being able to introduce them to our lives in actual practice or draw closer to the vast world of freedom, which is the base for every innovation and progress and which is the only successful solution.

FOOTNOTES

- 1-Many examples could be cited in this regard, such as the recurrence of the dissolution of the House of Representatives every time it becomes evident that its policies are contrary to those of the executive branch. Nine Houses out of a total of 12 have been dissolved. Another example is the repeated issuance of provisional laws . 91 per cent of the laws in force are provisional laws. The country has lived under martial law for a longer period than the period it has lived under the rule of constitution and ordinary laws. Since 1946, the country has lived 26 years under martial law.
- 2- Mr. Rashdan submitted his proposals for the amendment of the constitution to the Roundtable Conference organized by the Arab Organization for Human Rights/Jordan Branch on February 2, 1994. The proposals entitled: "The Jordanian Constitution and Human Rights" were submitted on the 42nd anniversary of the endorsement of the Jordanian constitution. The daily newspaper *Ad-Dustour* published the proposals. See also Rashdan's interview with the *Al-Ufuq* Magazine April 27, 1994.
"The Rule of Law and Human Rights: Explanatory Principles and Definitions"
Published by the International Jurists Commission, Geneva, 1966.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Dr. Fahd Al-Fanek

I am really surprised at some of the ideas raised in this seminar. For example, Dr. Suleiman Sweiss rejects the sovereignty of the law if the law is wrong. In other words, it is he who decides what is right or wrong. I want to say that law cannot be viewed that way. We should respect the law until it is amended. We cannot reject the law on the pretext that it is a virtuous pronouncement concealing vicious aims. I believe that our courts are applying the laws they have, and do not express their views on whether the law is fair or not. It is the duty of the House of Representatives to amend the law if it is improper. Who else other than the legislative power can say that this particular law is inappropriate? Anyone else would be expressing an opinion only, and his opinion does not require that any action should follow.

The Press and Publication Law has been attacked because it refers journalists to court. I have been writing for newspapers since the seventies, and for the last 22 years we have been asking the government for the arbitration of the judiciary, instead of prohibiting us from writing by a mere telephone call informing us so. How is it then that judicial arbitration has become a problem and a departure from democracy? The Jordanian judiciary is not formidable, and our journalists are not perfect. A journalist may not slander people or violate the law. If he slanders others or violates the law, he is taken to court. But, he still says: "Why are you taking me to court?" Assuming that journalists referred to court are innocent, then the judge will certainly not indict them. Nevertheless, these court appearances are an occasion when a journalist could advance his own career through the publicity he

gains by being taken to court. I believe that a good journalist does not mind going to court to prove his innocence, and in this case, his innocence will be a gain for the media.

However, the main point I want to examine at is the remark by Deputy Bassam Haddadin on the economic adjustment program. He noted that economists unanimously feel that the program is harmful and painful. In fact, I do not know whether he means Jordanian or world economists. However, in both cases, I would like to assure you that economists are not unanimous on anything. They neither support or oppose the program. If economists become unanimous, they would be no longer economists. Economists differ on almost everything, with the exception of the law of supply and demand and the law of decreasing returns. But, everything else in economics is open to interpretation.

You have said that the economic adjustment program has reduced services. Do you mean education, health, streets and for example? I must point out here that most of the new jobs were devoted to health and education, although there was no need for such allocation. What I mean to say is that the private sector is a competitor with the government in the field of education. But the government is saying no. It wants to monopolize education at a time when the cost of government-sponsored education is much higher than the cost of private education. Each elementary student at government schools costs the state some JD 125 per year, while the tuition and fees at private schools are less than that. So, we are paying more to get less because of the insistence of the Ministry of Education to expand rather than narrow educational services according to the program. You have also said that the economic adjustment program is being implemented at the expense of the poor. It is true that electricity prices have been raised, but the minimum lump sum paid by the poor has not been raised. The prices of water have also been raised, but the raise did not include the poor. The National Development Fund has been created with a budget of JD 10 Million to combat unemployment. The National Assistance Fund is spending some JD 16 million per year to assist poor families. Bread is subsidized by 55 per cent. Families are exempted from 70 per cent of the sales tax, and that was before the House of Representatives decided to increase the rate of exemption. Is all this directed against the poor and the middle class for the benefit of the rich, or is the contrary true?

Whenever there is an economic crisis in the country, it is a common thing for people to say that they are suffering because of the economic adjustment program. The truth is that the suffering would be much

more severe if the program was not being applied. You should not compare the current results with the situation that existed before the economic crisis, but you should make the comparison after the economic crisis if there was no economic adjustment program. For example, let us recall the economic crisis which started in 1988, the situation which prompted the economic reform. Our national currency was depreciating daily, the dollar was appreciating daily against the Jordanian dinar. We had no hard currency. Capital was fleeing the country. Commodities, including medicines, disappeared from the market. Inflation stood at 26 per cent. The accounts of the Central Bank of Jordan showed liabilities rather than assets. This is the situation which the economic adjustment program was designed to reform, and the situation is now exactly the opposite.

Dr. Eidah Al-Mutlaq

Thank you. I want to comment on the background papers of Dr. Kilani and Mr. Haddadin. The two papers are rational and objective. However, Dr. Kilani's paper overlooked important aspects of the government performance. One of these aspects is the slow pace of development in the democratic era. Another point involves administrative reform, and the third point involves educational development. I have my reservations on some of the phrases used, such as the neighboring countries from which we imported our ideas. We would still be in good shape if these were the only countries from which we imported our ideas. But, sadly enough, there are other countries from which we not only import ideas, but we become satellites to them as well. This is what really scares me. There was another phrase which Dr. Kilani used: the older generation. Dr. Kilani says that this older generation has been victimized because of its activities in the political parties. This idea has in fact been widely circulated to justify the absence of popular action and the repression of mass organizations. Who has taken a poll of the views of the older generation? The older generation is a stereotype which we have sought to create in our minds, educational curricula and mass media.

As for my remarks on the background paper of Mr. Bassam Haddadin, I would say that Mr. Hosni Ayeshe before me spoke about the lust of parliament deputies to hold cabinet posts and he called this a disease. I agree with that. However, there is a point of no lesser importance, I believe. I do respect the 11th House of Representatives. But I was stunned at the hostile tone expressed at the session devoted to a

confidence motion in the government, and in another House session held to debate the annual state budget. Parliamentarians in both sessions spoke in a repugnant tone. The outcome was that people felt sympathetic with the government and saw themselves suddenly outside the ranks of the opposition. I happened to be one of those people. This might explain why people were not sympathetic with the House when it was dissolved, and I was one of those people, although I have my reservations on the decision to dissolve the House. It was the people who brought in these deputies to parliament in a so-called fair elections. But the same people did not feel sorry when the House was dissolved. Incidentally, I have my own reservations about calling these elections fair. It should be noted that government intervention can always be indirect. On the question of the passage of a number of laws in the House, such as the Law on State Lands and Immovable Property. While overlooking women issues which have not been mentioned in Mr. Haddadin's paper, I would like to point out that all candidates spoke in favor of women's causes during their election campaigns and won the election by women votes, because it is a strategic vote which can make candidates win or lose.

On the question of the 11th House of Representatives, I believe deputies had lust for becoming cabinet ministers, and I have noted that cabinet ministers who were deputies were much harsher in dealing with democratic and mass organizations and institutions than cabinet ministers who were not deputies. We suffered in this regard at the Jordanian Women's Association. Perhaps the relationship that existed between the parliament and the executive branch at that democratic phase was one of conflict at a time when it should have been one of cooperation and mutual respect.

I have a final remark to make about the peaceful settlement of the Middle East crisis, and I am addressing this remark to Mr. Hosni Ayyesh. Democratic institutions and organizations in Jordan were not given an opportunity to have their say vis-a-vis the peaceful settlement. The serious strategic decision to initiate the peace process was not discussed by democratic and mass organizations and the parliament.

As for the question of Arabs in Spain which was cited for comparison purposes, I think that the comparison here is irrelevant, because the two questions are different. Finally, I have a remark addressed to Dr. Fahd Al-Fanek about the economic adjustment program: A study conducted in Morocco on the impact of the economic adjustment program on the education of girls indicated that school girls

were lagging behind in school enrollment and continuity, and this phenomenon continued, not only in the primary phase of education, but in the secondary phase as well. The result was a higher rate of illiteracy among women. This should be a sufficient indication of the effect of the economic adjustment program on the educational process.

Dr. Muhammad Ibn Mahfouz

Thank you. When Dr. Suleiman Sweiss was speaking, I felt as if he was talking about all the reform programs and initiatives which we started in Tunisia from 1984 to 1994. These programs and initiatives included the amendment of the constitution, penal code, the press law, the political parties law and the associations and trade unions law. They also included the endorsement of international agreements, the opening of a cultural center, a judicial center, etc.

What I wanted to say is that Dr. Sweiss was speaking in a legal language, and this language in itself is very significant. However, it is as if we are walking into a minefield. Political regimes are skillful enough to use or amend the law for the purpose of enacting new laws which are no better, but perhaps worse, than the existing laws. They do this under the slogan of reform and the promotion of political life in the country, etc. We have developed the feeling that whenever a law-maker, whether from the executive or legislative powers, seeks to amend a law, that the new law will be worse than the old one. Therefore, I have my reservations concerning legal comparisons. The legal system is a vacant space and will contain whatever we put into it. If we put into it what is good, it will produce good results, but if put into it what is evil, the results will be necessarily evil. I think that a cultural comparison is probably more pragmatic than a legal comparison. We have cultural values which we should rally people around to fortify their healthy democratic process.

Deputy Mohammad Uwaideh

Thank you all. Dr. Musa Kilani has spoken about the accomplishments of the government of Prime Minister Mudar Badran. I agree that it played a unique and a substantive role in the history of Jordan vis-a-vis democratic performance. However, Dr. Kilani overlooked the role of the Islamic Movement. When he spoke about the government statement, he did not explain that the statement included

several conditions made by the Islamic movement for giving a vote of confidence to the government. This was tantamount to a drastic change in the attitudes of the Islamic Movement. In fact this was the first government which the Islamic Movement gave its vote of confidence to.

Mr. Tarawneh spoke about the events in southern Jordan, noting that the Islamic Movement and the PLO did not act, and consequently, densely populated areas particularly in the central parts of Jordan did not act either. In my view, the events expressed indignation at specific policies, and no particular segment of society planned any political action or moves. On the contrary, the role which all the political parties and movements performed in this regard was to exploit the incidents for their own ends and at the same time act to calm down the protests. It is important to assert here that the Islamic Movement exists not only in Amman, but it also exists in Karak, for example, and in other areas of southern Jordan.

Deputy Bassam Haddadin spoke about the conservative nature of the Islamic Movement and its reluctance to confront government policies. My question here is the following: Is confrontation and the mentality of aggressiveness and conflict the only way for bringing about change, as Dr. Eidah said a while ago? If this is so, then this is not the path we have decided to chart.

I wished that Mr. Haddadin had spoken about the positive role of the Islamic Movement. It is true that we have not adopted the tactics of confrontation and conflict, because this is not the course of action we believe in. But he could have pointed out the many decisions and resolutions which could not have been adopted without the support of the Islamic Movement. Perhaps you may notice that the performance of the 12th House is much weaker than that of the 11th House because there were more members of the Islamic movement in the 11th House than the 12th House.

Mr. Haddadin also noted that the political movements and parties outside parliament did not act to support the parliament when it came into confrontation with the executive branch. Consequently, the executive branch dissolved the parliament and enacted the "one man, one vote" law. In reply to the remarks made by Mr. Hosni Ayesh, I would say that the Islamic Movement, represented in the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Action Front, made intensive contacts with the head of state and the government. It also issued statements, staged processions, held seminars and voiced its opposition to government policies. This is the method of political action we understand. But, if

what is intended is to use tanks and guns, we have no tanks and no guns, and this is not a method of political action.

Mr. Ramadan Rawashdeh

I want to comment on the remarks made by Dr. Suleiman Sweiss concerning human rights and the issues of the press and publications. I believe that the question is not one of amending laws, but of who enforces these laws. Some of the laws we have are very constructive, but those in charge of enforcement are people with a martial law mentality. The amendment of laws is not enough. Sometimes a political decision can be made shelving and neutralizing all these laws.

There is an important point which I would like to refer to: There is something in the law called the misuse of public rights. When it is the government or a governmental body which commits this misuse of public rights, who can try the government for the violations it has committed. For example, when I was arrested in September 1993 by the state security court for my news coverage of the Mu'tah University incidents, I was released on bail five days later. Please note that I was arrested during the democratic era, not during the era of martial law. After my release, I discovered that it was not within the jurisdiction or purview of the State Security Court either to try me or to sentence me. Nevertheless, this court had ordered my detention at the Juwaideh Prison. When my case was referred to the public prosecutor of the Anman Court of First Instance, he ordered my detention for the second time and I was released from prison on bail. Who is going then to make the State Security Court accountable for the days that I have spent in prison?

There is something that I must say frankly without pointing the finger of accusation at the judiciary system. There are people who profess that our judiciary system is independent and fair. My remark here is addressed to Dr. Fahd Al-Fanek. It is difficult to talk about anything but the independence and fairness of the judiciary system, because Article 191 of the Penal Code explicitly states that anyone who slanders the judiciary will be sentenced to a minimum of three months and a maximum of two years in prison. So who is going to criticize the judiciary when innocent criticism could be interpreted as slander? Furthermore, it is the general climate which sometimes prevails. When an official body like the State Security Court refers a journalist to court in an atmosphere of intimidation, will the judge of that court set him

free, even if he is innocent? It is noteworthy that bail is one of the rights defendants are entitled to, with the exception of two cases: when the defendant is dangerous to others, or dangerous to himself. We have the Audit Bureau which keeps an eye on the financial performance of the government, and we have the Control and the Inspection Bureau which keeps an eye on the administrative performance of the government. So why do not we have a bureau to be headed by a chairman who enjoys immunity to keep an eye on the questions I am talking about?

Mr. Yasser Abu Hilaleh

On the question of the government shares in the newspapers, I think that the main factor is the chief editor or the man in charge of the newspaper regardless of the number of shares the government holds. We in the Al-Sabeel newspaper do not allow a commercial advertisement in our newspaper if the advertisement is talking about the PLO, for example, although it is a paid advertisement. Furthermore, when a controversy rose about Deputy Tujan Faisal, many people sent to the newspapers messages of support to be published in the form of paid advertisements, but the newspapers refused to publish them. I believe that the fact that the government is a shareholder in newspapers does not constitute any restrictions on the newspaper.

My second remark is about the decision made by the Council of Ministers to ban three journalists from writing in newspapers. The targets of the decision were three well-known journalists. I do not think that this action is civilized or acceptable in a country that has been going through the democratic process for well over five years now. It is evident that such measure could be used also against government employee, and this would lead to grave consequences in a country where the public sector is the largest employer.

My third remark is about the question of trade unions. We are now living through a constitutional crisis. The Supreme Council for the Interpretation of Constitution is now looking into the question of the teachers association. The 11th House did not define its position on this question. A former member of the 11th House has said that the reluctance of the House to make a decision on this question was a mistake, because it is essential to have a reliable constitutional body, which can act free from political considerations or personal interests, to be in charge of the enforcement of the constitution.

As for the question of the dual function of the trade unionist and the

politician and the objections which the government is voicing against this dual function, I would point out that our prime minister is a member of the Jordanian Medical Association. So if we want to enforce the separation of the politician from the trade unionist as the government wants, the prime minister should either be engaged in politics and quit the Jordanian Medical Association, or quit politics and remain as a member of the association.

My comment about the statements of Mr. Hosni Ayesh is that I do not understand why he is always referring to the experiment of the National Salvation Front in Algeria and describing this experiment as being undemocratic. It is true that the front has committed several mistakes. But, one should not forget that there are in this world illegitimate regimes which have usurped power at the point of the gun. If we compare these illegitimate rulers with rulers who reached power through the ballot box, we could safely say that the latter are legitimate, irrespective of who they are and irrespective of whether we view them as modern or backward rulers.

On the question of clans, I do not believe that clanism is playing a significant role at present. The simplest evidence of this is the Al-Nafir case and the Mu'tah University case, where the defendants in the two cases were members of the largest clans in the northern and southern parts of the country. It is not true that transgressors are protected by their own clans, or that the clans protect their members when these members are in the wrong.

As for the April 1989 protests and the Islamic Movement, it seems that one of the problems of the Islamic Movement is that people do not understand it. Revolution and confrontation are not in the nature of the Islamic Movement. Ever since its rise, the Islamic Movement has been a conservative one and will remain so in the future. Confrontational or revolutionary movements could rise in Jordan. But as for the Islamic Movement in Jordan, it has been a peaceful movement ever since its rise in 1945, and it is part of the Jordanian political equation. Therefore, it did not support the April 1989 protests.

I am from the city of Maan, and I know how and why the events started. There was shooting at random and a number of establishments were burned down. It was something like a "blind revolution" with no objective or goal. There were people who were suffering, but their protest was expressed in the most violent form. Political movements and parties tried to join this blind revolution and set a goal for it, but they were too late and could not do anything. The April incidents prompted

the head of state to restore democracy and conduct parliamentary elections. However, all the political parties lagged behind the April events.

Dr. Hosni Al-Shiyyab

I hope that I am not offending anyone when I say that we are still discussing these issues in the same traditional mentality that has preceded the era of democratic liberalization. In other words, the papers submitted to this conference are not methodological, although I am sure that a great deal of time and effort has been utilized in their preparation. Yes, we want to evaluate the performance of the government and that of the House of Representatives. But what should the criterion of our evaluation be? Democracy should be the criterion. Otherwise, the whole evaluation would be futile. As panelists and discussants, we still cannot find a common ground for evaluating the issues that have been raised. Each one of us is making his own evaluation from his point of view. Therefore, I suggest that we proceed in our evaluation from democracy-based criteria. The constitution is one of the institutions of this democracy, because it is a democratic constitution. What do we mean by this? This question was raised this morning, and Dr. Muhammad Ibn Mahfouz suggested that the criteria should be a set of values, which is true, while Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber suggested that it should be a mechanism of governance, or an institution. In other words, it is an institution which should be organized. It is not enough to say that democracy is only a value, or that democracy is only an institution. It is the institution which is utilized in the service of values. Thus, the institution becomes a form, on the one hand, and a value that gives this form its content, on the other.

His Majesty the King is the head of state, as is the case in all democratic institutions. He appoints the prime minister. The prime minister recommends the members of his cabinet to the king. The king can dismiss the cabinet or accept its resignation. Meanwhile, the government is accountable to him and to the House of Representatives. What is missing in this arrangement is that the House of Representatives has been practically absent since 1957, and we have gotten accustomed to this absence. This is a constitutional situation which inevitably leads to the prevalence of the executive power. Therefore, we should think in terms of a constitutional balance whereby the government would become really accountable to the House of Representatives. A constitutional balance also means that the House of Representatives

should not live under the threat of dissolution while exercising its powers and responsibilities or if it opposes government policies. In the democratic criteria, the government is also supposed to be democratic. However, so far, the Council of Ministers has no statute governing its functions or jurisdiction. We do not know anything about the deliberations that take place during the meetings of the council of ministers. In a democracy, the council of ministers is one party of three that governs in accordance with the constitution. How do we know the way in which the cabinet ministers exercise the powers designated to them by the constitution? Do they take part in decision making, or do they just go along with the desires of the prime minister? How will we know all this?

One time we were discussing public issues with a former deputy who was appointed as a cabinet minister while he was still serving in parliament. His remarks in this connection were as follows: "It is good that there are no minutes for the meetings of the council of ministers. There are things which sometimes should not be recorded in the minutes of the meetings." Well, but suppose there were minutes of meetings to be recorded, would the cabinet ministers in this case only say the things that can be recorded and refrain from saying the things that cannot be recorded in the minutes of the meetings? How then could the Council of Ministers become accountable in a democracy? The Council of Ministers can never be committed to democracy as long as it has no statute or minutes of meetings and as long as people do not know how it exercises its functions. This is the institutional aspect of the question. But when we come to the values aspect of the question, it is clear that democracy is a set of values based on political freedom and social justice. My question is the following: Since the start of the democratic relaxation process, how binding have these democratic values to our government been, particularly on questions involving financial and administrative corruption and administrative reform? The continuation of financial and administrative corruption is necessarily the antithesis of democracy as it creates an anti-democratic culture and climate. People in this case would say: What a democracy! What a parliament! Furthermore, the concept of *Wasta* (mediation on behalf of others to attain for them gain they do not deserve) can create an anti-democratic culture, and the same thing applies to the concept which says that influential people can do anything. Values of democracy cannot be bound to such concepts, if we think of democracy in terms of political freedom and social justice.

As for the House of Representatives, I believe that we can evaluate its role on two levels only. The first level is its relationship with the executive power, assuming that both are democratic institutions, and the second level is its relationship with the political infrastructure. On the first level, the relationship between the government and the House of Representatives since 1989 has been characterized with a feeling of mutual distrust. The executive power appeased the House on certain occasions and created difficulties for it on other occasions. On the second level, the House of Representatives cannot be strong or effective unless it has a systematic and institutional base with the political parties. Naturally, the weakness of the infrastructure of political, popular and civic organizations would weaken the House of Representatives.

Dr. Musa Al-Kilani

I want to thank Mr. Muhammad Fares Tarawneh for his comments, and I would like to note that the government of Prime Minister Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker has played a distinguished role in Jordan's democratic process, beginning with the supervision of the fairest elections ever known in the history of Jordan. I mean the 1989 parliamentary elections, and thanks to Mr. Tarawneh for confirming this fact.

Furthermore, I do not disagree with Mr. Tarawneh that the period that followed the April 1989 incidents reflected the will of the country to rejuvenate itself. However, I do not exclude the possibility that some kind of foreign conspiracy was being hatched against Jordan. One could recall the "tornado" transaction and its effect on Jordan, the very serious rapprochement between Syria and Iraq and the threat it posed to the security of Israel, and the fact that the Arab Cooperation Council had become a reality possessing a military potential. I do not disagree with Mr. Tarawneh on this, and would like to thank him for the points he had raised. Nevertheless, I do not think that the April 1989 incidents had reached the point of an insurrection, even by revolutionary Marxist criterion. What I am saying is that external factors were more significant than the domestic factors in causing the April movement, and when I say external factors, I do not mean Arab countries only, but foreign countries as well.

As for the question of the freedom of the press, I might say that we are still suffering from the consequences of Article 19 of the Press and Publications Law and the recent statements issued in London about transgressions against our press freedom. Yesterday, a lengthy report

was published in London by Amnesty International about the scandal involving the trial of our friend, Mr. George Hawatmeh, the chief editor of the daily Jordan Times. Excesses were committed in the trial, not because the judge was unfair. On the contrary, we are proud of our system of justice which is a beacon of fairness and transparency. But the problem is that there is a martial law content in the law according to which our friend was tried.

I want to thank Dr. Eidah Al-Mutlaq for her remarks and I do not disagree with her that the pace of development, reform and growth is proceeding at a slow pace. However, I wanted to focus on the strategically positive achievements of the government of Prime Minister Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker and the government of Prime Minister Mudar Badran, such as the abrogation of martial law, returning the seized passports to their holders, the release of detainees, enactment of the Political Parties Law, the enactment of a modern press and publications law, although it is not ideal, and the release of public liberties.

I also do not deny the assertion by Dr. Muhammad Uwaideh that the Islamic Movement, which was the only strong movement in the country, managed to dictate its terms to the cabinet team of Prime Minister Mudar Badran, terms which were positive and shining in the view of the public. However, the statement issued was in the name of the government of Prime Minister Mudar Badran, with no mention of the Islamist Movement.

I do not disagree with Mr. Yasser Abu Hilaleh concerning the major principles he has spelled out. I am also calling for freedom and the expansion of its base. I am in agreement with brother Ramadan Rawashdeh, who was the first victim of the new press and publications law. However, we are not basing our criticism on individual incidents. But we are discussing public issues. An individual case is important only when it is an indicator of a public issue.

I also support the notion that the major pillars of democracy in Jordan rest on two cornerstones. The first is the achievements of the government of Prime Minister Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker, and the second was the achievements of the government of Prime Minister Mudar Badran. The two governments were supported by King Hussein, who was personally in favor of the democratic liberalization. It was he who personally breathed democratic life in the political parties, public institutions and the laws and regulations that have guided the democratization process of the country. Though we are all political activists, whether we belong to the right or to the left, the king was

always several steps ahead of us.

Thank you.

Deputy Bassam Haddadin

The presentations of the panelists and the interventions of the discussants have raised several ideas which could be discussed, but I am afraid that we do not have the time for an elaborate discussion. Therefore, I will try to focus on the most important of these ideas.

The remarks made by Dr. Eidah Al-Mutlaq and Dr. Muhammad Uwaideh about the confrontational relationship between the legislative and executive powers are worth examining. I think that this relationship should be reviewed and placed in its proper place. This relationship should be one of cooperation, understanding and trust. In the language of politics, we do speak about confrontation. Cooperation among the three powers is a healthy phenomenon. Political opposition to the government's policies is also a healthy phenomenon, and this is something natural. If the legislative and executive powers were in a state of harmony, then there is no need for the opposition, and unless the opposition raises objections, its presence cannot be felt, whether in parliament or in political life outside the parliament. We need to further activate the role of the House of Representatives so that it can become capable of expressing its will as an opposition to the government, an opposition that acts in goodwill in accepting, rejecting or submitting an alternative idea or program on the basis of what it believes to be right and wrong.

My second remark is about the April 1989 incidents. This movement has been exaggerated. Some people say with the same degree of exaggeration that the April 1989 incidents have generated all the democratic transformations in Jordan. Others describe the Maan protests as a foreign conspiracy against Jordan. I believe that it is about time that we stop inflating the whole question. This exaggeration and inflation of events by politicians is the consequence of their inclination to interpret these events in social rather than conspiratorial terms. The strength of the April protests stems from the fact that they began at the site of the social and historical base on which the regime depends for its support. This message was picked up by political activists in various other areas of the country. Above all, the events were politicized and conveyed to people as such. I have personally, together with other colleagues who are with us here today, worked on the formulation of the so-called

program of the popular and social movement, which has intensified the demands of the mass movement and which has existed for a much longer time before the April events.

There is also the question of whether the political parties were involved in the April incidents or not. There has been a great deal of speculation on this question. However, I can affirm that the April incidents started in Maan and no political party in Jordan had any role in it. However, political parties capitalized on the Maan message, inflated and politicized it in other parts of the country, giving it a clear political dimension. An example of this was the meeting held at the Municipality of Karak and the dozens of cables, petitions and statements highlighting the demands of the popular movement and expressing the maturity and awareness of the people and their need for such demands. The April incidents were the spark which released the long-concealed popular movement in the direction of democratization .

Dr. Suleiman Sweiss

Most of the interventions we have heard were about democracy and the laws. I would like to begin by talking about the amendment of laws. Amendment of laws is not enough for the respect of human rights, because these laws are drafted by the government and discussed and enacted by the House of Representatives. In the broader social and political context, it is the stronger segment of society that enacts these laws. As for the amendment of laws under question, it is a trend which Jordan began to follow in 1989. We are living in a state that raises the slogan of human rights and democracy, and we believe that there is a serious intention to proceed in this direction. Briefly speaking, democracy is a technique for resolving contradictions among individuals and groups in a single society through peaceful means. In other words, it is a means, not an end. If democracy fails to resolve social contradictions by peaceful means, then other means will be explored. Therefore, one of the techniques for the promotion and development of democracy and human rights is to amend laws. To ensure that the amendment of laws is proceeding in the direction that serves the larger sector, if not the entire society, civil society institutions represented in political parties and trade unions should exercise pressure on both the legislative and executive powers to introduce the necessary amendments. The question is even much bigger than that. Here I could recall the remark made by Dr. Muhammed Ibn Mahfouz who was apprehensive that amendments might move in the wrong

direction. He also noted that it is futile to raise slogans about democracy and human rights because the results in some countries will not be encouraging. This is something which even the ordinary citizen feels. In other words, it is not enough to pay lip service to democracy and human rights. What is important is that democracy and human rights become something real in our lives.

The main thing is that people should feel that they have freedom in their own country and that there has been a real change in their social and economic conditions. Unless this is achieved, democracy becomes a display of form rather than content, a display of elections, parties and television debates void of content. This is the crucial question. If the change we seek in our society is not achieved through democracy, the beautiful slogans we raise about democracy will remain lip service, void of any real value.

This is why the question of sovereignty of law is important, and I very strongly believe that it is. The International Jurists Commission has published a booklet entitled: *The Sovereignty of Law and Human Rights: Principles and Explanatory Definitions*. The booklet places a particular emphasis on the sovereignty of law. Sovereignty of law does not mean that we should enforce the law regardless of what it is. It means that the law to be enforced should be harmonious with the principles of justice, fairness and equality so that not only the executive branch, but all other citizens as well will honor and adhere to this concept.

As far as the freedom of the press is concerned, there are provisions in the Press and Publications Law which should be revoked. This was pointed out by Dr. Musa Kilani in earlier remarks. For example, the definition of journalist should not include members of the Jordanian Press Associations only, but other journalists as well. We have now the Jordanian Media Association which is functioning alongside the Jordanian Press Association. Journalists should be recognized as members of the association, and if not, a fundamental principle of human rights would be violated (Article 3).

There are also very general provisions in the Press and Publications Law, such as the question of goodwill, which the government could enforce in a very constructive manner. Nevertheless there are gaps, such as the stipulation that the journalist should practice his profession within the bounds of national responsibility, freedom and the traditions observed by our society. These are very elastic phrases. Under the guise of these phrases, a journalist could fall victim of legal prosecution. Another example of this is the question of public order. Therefore, the

freedom of the press and that of the journalists, which is one of the fundamental liberties, cannot be righted without a review of the Press and Publications Law.

FOCUS NUMBER THREE

- Political liberalization and the performance of the Jordanian parliament.
- Role of the professional associations in Jordan's democratic experiment (1989 - 1993).
- Performance of the cultural institutions in the democratic era.
- General discussion.

Political Liberalization and the Performance of Jordanian Parties

Samir Habashneh

Contents of Political Liberalization

Opposition political forces are the forces, which until the eve of the launching of the democratic process in Jordan, were in a state of conflict with the ruling regime. This period extended from 1957 till 1989. These forces included the leftists, the Pan-Arab nationalists and some factions of the Palestine Liberation Organization. It is true that the slogans and goals of these forces became different in the early eighties in the sense that these forces started to talk about democracy, the activation of the constitution and political pluralism. However, they remained in a constant state of confrontation with the government's economic and social programs. Moreover, these forces rejected the government's monopoly of decision and opposed governmental practices which were branded as violations of freedom of opinion and human rights.

I believe that one of the most important reasons why these forces have shifted course and started to go along with the trend of political liberalization, democratization, political pluralism, cooperation with other national parties, and even recognition of the ruling regime is that these forces have realized that they have to discard the concept of the monopoly of power by a one-party system. They have also realized that this system was a total failure on the international and inter-Arab levels and that political pluralism is the best means for achieving progress towards the attainment of national and Pan-Arab goals, releasing the resources of innovation, and the ideal utilization of these resources in

the service of the Arab World.

The Position of the Ruling Regime

The ruling regime charted a course for the socio-economic development of the country, without allowing the opposing views to be heard. The result was that certain political schools of thought and other social segments of society monopolized decision-making about the charting of the country's political future. This phenomenon was associated with the decline of the middle class, which is the symbol of the political and social independence of the country, and the emergence of a social segment which owns much more than it is entitled to and takes much more than it gives. This was a process which generated political repression of the masses, aggravation of poverty and unemployment, and inflation of foreign debts. The country could not maintain the minimum level of healthy relationships with other Arab countries. The result was that these countries were not as enthusiastic as before about supporting the Palestinian cause or the Arab frontline states.

Moreover, democracy and pluralism became the main feature characterizing the age and the major criterion for development. It was evident that if any political regime were to survive, it must renew and rejuvenate itself, expand its social base, and give a larger role to the masses and a lesser role to the security machinery. All these factors have made the ruling regime more responsive to the ideas of political liberalization. National reconciliation among the forces involved in the Jordanian national project did not come from a vacuum or wishful thinking. Nor did it come as a sudden or surprising event, void of practical introductions. All the forces involved in the Jordanian national project were undergoing a predicament until the early eighties when the government took the initiative to form a political party as a prelude to democracy. It is true that the experiment did not continue, but it was an indicator of the government's thinking about the national project. Crown Prince Hassan took the initiative in the mid eighties to meet with the active political forces in an attempt to renew ties and to create a common ground for action on the Jordanian national project. Although the meeting was not repeated, it was, nevertheless, an indicator of the mood of the political leadership.

Going back to an earlier period when the government of the late Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Sharaf was in office, it was easy to detect

in the cabinet statement of the government that there was a clear trend for openness toward all the political parties in the country. New concepts were introduced to the official government line, and the democratization process would have gained significant momentum had the late Prime Minister Sharaf lived long enough to continue his mission.

It is noteworthy that there were loud voices in the mid eighties calling for national reconciliation and democracy, including an attempt to revive the National Socialist Party as a party which would sponsor progressive social, economic, nationalist and Pan-Arab concepts and to allow the party to operate within the framework of the Jordanian constitution and political system. The idea was sponsored by forces and personalities which had been in the ranks of the political opposition.

I can recall that this initiative won the blessing of the active opposition forces then, particularly the leftist forces. The idea would have been executed had it not been for the fact that it collided with the dual political identity and loyalty shared between Jordan and the PLO, which was then the moral homeland of the Palestinian people. Under the circumstances, proponents of the idea were compelled to postpone it until a more opportune time. In fact, the Democratic Front Organization in Jordan issued a statement in the summer of 1988 clearly indicating the significance of national reconciliation, democracy, dialogue, and participation. I recall that at the time, I myself drafted a paper entitled: "The Road to a Jordanian National Project," asserting the significance of rapprochement among the various political and national forces in the country and the need for them to work together, just like they did in the fifties, before the opportunity was missed, either for local reasons or foreign interference. National reconciliation, then, was a product of local, regional and international factors. It was launched through the practical initiatives of the various forces involved in the Jordanian national project.

Ideological-Political Reasons

National reconciliation was also an outcome of objective political and ideological factors which were manifest in the following

1 All ideological forces had consensus on the importance of political pluralism, participation, freedom, human rights, freedom of expression and the respect of opposing viewpoints as elements which would lead to progress and advancement.

1 Consensus by the political forces that social justice had become a goal in itself and a factor representing social stability. It was also a factor by which any regime could renew its political legitimacy.

1 Consensus by all political forces concerning the Palestinian issue.

Earlier, the Palestinian issue caused division in Arab ranks, particularly on matters concerning the kind of solution to be sought and how to achieve it and the relationship with the Hebrew State. Moreover, the tense relations between Jordan and the PLO were replaced with coordination and cooperation. All these factors brought the active political forces in Jordan and their PLO affiliates together to work on the national project. In other words, the position towards the Palestinian issue was a factor of rapprochement, not alienation. Even the difference on the final objectives of the solution was restricted to its theoretical bounds. Moreover, there was a consensus on Pan-Arab unionist concepts and the Islamic dimension of the Arab nation as well as on the world liberation movement and the meaning of friendship or animosity in the modern world which we are in today.

The Method of Reconciliation

All these objective intellectual and political concepts and factors were reflected in the form of values to be practiced. Consequently, by the time the government of Prime Minister Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker was formed, a significant relaxation of pressure against liberties was felt. The government also supervised the fairest parliamentary elections in the history of Jordan. What was important about these elections was that no individual was prohibited from nominating himself as a candidate in the elections on the grounds of his political or ideological affiliations. The practical fruits of national reconciliation were evident from the high-level democratic performance and the equitable relationship between the government and parliament.

Nevertheless, the practical consecration of the national reconciliation came at the initiative of His Majesty the King when he ordered the formation of a royal commission to draft the Jordanian National Charter. The commission included in its membership representatives of all the political forces in the country. It was astonishing that these forces were getting to know one another as if they were meeting for the first time. It was evident after the rapprochement that these forces did not really have the assumed differences that have justified confrontation and conflict over the last decades. Clearly, the Pan-Arabists were not hostile

to Islam, and the Islamists had no objections that action begins from their closer circle of Pan-Arabism. It was also clear that the leftists were not alone in raising the slogan of social justice and the need to pay attention to the underprivileged segments of society that are being crushed by poverty, unemployment and exploitation.

The Royal Commission acted swiftly and managed through free discussion to chart the desired features of democratic Jordan and to reconcile positions, even on historic issues that were the theme of a great difference among the forces participating in the Royal Commission. By all standards, the National Charter was a progressive document which adopted a healthy position towards the Palestinian issue and Jordanian-Palestinian relations. It was also progressive in terms of its national, political, economic and social expressions. It bridged the gaps which were standing in the way of national reconciliation and created an openness on democracy, freedom and human rights.

Instruments of Reconciliation

It was the National Charter Commission which charted the features of national reconciliation in Jordan. The charter was vast enough to accommodate the different political ideologies and left the door open for competition among these ideologies. It was the law which regulated political life in Jordan, such as the Political Parties Law and the Press and Publications Law, which were issued even before the abrogation of Martial Law and the State of Emergency measures that imposed severe restrictions on freedom. The National Charter was tantamount to an instrument of reconciliation which started to bear fruit when political parties in Jordan started to obtain licenses in accordance with the law, despite the obstructionist attempts to the prevent it. Political parties were even given the right to issue party newspapers. It looked as if the whole atmosphere was favourable for the launching of a new political order in Jordan primarily based on political parties. However, this goal has not been achieved as it was originally envisaged.

Circumstances of the Birth of the Political Parties

Historical background

Going back to the early beginnings of democracy in Jordan in the fifties, the Jordanian people, particularly the youth and the activist forces, were very enthusiastic about political parties, despite the fact that

the level of political awareness then was not as advanced as it is now. Conditions on the domestic, Pan-Arab, and international levels were encouraging. Pan-Arabism was on the rise. There were goals for the Arabs to achieve, and there was a consensus that it was feasible to achieve those goals. Political parties at that time had a vast popular base. They were large and effective due to the large-scale popular participation in these parties. The situation at present is the opposite. When political parties were born again, they looked as if they were parties in the stage of formation. Furthermore, the masses were reluctant to participate in these parties for reasons which we will explain later.

The reasons

Political parties were reborn under frustrating domestic and Pan-Arab conditions. These frustrating conditions were necessarily reflected on the masses, who were convinced that action through the political parties would be incapable of surmounting the multi-faceted domestic and national crises. Moreover, the parties themselves could not attract the elements that were capable of mobilizing the masses and involving them in the struggle towards the achievement of their goals.

On the Pan-Arab level, the rebirth of the political parties in Jordan coincided with a phase of Pan-Arab disintegration. It coincided with the Gulf War and the American attack on Iraq and the stunning, unexpected alliances that were associated with this attack. While American military forces were stationed in Mecca and Medina, forces which were known for their nationalist Pan-Arab identity were fighting on their side in the same trench. These invasion forces were the very same forces that Arab masses had learned to hate. Arab propaganda in the Gulf War was affirming that the Arabs would win. The entire feelings of the Arab masses were mobilized to believe that Iraq would win the war. Then came the hard fact of a Western-Arab alliance fighting against Iraq. Iraq was defeated, and with the defeat, Arab hopes were frustrated and Arab power was neutralized. The outcome of the Gulf War left the Arab national liberation movement unable to salvage any of the slogans it had originally raised. The slogans proved to be as fragile as flammable material which could easily catch fire and burn. It was evident later that the incapacity of the Arab forces of liberation and freedom was not something that emerged suddenly, but was an outcome of circumstances and accumulations that had been brewing for some time.

Iraq's defeat in the Gulf War was the reason behind the reluctance of Arabs, including Jordanians to participate in or join any new political organizations or parties that did not know what exactly they wanted. It is noteworthy that active and experienced political and intellectual elites in Jordan refrained from involvement in these political parties, and there was more than one reason why the masses refrained from involvement as well.

On the Pan-Arab level, Iraq's defeat in the Gulf War was followed by another painful blow to the Arabs on the Palestinian issue. In less than two years, it became necessary for the Arab masses which have for so long rejected the State of Israel, to begin to accept the sovereignty of the State of Israel, normalization of relations between the Arab states and Israel, conceding Arab claims to Jerusalem and a Palestinian state, and to accept the Israeli withdrawal from only parts of the West Bank and Gaza, occupied in 1967, in return for a Palestinian entity that will be overseen by the Jewish state. The Arab masses were developing a feeling of despair and helplessness. They could not stop the normalization process, which was the more dangerous link in the series of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Frustration was building up in many parts of the Arab World. The process of Arab retreat and collapse was evident in various parts of the Arab Homeland. It was this feeling of helplessness, despair and frustration that was primarily due for the weakness of the political parties in Jordan.

On the domestic scene, the picture did not look any better. With the exception of the healthy phenomenon that was manifest in the unity of the people and government in supporting Iraq in the Gulf War and denouncing the American aggression, everything else was looking gloomy. Jordan, like other countries in the region, was participating in the peace process. Economic and social problems were growing. Unemployment rates were rising and poverty was claiming vaster segments of the population. Rising foreign debts were an indicator of the failure of the performance of the economy. The country resorted to even more borrowing to cope with short-term difficult conditions. Inflation rates were rising, and the tax burden to be shouldered by the people was becoming heavier. Meanwhile, political parties were showing an evident incapacity to launch national economic and social programs capable of solving the problems which the Jordanian people were encountering, particularly the poorer segments of society. To be fair in my judgment, I must say that some of these political parties have exerted efforts in this direction. However, things were not as easy as they looked, particularly when we know that information is the basis of

research and planning. The executive branch of government was monopolizing economic and social programs, and it concealed them, not only from the political parties, but from parliament as well.

Furthermore, ideological parties, such as the Marxist parties, encountered an additional problem in the failure of the models sponsored by these parties in other parts of the world. National experiments under the leadership of the one-party system failed to translate the slogans they raised into concrete action, despite the fact that they have held power in more than one Arab country for well over two decades. Even the Nasserite experiment, slogans and institutions in Egypt were liquidated, either by reversing the trend as was the case in Egypt, or by the gradual diminution of the role of the public sector and cooperative societies in the rural areas, as was the case in Syria and Iraq. As for the Marxist parties, their position was much worse. Not only had they stepped backwards, but literally collapsed from within, and they eventually decreed that they had failed to achieve their great slogans and noble, idealistic and humanitarian objectives.

On the other side, there was the American-Western absolute victory, the formation of a new world order according to the interests of the West, a victory of the relationships of interests over the relationships of principles. Under the circumstances, it is easy to imagine the difficult situation which the Jordanian political parties were undergoing.

It is noteworthy that Jordan's experiment in the sphere of constitutional parties and public action was a shallow one. The absence of public political action in earlier phases and the resort of political parties to clandestine action created a situation whereby party activists and functionaries needed knowledge and information on matters related to the activities of licensed political parties operating in public. This information and knowledge could only come from earlier experiences, which were not available at any rate. Jordan could not manage to devise a national model capable of becoming the example to be followed by the countries of the region, because of lack of the necessary ingredients that were needed for the formation of this model. In this context, we have not been able to devise an organizational model capable of attracting the intellectuals, the youth, workers and farmers to join political parties.

The role of the state

A comment is needed on the role of the Jordanian state and its

influence on the development of party life in our country. For the state, the political parties up to this moment are like an organ implanted into another body. The body usually rejects the alien organ. This example applies to the Jordanian state and its political parties. The political parties which are the organ implanted into the body of the Jordanian state. It is a voluntary process that excludes the use of force, but is done by acceptance, exactly like a heart transplant. Nevertheless, the Jordanian state still refuses to deal with the political parties. The most important evidence of this is that the official media completely ignores reporting about the activities of these political parties and does not give them any transmission time over state-owned radio and television. This at a time when the state media in Jordan covers the activities of all movie actors and actresses in the entire Arab World.

We have been told that the composition of the recent Upper House of Parliament excluded well-known personalities in the country because they were party activists. The biggest evidence of the state rejection of its new organ is the recent events that have involved Yemen. The pluralistic Yemeni leadership (before the civil war in Yemen) came to Amman for reconciliation. Jordan was supposed to play the role of mediator. But the Jordanian regime did not act as a pluralistic entity in its efforts at mediation. Jordan could have highlighted its democratic, pluralistic experiment in the mediation efforts had Jordanian political parties been involved in these efforts. These parties could have played a significant role in Yemeni reconciliation. The result was that a Yemeni national reconciliation accord was reached, but it soon collapsed and a civil war ensued. Jordanians who try to perform their national roles through the party institution are usually excluded from being given important government posts, simply because they are party activists. A secretary general of a certain party said recently: "We should not declare our organization in public so that competent members of our party would not be excluded from senior government posts." If this complaint is made by the pro-government Al-Ahad party, what will other parties have to say about this?

Double identity

There is a very important point which we should not overlook when we discuss the reasons why political parties in Jordan cannot penetrate deep into the ranks of the masses, namely, the duplicity of political and national loyalty manifest in the presence of two identities in the arena of public life in Jordan. One identity is Jordanian, and the other is

Palestinian. This phenomenon alone is the reason why most people of Palestinian origin are not joining Jordanian political parties. They feel that if they do, they will be practically abandoning their commitment towards the Palestinian issue. Some people went as far as saying that the participation of citizens of Palestinian origin in the political parties in Jordan is tantamount to the acceptance of the idea that Jordan is the "substitute homeland" for the Palestinians. Meanwhile, several licensed parties, which are rooted in the Palestinian resistance factions of the Palestine Liberation Organization, are not welcome in many parts of the country, because they are viewed as Palestinian parties. In fact, currently, in serious discussions, these parties are still referred to as the Palestinian factions.

The parties that have the strongest representation in the ranks of the masses in Jordan are the elitist parties. This is probably the most important reason that political parties in Jordan in general have not yet made a breakthrough in the ranks of the masses. Meanwhile, tribal loyalties in many regions of our country are still in conflict with party activism. Tribal loyalty is dominant and it poses a serious threat to party membership in these regions. This is the reason why some parties have not yet managed to move beyond specific geographic regions, despite their failed attempts to do so. There is another reason which cannot be overlooked. Jordanian political parties, even the ambitious ones, cannot shoulder their responsibilities properly in view of the choking financial crisis engulfing most of these parties. This crisis is manifest in the suspension of party newspapers, evacuating party headquarters for inability to pay the rent, dismissing many of their employees, and non-payment of transport charges for members who carry out assignments on behalf of the party.

These are the conditions governing the organized action of political parties in Jordan, as I see them, with their intellectual and political repercussions on the local, Arab and international levels, particularly the countless local problems these parties are encountering.

Nevertheless, the organized Jordanian political movement had and still has opportunities to overcome the current predicament. So far, this movement has failed to utilize the opportunities that have become available to them to consolidate their position and to contribute to the advancement of Jordan and its people. For example, the political parties and leaders grouped in the National Democratic Alliance failed to provide a successful example of collaboration when they had the opportunity to do so. The cabinet ministers, who were members of the

alliance, could not seem to work as a ministerial team, with a knowledge of its goals and according to strategy. This should remind us of the fact that all other coalitions have also failed for no objective reasons for their failure. It seems that one party seeks to coordinate with another party or a group of parties only when it feels that the political role of the former is diminishing and that coordination would strengthen its position. So these parties resort to formulas of coordination which have a poor chance of survival. Moreover, the idea of party merger still exists. But, attempts to merge parties are not succeeding for reasons related to differences over the party programs and for personal reasons as well. It is as if we are dealing with political parties with the same sense of loyalty we have for our tribes or clans. Failure of coordination among parties that have the same ideological background will necessarily place these parties in a position of feverishly competing with one another.

Channels of communication

There is a final important point to note, namely, the suspension of communication between the various political parties and leaders. This communication was intensive at the beginning of the party experiment. The lack of activation of the channels of communication, coupled with government indifference, and even attempts to marginalize the role of parties, will certainly push these parties into extremist positions, with an obsession to limit their roles to the confrontation of the government. I believe that the science of psychology has an explanation for this: one is ignoring the other, so the other acts aggressively just to prove it is still there.

The Islamic Action Front is not outside the predicament which the other parties are in. What makes things easier for the Front is that it embraces the Hamas Movement as an active Palestinian faction. Furthermore, the Front does not have any financial problems, and is somewhat institutionalized. Other than that, it has the same problems as the other political parties, and it is now in the predicament of trying to devise a national political model based on the Islamic Sharia (Religious Law) providing solutions for all economic, social and cultural ills.

The performance of the Jordanian political parties is below the acceptable standard and is much less than was originally hoped for. Their performance is still liable to get worse in view of the continuation of the aforementioned factors, which constitute an enormous pressure on these parties. The improvement of the performance of these parties

is linked to a number of factors which I can sum up in the following:

1- Political parties and leaders should restore regular and constant communication, all the more so because these parties are national institutions and part of the Jordanian state, its constitution, laws and regulations.

2- A Pan-Arab-Islamist reconciliation should be devised that would combine Arab nationalists and Islamists into a cooperative group capable of giving momentum to the efforts which must be made to achieve national goals. Arab nationalists and Islamists should embark on a profound intellectual dialogue based on democracy, discard of violence, and eventually presenting to other forces an example.

3- Arab nationalists themselves should engage in dialogue on the basis of the permanent goals of the Arab nation, without stopping their cooperation at certain historic phases of transient differences. The dialogue should set as its goal the building of a unified Arab nationalist party.

4- Dialogue among the political parties should be free from personal considerations and irrelevant loyalties. Democracy should be the only arbitrator in this dialogue.

5- Leftist forces should resume their disrupted dialogue and try to benefit from the events that have undermined the Marxist ideology in their attempt to build a political instrument capable of devising a national model. What we need is to get our inspiration from the intellectual heritage of thought or ideology, not to copy it.

6- There is a great deal of intellectual and political common grounds between the various political parties in Jordan. Consequently, their cooperation among one another is feasible if we could manage to minimize non-party loyalties, accusations and rumors in our attempts to curb the influence of others.

7- Political parties in Jordan should be invited to a national dialogue intended to reach a proper understanding of the developments involving the Palestinian issue. The dialogue should materialize into an understanding of our new national role and the responsibilities we should shoulder in order to protect Jordan from the negative anticipated consequences, on the one hand, and to honour our national commitments towards the Palestinian people, on the other. We should also try to agree on the nature of the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship as relations between two states. We should also try to understand the repercussions of the development of the relationship between the

Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, and the consequences of the personal monopoly of power in the leadership of the PLO.

8- Redefinition of the responsibilities which the Jordanian people should shoulder in addition to their domestic concerns is also necessary. The Jordanian people have struggled for Arab unity for many decades. Nevertheless, Arab unity has not been achieved. Instead it has remained divided into regional states by the very same people who had once raised the slogan of Arab unity. For several decades, the Jordanian people were partners in the Palestinian struggle as a Pan-Arab struggle. Today, the Jordanian people cannot play the same role, and cannot even talk about the fateful unity that exists between Jordanians and Palestinians, or about the unique Jordanian-Palestinian relationship in a single context.

9- The Jordanian Arab people have their own concerns and aspirations. Their Jordanian national identity can only be changed in favour of a broader Pan-Arab identity. Any other change of identity will not be accepted. The Jordanian people also seek a new climate for the various types of development. They want to curb poverty and reduce unemployment and foreign debts.

Will the political parties in Jordan become capable at the end of finding solutions to these problems and challenges ?

Discussant Ziyad Abu Ghanimeh

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the name of God, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. Praise be to God, and prayers and peace be upon the Prophet Muhammad, the Messenger of God, and upon his brethren of other Prophets and Messengers. I would like to convey to this distinguished elite of politicians, thinkers and honourable guests the gracious greetings of Islam: God's peace, mercy and blessings be with you.

One of the most difficult things a person could face is to comment on a background paper in such a short period of time. My remarks will be restricted to notions raised by Mr. Samir Habashneh in his background paper, not to statements I have heard him utter verbally.

First: Mr. Habashneh said in the course of his classification of political forces in Jordan that leftist and nationalist parties were the opposition parties in the period falling from 1957 to 1989. But, I must disagree with this. These parties played the dual role of opposition and loyalty. They were opposition parties in terms of their party structures such as the Palestinian factions. But they were loyal parties because the ruling regime managed to attract dozens of their leaders and theorists to the posts of prime minister, cabinet minister and high-ranking state employees. Meanwhile, Mr. Habashneh said in one place of his paper that the Islamic forces, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood Group were loyal to the regime and that they were given important posts in the government. We need to pause at this statement, because the opposite is correct. Only three Brotherhood ministers participated in the government from 1957 to 1989. Two of them became cabinet ministers after they quit the Brotherhood. Dr. Abdul Latif Arabiyat, who is now with us, was the only Brotherhood secretary general of a government ministry. Eventually, he was discredited by the government and dismissed from his post.

Thus, we need to look carefully at the above two notions. It is true

that the Islamic Movement was not in a state of conflict, and does not seek a confrontation with the ruling regime. This is due to the clever tactics of the Brotherhood and the realistic policies of the government. In countries other than Jordan, it was not the Islamic Movement which sought confrontation with the governments of these countries. Rather, it was these governments which sought the confrontation. In Jordan, the regime did not opt for confrontation with the Brotherhood, although there were difficult times for the Brotherhood, and specifically speaking, before the recent surge of democracy, during the rule of the government of Prime Minister Zaid Rifai.

Second: I agree with Mr. Habashneh that the theory of the one-party system has collapsed, and there is no longer any room for any party to believe that it is the only party qualified to rule the country. The collapse of this theory opens the way for all the political parties to accept the principle of political and party pluralism and to coexist with it.

The panelist also spoke about a larger role for the masses in the democracy-building process in Jordan by restraining the role of the security machinery. I believe that this will remain a dream, not in Jordan only, but in all the Arab countries extending from the Arab Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean, because the mentality of those in power is to be suspicious of the people. Nevertheless, one must admit that the Jordanian regime, if compared with other Arab regimes, was the best in dealing with the masses and the forces these masses represent. The masses were unable to perform their role in the democracy-building project for more than one reason. The first reason was that the masses sought to play this role through the political parties, but the parties failed to attract the masses, as the panelist himself admits. Political parties in Jordan are still suffering from this alienation, and I am not excluding any particular party here. The second reason was that the democratic process was launched as a clever act carried out by the political leadership of the regime in the aftermath of the April 1989 incidents, and was not imposed by a popular revolution as one would like to see.

Third: The panelist spoke about national reconciliation among the two institutions of the Jordanian national project: the ruling regime on one hand, and the political parties, whether Islamist, Arab nationalist, leftist or centrist, on the other. The truth is that I am pessimistic about the chance of a national reconciliation between these two institutions. You may be astonished that I will not accuse the regime for the failure of any such reconciliation. We have been accustomed to pointing the finger of accusation at the regime for everything. But to be fair, if this

national reconciliation is destined to fail, it will be the political parties, not the regime, which will be responsible for this failure. The sad fact is that each of our political parties needs to be reconciled with itself first. Each needs a reconciliation within in order to overcome the divisions that have become a common characteristic of our political parties. How can the parties that are divided within themselves and not reconciled with one another achieve reconciliation with the regime?

Fourth: The panelist spoke about the fact of the political parties being alienated by the masses. As I have mentioned earlier, it would be the easiest thing to blame the government for such a phenomenon. It is true that it is not in the interest of the ruling regime in Jordan and in the other Arab countries that the political parties survive and continue. In fact, these regimes have done their best to alienate the masses from these parties. But it is also true that the political parties themselves did not manage to cope with the plots concocted against them by these regimes. Let us get down to real substantive issues-- the problem of unemployment for example. None of our political parties has any feasible or realistic program to solve the problem of unemployment. Nevertheless, all our parties indiscriminately attack the government because there is an unemployment problem in the country. The same applies to the question of poverty and the question of crime. Moreover, how can the masses be attracted to the political parties while seeing with their own eyes this unjustifiable large number of political parties. Here I must accuse the government of being the reason that we have so many parties. The fact of the matter is that several political parties were formed at the inducement of the government with the deliberate aim of scaring away the masses from these parties because of their multiplicity, particularly the centrist parties. What is the justification for having so many parties, whether leftist, Arab nationalist or centrist? Why don't the parties of similar political orientations merge? The masses will certainly not be attracted to the political parties as long as these parties are in large numbers, because in this case, people will have a hard time deciding which political party to join.

Fifth: The question of pluralism is one on which we should pause and think seriously. Do our parties really believe in pluralism? I dare say that many parties, and I am speaking from personal experience, do not believe in pluralism within the one party. Nor do they believe in the freedom of expression, the freedom of participation or the freedom of opposing views. This is a point which the political parties in Jordan should be well aware of. The background paper of the panelist spoke about many convergence points the political parties in Jordan could

meet at, but this does not really tell the whole story.

Sixth: The Palestinian issue, which once was an issue which political parties in Jordan had consensus on, has now become a question dividing these parties. There are political parties which support the sham peaceful solution currently being worked out. Meanwhile, there are other parties which support a peaceful solution that would recognize the legitimacy of the Zionist usurpation of Palestine, but they do not want the solution the American way. It is the Islamists, and the Islamists alone, who reject all peaceful solutions and insist on the liberation of Palestine, although some slips of a tongue by some Islamist leaders may suggest that there is a change of policy towards the Palestinian issue. The truth is that Islamists have not budged one inch from their constant, non-changing policy towards the Palestine issue.

ROLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS IN JORDAN'S DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENT (1989 - 1993)

Dr. Zaid Hamzeh

Introduction

At the outset, I would like to extend my thanks to the Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation for this distinguished effort which I hope will be beneficial to our country. I have drafted the remarks I am going to make today with haste, but I can claim that these remarks are based on experience in trade union affairs for well over 40 years. I know in advance that what I am going to say might be controversial and it might bring me headaches. It is not that I like to swim against the current or walk in a minefield, but it is a question of being honest and true to oneself and to the professions that we represent and above all, to the country. Therefore, I am going to speak frankly about what I think should be rectified in our march and in our way of life.

In my attempt to understand the linguistic origin of the phrase "trade union" and its use in the Arab countries, I have not found an answer that satisfies me. These are not unions or associations. Nor are they societies or organizations. They are in fact syndicates in the real sense of the word. Syndicate is a word which is not very well liked, because it means a group of people monopolizing a financial or investment activity which will not allow anyone else to participate without their permission. For workers, the word syndicate means a group of people or even a gang controlling work in a certain port, where no worker could enter the port without their permission or get a job except through them and on their own terms, provided that the worker pays part of his wages to

the gang. The novel of the well-know playwright John Steinbeck *Wolves of the Port* , which appeared as a film in the fifties is an example of this domineering syndicate grouping which persecutes the workers. From this introduction, I want to introduce the concept of professional syndicates, not labour syndicates, in Jordan. These professional syndicates in Jordan control everything related to the persons engaged in the same profession. The strange paradox here is that it is the law which protects this monopoly, as we will see later on.

Labour syndicates

My paper is devoted to the professional syndicates in Jordan, because I have been involved with them since the establishment of these syndicates some 40 years ago. I must for the sake of fairness, however, review very briefly, from my own impressions, not from documentation, the development of the labour syndicates in Jordan starting from their establishment and ending with the launching of the democratic process some five years ago.

Membership in the labour syndicates is not mandatory. In the fifties, these labour syndicates were small and scattered, encircled and resisted. There was the fear that Marxism might infiltrate their ranks and that they would fall under the control of clandestine leftist parties, which would steer these syndicates in the direction of illegal political activities. Some of these syndicates did well for their members. They attained significant gains for them, such as increaseed wages, fixed working hours, the right to health insurance, etc. These syndicates were organized into what is called the General Federation of Labour Syndicates in Jordan. I must admit that I do not know much about the relations between one syndicate and the other, or the relations between the syndicates and the General Federation. However, I have noticed from the beginning that the style of these syndicates was non-democratic. It was a style which eventually led to pro-government candidates assuming the positions of leadership in these syndicates.

The largest Jordanian syndicate is the Jordanian Drivers Syndicate. The government instructed that membership in the syndicate should be compulsory so that it could exercise efficient control over the syndicate. All car drivers have been registered with the syndicate and paid their subscription and membership fees. It is noteworthy that even with the launch of the democratic process in Jordan, the labour syndicates are still far from the adoption of trade union rights or pluralism as is the

case in democratic countries. The Labour Law in force is the same labour law which has existed for well over 25 years. Discussion is now underway for its amendment, but the efforts made to amend the law are still stumbling. In any case, even the proposed amendments are short of meeting the demands of the workers or their legitimate aspirations which they have struggled to attain for several decades. For example, even the proposed amended law does not provide for health insurance coverage to the workers.

Professional syndicates

The rise of the professional syndicates, such as the physicians, engineers, lawyers and pharmacists, was completely different than that of the labour syndicates. From the very beginning, the professional syndicates enjoyed the support and encouragement of the state. Each professional syndicate had its laws which governed its functions and activities. It was left up to each syndicate to draft its own laws without any interference on the part of the government. For example, the laws governing the functions and activities of the Jordanian Medical Association were drafted in 1954 under the government of Prime Minister Tawfiq Abu Al-Huda, which was known for its reactionary leanings and repression. Nevertheless, the doctors were given full freedom to draft the laws governing the functions and activities of their own association as they wished. So, it was the doctors who drafted the law of the association. Naturally, the doctors used the opportunity to consolidate their own power and privileges. According to the laws they have drafted, membership in the Jordanian Medical Association is compulsory for each doctor, and he is not allowed to practice medicine in Jordan unless he is a member of the association first. The doctors boosted the status of their association to eventually be some kind of counterpart to the Ministry of Health, which is constitutionally responsible for all health affairs in the country. In fact, the association took legal issue with the Ministry of Health on a number of powers that were vested in the Ministry of Health without any governmental objections.

Successive Jordanian governments did not interfere in the professional syndicates, which were exercising their domineering role in complete freedom. The government continued this policy of non-interference even after the professional syndicates began to play an undeclared political role in the country's life when political parties were banned in the late fifties. The banned parties sought to intensify their

activities in the professional syndicates, particularly in the election of the presidents and boards of the these syndicates in order to prove their presence or to display the superiority of one party over the other. The battle used to end with the end of the elections and the winning of this or that party. After the elections, the parties carried out no activities within the syndicates, because the opportunities available for political activities in any professional syndicate remain limited. For example, the class status of doctors, who come from various and diversified segments of the society, is different from the unified class status of workers in their own syndicate.

The Arab defeat in the 1967 war with Israel heralded the politicization of the professional syndicates in Jordan. The idea was that these syndicates could fill some of the alarming political vacuum that resulted from the defeat and Jordan's consequent loss of half of its territory and the collapse of many of its institutions. The politicization of the professional syndicates after 1967 was all the more urgent because for 10 years prior to 1967, political party activities in Jordan were in complete paralysis. Party activists were pursued, imprisoned or forced out of the country. The "professional alliance" managed to formulate a general framework for serious political action through objective studies conducted by intellectual leaders of the professyndicates. Newspapers, news agencies and even foreign embassies in Jordan used to take seriously the statements issued by the professional alliance.

However, the professional alliance did not remain alone in the political arena of Jordan. The arena was soon joined by the political forces which regrouped themselves, particularly the Socialist Arab Baath Party, the Communist Party, the Arab nationalists, and the Muslim Brotherhood Group. Soon enough, they were joined by the General Federation of the Jordanian Labour Trade Unions and some factions of the Palestinian resistance movement, which had already started their activity from Jordan. This led to the formation of the National Alliance, and the role of the professional syndicates began to gradually diminish. The professional syndicates' role was reversed from one of leadership to one of subservience. Political parties became more active in the elections and conflicts involving the professional syndicates. Professional activity within the syndicates was gravely weakened as the syndicates turned their attention to confrontation with government. The confrontation was a political one and had nothing to do with the syndicates as professional associations. The government in turn arrested many trade unionists for reasons unrelated to their

professions or the trade union positions they held.

The government has also introduced some undemocratic legislation to the Professional Syndicates' Law. One of the amendments introduced authorized the Council of Ministers to dissolve the board of any syndicate according to the dictates of public security and safety. The decision to dissolve the syndicate's board was final and not subject to appeal. Nevertheless, the professional syndicates did not stop their political activities. In the aftermath of the September 1970 bloody confrontation between the Jordanian army and the Palestinian resistance movement, the professional syndicates held their most important political meetings, conferences, seminars and festivals to voice opposition to government policies despite the fact that political activity was banned for all parties, and Jordanian political parties and Palestinians resistance factions were compelled to operate illegally and underground.

A call for professionalism

Professionalism is not a new expression in Jordan, but it began to be widely used in recent years, and it was welcomed in the ranks of the professionals themselves, who were uneasy in the past years about the professional syndicates' neglect of their professional role and the involvement of the syndicates in politics instead of concentrating on their primary functions and responsibilities as associations representing doctors, engineers, lawyers, pharmacists, etc. The professionals were also fed up with the hegemony of the various political groups over their syndicates through the elected presidents and members of the boards of the syndicates, who in no case could be elected to these posts without the support of the political parties.

The politicized members of the syndicates reacted strongly and violently against the call of the professionals. They accused the professionals of being part of a government plot to weaken the role of the syndicates in serving the country. Nevertheless, the professionals argued that political action is the purview of the political parties, not the professional syndicates. They also argued that since the government had licensed more than 20 political parties, it was no longer reasonable for the professional syndicates to intrude on the role of the political parties and become active in the very field which is the purview of these parties. However, this was no reasonable justification for the political parties which still sought involvement with syndicates with the aim of

dominating or containing these syndicates and manipulating them to achieve the political goals of the parties.

I would like to say at this point that we are undergoing a phase of political pluralism where opposing views are being respected. Therefore, we reject the exercise of intellectual terrorism against those who regard professionalism as the opposing view which should be discussed objectively and rationally, particularly since the call is made by professionals whose definite goal is to serve and promote their profession. As far as I am concerned, I am not going to contradict myself or my long history in trade unionism and politics. Therefore, I am not going to call for banning professional or other syndicates from engagement into political activities. No one in the world can convince me that there is a dividing line in the field of public service between trade union and political activities. Article 8 of the 1966 International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states that the parties to this international convention pledge to guarantee the right of the trade unions to operate freely with no restrictions imposed other than the restrictions stipulated by the law of a democratic society whenever the application of this law is necessary to safeguard national security or public order or to protect others and their liberties.

I believe that the political role of the professional syndicates which was much more active than the professional role will automatically and gradually diminish when the political parties become capable of filling the vacuum which the professional syndicates were compelled to fill. The role of professional syndicates in politics will also diminish when the political parties will no longer need to manipulate the professional syndicates to achieve their own ends. Meanwhile, the professional role of the syndicates will grow and expand until they become genuine democratic institutions, or in other words, when they stop the practice of compulsory membership and make membership in these syndicates voluntary. In this case, the syndicates will seek to attract members by striving to achieve more professional gains for their members instead of involvement in political activities which are not of their priorities, but are in fact the main function and responsibility of the political parties.

Constitutionality of the professional syndicates

There are now some people who are raising questions about the constitutionality of the professional syndicates, not for the purpose of eliminating them, but for the purpose of rectifying their legal position.

Again, this view should not be suppressed. We should listen to its proponents and collaborate with them in a serious and constructive discussion of the various aspects of this issue. Laws governing the professional syndicates are usually enacted in accordance with Article 31 of the Constitution. But the article is a general one, and falls in the chapter that discusses the monarch and his rights. In Jordan, all laws are enacted in the name of His Majesty the King. It is the king who endorses all the laws, not only the laws of the professional syndicates. It would have much more convenient had these syndicates been treated as associations subject to Article 16, Paragraph 2 of the Constitution, which states: "Jordan has the right to form associations and political parties, etc.," not to Article 23 of the Constitution, as some jurists have recently suggested, because the article speaks about labour and workers rights, including the right to organize themselves in a free trade union (Paragraph F). Clearly enough, doctors, engineers, lawyers and pharmacists are not workers.

I believe that what is more important and urgent in this regard is not to identify the constitutional article according to which professional syndicates' laws are enacted, but to determine whether these laws themselves are democratic or not and whether they are in harmony with the spirit of the Constitution and the International Declaration of Human Rights. This is the course we should follow to correct the trend of these syndicates so that they can serve the interests of thousands of their elite members.

Review of laws and self-criticism

Strangely enough, we have accepted the laws of our syndicates for a long period of time without questioning any of them. We have even perhaps taken part in the formulation and consolidation of these laws without really being aware of whether these laws are contradictory with human rights or democracy at a time we were struggling for human rights and democracy. To admit one's mistakes is a virtue; and if we admit that we have made mistakes, we should embark on a process of self-criticism, which in my view, has become an urgent need. The review should be relevant to the following particular topics:

- 1- The compulsory membership in the professional syndicates, whereby a doctor, engineer, lawyer or pharmacist is not allowed to practice the profession unless he is a member, although he could be licensed by the state and its competent authority or ministry to practice

the profession. Evidently, this is a violation of the spirit of the Constitution and of Article 20 of the 1948 International Declaration of Human Rights, which Jordan ratified in 1976.

The second paragraph of Article 20 states the following : "No person should be forced to join any society....." In all countries of the world, membership in syndicates, federations, associations, societies and parties is voluntary, with the exception of the authoritarian states or whatever has remained of them, and some Arab countries like Egypt from which we copied our trade union laws. Egypt has not yet changed these laws, nor have we.

2- The mockery of the annual or emergency meetings of the general assembly of these syndicates. The meeting is usually said to have a legal quorum despite the number of members attending. The press often reports the news of the meeting, its deliberations and resolutions. There is a false impression that all members of the general assembly or their absolute majority usually attend this meeting. But the fact of the matter is that the meeting is attended by only few hundred members and sometimes only dozens of members out of a total of thousands of members. Nevertheless, it is this very small minority which makes the decisions relevant to the profession, such as subscription and membership fees, retirement regulations, insurance, disciplinary action and other vital matters pertaining to the activities of the syndicate in question. This very small minority can speak for thousands of absent members on major political and economic issues. It can also issue strong and stiff statements and declare a strike or a sit-in.

This is a mockery which is protected by the quorum law which states: "The second session shall be regarded as having a quorum, despite the number of those attending." The mockery is continuing, and it is pleasing to those who have been accustomed to dominate the syndicates under the protection of a weird law.

3- The power of some syndicates to fix the fees their members should charge for their service is in fact an exploitation of the law, whereby the syndicate imposes on the citizens how much the fees are that they should pay to the members of these syndicates, such as doctors and other professionals. This is something that would only be done by monopolies and cartels. It is also contrary to the principle of supply and demand, experience and free choice. It is even contradictory with the very same law governing the activities of the Jordanian Medical Association. In Chapter Five, Article 40 of the Jordanian Medical Association's law states, under the title: "doctors' fees" the following:

"A physician is entitled to charge the patient or his family fees for treatment, provided that the fees are moderate.": In another article under the title : "Fixing the fees," the association's council fixed the fees for the various types of medical treatment. This was done at a political phase where a certain political thought was in the forefront. This thought was socialist in form and authoritarian in substance.

4- One syndicate for each profession: This is contrary to the International Convention which entitles each individual to form syndicates and join the syndicate of his choice. No restrictions whatsoever should be placed on this right. The "one syndicate, one profession" principle is also contradictory with the principle of pluralism, which is one of the main pillars of democracy. We should not allow ourselves to be entrenched behind the slogan of the "unity of unionist action" to squeeze by force people with contradictory interests and different specializations into one single syndicate. The records of the Jordanian Medical Association show many examples of this phenomenon. Transgressions involving the Jordanian Medical Council for the last 12 years and the disparity in the salaries of the Health Ministry physicians, the University of Jordan physicians and the physicians of the Royal Medical Corps are examples to be cited in this regard. Furthermore, private sector doctors have a much higher income than public sector doctors, when in fact they are members of the same association.

5- Disciplinary tribunals in the syndicates: Some jurists view these disciplinary tribunals as special courts functioning in violation of the provisions of the Constitution and the purview of regular courts. These tribunals not only settle differences between the members of the one syndicate, but look into complaints brought about by citizens against syndicate members such as doctors, engineers or lawyers. This situation could be described as a court where the adversary and the judge are the same person.

Conclusions

The democratic process in Jordan has encouraged associations and unions to present their demands to the government to restore to them rights that have been missing. I believe, however, that conscientious trade unionists should first examine themselves, before they confront the government. They should rectify the shortcoming and defects of the laws of their syndicates to make them more compatible to the new

concepts of the age which civilized societies are enjoying under the umbrella of human rights.

Discussant Yossef Hourani

Now that we have heard the background paper of Dr. Zaid Hamzeh on the realities governing professional and unionist organizations in Jordan and how they affected democratic liberalization in the last five years, I want to make the following remarks on his paper:

1- The background paper was a reflection of a personal experience in professional unions. Therefore, the greater part of the paper dealt with professional unions. Dr. Hamzeh declined to discuss the realities governing the labour movement and its unionist organizations because, as he said, he does not know a great deal about it. Nevertheless, this should not excuse him from conducting a study on these labour organizations, because in any country, labour organizations are the largest organizations.

In Jordan, the labour union organizations are the largest in the country, claiming a membership of 102,000 workers in 17 labour unions out of a total of 600,000 waged workers. It is because of the size of the labour union movement that it needs a larger effort in research. Therefore, I hope that I will cover this part, which Dr. Hamzeh declined to cover.

In the last quarter of the century, the labour movement and its organizations have been the target of a conspiracy aimed at weakening and dismembering this movement. The conspiracy has been manifest in government intervention in the affairs of the trade unions and the general federation and harassment of its members by the government security machinery. The conspiracy has sought to preclude the labour movement from becoming a real social force capable of attaining the rights and liberties to which the workers are entitled. Perhaps this explains why successive Jordanian governments have been reluctant to ratify the International Convention No. 87 for 1948. It guarantees for the workers much broader unionist rights and freedoms than are stipulated in the Jordanian Labour Law or the operational ordinances of the unionist organizations.

The government's security machinery has created a special department to handle matters related to unions and the general federation of labour trade unions. More than one Jordanian government has introduced amendments to the Labour Law, which were a direct assault on the unionist rights and liberties, recognized and exercised from 1976 to 1978. The amendments were also transgressions on the labour rights and liberties stipulated in the Labor Law.

The government-installed leadership of the General Federation of Jordanian Labor Unions has, at the instructions of the government and the state security machinery, been obstructing the convocation of the Fourth Labor Congress for the last 16 years. According to the statute of the General Federation, the congress should be held once every four years. Labor congresses are normally expected to bring about significant improvements on the conditions of the labor movement, though government intervention usually subverts the benefits which could be reaped from these congresses. In the Third Labor Congress held in 1978, the Minister of Labor directly interfered in the functions of the congress, and the state security machinery worked hard to make the congress divert from its real objectives, and finally it obstructed its resolutions.

The leadership of the General Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions has recently introduced substantive amendments to the federation's statute abrogating the role of the unions and their general assemblies as well as the role of the central council. Through these amendments, power was concentrated in the hands of a five-man, pro-government body which stripped the unions and their organizations within the general federation of their powers. It is noteworthy that these amendments were introduced without being referred to the general congress, which alone has the power to introduce such amendments. All this took place in May 1993, three years after Jordan had embarked on the democratic process.

Unfortunately, neither the unions nor the political forces, particularly the democratic forces, have been able to introduce any changes to the status quo. On the contrary, the state of conflict that has been prevalent among these forces has precluded any meaningful efforts to consolidate the role and influence of unions in particular and the labour movement in general.

I believe that these forces have contributed to prolonging the life of the government-installed conservative leadership of the general federation. They have not reacted in any way to the excesses of the general federation, and at times, they have acted as part of the

leadership of the general federation and its policies. These forces have also gone along with the general federation in a grave violation which has been committed. The executive bureau is always elected by the central council, which consists of 17 unions. The election process was overlooked, and each of the 17 unions was requested to designate a representative to the executive bureau. This arrangement was a compromise between conservative and democratic forces. However, this is a violation of the constitution of the general federation and of the democratic tradition that union leaders are elected, not appointed.

The democratic forces have not succeeded in introducing any change in the direction of democratizing party and labour action in the trade unions which were under their leadership. Statutes governing the operations of some unions, some of which are as old as 25 years, remain operational to-date. These outdated statutes and laws and regulations enabled certain groups to jump to leadership positions in these unions. They monopolized power and obstructed the functions of the unions whether as regards their role in the general federation, labour demands or national and political roles. They dealt with the elections of the general assemblies with extreme contempt. No working programmes were ever submitted to the general assemblies, which were also prohibited from discussing the reports and activities of earlier administrative boards or formulating the policies that should guide the unions. General assembly meetings were strictly devoted to the conduct of elections.

In some unions, the general assembly never meets. This is true in the case of the drivers' union, which claims a membership of some 90,000 people. Elections in the drivers' union are something closer to appointment than anything else, as they are done by proclamation. In the 1976 election of the drivers' union, two lists competed in the election, one was conservative and the other was democratic. Members of the latter list were arrested by the security machinery as a "precautionary measure." It is evident from the foregoing that the role of general assemblies in the unions in general has been completely neutralized and this applied to the progressive unions. The reason for this has been the infighting and internal quarrels among these forces. This atmosphere of infighting still prevails, but it is unjustifiable either from the rational or unionist points of view.

2- In his assessment of the professional syndicates, Dr. Hamzeh made an informative review of the conditions of these syndicates, constitutional problems, and the fact that some of their laws violate

international conventions and the International Declaration on Human Rights, particularly as regards compulsory membership, quorum, monopoly on fixing wages, and disciplinary tribunals. I agree with him that these are issues which should be tackled and resolved. I also agree with him that laws should be reviewed in the interest of harmony and members of these syndicates. As for his statement that there is no dividing line between political and unionist action, I must say that it is the political parties which should review their policies towards these syndicates. Political parties should utilize their efforts to promote the conditions of the professionals and their organizations democratically and organizationally to enable these organizations to make realistic and effective contributions to the building of the civil and institutional society. Care should be taken that the idea of the professionalization of the unions does not become an idea that will take the unions out of the public sphere.

In any case, the idea of professionalization of the unions should not become a pretext depriving political parties from their democratic right to reach the leaderships of the popular and democratic organizations in accordance with a programme that takes into consideration the professional and political interests and rights of the groups concerned and creates a reasonable and logical balance between the political and professional roles.

3- Dr. Hamzeh did not touch in his paper on the conditions of other popular organizations which were created to defend the interests of various social segments and sectors. These organizations are no less important than the unions, and their conditions are not any better than the unions either. In fact, these popular organizations are still subject to undemocratic practices, their laws and regulations are outdated, they are overseen by authoritarian and domineering mentalities, and they are in conflict and competition with one another. The result is that the performance of these organizations has stepped backward, their memberships have been diminishing, and they have become alienated from their general assemblies. This can be very clearly seen in several youth and democratic organizations.

The performance of these organizations has retreated in the past years, and it will continue to retreat in the future unless a real and democratic change is introduced to the structures of these organizations and unless the general assemblies of these organizations are invited to take part in the decision-making process. What really makes me worried is that these organizations might remain captives of the patriarchal

domination of the elite.

The opportunity is still available to all, particularly the enlightened forces, to utilize the conditions of democratic relaxation for consolidating the influence of these organizations in the ranks of the mass and giving momentum to the democratic process, particularly since these forces are speaking in terms of building the civil institutional society. The building of a civil institutional society can only be done through a democratic system that governs all the institutions of society, including the political parties.

It remains for me to say that the effort made by Dr. Zaid Hamzeh in preparing this paper was modest. I am very confident that he is capable of giving much more. In any case, I want to thank him for this paper, and I want to thank you all for listening.

PERFORMANCE OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE DEMOCRATIC PHASE

Mr. Ghassan Abdul Khalek

To start with, it might be worthwhile to examine the conditions of Arab intellectuals and the cultural institution in Arab society. In the pre-Islamic period (Jahiliyah), Arab poets expressed the philosophy of their clans without getting any pay for it. Islam transcended the tribal, pastoral society of the Jahiliyah and established a centralized civil system. In the midst of the political conflicts that raged between the Umayyads and their Shiite foes, the Umayyad rulers in Damascus became aware of the mission to which a poet could be assigned namely, the ideological and political mobilization of the people. Thus, the Umayyads sought to attract to Damascus the largest possible number of poets and rewarded them generously.

The situation was not much different during the rule of the Abbasid Caliphate that followed in Baghdad. Poets continued to be in the forefront of cultural activity. Soon afterwards, writers, speakers and jurists came to prominence. They competed with the poets, but the poets were still the masters of cultural expression. At this time of history in particular, the features of the historic function of the Arab intellectual, whether poet or writer, took shape. A poet was a person who recited praise, and to do so, there had to be someone to praise. It could be the caliph as an individual, or it could be the existing political, ideological and social order.

It is noteworthy that the Abbasid Caliph Maamoun institutionalized and organized culture through the Bait Al-Hikmah (House of Wisdom) project. Philosophers, jurists and scientists, rather than poets and writers, were given prominence. This was essentially a transformation from an appreciation of rhetoric to a profound interest in the rationale of

the mind. The Islamic state and its political system were undergoing a period of cultural prosperity. At a later stage, the Islamic state was deteriorating, and the Arab intellectual suffered a setback which was a severe blow to the prospering culture. (1)

The weakness of the central government was devastating to the Arab intellectual, and his status and conditions worsened. It is noteworthy that the history of Arab literature has no place for intellectuals who did not write poetry of praise. Poetry of praise made the caliphs accessible to them, and once they gained access, they could gain prestige and wealth. Three famous Arab poets are known in Arabic literature as the Princes of Praise. They are Abu Tammam, Buhtiri and Mutannabi. Learned men could not be privileged as such. The famous sociologist Ibn Khaldoun had access to the caliph only as a poet of praise, not as an intellectual thinker and philosopher. Even in the modern age, the poetry of praise persisted. One could refer to the lavish praise which the Egyptian poet Tahtawi had to say to the then ruler of Egypt, Muhammad Ali, for introducing the first Arab printing press and the first newspaper to Egypt. In fact, he was the pioneer of creating the first Arab cultural institution in modern times.

What I wanted to say here is that when the cultural institution appeared in the modern age, it was the property of Muhammad Ali, just like Bait Al-Hikmah was the property of the Caliph Maamoun, with one difference only, namely, it was a historic achievement on the part of the Caliph Maamoun to institutionalize culture. However, in our modern age, we cannot afford to have the cultural institution become the property of the ruler, because in this case, it would devote its efforts to a rhetorical culture focusing on the praise and glorification of the political model rather than producing critical literature and advancing human values. In the case of the former, the intellectual turns into some kind of mercenary, someone praising others to make a living, someone who is incapable of innovation.

Jordan's option for democracy dictates that the cultural institutions of the country review their short-term and long-term philosophy and function, including the review of personnel and the extent of their suitability to keep pace or comprehend the dictates of the new phase. No doubt, there has been a significant change in the performance of governmental cultural institutions, particularly in the enlargement of the space allotted for the expression of the alternative cultural views coming from the political opposition. However, there is still an evident disparity in the government cultural institutions themselves. While the magazines

issued by the Ministry of Culture are attracting larger numbers of writers and intellectuals, the state-owned Jordan Television is still incapable of keeping pace with the new era. It insists on continuing the same pattern of thinking and performance as the past era in terms of use of rhetorical literature and its failure to benefit from the resources of Jordanian intellectuals and writers in its cultural programs.

The most elementary thing democracy should produce is fair opportunities for employment and placing the right person in the right place. However, these two goals have not yet been achieved. The government has not sought to absorb qualified cultural personnel whose earlier political affiliations barred them from work at these government institutions. The government has been content with the partial cooperation of these intellectuals inasmuch as their contributions would help overcome the crisis of these governmental cultural institutions that help employ personnel that cannot cope with the responsibilities they are supposed to shoulder. Perhaps the strangest thing in the performance of these institutions is the trend to increase the number of their administrative personnel at the expense of their professional personnel. In other words, they are expanding horizontally, just like any other ordinary department, instead of expanding vertically through efforts which could only be made by genuine cultured intellectuals.

For the sake of fairness, I would like to point out that the Ministry of Culture had organized a seminar under the title: "Cultural Periodicals - Realities and Prospects." (2) The seminar could have turned into a qualitative leap forward in the performance of the governmental cultural institutions had it not been for the fact that the most important recommendation of the seminar, namely the recruitment of editorial staff from the ranks of intellectuals and writers outside the Ministry of Culture, was not approved by the officials involved. Moreover, the seminar was the only serious attempt in this direction, because it sought no publicity by the media. In fact, it was organized in the form of a closed workshop that was constantly meeting with the secretary general and all the concerned personnel of the Ministry of Culture attending in order to hear the views and remarks of the writers and intellectuals from outside the Ministry and to benefit from these views and remarks.

The most urgent democratic demand of the intellectuals of this country is for the Ministry of Culture to expedite the convocation of a general national conference on culture and the intellectuals (3) to discuss the requirements of the new era and to devise a national cultural strategy. Although some people have voiced their reservations about

this national strategy as it could lead to a totalist or centralized understanding of culture, which is the negation of pluralism and democracy, I believe that a flexible cultural strategy is the only national safeguard that can prevent cultural pluralism from turning into cultural anarchy. The cultural experience of Lebanon, before, during and after the civil war, has proven that democracy is not everything, and that there should be a legitimate body to act as an arbitrator among intellectuals. In Jordan, the number of cultural forums has almost exceeded the number of political parties that are functioning in the country. Moreover, there are loud calls for the privatization of culture, like other national sectors. It is important to note here that private sector participation in the cultural advancement of the country is something, and the privatization of culture is something else.

The requirements of the democratic era cannot be restricted to the governmental cultural institutions, but should extend to embrace private institutions. In this regard, one can note with regret that private cultural institutions are inferior in performance and efficiency to the governmental institutions. The political imagination reflected in the magazines published by the Ministry of Culture, for example, is much vaster than the imagination of any private cultural forum. (4)

Daily and weekly newspaper cultural supplements published in Jordan are still suffering from numerous ideological and political bottlenecks. It is the political ideology of the funding agency which decides the contents of the supplements. The cultural editor of the supplement is often appointed for family, sectarian or political considerations. Rarely does a political party appoint an independent cultural editor for its cultural publications, and rarely is a cultural editor appointed because of his efficiency and qualifications or because of the party's desire to expand the scope of political representation on the pages of its publications.

Perhaps all this would raise the old question again, namely, the subservience of culture to politics. Ours is a culture which is on the government side devoted to the praise of the existing model, and on the side of the opposition devoted to the praise of the absent model. Public and private cultures in the new era are interlocked, and both are subservient to the desires of politicians. The financial crises which rocked some political parties in Jordan showed that austerity measures begin with cutoffs from the allocations for culture. Most party newspapers stopped payment of compensations for writers after the financial crisis erupted. Consequently, their cultural supplements

diminished. (5)

Regrettably, our cultural institutions which are funded by the private sector often accord a preferential treatment to intellectuals from other Arab countries, while they do not accord the same treatment to Jordanian intellectuals. Arab intellectuals are invited to Jordan with fully paid accommodation at luxurious hotels and substantial financial rewards, while Jordanian intellectuals are deprived of all these privileges.

The Ministry of Tourism did well when it organized in the summer of 1993 a tour for a group of writers affiliated with the Jordanian Writers Association to southern Jordan, where they organized cultural evenings in Tafilah, Shoubak, Wadi Musa and Aqaba. The Ministry of Tourism paid all the expenses of the tour.

There remains an important question which should be raised: What was the impact of the democratic process on Jordanian cultural institutions, specifically on the Jordanian Writers Association of which I am honoured to be a member and to Chair the Novel and Short Story Committee of the association?

The Jordanian Writers Association was formed after Jordanian novelist Taysir Shoul committed suicide. The association identified its goals as protection of the national culture and defense of the rights of the Jordanian intellectual. The association had poor financial resources and it was in a dire need of financial support. This has caused the infiltration of many people who were not really writers or intellectuals in the real sense of the word into the association. Their only qualification was that they could offer financial support. They have now become the majority in the association, and they decide the outcome of the elections of the association's administrative board, which bases its decisions on purely party or political considerations, not on cultural, democratic or rational considerations.

I attended the last election of the association. The outcome of the election was a surprise to all. Representatives of the largest political party in Jordan lost, while independent candidates won. The election was accompanied by mutual incriminations and accusations about Arab cultural normalization with Israel. It was evidence that the domineering party mentality does not hesitate to do anything in order to win. Unfortunately, it is this mentality which dominates the majority of the members of the Jordanian Writers Association in an atmosphere that is alien to democracy and culture.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) For more information on this subject, see chapter three of: *The Predicament: A Study on the Controversy Between Religion and Politics in Islam*. Dr. Fahmi Jadaan, Al-Shuruq Publishing House, Amman, 1989.
- (2) It was held at the Royal Cultural Center in Amman from 29 - 30 March 1993.
- (3) See my article in *Al-Rai'* newspaper on February 22, 1994 entitled : "Towards a National Conference for Culture in Jordan."
- (4) See *Afkar* magazine issued by the Ministry of Culture, volumes 109 - 116.
- (5) See my article in *Al-Rai'* newspaper on March 13, 1993 under the title: "The Writers, the Press and the Parties."

Discussant Mrs. Raja' Abu Ghazalah

At the outset, I would like to thank Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation for inviting me to comment on the paper of Mr. Ghassan Abdul Khaleq which he presented under the title of "The Performance of Cultural Institutions in the Democratic Era." I would like to say first that the panelist has presented a historical background about the relationship of the Arab intellectual or poet with the Caliphs or princess throughout the ages, noting that it was a relationship built on self-interest, i.e. the poet would praise or attack the Caliph or prince depending on his self-interest. In other words, the poet or intellectual was a mercenary. The background was presented as a prelude to what the panelist wanted to conclude, namely that the relationship of the intellectual in our modern age with the cultural institution is similar to the relationship that existed in the past. In this regard, he has cited two examples: the Ministry of Culture and the state-owned Jordan television, and the Jordanian Writers Association. This is the first point I want to note.

The second point is that the historical background on which the panelist was eager to elaborate was intended to condemn some young intellectuals who believe in this relationship which is built on self-interest, noting that such a relationship should not exist under a system of cultural pluralism. I might add to this that the democratic process is currently suffering from the domination of the patriarchal, paternal mentality, which leaves no room for innovation not based on self-interest.

The panelist also spoke about the under-performance of the private cultural institutions compared with the state cultural institutions, and commended the Ministry of Culture for its performance. In fact, I too want to commend the Ministry of Culture because it has been serving as a gathering point for free and nationalist thinkers who believe in Arab unity and the need for democratic change, such as Mu'nis Razzas,

Muhammad Naji Amaireh and others who represent all the blends of culture whether within the state institution or outside its framework. It is a culture which calls for equality between man and woman and between all citizens.

The panelist praised the cultural institution as a middleman whose role is needed for the sake of cultural complementarity. I have borrowed the word "middle" from Raymond Williams' book entitled: *Culture and Anarchy*. In his book, Williams holds the cultural institution fully responsible for fulfilling the demands of the intellectuals. Meanwhile, he calls for a flexible culture so that other intellectuals will not get the impression that culture has become centralized. Furthermore, he clearly draws the line between cultural pluralism and cultural anarchy.

The panelist has attacked the manifestations of our cultural pluralism, although they are an indication of the richness of our culture. Furthermore, he spoke in the language of praise or slander exactly like the old Arab poets used to do. He overlooks the fact that we are living in an era of cooperation and integration of all the cultural institutions in order to create new concepts and healthy collaborative relationships among all these institutions, including the Ministry of Culture, the Jordanian Writers Association, cultural centers and clubs, women unions and art galleries.

The panelist called for a national strategy on culture. Needless to say, every Jordanian intellectual has advocated the same. However, I did not understand what he meant by saying that he wants a flexible culture that precludes the enforcement of the concept of cultural pluralism. Does he want, for example, a fundamentalist rule that would be the judge on all blends of culture? Only constructive dialogue and participation by the individual in the life of the group can stop attempts to subjugate us to the domination of private groups. The Lebanon which he cited, namely that democracy led to anarchy, does not explain the events of Lebanon. Only an understanding of the political, ethnic, social and economic conditions of that country can explain these events.

The panelist noted that the success of cultural supplements depends on the size of the compensation paid. Meanwhile, he called for placing the right person in the right place. However, he attacked those responsible for the cultural supplements saying that they were appointed for family, sectarian, or political considerations, not on the basis of competence. It is true that there has been some excesses. However, does the panelist have figures or statistics to prove his contentions? Furthermore, assuming that a qualified woman journalist

becomes the chief editor of a cultural supplement, would he view her as the right person in the right place, or should the person in charge of the supplement be a man? And in this case, what does a democratic choice mean to him?

The panelist voiced his regret for the financial crises and austerity allocations of the party cultural supplements. However, he has overlooked the fact that political parties have been newly born in a democratic climate, and that the principle of compensation is not binding, even in the two daily newspapers, *Al-Rai'* and *Ad-Dstour*. It seems to me that the panelist has overlooked the fact that cultural centers are not institutions promoting self-interest. However, in our situation, we still need time to build the ethics of the profession through the exercise of democracy and building on our pluralistic experiences.

The panelist noted with dissatisfaction that other Arab intellectuals are being treated much better than local intellectuals in terms of financial compensations. He also notes that as a host country, Arab guests cost us a great deal of money when they come to our country to attend conferences. However, I must disagree with this assessment. We as Jordanians are given a reciprocal treatment when we go to attend a conference in another Arab country.

As for the tour of story writers organized by the Ministry of Tourism and the Jordanian Writers Association, it was at the initiative of the association, though the ministry paid all the expenses of the tour. In particular, I am surprised about his question about the under-performance of the association, at a time when he is the rapporteur of the Short Story and Novel Committee at the association.

The panelist explained that the association was established after the late Jordanian novelist Taysir Subul committed suicide to serve as a shield protecting the national culture and the rights of Jordanian intellectuals. I am surprised that he talked about Jordanian intellectuals in protectionist terms. The association was in fact established to protect Jordanian and Arab culture and Jordanian and non-Jordanian intellectuals on equal footing.

As for control of the election of the managerial board, this can only be another example showing how the panelist has contradicted himself. While he attacks an institution of which he is a member, he also expresses pride in his membership in the association. The panelist also knows that the managerial board was not elected for political party considerations. In fact, the independents won in the election for

cultural, democratic considerations void of any self-interest.

The information of the panelist about the Jordanian Writers Association may not be sufficient because he is a new member. Nevertheless, I do respect his views, thanks to the democratic climate we are living under. A final point to note on the statement the panelist made about elections in the association: He said that party considerations dominate the elections of the association. I must say that party considerations have never been the decisive factor in the association's elections in the past or at present, because the communist, nationalist or independent members of the associations do not decide the policy of the association unilaterally. The policy of the association is decided in a democratic way by consensus. The overwhelming majority of the association place the interests of the association above the interests of any party. I regret to say that the panelist did not make an objective assessment in this regard. In particular, his concluding statements only express his personal views.

Thank you.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Senator Abdul Latif Arabiyat

I would like to thank his excellency the chairman of the session and Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation for their efforts. Let me start with a general remark. Some participants from outside Jordan use the papers submitted to this conference as a reference in their research. From the papers I read yesterday and listened to today, I can say that these papers express personal views only and are not documents produced by scientific research. I must say that I respect the views that I have heard, but I must stress again that they are personal views. If we really wanted to examine these papers objectively, we would need a team of qualified specialists and experts to look into these papers in comparison with the real situations they are talking about and then reach conclusions which could be the closest to the truth, and I believe that we are in a dire need of such an examination.

As for my remarks about the papers, I would like to thank Mr. Samir Habashneh for his paper and Mr. Ziyad Abu Ghanimeh for his comments. Briefly speaking, I agree with Mr. Ziyad on the first point in which he commented on the paper of Mr. Samir. But I do not agree with his pessimism about the chances of a national reconciliation among the political parties operating in Jordan. I am an optimist, not a pessimist. I believe that the existing differences among the parties are artificial, not real, particularly between the nationalists, the Pan-Arabists and Islamists. The problem is in the persons, not in the principles or ideas. If the persons concerned amend their attitudes, the reconciliation is definitely feasible.

Another point was mentioned by Mr. Ziyad about the failure of the political parties to launch their own programs. He also cited unemployment, poverty and crime as problems which the political

parties have not deal with. I must say that unemployment for example is beyond the capability of any party to resolve. It is also beyond the capability of any institution to resolve it alone. Irrespective of what is being said, unemployment is basically a problem with deep roots in the educational system, beginning with planning for this educational system. The crucial question is: What kind of people are we graduating these days? The unemployment which we are currently witnessing can be classified as about 90 per cent structural unemployment and 50 per cent covert unemployment. Our departments and offices are over-staffed. We do not need all these personnel. Half of the present number would probably be enough, and they will perhaps perform better. So we have a problem of covert unemployment. Furthermore, we have a problem of structural unemployment. 80 to 90 percent of job applications at the Civil Service Commission are university graduates, and the government cannot provide jobs for them.

Another point: Is it true that our political parties believe in pluralism ? The answer is yes. I believe that they do, whether this pluralism is ideological, political or cultural. Pluralism is a fact in our lives, and we believe in it. I was privileged to present the question of pluralism from the Islamic point of view in a television debate in 1990. The reaction to the debate was favourable. All parties are calling for pluralism, including the Islamists.

Mr. Ziyad noted that there were slips of a tongue by some Islamists which suggest retreat. I do not believe that slips of a tongue should be given that much weight, nor do I believe that there has been any retreat.

On the paper of Dr. Zaid Hamzeh and his criticism of the compulsory membership in professional associations, I believe that membership should be compulsory, because people engaged in any certain profession or trade offer the same service, and should be accountable as members of the professional association, not as individuals. We have a law on the control and exercise of the professions without which unqualified physicians and witch doctors would have practiced the medical profession had it not been for the fact that there is a Jordanian Medical Association which can control and organize the medical profession in the country. Therefore, membership in professional associations should be compulsory in order to preclude unqualified people from entering the profession and inflicting harm on the people.

The comments of Mr. Yousef Hourani were valuable in covering the history of the labour unions. Also, Mr. Ghassan made a remark about the institutionalization of culture. I believe that the shortcomings of our

private and public cultural institutions are evident. We are in dire need of cultural institutions that have the capability to make a cultural distinction between the culture that is beneficial and the culture that is harmful. Inability of cultural distinction is tantamount to suicide for the nation. It would be a very grave mistake to concentrate on one aspect of culture and neglect other aspects. Our nation is resourceful in culture and cultural values. We have given to the world inasmuch as we have taken, or even more. Since there is pluralism in culture, thought and politics, we should be able to distinguish between cultural, intellectual and political pluralism so that things might be clear and understood by us when we accept this or that concept.

Dr. Yossef Al-Hassan

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Please allow me to speak about the other side of democracy that is related to the work techniques and innovation of those who are committed. Democracy is also a way of life governing pluralism and peaceful coexistence among the individuals of society. It is a flexible way of life reinforced by culture, faith and values. Its roots are deep in history. We have no ready prescription to offer to any particular society. But generally speaking, one can say that democracy is the social action of the live forces in any society, i.e. political parties and civil society institutions.

My question is How can we judge the experiment of the political parties in Jordan in the field of democracy? The experiment can only be judged by the degree of its innovation in the social field. The Islamic thinker Malik Ibn Nabi defined the democratic system as an educational and cultural project utilized in the service of the people on the psychological, moral, political and social levels. Democracy is not then a pure transition of power from one person to another or from one group of people to another. Nor can a mere provision in the constitution about democracy make the country a democratic one. As we know, in Britain, the constitution is hardly enforced. Therefore, the conclusion I want to make is that it is the mentality, or the pattern of thinking, that can guarantee human rights and people's liberties. It is the only sure guarantee of democracy.

Jordan is undergoing a process of democratic transformation. This process of democratic transformation is usually accompanied by a developmental and cultural project to advance the country. The project could be domestic or national. It is true that Jordan has intellectuals,

thinkers, jurists and leaders. However, the societal movements that are capable of guaranteeing the minimum of institutionalization are, to a very large degree, non-existent. The democratic process is being built up by understanding and dialogue, and this is the function of a seminar like the one we are attending. The questions I am going to ask this morning are based on what I have heard from the papers this morning, particularly the paper of Mr. Samir Habashneh. My first question is: Have the political parties tried to institutionalize democratic concepts within their own members and within society at large? My second question is: Have the political parties launched programs and working plans that are based on realistic vision of the needs of the people and society at large? Or are these political parties content with continuing to operate under the sponsorship of the state?

I dare say that there is some kind of division or split in the ideologies of these parties and in their pattern of thinking. Some of the political parties we have at present were originally sponsored by the state. Other parties are only branches of larger Pan-Arab parties. There are new party leaders whose names we have never heard before. The democratic process has been going on for the last five years at a time when the regional and international changes are much older than this. And my question here is whether the mentality of these party leaders has changed in order to be able to cope with all these changes? I sometimes feel that we here in Jordan do not appreciate the value of democracy, constitution or the Political Parties Law which is more flexible and more modern than the constitutions and laws currently in force in other Arab states which are older than the constitution and laws of Jordan. Nevertheless, I must emphasize here that the problem is not one that involves the values of democracy. The problem is that we should embark on a process whereby we develop and rejuvenate the forces that exist in society instead of quarreling about national action and pluralism.

Pluralism is not a means to divide positions or distribute profits and war booties. The constant desire of the opposition to reach power or to be a political partner of the government will offer the state the excuse to portray the parties as some kind of national institutions whose motives are to be suspect. There are legitimate reasons why the masses are staying at a distance from political parties. Some of these reasons are genuine and could be a manifestation of frustration of the masses at the historic failure of the Arab political parties in general, the latest of which was the defeat in the Gulf war.

I must draw the attention to an important point which most of us are overlooking. It is the second technological revolution which is having a significant impact on the minds of Arab citizens everywhere. Among the results of this impact is that a significant proportion of Arab citizens have become disinterested in involvement in party activities. The second technological revolution is the pictorial culture which has stormed every home. Nevertheless, the state of mind of the people is one that is inclined to accept the democratic project. All that I can hope for is that we do not barter democracy for political objectives or slogans for protocolic celebrations as this would be a manifestation of authoritarianism within the regime and the political parties on equal footing.

I would like to say one last word about the trade unions. We have been dealing with the unions for well over four decades. I believe that with the recent regional and international changes that have taken place, we should deal with these unions in a completely different mentality. The politicization of the unions and using the criterion of party affiliation as the basis for union elections will certainly be detrimental to the chances of the growth of these institutions as independent civil society institutions and as an appropriate framework for the exercise of democracy and training and learning about democracy.

Civil society institutions, including unions, associations and clubs, are the real test for the consolidation of democratic values, where power would be alternated within these institutions and traditions for the control and accountability of elected bodies could be laid down. Many political forces that have been banned as illegal could find in these institutions an opportunity to express themselves and to be active. Now that political parties have been licensed and can operate freely, they should leave these independent institutions so that they can operate freely. This is the way we can exercise democracy in its genuine form and judge things and events by a critique of rational thought.

Mrs. Muna Shqayr

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In his paper about political relaxation and the performance of Jordanian parties, Mr. Samir Habashneh spoke about the issue of national reconciliation between the ruling regime and the political forces active in the Jordanian arena as a milestone of democracy or a prelude to it. I believe that the democratic

transformation has led to a state of unprecedented popular consensus on democracy. This was confirmed during the Gulf war. However, it is difficult to accept the notion that there is one political family in Jordan consisting of the ruling regime and the political forces that exists in the arena, as if the political opposition in Jordan is something that has publicly existed throughout the various phases of political life in Jordan. Perhaps there were political figures who were acting in opposition to the regime, and perhaps there were party organizations engaged in clandestine action, not as part of the political organizations. However, all this does not mean that there was a genuine political opposition before 1989. In fact, when we talk about democracy or listen to the official version, democracy is viewed as gift from the king to his people. This kind of thinking is prevalent in numerous political quarters.

It is true that we would like to think that democracy came to this country as a result of a long historic national struggle. I do not deny that there was a struggle, but how effective was this struggle which was waged in the 30 years that preceded 1989? I agree with the statement of Mr. Ziyad Abu Ghanimeh that the opposition did not exist, because the ruling regime contained it, together with its leaders, in one way or the other.

In the National Charter Commission, there was a constant controversy about the democratic transformation over the following question: Was democracy a product of the April 1989 protests or otherwise? The general impression is that it was the regime, which was always in the forefront of the political forces in the country, that brought about the democratic transformation because it wanted to go along with certain regional and international changes that have been taking place. The general impression was also that the regime started the democratic process before even the National Charter Commission was formed, and that the regime was even a forerunner of the Freedom Studies Center. This was a political dilemma which we had to deal with, and at certain phases, we were confused about how to handle it.

In my personal judgment, democracy in Jordan before 1989 was not part of a national policy or a component of the prevailing national culture. While I agree with Mr. Ziyad Abu Ghanimeh that the ruling regime had contained the opposition, I do not agree with him in the criterion he used. My question here is how many nationalist or leftist ministers were members of the cabinet?

Generally speaking, nationalist and leftist opposition did not exist, and the same applied to the Islamic opposition. The Muslim

Brotherhood were a group that was licensed, but not on the basis of being a political party. It did collaborate with the ruling regime, but there were cases when it was in contradiction with the regime, particularly on the question of the Iranian Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War. So, the Muslim Brotherhood Group has never been a political organization. This would probably explain why political parties are in a state of disarray and marginalization. No one is saying that these political parties are playing an effective role in our political life at present.

On the question of cultural organizations in the democratic era, I am surprised that the paper and the comments did not touch on any of the substantive and vital issues concerned. For culture, democracy is the most important changing factor in the cultural life of any nation. Why then when we talk about democracy do we not refer to cultural institutions such as the Shoman Foundation, the Royal Cultural Center, the Jordanian Writers Association and the art galleries? All these are carrying out some kind of cultural activity. We will not argue about the assessment of their importance. But the important question is whether the enhanced cultural activity in the democratic era has led to a qualitative change in the prevailing culture, and why is this cultural accumulation in our cultural life unproductive? There is also another issue of no less significance, namely democracy. Has democracy changed the role of the intellectual and turned him into a supporter of the regime, and has democracy changed the method in which the authorities deal with the intellectual? Then why is Jordanian political life void of vitality and dynamism? Who is the new intellectual and what are his programs? Then, what is the difference between formal and informal culture? I believe that the two cultures are interlocked, and perhaps this is the predicament or part of the predicament of the cultural life in Jordan.

Mr. Fuad Hussein

From the discussion that took place on culture through the presentation of the paper of Mr. Ghassan Abdul Khaleq and the comments of Mrs. Raja' Abu Ghazaleh, it seems that the panelist is making the accusation that politics is dominating culture as if the politicization of culture is a charge one has to reply to. I must emphasize here that politicization in this context is a necessity, particularly after the Arab regimes and the Palestine Liberation Organization shelved the military option as a means to decide the outcome of struggle with Israel

at this phase at least. Thus one had to retreat to the second line of defence, which is the line of culture, in order to protect the nation against the normalization of relations with Israel on the various levels, particularly cultural normalization which poses a very serious threat to the cultural identity of the forthcoming generations.

In the election of the Jordanian Writers' Association, there was a trend rejecting cultural normalization, a trend accepting normalization, and a third trend going along with the Gaza-Jericho Accord concluded between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel. I do not believe that this is something shameful, or some kind of an accusation that one should defend himself against. It was a genuine and objective dialogue between the forces that attract intellectuals and writers. I believe that the election of a less innovative writer from the professional point of view to the membership of the managerial board of the Jordanian Writers' association is much better than the election of the greatest poet or writer if he supports normalization which would eventually generate the marginalization of our culture.

As for the presence of cultural gangs, whether in the association or in the cultural supplements and the newspapers, I believe it is true. It is a phenomenon that cannot be justified or defended. However, I would classify these cultural gangs as political.

Regarding the paper that dealt with political parties, I believe that the parties are suffering from a two-faceted problem. The first is that the political parties are an arena of struggle between veterans who have been contained by the ruling regime in one way or the other, and the youthful new blood who are firm in their convictions and are willing to fight without taking profit or loss into their consideration. The second involves the government policy strives to alienate the political parties from the masses and curb the power of these parties. The government media completely ignores these parties. Any visitor to Jordan with no background on the political life in the country would conclude, after listening to the official newscasts, that there is no party pluralism in Jordan.

Mr. Amin Dhiyab

Political action in our part of the world is not manifest in working programmes and plans to resolve pending problems and to give momentum to the country's progress. Why do we insist then that political action in our part of the world should be the same as that in

foreign countries?

About the question of opposition or loyalty which some panelists spoke about, what is the criterion for these classifications? How do I know if this person is from the opposition or from the loyalists?

Mr. Ziyad Abu Ghanimeh agreed with Mr. Samir Habashneh that the one-party theory has collapsed. Does it follow that the one-nation theory has also collapsed? Mr. Ziyad said that he wants a larger role for the masses. He then said that the regime in Jordan treats the masses in a better way than the regimes of other Arab countries. I would like to know whether repression is measured quantitatively? If repression in Jordan is less than it is in other Arab countries, does this mean that the situation in Jordan is better ?

About the question of professional associations which Dr. Zaid Hamzeh spoke about, I would like to indicate that Dr. Hamzeh did not refer in his presentation to the Master of the Profession, who is well known in the Islamic culture, and whose job is to appreciate perfection in jobs that were well done, and then give a formal certificate that the work has been done in the best possible manner.

On the issue of culture, I would like to raise the following question : Is there any relationship between the form and substance? Why is it that in our Arab countries literature is the only thing that is called culture? What about other products of the intellect? And has the Jordanian Writers Association produced any intellectual products ?

Mr. Hassan Ayed

At the beginning, I would like to address my question to Dr. Zaid Hamzeh. If the engineers, doctors and other members of the professional associations are indifferent in attending the meetings of the general assembly of their own association, how can we really trust or depend on them? How can we trust the engineer who built our house? If a doctor is incapable of dealing with organizational and professional concerns, how can they play an effective role in consolidating or giving momentum to the democratic process? I do presume that a member of a professional association who does not attend the meetings of his association agrees with the decisions that are made.

In his capacity as a doctor, what is the method which should be followed to enable the Jordanian Medical Association to hold a general assembly meeting with more than half of its members attending? Or

does Dr. Hamzeh believe that these associations should be abrogated? If so, I believe that this is an uncivilized and undemocratic approach. Does Dr. Hamzeh believe that the pressure currently being applied to the professional associations, particularly the pronouncements printed by some newspapers about the unconstitutionality of the professional associations, will help the government suspend the Jordanian Teachers' Association, for example, or any other association rejecting the Middle East peace process?

I have a question I want to address to Mr. Samir Habashneh on the Jordanian National Charter. You say that the National Charter was essentially a national reconciliation. However, the government has announced more than once that the National Charter is a source of reference for the democratic process. Since the charter was approved in the way that it was is it a normal thing to approve crucial issues outside parliament? Why hasn't the National Charter been submitted to the parliament then? And why is the National Charter not being activated these days?

Mr. Hussein Da'seh

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to comment on the paper of Mr. Ghassan and the remarks of Mrs. Raja' Abu Ghazaleh. I would like to begin by saying that the historic presentation which consumed half of Mr. Ghassan's paper, is irrelevant to the topic discussed. Or, in other words, irrelevant to the evaluation of the performance of cultural institutions in the democratic era. Mr. Ghassan has completely departed from the concept of the cultural institutions. I think he should have started by defining what is meant by a cultural institution. Instead, he went on to criticize government, semi-government, popular and union institutions. He could have made a stronger entry had he submitted a more serious paper that could enrich the dialogue.

The cultural institution consists of the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Tourism, and Ministry of Information. These three government departments are the closest in dealing with cultural and intellectual concepts in any society, including the Jordanian society. Mr. Ghassan did not say anything in his paper about the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Information, particularly that the latter embraces two of the most important media institutions in the country, namely the Jordan News Agency, Petra, and the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation.

As for semi-government institutions, and I mean by that universities

and colleges, they are cultural institutions that tutor students in the post high school phase of education, and consequently, they leave a great influence on his intellectual and cultural formation.

As for the popular and union organizations, Mr. Ghassan spoke lengthily on the Jordanian Writers Association, and so did Mrs. Raja'. However, more than one cultural league and forum which was launched in the seventies just like the Jordanian Writers Association, have been deliberately overlooked. We have the Jordanian League of Artists, which was launched in 1978, the Plastic Artists Association, the League of Jordanian Musicians as well as many forums which was been launched in the last five years. Why haven't they been mentioned? While the Jordanian Artists and Theater Actors Associations are calling for the creation of an artists association that would include musicians and theater actors, Mr. Ghassan did not refer to this fact in his presentation. In fact this question has been outstanding for sometime, and more than one sector in our society sent memos to this effect to the prime minister and to the parliament.

As far as the performance of these institutions, as you well know, it depends on the performance of the government institutions, or the Ministry of Culture, which is usually at the mercy of the Ministry of Finance whenever appropriations are made from the state budget. Furthermore, the House of Representatives has reduced the Ministry of Culture budget that subsidizes the cultural leagues. The paper did not discuss the obstacles in way of communication among these popular, semi-government and government cultural institutions. Finally, I could say that the paper is rich in certain aspects but lacking in others.

Mr. Muhammad Awwad

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to point out first that Mr. Ghassan's paper was full of generalalities. It is based on personal observations which cannot be relied on in the evaluation of the role of cultural institutions in the democratic era. Nevertheless, I want to make the following remarks:

1- I will begin with a question: Have cultural institutions consolidated democratic life in our modern age? If the performance is different, it means that there is a difference in the mentality which runs these institutions. Consequently, a researcher will have to formulate the different criteria for the purpose of comparison between the two eras, and this is a thing which a panelist cannot do in the short time allocated

to him. However, even with cultural performance, the panelist could have proposed the appropriate criteria and the assumptions he makes, and proceeded then to identify government and private cultural institutions. Some participants have pointed out that there is a large number of these institutions, such as political parties and cultural forums, i.e. the Jordanian Writers Association, the Jordanian Press Association, the Royal Cultural Center, the Shoman Foundation and various other cultural bodies.

Generally speaking, these institutions have played a major role in building democratic life in Jordan and organized many seminars, conferences and lectures. I believe that a practical change in the approach is being introduced and that people attending these gatherings are acting more rationally. At least, the dialogue is no longer as it used to be in the early beginnings. In the early beginnings, there was a harsh, vindictive dialogue, sometimes departing from the rules governing democratic dialogue. But this has now completely changed.

2- The second point involves historic facts, and I regret to say that Mr. Ghassan was not accurate in his narration of historic facts. It is untrue that the decline began during the era of the Caliph Maamoun. The contrary is true. In fact, the fruits of progress began to ripen after the Maamoun era in the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth Hegira centuries. Among the prominent scholars of that era were Tawhidi, Ibn Sina, Al-Farabi and other leading intellectuals in the era of Islam. Even Ibn Khaldoun was a product of the Eighth Century Hegira. It is untrue that backward economic conditions normally produce a backward cultural mentality. We are talking about an era of political decline and weakness. Nevertheless, the cultural performance of that era was rich.

Dr. Ahmad Al-zu'bi

The paper presented by Mr. Samir Habashneh on political relaxation and the performance of political parties was generally constructive. However, he made a remark which could give a negative impression, namely that all attempts at collective party action and coordination did not succeed. Mergers among political parties did not succeed for reasons which were sometimes objective and sometimes personal. Mr. Habashneh concludes by saying we were dealing with the political parties with almost the same sense of loyalty we had for our clans. My comment here is that the panelist did not explain the objective or personal reasons. He also did not answer a question which is implicitly

raised in this case: What is to be done to cope with such a situation assuming that it was true?

Mr. Jamil Al-Nimri

Dr. Hamzeh has a long history of involvement with professional associations, and I think that we should listen carefully to him. I was one of the people who worked for many years for professional associations. I must say that the conditions of the professional associations are awkward and bear no resemblance to associations in developed democracies. Professions such as law, pharmacy and medicine in the developed democracies have societies to handle their affairs as professions. But unions that strive to achieve the demands of their members are something different. Unions in our country have a dual character. They are formal legal bodies on the one hand, and associations that strive to achieve the demands of their members, on the other. The strange thing about the unions in our country is that they embrace the employer and worker at the same time, although they belong to different categories of interests. The employer may be an owner of a private hospital and the worker may be a doctor employed in that private hospital. How can such a union fulfill its professional mission or serve the special interests of people who belong to different sectors?

I was schooled in Italy, and I noticed that such a situation does not exist in Western countries. There in Italy, they have formal bodies handling affairs related to the profession, i.e. medicine, law or pharmacy, etc. But each doctor, lawyer or pharmacist will also join his union. An employed doctor would in this case join the federation of workers unions/ doctors branch, and so on. I am not saying that we should copy this or that system. However, the situation that exists in our country is abnormal and needs a thorough review. I believe that the paper presented by his excellency Dr. Zaid Hamzeh should be taken seriously and that we should review the conditions of our professional associations.

Mr. Rasmi Hamzeh

I would like to begin with Dr. Zaid Hamzeh's paper on the professional associations wherein he calls on the professional associations to refrain from playing a role in politics. I agree with this view, and I think that professional associations should be devoted to the

care of the professional members who are subscribing to them and to the defense of their interests and rights. Otherwise, there would be no reason why these associations were created in the first place. Now that we have political parties that have been licensed to perform their role in the political arena, I think that professional associations should stop their political activities.

As for the paper of Mr. Ghassan, I wish he had said something about cultural security for the next phase. I believe that we will encounter new challenges that will require the cultural institutions to do a great deal. The panelist has spoken about the relationship between the intellectual and the politician and the right of the intellectual to get rid of the domination of the politician. I believe that this will be up to the intellectual to do, because the politician who attains gains from his domination of the intellectual will certainly not free the intellectual freely.

Mr. Ziyad Abu Ghanimeh has spoken about the programs of political parties. I believe that most of our political parties have strong, good and daring programs. But sadly enough, these parties will never have any opportunity to prove that they have programs or can enforce them. Therefore, we should strive to give the opportunity to the political parties to prove that they have appropriate programs. I know many parties which have integrated programs embracing all matters involving political life that are of interest to the people. As for the chances of merger of a number of political parties, I know that the beginning of each experience will no doubt suffer some setbacks, but these setbacks can certainly be overcome through persistence and rational dialogue, and the results will be much better in terms of attaining the desired goals.

Mr. Ramadan Rawashdeh

Thank you, your excellency the chairman. I have one remark to make on Mr. Samir Habashneh's paper. In the progress of his talk about the dual identity, he says that many licensed political parties have their roots in the Palestinian resistance factions and consequently, these parties cannot be accepted in many parts of the country as they are commonly known as Palestinian parties. I certainly do not agree with him on this point. The problem is not that these parties had roots in the Palestinian factions and then evolved into Jordanian parties. From my experience with the leadership of the leftist parties associated with the

Palestinian factions, I have noticed that the problem is not the people but the leaders of these parties themselves. We still have people in leading positions in our political parties who do not view themselves as being part of the institution of the Jordanian political parties or even as part of the Jordanian institutional system, but are acting as if they only have an office in Amman and are not concerned about anything else regarding the problems of this country. This is the reason why our leftist parties cannot find a foothold in certain areas of the country. I often meet with people from various parts of the country who tell me that we are dealing with Jordan as if it were an external body alien from Jordan although the party is licensed by the Jordanian Interior Ministry. The problem then is the leadership of these leftist parties, and I include my party in the criticism. These leftist parties do not feel that they are Jordanian parties or part of the Jordanian party institution. All that they are concerned about is issuing statements condemning the Madrid or Oslo or Cairo accords on the Palestinian issue or collecting signatures from the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan for petitions attacking and condemning the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Thank you.

Dr. Saleh Ershaidat

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope that I will not repeat myself in the ideas I am going to put forth. I would like first to comment on Dr. Zaid Hamzeh's paper on the question of the professional associations. The timing of talks about the professional associations comes at a stage which could be a political expression of the political and social results of the earlier phase. The professional associations were not criticized by anyone when they were a national center of radiation. Of course, they remain so. At one point in time, these professional associations were the only legitimate arena that were expressive of the aspirations of the Jordanian people. Consequently, the constitutionality of the associations is due to their participation in the popular and political national action at that time. The professional associations have been of a great service to Jordan and its national goals. They were a true political expression of the phase that preceded the democratic process.

So far political parties have not been able to enter the parliamentary game, and I am sorry for this expression. Political parties will continue to exist through the professional associations and express their views and objectives. Unions were in the past the only place for political

struggle among the various forces of the left, center and right. This struggle assumed dimensions which all of us are well aware of. It has culminated into elections and the gains that have been produced by the elections.

Mrs. Muna Shqayr noted that the question of democracy and unions was not raised at that time, because it was not part of the issues of that political era. I must say that I agree with her, and would like to thank her for using this expression. Political action was not based on democracy at that time. It was something closer to despotism, fanaticism and irrational struggle among the contesting forces. I would like to assert here that the professional associations, which are civil organizations in the real sense of the word, are the other face of the institutional cornerstone of democracy in Jordan. These organizations have culminated into democratic institutions such as the Upper House of Parliament, the House of Representatives, the political parties and other civil society organizations. Therefore, the talk about alienating professional associations from politics is not democratic. In fact, professional associations should be as involved in politics as political parties and the parliament.

I do agree with Dr. Hamzeh that these associations have grown up to the point that they have almost become unmanageable and that their political activity is overshadowing their professional performance. However, professional associations could be utilized for the purpose of consolidating both democratic and professional functions if there were qualified managerial, technical and political leaderships for these associations.

MP Samir Habashneh

I am going to answer the questions raised and the remarks made in general. On the remarks made by Dr. Abdul Latif Arabiyat, my answer is that I never claimed that I was presenting a new study. On the contrary, I believe that the current situation requires studies of an explorative nature that can practically deal with our problems. Academic research is probably good for schools and universities, but it is not suitable for political parties and the democratic process in Jordan. We need field studies that are based on the scientific method to find solutions to our problems.

Dr. Al-Hassan has made a very significant intervention, and what I have to say about his intervention is that the Arab World has inherited

an abnormal political heritage manifest in ideas such as the leader party, the leading person, the sole party and the Stalinist model. This problem cannot be overcome in a short period of time. But generally speaking, our political parties have been acting democratically under the circumstances.

There was a question about whether the program of the political parties dealt with the problems of society. My answer to this question is that our political parties are still engaged in the theoretical aspects because these parties are still relatively young. Consequently, they have not yet made a real encounter with the national economic, political or social problems of our society. Furthermore, these political parties are still reacting rather than acting. In other words, they would reply to a decision made by the government on singular basis rather than as part of an integrated strategy. Veteran party leaders still insist on continuing in their posts instead of handing over responsibility to the younger generation. These veteran leaders have reached the retirement age, but they still want to continue. I believe that they would just love to have the retirement age raised from 60 to 80 or even for life.

I agree with Dr. Al-Hassan that pluralism should not become a means to divide posts. Pluralism means the alternation of power as a right granted by the masses.

My answer to the remarks made by Mrs. Muna Shqayr about national reconciliation is that I did not mean reconciliation between the political parties on the one hand and the ruling regime on the other. We have used the term "national reconciliation" in the National Charter commission to signify the Jordanian national project. I meant by national reconciliation the reconciliation of the political parties themselves, one with the other, on the eve of the launch of political liberalization. We have thought that political reconciliation among our parties is very important, because supposing that a nationalist party reaches power in Jordan, what would it do? The answer is that it would massacre the communists and the leftists, if there has been no reconciliation. And what if a Marxist or leftist party reaches power in Jordan, what would it do? The first thing it would do is to massacre the nationalists starting with the Baathists. What I meant to say is that national reconciliation should embrace parties that are engaged in an ideological conflict.

We in Jordan still have our problems with the parties. Why do we have more than one Baathist party in Jordan. The answer is because they disagree on certain issues. What about the Baathists and the Nasserites, including our party, which is the Democratic Arab Party. Our party puts

more emphasis on democracy and less emphasis on intransigence than the Baathists do. The conflict between the Baathists and the Nasserites is as old as the conflict between the Baathists and the late Egyptian President Jamal Abdul Nasser over the union between Egypt and Syria. The Baathists are even split among themselves, i.e. there are the Syrian Baathists and there are the Iraqi Baathists.

National reconciliation is the only process that can contain all these contradictions. Again, I do not mean reconciliation between the political parties on the one hand, and the regime on the other, but reconciliation among the political parties themselves. The national reconciliation should embrace the Muslim Brotherhood, the Baathists, the Nasserites and the nationalists. It is at this point that the National Charter will become a meaningful instrument for dialogue.

I have heard someone say that the opposition is non-existent. I believe that this is unfair to say. It is possible that there were certain periods of time when the opposition was less outspoken than others. But the opposition has been there since 1957, and it had its own literature and made its own sacrifices for the purpose of attaining their goals. It is also true that the opposition has changed tactics. It is now talking in terms of democracy and pluralism. In the absence of national reconciliation, each party would strive to undermine other parties to gain power and execute its program by force. The national reconciliation is the second stage in the life of the Jordanian state after the short period of the fifties. National reconciliation means that we do not engage in resistance to the ideologies of others. The Communist Party could now hold its conference in the Royal Cultural Center in Amman. This would not have been possible had it not been for the national reconciliation. I dare say that the ruling regime had a sharper sense of politics than the political parties. It had the ability to explore the horizons of the future and to embark on change.

Mr. Fuad Hassan said that the problems of the political parties can be summed up in domestic disputes. It is true that political parties are just like other institutions created by the Jordanian people. They are reflective of the realities that exist in our lives and societies.

My answer to Mr. Amin Dhiyab is that I support the Al-Nahda Party. I have not equated Arab nationalist and Islamist parties with the parties that existed in Germany. There, in Germany, the parties have resolved their national problem and they are now seeking to attain progress on various fronts. I believe that we need a Nahda (Renaissance) Party in the real sense of the word.

Mr. Hassan Ayed asked why hasn't the National Charter been submitted to the House of Representatives for approval. My answer to this question is that there is no constitutional basis for submitting the National Charter to the House of Representatives. This question was discussed at the time. The national laws are derived from the constitution, and these should be submitted to the parliament for approval. However, the National Charter is a moral, rather than a legal document. It arbitrates differences among Jordanians over the various political, economic and social issues. I believe that each one of us is entitled to join the political party of his own choice. There was another question about why the National Charter hasn't been activated. My answer to this question is that the anti-democratic forces in Jordan are making serious attempts to undermine the charter and to abort the many gains that have been attained by our people through the democratic process.

Mr. Rasmi Hamzeh says that political parties have integrated programs. I am of course speaking as a party insider. The truth is that we do not have an integrated national vision to reply to the challenges encountering us. We do have concepts and ideas, but these concepts and ideas have not yet materialized into an integrated vision capable of finding solutions to the problems of our Jordanian people.

I want to thank Mr. Ramadan Rawashdeh for exercising self-criticism, which I agree that we should all do. We have the problem of the dual identity that is rooted in the Palestinian resistance factions. The problem is not with the people, but with the leaders of the political parties. Some of these parties are acting as if they were foreign companies operating in Jordan. We want the Jordanian parties to develop a national identity so that they can become qualified to embark on the larger and vaster road of Pan-Arab action. Most evidently, this is the only way we can achieve our major Pan-Arab goals. It is a very harmful phenomenon for the political parties in Jordan to remain as institutions serving bodies outside the borders of Jordan. Such a phenomenon will never enable the political movement in Jordan to grow or prosper.

Dr. Zaid Hamzeh

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to begin with the remarks made by Dr. Abdul Latif Arabiyat, who is not here in this session. Dr. Arabiyat supports the compulsory membership in the professional syndicates. It is a well known fact that membership in professional syndicates in all parts of the world is voluntary, and this is prompted by

respect for the principles of human rights. I do not think that Dr. Arabiyat is really calling for compulsory membership. I believe that he is mixing between compulsory membership and licensing. We have not called for anarchy. Voluntary membership does not mean that there would be unlicensed doctors or engineers working. In all countries of the world, including Jordan, there are licensing authorities which do not license any person unless the candidate fulfills certain specifications and conditions.

Dr. Arabiyat has noted that my presentation was not comprehensive. I do not want to comment on this view in the short period of time I have. I said from the beginning of my presentation that I would discuss only the question of the professional syndicates, and this meant that I was not going to discuss any other question. I want to thank Dr. Yossef Al-Hassan for his remarks. As for the remarks made by Mr. Amin Dhiyab, I would like to say that we do not seek to cancel the post of president of the syndicate or the syndicate itself. But what we are striving to do is rectify mistakes by democratic means. Mr. Hassan Al-Ayed has raised a very important question about the quorum of the general assembly meetings of the syndicates. One should not expect 6,000 doctors in Jordan to attend the general assembly meeting. This is impossible for practical reasons. They could not all come to one place at the same time. It is the law which has created the problem. Had membership in the professional syndicates been voluntary, member doctors would be enthusiastic about attending the general assembly meetings. Furthermore, increased achievement would mean increased membership. It is illogical to continue to have a law stating that all doctors or engineers in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan should attend a general assembly meeting in order to have a quorum.

A question was raised about the constitutionality of the professional syndicates. I did not say that the professional syndicates were unconstitutional. What I said was that their laws should be revised. I have not said that they were unconstitutional, and I am replying here to Dr. Saleh Irsheidat, but asserted that they are part of our institutional life and have an important role to play at any time. As for the government reluctance to license the Teachers Syndicate, this question was irrelevant to my paper.

The comments which Mr. Jamil Al-Nimri made are probably an indication that he supports my call for a review of the laws of the professional syndicates. Mr. Rasmi Hamzeh called for full-time engagement in professional work for syndicate members who should

also quit political activities. I do not support this request, because I think that this is something which will happen gradually and spontaneously when political parties prove that they can fill the vacuum. At that point, as Dr. Saleh pointed out, the syndicates will continue as national organizations and as part of the democratic process, not all of which is political. The democratic process is the sum total of these institutions and organizations. What I am saying is that we should only revise their laws, and I have explained the things which should be reviewed regarding the Jordanian Medical Association and other syndicates, such as compulsory membership which is in violation of the principles of human rights, the non-democratic general assembly meetings, the unreasonable disciplinary tribunals or special courts, and the imposition of fees on the citizen, not on the profession.

Thank you.

Mr. Ghassan Abdul Khalek

At the beginning of my remarks, I would like to say that I wish Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center had expanded the circle of participants in the discussion on the performance of cultural institutions, because many of the interventions were based on the evaluation of the organizations the speakers were affiliated with, such as the Plastic Arts Association, the Royal Cultural Center, the Shoman Foundation and other organizations. If you take into consideration that there are well over 50 cultural institutions or forums in Jordan, you can probably imagine the amount of the effort that should be made in this connection.

I agree with Mr. Habashneh that what is required now are the personal views and the field studies, not the academic research. As a researcher, I know that researchers can sometimes conceal themselves behind figures and sources to refrain from stating their personal views or impressions. I agree with the notion that our cultural institutions should be able to make a distinction about the various types of cultural manifestations. Some people have their reservations about a national strategy for culture, because they are apprehensive that this would suggest centralized thinking. We should not be afraid to make important decisions to cope with the cultural invasion of which we are a target.

As for the question of the politicization of culture, what happened in the Jordanian Writers Association was not really a difference over cultural normalization with Israel. What really happened was that one group accused another group of supporting the normalization, and this

was untrue. It only shows the non-democratic methods with which intellectuals deal with one another. If I wanted to burn up a political foe, it would be enough for me to accuse him of being a supporter of normalization or being a researcher with American cultural centers. This is a non-democratic practice which should be condemned.

As for the historical identification of poets and writers as the intellectuals of their society, I think that I answered this when I said that the Muslim Caliph Maamoun reversed the trend by giving prominence to jurists and scientists rather than poets and writers. But after his death, there was a cultural setback, and Arab-Islamic culture reverted to its rhetorical nature.

I do agree with the notion suggested by Mr. Rasmi Hamzeh that culture should be freed from politics. However, this issue remains controversial. Even when there are voices speaking up loudly that culture should be freed, we find a quite significant number of intellectuals resenting and resisting this call. Seemingly, they are happy with their subservient status.

Briefly speaking, I can say that a genuine intellectual is still a rare commodity in our Arab society. He is still the target of persecution even by institutions that claim to be democratic. He works hard to make a living, and does not live in luxury. This is why I say that he should be protected by a unionist organization that can improve his personal and professional conditions.

Ziyad Abu Ghanimeh

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Please allow me to correct a mistake I made in the progress of my comment on the paper of Mr. Habashneh. I have said that the Islamists were the only organization rejecting peaceful solutions. I apologize for this statement, and I know that there are many nationalist, leftist and centrist forces which share with us the same enthusiasm for opposing peaceful solutions.

Focus Number Four

- **Media performance in the democratic era**
- **Media performance in the democratic era : Jordan Television**
- **Women and democracy: political performance of Jordanian women.**
- **Women and democracy: the democratic experiment in Jordan (1989 - 1993).**
- **General discussion**

MEDIA PERFORMANCE IN THE DEMOCRATIC ERA

Suleiman Al-Qudah

Introduction

The sudden and surprising collapse of the Soviet Union and communism and the bipolar system has again drawn attention to international relations and the subsequent new world order and new media order that have been the outcome of this dramatic change. The more profound change that has resulted is the transformation of Western societies from industrial into information-based societies.

Sociologists believe that the most prominent feature of the new "Information Society" is the emphasis on the production and circulation of information through the computer which has generated a far-reaching intellectual revolution in the field of production, distribution and consumption related to all disciplines of knowledge. If we add to this the major advancements in the technology of information, particularly in the large-scale use of satellites for universal television transmission which has transcended geographic boundaries, we can see how the multi-media are beginning to influence values, trends and customs. The world is being transformed into a global village, and consequently into a global consciousness that transcends all other forms of national consciousness, particularly in the Western world. This new consciousness formed by the media has become a mass consciousness no longer restricted to the elite. Nevertheless, the Western media, which is the leader of the new media order in the world, is circulating a false and erroneous consciousness. In the words of MacBride in his report to the UNESCO: "There may be a multiplicity of sources and means of communication, but this does not necessarily

mean that there is a multiplicity of performance."

In order for the world to avert the authoritarianism of information, the challenge should be coped with by stressing the democracy of information, which should be based on the right of the individual to the protection of his own privacy as well as the right to knowledge, the use of information and participation in the mass media.

Where do we stand?

Here is the big question: Where do we stand in the midst of these accelerating developments, and how do we cope with this enormous flow of information and the danger of the authoritarianism of communication? Are we prepared to keep pace with media developments in the world in a manner that will advance our national goals and democratic process and protect against the pseudo-media consciousness which the West is trying to impose on the world? To answer this question, we must first take into consideration that the democratic process in Jordan is still new and that the change which should have accompanied this process has not been consolidated in our institutions, particularly the press. This paper will specifically discuss the Jordanian press and the extent that it has kept pace with these developments and the democratic process. To do so, we should discuss the factors which govern the performance of the press, together with a brief review of the history of the press since the establishment of the Emirate of Trans-Jordan.

Evolution of the Jordanian Press

Going back to the beginnings of the Jordanian press, it is noteworthy that the founder of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the late King Abdallah Ibn Al-Hussein, was a man of letters, a poet and a journalist. He wrote several articles in the newspapers of Hejaz and Egypt, and published the first Jordanian newspaper *Al-Huqq* at his camp in Maan in 1920. The slogan of the newspaper was an "Arab Revolt." The newspaper was distributed to the leading figures of the Great Arab Revolt who accompanied the king and to his officers and men.

The Jordanian press has undergone three phases of evolution. The first phase began with the creation of the kingdom until 1952. During this phase, many newspapers and magazines were published. They were literary in nature and committed to the Pan-Arab nationalist

anti-colonialist line which called for independence, unity and liberation. The press then had very meager resources and was governed by laws that were enforced in the Ottoman era or during the British mandate. The second phase extended from 1952 until 1970. In this phase daily newspapers appeared in Jordan and Palestine. The decade of the fifties was the decade of the modern Jordanian press. The press became mature, particularly after the unity of the two banks of Jordan. A Jordanian Press Association was established for the first time to care for and support the profession. The first publications law was issued in 1953. National documents available indicate that from 1920 to 1954, some 38 newspapers, including 7 daily newspapers, and 39 magazines were published in Jordan. The daily newspapers were *Al-Urdun*, *Falastin*, *Difa'*, *Jazirah*, *Jihad*, *Nisr* and *Nahda*. Some Jordanian political parties also published their own newspapers which spoke for the party. In the sixties, the habit of publication of daily newspapers became deeply entrenched in the culture of the country while weekly newspapers were on their way to demise. However, the main dailies of that period suffered from the same complaint--meager resources--because of the few advertisements and the limited circulation of some of these newspapers. A new press and publications law was issued in 1967. However, the law was rejected by parliament and suspended in 1968, and the 1955 law was reinstated.

The third phase began in the early seventies. Modern daily newspapers were published, witnessing a transformation from profession to industry. The press of the third phase was institutional, balanced and committed to the issues of the nation. They were also widely circulated. The newspapers also adopted modern methods of printing and layout. However, they continued to be subject to the Publications Law of 1973, which was similar to the publications law rejected by parliament in 1968. The 1973 Press and Publications Law placed severe restrictions on the freedom of the press, curtailing its ability to get genuinely involved in national issues and the problems of its own society. The freedom of expression was also severely restricted by this law.

Throughout the three phases of the evolution of the Jordanian press, there has been a close relationship existing between the press and society, particularly in the political and social domains. The emergence of the press in Jordan can be traced as far as back as the foundation of the Emirate of Trans-Jordan. It continued to develop and grow in stages during the post-independence era, thereby reflecting the political, social and cultural ambitions of the Jordanian society.

Frameworks Governing the Performance of the Press

To determine the role of the press in the democratic era, we should look into the various frameworks that have governed the performance of the press and its ability to keep pace with the constant development and change in society.

1- The constitutional and legislative framework :

The Jordanian constitution has guaranteed for every citizen the right of expression and the right of criticism. Article 15, Paragraph 1 of the constitution states the following: "The state shall guarantee the freedom of opinion. Each Jordanian shall be entitled to express his views freely, whether through speech, writing, photography or any other means of expression, provided that this is done within the limits of the law." Paragraph 2 of the same article stated that the freedom of the press and printing shall be guaranteed within the limits of the law.

It is evident from the provisions of the above-mentioned article that the Jordanian constitution has guaranteed the freedom of opinion and does not place any ceiling or limitation on this freedom other than the limits of the law, or the considerations of martial law, states of emergency, public safety and civil defense, as stipulated in the fourth paragraph of the same article.

On the legislative level, five publications and press laws have been issued since the foundation of the kingdom. The most recent was issued in 1993.

It is noteworthy that legislation has not kept pace with the advanced standard of our press, and does not fulfill the ambitions of the journalists. Even the new law which was approved during the democratic era has its shortcomings and gaps which could have been avoided had the law been discussed first by the various press, political, parliamentary and unionist segments of our society. The present law was drafted in ambiguous generalities and listed the acts which newsmen are banned from doing and the penalties to be imposed in case they do not abide. Needless to say, a free and advanced press needs progressive legislation that can keep pace with the ever-changing conditions in society. However, the most important merit of the law is that it stripped the executive branch of government of the power to punish the press and gave this power to the judiciary. It also facilitated

the procedure for licensing new publications.

2- The political and intellectual framework:

Press freedom is usually dependent on the political system that exists in any country. A democratic system should necessarily be associated with a free press, and vice-versa. Furthermore, the intellectual, cultural and social modes that are prevalent in any society affect the performance of the press, either positively or negatively. For example, there is a progressive relationship between the performance of the press on the one hand, and the educational and cultural standards and ability of the society to grow and develop on the other. Perhaps the most prominent example of the influence of the press on politics is relations among states and the impact of the press on these relations in terms of improving or worsening these relations.

3. The economic framework:

We mean by the economic framework the financial capabilities of the press, the nature of the proprietor and whether the press is capable of funding itself from its own resources or is dependent on external sources such governmental and party sources or explicit or implicit foreign funding. The press has become an advanced industry which needs enormous resources to secure its continuity and modernization. This is why an independent press relies heavily on commercial advertisements and mass circulation.

4. The technical framework:

We mean by the technical framework the editorial, layout and printing functions which primarily reflect on the form and content of the newspaper, its circulation and accessibility to readers at the right time and in the right place in the best and easiest possible manner.

5. The nature of the communicators :

Perhaps one of the most prominent factors influencing the quality of the press material is the nature of the communicators. By communicators, we mean newsmen and planners and executors of the media policies in the various governmental and private institutions. The crucial points in their activity are their academic and professional

qualifications and ability to constantly obtain new and fresh information about the various issues and problems facing society.

Conclusion

By reviewing the overall frameworks and objective factors that govern the function and performance of the Jordanian press, it is evident that it still has a long way to go before it can play an effective role in the democratic process. We should emphasize here that there are essential prerequisites for the press before it starts playing this role, and these prerequisites can be summed up in the following :

1- Laws governing the press should be reviewed and revised, particularly the Press and Publications Law and the Jordanian Press Association Laws with the aim of safeguarding the freedom of the press that has been guaranteed by the Constitution and the National Charter. The press should be accepted as one of the institutions of democracy undertaking the responsibility of the freedom of expression and providing the necessary information to form public opinion and to generate a profound commitment to the national and societal issues.

2- The press institutions should be supported financially and they should become capable of self-funding from the sources of advertisement and distribution. Administrative barriers standing in the way of the progress of the press should be eliminated.

3- The ownership of the shares of the major daily newspapers should be reviewed. Government enterprises currently own most of these shares according to the provisions of the new press and publications law. There should be a ceiling for government ownership of the shares of these newspapers so that these newspapers can become independent in the decisions they make and policies they follow.

4- Press establishments should be provided with qualified journalistic, technical and administrative personnel. This requires that we focus on the institutional dimension of performance, such as providing incentives to these qualified personnel so as to keep them employed with the press.

5- The Jordanian press is still suffering from a serious shortage in information centers. The information currently available is not updated. Consequently, an integrated national effort should be made by universities, research centers and government information centers to offset this shortage.

6- Efforts should be made to expand the scope of circulation of the local press to Arab countries by enlarging the circulation networks and printing international editions so that the Jordanian press can convey its national mission to the largest possible number of Arab readers.

Finally, I must say that the early pioneers of the press worked hard and persisted in their endeavours in the honesty for which they were known and the distinguished ability that has characterized their performance, until they created a fair and capable press institution. The Jordanian press, I am proud to say, has performed its enlightening role under the most difficult circumstances. Now that we are witnessing a democratic era, the press has certainly attained a remarkable professional progress and persisted in its efforts to advance and promote its national mission. The fairness and objectivity of the Jordanian press has been commended by international organizations and institutions.

A poll conducted by Yarmouk University on a sample of 500 people who were questioned about the seriousness of the democratic process in Jordan indicated that 89 percent of those questioned replied that the performance of the press has improved. 93 per cent of the sample surveyed replied that the freedom of expression has improved. 79 percent replied that access to information has improved, and 62 percent replied that there was now more hope for the future.

It was once said that the problem of Lebanon rested on the fact that it had too much freedom and too little democracy. I must say that in our case, our problem is that we have too much democracy and we must provide a lot of freedom.

MEDIA PERFORMANCE IN THE DEMOCRATIC ERA

JORDAN TELEVISION

Ayman Masanat

When we talk about democracy and television in Jordan, we assume in advance that compared to the past, there is a democratic transformation currently taking place in the country. However, the monitoring and analysis of these democratic transformations, whether they are positive or negative, needs a long pause for the purpose of profound and objective examination of these transformations and the institutions involved in these transformations, such as the citizens, political parties, the government and social organizations. Furthermore, we should be able to understand the context of the democratic transformation processes in the political, economic, social and cultural fields and their repercussions on the practical and realistic levels.

At the outset, I would like to say that democracy does not necessarily create a truthful and objective media with a constructive content on the level of thought and culture. The media that respects the mind, heart and taste of its recipients can never be a natural and spontaneous outcome of a democratic system based on the Western liberal pattern. Consumer-oriented Western societies, including the media consumers are complaining about cultural patterns that can never be satisfying because they are superficial and stereotyped.

We would be mistaken to assume that a democratic atmosphere is a sufficient condition for a media industry that will satisfy the various tastes and cultural preferences of the masses. Media production, particularly television production, is complicated and requires

knowledge of instruments, techniques and forms. The democratic transformation process is also a difficult and long process that requires the pooling of the efforts of all those concerned in order to translate objectives into tangible programmes that can be implemented realistically. This cannot materialize unless the growth and institutionalization of the various social, political and cultural organizations is completed and these organizations can interact effectively with the masses.

I make this introduction in order to warn against falling into the illusion of the so-called balanced, or ideal, or objective or constructive media, and to warn also against falling into the mistake of believing that democracy is the saviour that has the ready solutions for all the problems and difficulties of the media. Democracy has become a mere slogan for some people and a transient phase to reach power, for others.

The Viewer: Between the Free and Controlled Systems

If we go back to Jordan Television and try to determine the degree of its participation in promoting the understanding of democracy and in advancing the cultural standards of citizens, what would be our conclusions? First, let me say that television is a medium of communication in terms of supervision and management. According to Sydney W. Head of the United States, there are three supervisory systems applied to the televisions of the world:

The first system is a free one which trusts the market forces and the principle of supply and demand. Nevertheless, it operates under checks and balances. The American television is an example of this free system. The second system is a paternal one which seeks to strike a balance between supply and demand in the market on the one hand, and the needs of viewers, on the other. British television is an example of this system. The third system, which is prevalent in most countries of the world is an authoritarian instructive system, whereby the government decides the contents of the programmes and speaks on behalf of the viewers.

Needless to say, we in Jordan use the third supervisory system in the management of state radio and television. The relationship between the television and the viewer is then one that exists between the ruler and the ruled. Political authorities do not interfere in all the details of the radio and television functions. They leave a margin of freedom of movement and action to those in charge of radio and television

production. This margin expands under normal circumstances and contracts in cases of crises.

Thus, we probably could inquire about the nature of the relationship between the viewer and the television, and specifically speaking, about the role of the viewer-citizen in the communication process itself. An examining look at the forms and contents of the television programs clearly reveals that the viewer-citizen is the target of education. He is treated as a subordinate receiver who needs to be helped and shown right from wrong. He is a receiver of programmes that are based on counsel, guidance and advice, beginning with the developmental media and ending with the news reports which all warn us in one way or the other not to commit mistakes or follies. This is done under the guise of the protection of environment and public hygiene, the respect of traffic regulations, and rendering help to tourists, the elderly, etc.

Briefly speaking, the viewer-citizen is not a productive or effective element in the education process. He does not decide on his own, but needs others to help him decide. He is a citizen who can be influenced by a general speech or pronouncement that is superficial in nature and that does not deal systematically with the issues of the hour or the problems people are encountering. Briefly speaking, it is a television pronouncement with an elastic content.

Culture and the consolidation of the existing Systems

Television, as a channel of mass communication, is influenced by the development of communication technology, particularly since this technology is not as neutral as it may look from the first instance. Communication technology reinforces the concepts of the prevailing Western media which are based on specific criteria, such as giving priority to the picture, quick rhythm, press scoops, movement in all directions for a quick news coverage, live relay, ready spots, etc. Thus, media work, particularly news coverage, depends on the following: Broader coverage, faster speed in work, larger messages, and live coverage of events.

All these elements taken together generate a consumption pattern prompting all those who are concerned to rush to produce in order to enter with their product into a media market that can provide them with a place on the international media map that is constantly changing and rejuvenating.

What I want to assert here is that it is extremely difficult to control the relationship between ever advancing technology and the content of the media message whose production requires highly specialized skills. However, technical skills and a good quality of production are not sufficient by themselves. There should be a value system covering the intellectual, cultural and moral aspects that govern society and that would not overlook the respect of pluralism and the freedom of opinion. When it becomes possible to attain this relationship, we can talk about clear and meaningful communication contents .

Absence of an Integrated Outlook

All this leads us to raise the following question: Does Jordan Television have a clear, integrated outlook based on a value system? The answer is no, although I believe that there is a movement in this direction. Though this movement is based on the views of competent young people, it still needs to be regulated within a collective movement which has a clear vision. Nevertheless, it is a positive step in the right direction. As for the organization of the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation, changes have been introduced in several areas, including the following:

- Movement towards administrative and financial independence of the corporation.
- Re-organization of the corporation's personnel on the basis of more accurate job descriptions.
- Activation of the role of the Information Training Center.
- Opening of the Jordanian-Arab satellite channel.

Furthermore, Jordan Television has become more open to viewers and is trying to attract new qualified personnel to join the corporation.

All these changes that have taken place in the democratic era are of extreme significance, particularly if we take into consideration past negative performance where specialization and professionalism did not count, where there were very short intervals of time between one director and the other taking over the management of the corporation, and where there was lack of resources to train those who were in charge of the production process. All these were negative factors which affected the performance of the corporation's personnel.

But what can we say about the professional performance of Jordan Television today, or about its role in raising the level of democratic

dialogue and promoting the understanding of the concepts of democracy? Unfortunately, Jordan Television has failed in handling this question wisely. It has transmitted programmes about democracy that are clearly intended to promote certain concepts, and this is clear from the fact that emphasis was placed on certain promotional slogans, such as: "Jordan is a unique democratic model in the region;" "Jordan is an oasis for democracy;" "Democracy means the freedom of expression;" "Transmitting the views of the parliament deputies and senators to the viewers is a democratic manifestation;" and "Democracy, is it necessary or not?"

Exaggeration in talking about democracy made some viewers sarcastically devise the slogan : "Democracy is the solution" as a reply to the slogan raised by the Islamists: "Islam is the solution."

In other words, the over-use of the word "democracy" in a superficial way that is void of a significant meaning had made a mockery out of democracy. Thus, you might hear a farmer on Jordan Television thanking God for the rain, His Majesty King Hussein and the Department of Agriculture for the seeds, democracy for solving our problems, and reassuring us that there will be a bounty of agricultural produce if we have more rain. My question is: Are farmers that naive? Isn't Jordan Television insulting the intelligence of our people when it transmits reports and interview that have no content? Most of Jordan Television's local and news programmes do not reflect the concerns of large segments of our people or our cultural conditions. Proper news coverage cannot be done during a camera's tour at random of public places to promote an idea set in advance or an objective determined previously. Furthermore, people outside of Amman are completely unheard. Why don't the television reporters go to places outside Amman to reveal the concerns of our people there? Why don't they discuss with them the issues that have been raised in parliament? Why is the formation of political opinion restricted to the residents of Amman only? Why are the visits of Crown Prince Hassan given immediate attention only, why are they not followed up with reports from the local community to determine the results? Why don't television reporters conduct interviews with local residents for this purpose ?

Why don't our reporters, commentators and newsmen at Jordan Television explain to us in a simple and clear language some of the events that are influencing our daily lives ? Why don't they explain to us the reasons for the rise or decline of share prices at the Amman Stock

Exchange? Why don't they report about the reasons for traffic accidents and the solutions proposed instead of showering us with figures of casualties?

Unfortunately, the performance of Jordan Television in the area of daily news coverage is below the acceptable standard. Jordan Television is also stumbling in the handling of political, economic and cultural issues simply because there is no clear strategy or philosophy according to which it could act.

Nevertheless, we should not hold Jordan Television and its personnel fully responsible for all these shortcomings in professional performance and in the failure to promote people's awareness of the democratic process. The executive power is also to blame, because it has not been able to keep pace with new changes. I sometimes think that the executive power can hardly understand the uniqueness of television as a mass communication medium or realize the obstacles faced in production. The executive power should strive hard to offer new and clear contents and to stop publicizing for government achievements, which are in fact duties which the government should perform in any case. Furthermore, it should become more involved with the masses.

There remains only the third and last party in this process: the masses. The different categories of people have different political, cultural and social ingredients, and they should participate in the democratic process and process of social change as an active partner. In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the following points:

- 1- The media does not create democracy.
- 2- Democracy cannot create a good media.
- 3- Media messages outside the political and social context should not be presented to the masses.
- 4- The change of persons does not produce a better performance. What is important is that the new people are specialized in television work.
- 5- It is not enough to devote dozens of meetings, encounters and interviews to speak about the advantages of democracy. What is important is to strive for changing the way of thinking and the method of handling the content of the media message. This necessarily requires the adoption of a new value system that respects the other view and makes it possible to produce meaningful messages.

While it is easy to agree on the purely professional criteria that can regulate television performance, things become more complicated when we come to the adoption of a cultural and moral value system. The difficult question here is: From where do we derive constant values in an age that is characterized by constant change? Do we derive this value system from our heritage, or divine religions, or political ideologies, or a document called the National Charter? Don't we all at the end of the 20th Century, need to change the codes of our readings?

Discussant Abdallah Hasanat

I would like to make my remarks on the paper presented by Mr. Salman Al-Qudah. I believe that the issues of freedom of expression and freedom of speech, and consequently the issues of publication and the press can be handled in isolation from the constitutional and legal framework governing them, which is a historic product of the policies of the state.

I do agree with those who say that the Jordanian constitution has guaranteed the freedom of expression. In fact, the constitution states that each Jordanian is entitled to express his views freely, whether in speech, writing, drawing, or other forms of expression within the limits of the law. Although I am not a legal expert, I would say that by adding this condition "within the limits of the law," the constitution has restricted the freedom of expression. No one can claim that the Press and Publications Law we currently have is unconstitutional. So, journalists are currently being taken to court in accordance with a constitutional law one hundred per cent.

We are always reminded that this is a state governed by law and that we have to work within this law, although the law itself, as Mr. Salman Al-Qudah noted, is full of instructions about what is allowed and what is banned. I am not calling for rebellion against the law. Nevertheless, all those concerned, including writers, journalists and citizens, should realize that there are two important points which should be emphasized. The first is that we should seek to change the law, and second we should seek to amend Article 15 of the constitution to guarantee the full freedom of thought and expression.

Arab intellectuals and thinkers have been subservient for many decades now. The question is not one of an elite using the printed word to reach a position of power, although this is its right and is much safer for the nation than violence that is generated by repression. This is a crucial issue which involves the interest of the nation and the people.

The nation can never progress unless it is free, and this freedom, first and foremost, should include the freedom of thought and expression, which should not be restricted unless the person concerned trespasses on the freedoms of others.

Thought can never grow and prosper under the control of a watchman. If we go back to the Press and Publications Law, we will find out that the most important person in this regard is the director of the Press and Publications Department. While editors, publishers, writers and journalists have specific qualifications for holding their posts, there is no specific qualifications set for the director of the Press and Publications Department. This man, who has no specific qualifications, has been entrusted with shaping the minds of the people and assessing what they should read and should not read, what they should view and what they should not view. For example, this man bans almost all books that speak of Jordan's contemporary history because they are incompatible with the official version. Thus, researchers, scholars and writers are deprived of many sources that are authoritative, although occasionally biased. Nevertheless, all these sources contribute to the enrichment of knowledge about the topic under discussion. Even newspapers and magazines sent to daily newspaper editors from abroad are often censored. Articles dealing with Jordanian issues are either censored in whole or in part. You are well aware of the various tactics used to censor the press, publications and literary production. Consequently, serious restrictions are being placed on the freedom of thought in Jordan.

Therefore, and although I agree with Mr. Salman Al-Qudah that there are several interlocking questions which should be dealt with, whether as regards the ownership of newspapers, or training the press personnel and others, we should never forget that our ultimate goal is to sanctify the freedom of thought and expression by striving to change the Press and Publications Law and to amend outdated articles of this law, articles that can only belong to the past century. In the climax of the tyranny of the Ottoman rule, an Arab writer, Abdul Rahman Al-Kawakibi, wrote the following in his book *Issues of Despotism* "The most feared thing for a ruler is the realization by the people that freedom is more precious than life."

We in Jordan freed ourselves from the rule of tyrants some decades ago, and if we still want to be an example to be followed, we should free ourselves from the watchman's authority.

WOMEN AND DEMOCRACY POLITICAL PERFORMANCE OF JORDANIAN WOMEN :REALITIES AND HORIZONS

Dr. Eidah Al-Mutlaq

Preface

To assess the progress of the democratic trend in Jordan and the political performance of Jordanian women, we have first to take a look at the basic concepts of democracy and participation and the objective conditions that can boost this participation. In one of its theoretical definitions, democracy is a way of life governing the relationships among people, including elections, in addition to the job, home, village, city, school and others. Another definition says that democracy is a form of association based on the principle of the political game, which governs its trends, conditions, restrictions and procedures. According to these two definitions, democracy is not restricted to the political aspect of life, but goes beyond this to include the social, economic and cultural relations among people. Therefore, this paper will deal with two focuses: First is the terms and criteria of participation, and second, the prospects for the improvement of performance and introducing the change.

Terms and criteria of participation

A- The criteria for the development of the political system: The case of Jordan:

To assess the progress of democracy in Jordan, one should use a number of criteria related to the development of the political system,

including the following :

- A general national consensus on the basis of political and social goals.
- Effective communication between the leaders and the masses.
- High standards of education.
- Efficient civil administration.
- A political system based on competition among political blocs and parties.
- Political institutions executing various functions.
- Political activity on the level of the entire country, and not in the capital, Amman, alone.
- The presence of organized interest groups or pressure groups.
- Freedom of political action.
- The presence of a constitutional court that rules on the constitutionality of the laws.
- The Armed Forces are subject to the supervision and control of the civilian authorities.

If we were to assess the case of Jordan in light of these criteria, one could say that democratic achievements were attained on the first three variables. In the sphere of national consensus on the basic political and social goals, Jordan has reached this consensus by agreeing on the National Charter. Effective communication between the people and the leaders has been evident on a number of issues. In the sphere of public liberties, the scope has widened. This is due to higher standards of education. However, achievement on the remaining aforementioned criteria is almost peripheral. On the criterion of efficient civil administration, we can clearly note that the public administration in Jordan still needs quantitative and qualitative development if it were to cope with the educational and intellectual development that has taken place in the Jordanian society and with current and forthcoming needs and challenges of the democratic revolutions and the human rights movement. Management in many of our institutions is still incapable of accelerating social development. Furthermore, corruption is prevalent in many of our institutions.

Concerning the position of the regime towards the outcome of the democratic process, this position is tantamount to some form of non-recognition of the new political facts in the Jordanian arena, as has been evident from the elections. Concerning the criteria of the other political institutions which perform various functions, the executive

power is still dealing with the legislative power on a basis of superiority, not on the basis of being a counterpart or a partner. Furthermore, the executive power does not care about the remaining civil society institutions, such as political party organizations, professional unions and popular organizations. As for the opposition, the government views the opposition as a democratic cosmetic only. But in real practice, the government does not allow this opposition to grow or become influential.

On the level of the official governmental dealing with popular political activities, the government acts with double standards. What it allows for pro-government political forces in the capital, Amman, is usually prohibited outside Amman. This has led to the concentration of political activities in Amman only which have not expanded to the remaining regions of the country. All these practices have weakened the chances of the emergence of organized interest or pressure groups. As for dealing with the political forces, the government allows pro-government political forces to carry out activities that are prohibited for the opposition. The freedom of political action is usually suspended by administrative measures, such as the prohibition of meetings, rallies and protests, and even general discussion of hot issues. Since there is no responsible constitutional court to rule on the constitutionality of the laws, many laws are still being endorsed without any evident legal reference source, such as the "one man, one vote" law.

The combination of these imbalances in dealing with the criteria is an evidence of an imbalance in dealing with the democratic process. This imbalance is perhaps due to the incorrect notion which the regime has about its relationship with democracy. Democracy for the ruling regime means anything that ensures the stability, security and continuity of the regime. In such a situation of duplicity of concepts, it is difficult to agree on one single meaning of democracy.

B. Jordanian political trends and conditions of their formation :

The form and scope of the popular participation in the political process is usually determined by the cultural conditions that are prevalent in society. There are three participatory cultures in society, as classified by Gabriel Almond and Sydney Farba:

1- The old culture where there is a weak orientation of the citizenry towards political questions. In this case, the citizen is not associated in one way or the other with the national political institutions or political

issues, because he feels that he cannot influence these institutions or issues.

2- The culture of submission: The citizen in this case is very aware of the political regime and its actions. He likes some of these actions and hates others, while his knowledge of the institutions that undertake to attain social gains for the citizens remains poor. He also feels that he will not personally influence events if he participates in the political process.

3- The culture of participation: Here the citizen has a high standard of political awareness and plays an effective role in politics. He influences the political process and system in various ways, such as participating in the elections, rallies or protests, or exercising a certain political activity through his membership in a political party or a pressure group.

If we were to assess the case of Jordan in relation to the three cultural patterns of participation, we can see that the three patterns interact with one another on the one hand, and with overall social, economic and political conditions in the country, on the other. The overall outcome of these interactions is a blend of different and contradictory attitudes. Nevertheless, it is the pattern of the old culture that characterizes the prevailing political attitude in Jordan. This can be clearly noticed in the negative attitude of the citizens and his weak links with political institutions and public issues. Citizens, particularly women in this case, have a feeling that they cannot influence the political process. Evidences of this are the symptoms of indifference and escapism.

As for the attitude which we could attribute to the culture of submission, it is most evident in the attitude of women and the youth. An example of this is the attitude taken during parliamentary elections where the clan meets in the presence of males only and nominates its candidate and imposes him on the young men and women of the clan, who have no alternative but to acquiesce. The culture of submission then is not restricted to submission to the political authorities but extends to include submission to the family institution. The culture of submission still governs the relationship between the government and the opposition. While the government forces in power tries to subjugate the opposition, the opposition forces try, on their part, to take the place of these government forces and subjugate them.

C- The political attitude and the conditions of its formation:

Political attitudes are usually formed under the influence of a number of factors, such as the following:

1- The impact of personal and collective experiences.

2- The impact of social factors, such as affiliation with a certain group on the basis of social, economic or geographic criteria, or affiliation with an organized group, such as a club, union, party or political movement, or affiliation with a close group, such as the family, friends and colleagues.

3- The impact of contradictory political attitudes as a result of the weakness of socio-political polarization, the multiplicity of social roles and centers, and the contradictions involving the social position.

In light of these impacts, one can read the political attitudes that Jordanian women have formed. On the level of personal and collective experiences, Jordanian women have undergone various political trials that generated a state of uncertainty and lack of confidence in some political institutions. Furthermore, the regime still deals with women organizations with a martial law mentality, just like it does with other civil society organizations. Women's organizations have suffered a great deal as a result of this martial law mentality, which can see its existence only in terms of eliminating the other side or reducing it to rubble. This mentality is of course contradictory with the conditions needed for the formation of a mutual relationship based on the recognition of one another's right to exist. Thus women and their organizations, and this applies to men too, were a target of repression.

These practices were coupled with a form of a social upbringing that depends on an exaggerated protection of the individual by the family or the clan. This social pattern was another form of repression disguised under a false pretext of care and protection for the individual.

All these patterns employed in dealing with women and the social and economic frustrations that they experience have obstructed the political growth of women in general and rural and less privileged women in particular. The outcome of the performance was by no means satisfactory.

It is noteworthy that these practices did not stop after the democratic process was launched. In fact, these practices still exist. An example of this is the constant interference by the executive power in the affairs of the General Union of Jordanian Women and its efforts to rebuild the union on democratic basis so as to enable the union to absorb and train all women on acquiring advanced political skills. As for the contradictory political attitudes that are the product of weak socio-political polarization and the multiplicity of social roles and

centers, Jordanian women are still facing the dilemma of contradictory political attitudes, whether by political party organizations or others. Often, when the time for general elections becomes close, there is an increased activity and talk about women participation in the political life of the country and about the need to activate them in the electoral process. Of course, each is viewing this activation from the angle of his self-interest. The result is that no clear-cut policy has yet been developed regarding women participation in the elections.

Furthermore, most political forces view the role of women in the electoral process as a voter only without being given any leadership roles as candidates. The most evident example of this phenomenon was the fact that none of the candidates on the lists of political parties were women. Political parties have not supported any women candidates who ran for elections independent from political parties. Some members of Islamist parties have even advocated that women be banned from candidacy in elections, overlooking the fact that Islam calls for equality between men and women in rights and duties.

D- Participatory organizations :

There are many democratic institutions with different forms and functions that are active in any society. Nevertheless, civil society institutions are a prerequisite for the building of democracy and are one of the conditions of mature political participation. Perhaps the most prominent participatory institution is the political party.

The political party is a natural phenomenon in any political society. The party is supposed to offer public services to the people in general and to the voters in particular. It is an educational institution because it provides the people with information about the economy, politics, security and the prospects for the future in a simple and clear way that can awaken and enlighten them about their problems. The political party also enables the various segments of society to express their desires, demands and beliefs in an effective, systematic way. The party also exercises the role of watchman on the ruling body when the former is outside the government.

In light of this definition of the responsibilities of the political parties, one can note the weak role women play in political parties in Jordan. An indicator of this weakness is the very low rate of women membership in these political parties. Furthermore, political parties are not doing anything to train women on the mechanisms of participation in the

process of democratic transformation or even involving them in political action. Jordanian parties are handling women's issues strictly from the social perspective, where they form women's committees strictly from women members with no men participating in these committees. The relationship between what is social and what is political is not explained here. Consequently, men in the political parties are not concerned with the issue of advancing the status of women. Furthermore, this issue does not constitute one of the focuses of action in political party programmes.

This situation can only reinforce the conviction about the disparity between the declared positions of the political parties that they are in favour of the advancement of women and the actual practices which are evidently discriminatory in nature. Political parties thus fall in contradiction between theory and practice. Consequently, political parties should handle women's issues as a societal undertaking, which is not the responsibility of women alone.

In any case, the policies of the political parties towards the issues of social progress, including women's issues, are still ambiguous, transitory and contradictory. This has been confirmed by the decision of the political parties not to nominate any women candidates for elections for reasons which some party leaders justified on the grounds of the lack of experience of the political parties in Jordan. Other party leaders held the electoral law responsible, while still others claimed that male candidates would carry the women's demands to the House of Representatives. Others threw the ball in the women's court by saying that none of the women have applied for candidacy.

Evidently, women are refraining from engagement in political party activities. This may be for reasons involving the women themselves and for other reasons beyond their control. Among the reasons involving women themselves is the narrow margin of freedom and the woman's responsibility as a wife and mother. As for reasons that are beyond their control, it could be because Jordan's experience with democracy is still a young one. In this context, one could probably cite other reasons, such as the following :

- 1- The educational factor within the family.
- 2- Political parties in the era that preceded democracy where clandestine organizations were operating secretly.
- 3- The negative approach to political parties by the state media.
- 4- Some segments of society, and above all the government, viewed the political parties with doubt and suspicion.

- 5- Democracy was not exercised within the parties themselves.
- 6- The historic factor of the biological division of functions between men and women.

Needless to say, the negative attitude towards women's rights and their public liberties poses a serious threat to the democratic process as it neutralizes women's effective participation in the process of democratic transformation. In any case, there are a number of cultural traditions which should be formed in order to make participation in political action a natural state of societal activity, and this role should be played by political parties, the university and the school. Perhaps women are the last to blame for this. Nevertheless, this does not exempt women from the responsibility of specifically defining their role in political participation. In this context, questions are raised about the seriousness of women regarding their participation and role. These questions are the following:

- Are women's organizations and unions serious about integrating women in the political process?
- Do women leaders realize their important role in rectifying the national political trend that has overlooked women's participation?
- Are women leaders practically committed to actual and wide-scale participation?
- Does the same activity that is characteristic of the pre-election period continue into the post-election period?
- And has the social attitude towards women undergone any change?

To answer these questions, one must examine women's attitudes and thought as expressed in their political and social literature. In the intellectual sphere, women's presence is still weak and there are hardly any serious contributions made by women to social thought. Nevertheless, attempts to this effect have been made, and they should be encouraged. As for the participation of women in the various activities of life, developmental statistics indicate a sharp quantitative and qualitative weakness in this sphere. Developmental studies also indicate that women are still concentrated in traditional jobs and roles, which is, to a very large extent, responsible for the backward conditions of women and their poor participation in the various activities. It is noteworthy that there are clear signs of change in society's attitude towards the participation of women in all forms of activities. A study conducted by Parliament's Research Department showed that 75.5

percent of the women polled believed that women could reconcile the conflict between employment and housework. Two thirds of the sample polled believed that there are enormous benefits behind the participation of women in the political life. 68.5 percent of the sample believed that women should participate in the political life of the country, and 70 per cent said that women could become successful politicians.

E- The political performance of Jordanian women through the electoral process:

Perhaps elections are the most prominent sphere of political participation for women. There are three forms for this participation. The first form of participation is when women nominate themselves as candidates in elections. In this case, the role of women's masses and organizations is very limited. Rarely do women meet to discuss this national event and to formulate a strategy with clear-cut landmarks on how women should move according to the rules of the political game, to make a binding decision to nominate one of them or a list of women, or take the initiative to contact other political forces to form joint lists to run for elections. The second form is the participation of women in supporting women candidates. In fact, the activation of this form of participation depends on the realization of the leaderships and organizations that they are capable of making the required change. It also depends on their realization of their important political weight at election time and the ability of this weight to reverse the trend in their own favour. The third form is the role of women as voters. This is the most common role women play in elections. Female voters vote for male candidates. The role of women in this connection is to support candidates, run their election campaigns and promote their election among other women. However, this form is no less significant than the first and second forms, particularly since women in the third form have established a strong association with the electoral process and the various electoral forces on the basis of mutual confidence and the election programme that proposes solutions to all issues of public concern.

Prospects for Political Participation of Jordanian Women

A- Social and economic development:

Women's political performance and their effective participation in the political life of the country will continue to depend on the social and

economic conditions and circumstances. The economic conditions of Jordan, including the blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba, the foreign debts, the International Monetary Fund's national adjustment programme and the unprecedented unemployment of thousands of young graduates, men and women, are directly affecting the political performance of the country and marginalizing vast segments of society for the benefit of a small group who use democracy as a political cosmetic to impress foreign observers. The gap between the rural and urban areas and between men and women is widening as a result of pressure of economic and social factors. A concealed class struggle has begun to emerge raising the motto of social justice. Such a conflict will certainly be harmful to the development of the democratic performance. Under such circumstances, the election mechanism is utilized in the service of large landowners and capitalists who have strong financial resources that can run election campaigns and win these election campaigns.

Therefore, the reform of democratic performance should be coupled with a series of economic and social reforms aimed at improving the standard of living of the people and the conditions of the labour market, striving to contain poverty, unemployment and the deterioration of the conditions of social development. The difficult living conditions are in fact obstructing political development and may be the reason for weak political performance, the delay in the maturity of democracy, and the diminution of the scope of participation. Furthermore, the growth of the other civil society institutions, which are viewed as the essence of the integrated democratic structure, has been obstructed. Thus, new opportunities should be explored for social and economic development so that society can possess the sources of real power and direct this power towards free and conscientious participation in the developmental decision.

B- Political education and upbringing :

Socio-political upbringing is the process by which the individual gets acquainted with the political system and decides his reactions towards political developments. It involves an examination of the social, economic and cultural environment and its impact on the individual and his political values with the aim of bringing about the desired change and prolonging the life of democracy. Future generations should be trained in participatory skills for the sake of protecting democracy and promoting its institutions until it becomes an integrated way of life which cannot be changed or uprooted from the national

conscience by a political decision. Political education and upbringing is the means by which people can train individuals to perform role and to acquire the instruments of knowledge and the skills of behaviour. The socio-political upbringing is not restricted to the reinforcement of the already existing political attitudes, trends and values, but to the creation of interest in politics and to regarding it as part of citizenry. This probably explains the role of social backwardness, illiteracy and the deteriorating economic and social conditions in the country in obstructing the popular democratic momentum towards effecting change. Human rights is a concern and a goal. Women's rights are an inseparable part of human rights. To safeguard, protect and develop human rights, we should be aware of these rights. The right which we are not aware of and which we cannot exercise is an useless right, and is probably non-existent.

C- Women organizations :

Women organizations are still lacking the strategic conception that could put their programmes and ideals into motion as they are still focusing their interest on the narrow angle of social action at the expense of the political, economic and cultural aspects of this action. The leaderships of these organizations still do not realize that they should shoulder the responsibility of discovering the appropriate women candidates who can run for elections as well as organizing work to make sure that these candidates win so that the masses will come to trust women's capabilities and seriousness and view their organizations as important. If this ever happens, the women's vote will become an influential force in the social and political change. But if the struggle to attain women's rights continues to be restricted to the holding of seminars and meetings without entering the arena of real political practice, the vote of women will lose its significance and will eventually end up maintaining the status quo. Moreover, it will not become an effective and influential force in bringing about the desired change or in raising the standards of comprehensive development, particularly political development.

D- The women citizen :

If women are not part of the solution, they are at least part of the problem. As long as women continue to think in the rationale of the victim, the desired change will not happen, and it ever happens, it will

not be in the required speed or direction. What we need most is to build the political awareness of women within the context of the democratic project for advancement. This project will certainly need political, economic and cultural conditions in order to bring it to a successful conclusion, and these conditions are not available, neither to individuals, nor to the society.

Finally, the actual and realistic change which takes place on the practical level is more complex than any theorization, irrespective of its level. Change has its own conditions and criteria. So if society and its institutions are serious about the change, then they should provide the necessary conditions for this change, namely, awareness, work and dialogue. Awareness plays an important role in the process of change and in activating its mechanism, while work is a basic step in freeing people, whether they are men or women, and dialogue, the respect of opposing views, the freedom of the citizen and his right to receive information, research and examination are essential pre-conditions for change.

As for the institutions of the state, they should accept the rights of all citizens to criticize all issues and ideas as well as their freedom to maintain their convictions and to express them freely and responsibly. Only at this point can the people begin to contribute to the making of the future with the mentality, instruments, concepts and culture of the future.

As long as we have in our midst people who deny us our freedom and our legitimate right to express ourselves and as long as the people are deprived of the right of participation in shaping their own future and in exercising their right to take part in decisions that shape their future and destiny, democracy will remain something of form rather than of substance, and backwardness will remain the destiny of our people. It is time to embark on serious action and supply our civil society institutions with the instruments of change. These civil society institutions can initiate the required change. The more we consolidate these civil society institutions and strengthen them, the more democracy will be consolidated and strengthened. These civil society institutions also can mobilize the masses and their popular forces for action to expand the scope of freedom, particularly the freedom of expression and publication, and to promote the mechanisms of constructive dialogue which is based on the respect of the minds of the masses.

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WOMEN AND DEMOCRACY: THE DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENT IN JORDAN (1989 -1993)

Mrs. Asma Khader

The question of women and democracy is a very large question. It has been discussed on frequent occasions. We, who are meeting in this hall, have discussed this question and reached a number of important resolutions and recommendations. However, they will remain ink on paper unless they are enforced. Five years after the launch of the democratic process and two years after the recent parliamentary elections, we have not yet been able to reinforce the resolutions and recommendations we unanimously approved regarding our criticism of the lack of progress in the advancement of the women's cause in the democratic era.

The issue of women in our society is not an issue of sex only as women in our society form 50 per cent of the population, but is an issue to which there is opposition by men, women and other segments of society. Therefore, we cannot say that the issue of women is one that is related to a numerical majority. Rather, it is an issue of intellectual opposition, if not a political opposition. Ideally speaking, the issue of women is essentially one of belief in their equality and their right to enjoy all rights on equal footing with men as well the belief in their right to fulfill their needs so that they can perform this role. Nevertheless, those who believe in this cause are few at the moment. The evidence of this can be found in the practical manifestations we can see from day-to-day practices. Naturally, the issue of women is not the only issue being opposed and resisted in our country. There are also the issues of

the freedom of opinion, press and publication, public liberties and human rights. There is opposition to all these issues.

Women have distanced themselves from political parties, because very few parties have highlighted the issue of women in their programmes. What is more important is that still fewer of these parties have really spelled out what is meant by the issue of women. Is it the struggle for equality, enjoyment of all the rights they are entitled to, opening the way for their participation in public life, and merging them in the process of socio-economic development? Some political parties spoke in terms of supporting women's issues. But what kind of issues did they support. It was by no means clear. Other parties from the right, center and left completely ignored the issue. Some parties spoke about supporting women's issues within the framework of human rights and equality in general, while other parties did not mention equality on the basis of sex at all. The parties which failed to speak about equality in terms of sex were the leftist parties. Thus, the position of the political parties towards women's issues is neither clear nor does it have defined features or landmarks. It is handled as some kind of a marketing issue rather than as a genuine belief in the advancement of women through clear programmes aimed at developing or changing the status of women for the better.

The following are some of the facts about the position of women in the political movement: The rate of women founders of political parties is only 5.5 percent. Only four political parties have women in leadership positions. The Islamic Action Front Party is one of the parties that has women in leadership positions since women assumed these positions on the basis of election to the Shura Council that took place recently. There was one party that had two women in leadership positions out of a total 16 leading positions. Other parties had one or three women in leadership positions. In the government service, we have one cabinet minister, two legal counsels to the prime minister, one deputy in the House of Representatives and two members in the senate who are women.

This should not give the impression that the democratic era, which began in 1989, is responsible for all these achievements for women. In fact, women's struggle for the attainment of their rights began much earlier than that year. As far back as 1954 and 1955, Jordanian women addressed memoranda to His Majesty the King, the prime minister and the speakers of the two houses of parliament requesting equality in political rights and in nomination and election. The result was that

legislation was proposed to amend the law that was in force, excluding illiterate women from these rights. But these illiterate women objected to the proposed law on the grounds that society was responsible for their illiteracy. They argued that as long as an illiterate man is given the right of nomination and election, then an illiterate woman should be given the same right. Women's organizations were active in that period and drew the attention of large segments of society to the rights women were struggling to achieve. Articles were written and petitions were submitted calling for equal rights for women. Thus women's struggle for equal rights is much older than the democratic era.

Three women were appointed in the first Consultative Council, four women in the second Consultative Council, and four women in the third Consultative Council. These included the following ladies: Widad Boulos, Ina'am Mufti, Nai'leh Rashdan, Alawiyeh Alami, Janet Mufti, Eidah Mutlaq, Haifa' Bashir, Laila Sharaf and Samia Zarou. Most of these ladies continued their interest in politics afterwards, held cabinet posts or ran for parliament.

There is another important question: When we say that we want a democratic society, what kind of democracy do we want? Is there only one concept of democracy? And is there a certain degree we can reach in our democratic endeavours? We can probably understand the answers to these questions much better if we realize that the French Revolution began to build democracy some 300 years ago and accomplished its goals gradually. There are still democratic demands by French organizations to this minute. Although democracy is as old as 300 years in France, initially only males who were owners of property and tax payers can be elected. At a latter phase, all males were given this right. At a subsequent phase in 1944, French women were given the right to vote. The controversy still goes on about which system is better to achieve more useful democratic results for the French society. Is it election by the list, or by constituency, etc.? Thus democracy has not been completely achieved in any place in the world and no final form has been determined for it. It is an issue which keeps developing and evolving according to need and the degree of economic and social development.

As for the question of women and democracy, there have been two or three studies conducted on this question. The first was by the Strategic Studies Center at the University of Jordan, and the second by the Jordanian parliament. There were also other less important studies in this regard. Women's trends vis-a-vis elections and political

involvement in general have not yet been analyzed or examined accurately. What does political involvement mean for women? What is their position towards participation in politics? What is the extent of women's realization of the usefulness of political participation to the details of their daily life? Of course, this applies to men and citizens in general. Efforts should be made to examine these trends. Planning for political involvement to apply specific political programmes should be based on these trends and attitudes of citizens in general towards democracy and politics. It is noteworthy that there is an acute shortage of statistics and field surveys and studies on the issue of women and democracy.

On the women's movement and its role, Dr. Eidah Mutlaq criticized the shortcomings of the women's movement and its role. No doubt, there is a role for the women's movement to play, but it has not played it as far as it should. The same applies to other civil society organizations, including the political parties, which have a role to play, but have not carried it out as they should. It is a fact which we should admit.

There is another problem facing civil society institutions, with the exception of political parties. This problem is manifest in the law on social organizations and societies. The law says that these organizations and societies may not engage in political activity. In fact all the pressure which the state has exerted against the women's movement in the past has been due to the government's accusation that these organizations and societies were engaging in politics. We have applied to the Ministry of Interior demanding the amendment of the law to state the following, among other things: "To advance the awareness of women of their role and rights in the social, economic and political spheres." The objection was made to the word "politics" and we were requested to change it to the phrase "political system." We had a long discussion with the governor of Amman on this word, and I tried to convince him that political rights are synonymous with the human rights of women and do not seek to attain political objectives in particular. But I failed to do so.

Clearly, there are still obstacles standing in the way of the women's movement and obstructing the role it could play in the sphere of political life. The same thing applies to the labour and professional unions and the other civil society organizations, with the exception of political organizations. However, one must admit that the overall resolutions and recommendations adopted in previous seminars and conferences were a positive indicator urging women's organizations to become active in the public sphere. The least I can say is that women

have drafted a list of their legislative demands as a women's union in Jordan. The list included 17 demands or specific laws which were distributed to candidates in the parliamentary elections. The signatures of many of these candidates were taken as a pledge that they would adopt these demands. This was followed by the formation of a pressure group, and we prepared a very careful and sober draft, because we knew that the Ministry of Interior was watching for any meeting that might be held by the women's union. The Ministry of Interior has in fact addressed a memo to the Women's General Union instructing that no election meetings or rallies for candidates may be held before the official beginning of the parliamentary election campaign. However, we managed to hold several public rallies with the intention of making women's demands known. We also organized a meeting for women parliamentarians, including a big reception which included an address by the first Jordanian woman to be elected to the House of Representatives, Tujan Faisal. We also wrote to the House of Representatives expressing our preparedness to come to the House and present our views on any proposed amendment of laws pertaining to women. However, the Legal Committee in the House did not summon us. Consequently, we wrote down our proposals concerning specific amendments and distributed them to the institutions and persons concerned.

We utilized the recommendations by trying to play the role of the pressure group. But was this enough? We know that the question of women and democracy is linked with the broader issue of popular participation of the broader sectors of the masses in the electoral and democratic processes. But how can the masses participate constructively in the electoral and democratic processes? This participation cannot be secured by merely going to the election polls on voting day or listening to the media explain democratic concepts. Participation primarily depends on safeguarding the rights of citizens to know the law and the facts and information. They should know to what extent basic needs are secured for the people. The hungry, the poor, the unemployed, those who have health care, housing, children and schooling problems want to know whether the election will mean any change in their lives. If it does not, they will certainly not participate.

Fulfilling the basic needs of citizens means democracy in its economic and social content. There are problems which are viewed as serious by women. For example, will the umbrella of social security be expanded to include the working women? A working woman certainly feels the pressure of having to do her job on the one hand, and to take care of the

housework , on the other, particularly if she has no one to help her at home. Furthermore, if the question of maternity is not handled seriously so that women find help in taking care of their children, they will not be able to participate in the election or democratic process. Above all, can the underprivileged groups catch up with groups that were privileged even before the launch of the democratic process? How can we make these underprivileged groups acquire interest in the election and democratic processes if they have nothing to gain from these two processes? We all know that the opposition in our country does not have either the media or the money. The opposition had been pursued and persecuted by the government. In fact, it started from scratch. On the opposite side, there were political forces which had the media and the money and the access to communicate with people, because they were part of the ruling regime. They also had experience and organizational power. There is one party which has such resources, namely, the Islamic Action Front Party (formerly the Muslim Brotherhood Group). The party has been able to command resources because of the religious nature of its activity which necessarily makes it accessible to the media, education and the mosques and because of its constant contact with citizens. Thus we can say that the Islamic Action Front Party did not start from scratch. Judging from their party platforms, both of these forces do not treat the issue of women as one of their priorities.

Unfortunately, nationalist parties too, did not focus on the women's issues clearly in their platforms. Some of their parties have no women in their constituent assemblies or leadership positions. This confirms that economic and social issues are not a priority for these parties. I criticize these nationalist parties knowing in advance that in any discussion they will say that they believe in equality between men and women. This is a theoretical declaration which needs to be proven in actual practice.

One final remark about the parliamentary elections : Some 30 to 50 percent of the women participated in the elections as voters. Nevertheless, the votes which women candidates received in their electoral constituencies were no more than 2.2 to 3.8 per cent of the total votes cast by men and women combined in these constituencies. My conclusion here is that the issue of equality for women is still an issue which not only the majority of our men do not believe in, but the majority of our women as well.

Discussant Dr. Lori Brand

At the outset, I want to thank Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center for providing me with the opportunity to participate in this important conference. This is my tenth visit to this country which has become dear and cherished to me in the last ten years.

My remarks will be focused on Dr. Eidah Mutlaq's paper, and I regret that I did not have the chance to see the paper of Mrs. Asma Khader because it was not ready yet. My remarks will be about women organizations, political relaxation and some other public issues. I must say that I am an academic person, not a political activist.

I believe that Dr. Eidah's paper is very valuable for more than one reason. It was rich in information and there was a general framework for the paper . In the first part of the paper, she spoke briefly about democracy, the evolution of political systems, and the various forms of popular participation in the political process. She also has been keen to cite Jordan as a case study, which in fact creates a balance between theory and practice. The general framework of the paper is very important, not only to university professors, but to ordinary readers as well, because it provides the healthy basis for universalizing a certain experience. This is all the more important because the paper dealt with the women's issues, which are often treated as special and exceptional. It is very important in this regard to focus our attention on the social, economic and cultural conditions in a country as these conditions not only affect women, but the other organizations we have spoken about this morning.

I would like to emphasize that the role of women's organizations should change with the change in the various phases of political development. For example, if women's participation in a certain country is limited and if government interest in women issues is limited, women's issues should be boosted through the activities of other civil

society organizations. The criterion for the success of women's organizations is whether other governmental or civil society organizations support them or not. When these governmental and civil society organizations include women's issues in their political, economic, social and cultural programmes, this can be regarded as the most important evidence of progress of the women cause towards the desired equality and justice for women in society. But as long as the objective conditions of society do not allow women's causes to be regarded as part of the political, economic, social and cultural issues that concern not only women but the whole society, the desired equality cannot be achieved. These are not women issues only. In fact, if these issues are to succeed, they must become part of the general political, economic, social and cultural programmes of any society.

My other point is that a climate of democracy usually provides a better opportunity for future action towards the attainment of equality and justice. However, political relaxation after years of repression and dictatorship will open vast opportunities for various forces from the extreme left to the extreme right to emerge and grow. All these forces which emerge under the atmosphere of political relaxation are not necessarily democratic or liberal. As I said, there will be political forces from the extreme right to the extreme left operating on the arena. There are several examples of this phenomenon, most important of which is the rise of Jeovinsky in Russia and some other parties in the former Soviet republics. Perhaps the National Charter, which has laid down the rules of the political game in Jordan, will help Jordan avert encountering a similar situation.

However, the question here is that the political game is in itself a negotiated question where gains and concessions are made either by the government or by the various political and social forces in the country. It means give and take until finally a decision is reached over a certain issue or a policy is adopted on a certain question.

The early years of the democratic process are sensitive, because the experience is new and not much is known about it. It may be unstable and uncomprehended by some people. This process will necessarily produce victors and vanquished among the various political, social and economic forces in the country. The important question here is: What are the issues which the government agrees to negotiate on, and what are the issues which it does not agree to negotiate about ?

of course, the answer to this question differs from one country to another, depending on the special conditions of each country, the

strength of the government and the strength of the opposition. However, if to examine the models of democratic transformation in Eastern Europe, we unfortunately note that among the important issues which the new democratic governments in Eastern Europe refused to negotiate on issues related to women's rights. This is certainly a very regrettable matter. Therefore, political relaxation does not necessarily mean an improvement in the conditions of women or the advancement of their cause in terms of safeguarding their rights. On the contrary, women could be part of the vanquished on the short-term . Consequently, if we are to assess women's gains under the democratic process in Jordan , it will be useful to explore in our future studies the new legislations pertinent to women directly or indirectly since 1989 to determine where women's issues stand in terms of give and take, gain and concession, winning and losing, and the government and the opposition political forces in the country.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Dr. Yossef Al-hassan

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to comment on the paper about the press and television. At the outset, I would like to say I wish the party press had been given some attention in this discussion. I also wish I could have heard an assessment of the party press, particularly the veteran Islamist press, at this phase in terms of the service it has rendered to democratic values and concepts, dialogue and the cohesiveness of the domestic front.

My second point is that, as you know, the modern press depends on direct information, the professional industry, the picture or influence by impression rather than by persuasion. Unfortunately, if I were to judge the Jordanian press, I would say that just like the press in other Arab countries, it is still backward and primitive. When Mr. Salman Qudah said he had the ambition to convey the example of the Jordanian press to the Arab press and then to the international press, I felt surprised and astonished. We have seen journals that have failed for financial, political or professional reasons. Meanwhile, there have been publications that scored an enormous success, moved on to the international arena and gave a good example of the press as a profession. Mr. Qudah spoke about the "democracy of information," but I believe that there is an important ingredient which is missing, namely the institutions that can safeguard public liberties. As far as the press is concerned, this means the freedom of expression and constructive criticism, the right of access to information from un-official sources, and the right to protect the sources of information.

My last point is about the relationship between the press and the

authorities in Jordan, which Mr. Qudah raised in his paper. Here we encounter the problem of the relationship between the Jordanian intellectual and the authorities. Needless to say, in the last decade at least, the Jordanian press was a full partner in managing Jordan's multi-faceted relations with other Arab countries. In most cases, the press had identical views with the official line. This trend continued in the democratic era. An example of this is that the suspension of the media campaigns exchanged between Arab countries has become a prerequisite for Arab reconciliation. This is where damage is inflicted on Arab causes as a result of the identity of views whether in times of conflict or in times of reconciliation, because substantive issues would be side-stepped. The result is that people do not become aware of these issues and they are never discussed seriously.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Hussein Da'sah

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to comment on the press and television paper. I will try to be brief, because to give one hour of discussion for the press would be at the expense of other issues. I would like to commend Mr. Qudah's paper and the remarks which Mr. Abdallah Hasanat made on the paper. My commendation also goes to the paper of Mr. Ayman Masant.

We know that the Arab world, including Jordan, is currently undergoing a significant phase in terms of acceleration of information after the Gulf War. Satellites are now used by all state facilities, by all popular and civic organizations, homes, daily and weekly independent and party press and others. What is then the new policy which we should adopt in the forthcoming phase to cope with this phenomenon of accelerated information? The satellite is there, the video is there, a summary of books is here, even a summary of the international press is available on a daily basis and has become a major part of our daily life. How will the daily press cope with such a situation? And what will the performance of the Jordanian journalist be like under the frustrations caused by the Jordanian Press Association's law and the Press and Publications law?

Thank you.

Mr. Yasser Abu Hilaleh

My first remark is about the censor. Evidently, the director of the Press and Publications Department could be changed as a person. However, the criteria that is applied to the censor is the same criteria that was enforced before the launch of the democratic era. We should strive to develop the censor in a way that it could guarantee the freedom of expression and publication.

My second point is that the old mentality is prevalent in the press. For example, the Islamic Action Front Party issued a statement about the dissolution of municipal councils describing this action as a retreat from the democratic process. The press did not deal with the statement in the way it should treat a statement issued by the largest political grouping in the country with 16 deputies in parliament.

My third point is about the Jordanian Press Association. I am a registered member of the association and have been working as a journalist for the last three years. This association is following a policy intended to alienate new members and keep them out of the association. The procedures for membership application are very complicated, and there are qualified colleagues working in party newspapers who are not allowed to apply for membership in the association. Meanwhile, non-professionals can be accepted as members of the association. With all my due respect to the association's council, I know of members who were admitted on the grounds that they were once owners of newspapers, but have no relationship whatsoever with the press or the media at present.

On the issue of the press and women, I do not think that our problem is the lack of legal provisions, but is one of implementation of the provisions that already exist, particularly since everything now depends on the person or the body that enforces the law.

My final remark is about women's activities. It seems to me that the most serious problem obstructing women's activities is the monopoly of these activities by a small group of women. The blame here should be placed on the women movement itself, because it is depriving itself from the services of many qualified women. The problem then is within the framework of the women's movement, not outside it.

Mr. Salim Al-Zu'bi

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to say that the four papers

that have been presented were very important. I would like to start with the paper submitted by Mr. Salman Qudah, who commended the performance of our press, media and democracy. I may agree with him on some points, but I disagree on many others. Mr. Qudah hinted that the press was progressing. But I can only see the opposite. The press has indeed fallen back concerning the issue of press freedom, the flow of free information, the press inquiry, and printing the opposing views. Meanwhile, it has achieved progress in other areas, which are probably non-professional. The number of pages on which mourning advertisements are published has increased. The press has also been rendering unquestionable support to the successive governments in Jordan, irrespective of their policies. Thus it is probably true to say that our press believes in polygamy, i.e. the press is married to several governments.

On the role of the press in evaluating the parliamentary performance, there were two newspapers at least which printed comments which were strictly personal in nature and which served no public goal on topics such as the necktie of this deputy or the color of the suit of that deputy. How can such comments serve any cause? Ironically enough, such comments might increase the sales and profits of the newspapers. But the decisive question here is whether the mission of the press is to attract the attention of the public to such peripheral matters at the expense of important public issues. Such an attitude does not help the press in any way to become the fourth power in the country or one of the cornerstones of democracy.

I would like to congratulate Mr. Ayman Masanat for his presentation on the performance of Jordan Television. The performance of the television has in fact retreated. In the past four years, there were seminars held over television in which opposing points of view were expressed. But now we do not see any of these seminars.

Finally, I would like to conclude by saying that the women's issue is not one of legislation. It is one in which we must first bridge the cultural gap between the home and school.

Thank you.

Mr. Khalil Al-banna

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As a sociologist, I wish that the social dimension of democracy had been discussed. The other face of democracy is social justice. There is an eternal wisdom which says if we

spread justice in this world, eliminate poverty and unemployment, and uproot injustice, people will love one another and there will be no animosity among them. When we remove animosity, we will remove vice from our society, and the virtues of charity, love and solidarity will prevail.

The second point in my modest view is that there is no problem affecting women in isolation from the problems of men. The two need each other in the era of democracy. Whether as stated in the constitution or as evident in our Arab and Islamic heritage, men and women are equal. With the natural and gradual social evolution of society, women will be able to attain their goals, but without rashness or unjustified speed. As much as men are searching for their rights, women are doing the same.

Thank you.

Ms. Khadijeh Habashneh

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Eidah's paper was a theoretical description of political participation or performance in general. It did not touch on the realities governing Jordanian life, although theory sometimes helps us to see the objective facts. However, I could not trace this in the paper. It is noteworthy that there is a new trend in social studies and research which does not utilize definitions, because the progress of science and research as well as the means of communications have far exceeded development in theory. There are no longer static definitions or theories. For example, Gabriel classified culture into three types: the old culture, the culture of submission and the culture of participation. My question is : Why don't we have a culture of change , for example?

Resorting to a specific definition of a specific theory does not always serve the issue in question. If we look at the factors which constitute a political stand, we will find out that they are general factors based on personal experiences and social conditions. I wish there had been a discussion of the factors which constitute the political stand of Jordanian women, such as the position of the state, the position of the political parties, the position of the political movement, the experiences which women have undergone and what kind of influence they have left on them .

Dr. Eidah mentioned the educational factor and the secrecy of party activities as some of the factors that have discouraged women from

participation in party activities. But my question is : Why the secrecy of party activities? Perhaps it is the whole attitude towards political parties, not only their secret activities. Therefore, there is a selectiveness in deciding the factors which constitute any of the phenomena of political activity.

We can see the same thing in the suspicious stands towards political parties. Of course, there are other views which are very much in favour of political parties. Generally speaking, I did not feel that the paper had any scientific or objective dimension, although it has a theoretical framework. Needless to say, Dr. Eidah's valuable remarks about the women's issue's should be commended.

Women's role in the democratic process is a crucial issue which cannot be overlooked, not only as a women issue, but as a social issue as well. I believe that no social structure can be changed in a democratic direction, not even one step, without changing the conditions of women.

Here we probably could identify the instruments of change in society on the official and popular levels, such as the government, parliament, the judiciary, and civil society institutions, such as political parties, women movements, and private organizations. The problem we are facing is the laws which constitute a major obstacle in the way of development of civil society organizations. The professional associations' law is an example. I would like to thank Ms. Asma Khader for explaining to us how the law is an obstacle in the way of promoting popular action

Another example is the Civil Status Law which can never be helpful to women unless it is updated. There are some people who believe that the Sharia (Religious Law) is a barrier in the way of women's advancement. However, I believe that this is untrue, because the Sharia is flexible and can be developed to go along with the needs of society any time and any place. Therefore, unless the Civil Status Law is updated, it should be placed outside the framework of the Sharia. Perhaps this law now belongs to the Pre-Islamic era rather than the Islamic era.

Finally, I believe that the basic points which should be dealt with concerning the question of women and democracy are the mechanisms of change in society through civil society organizations, particularly the women's movement and the political parties, through women's involvement in political party activities and the updating of the laws concerned.

Deputy Dr. Muhammad Uwaideh

I want to thank the management of the seminar, the panelists and discussants . As for the paper on the media, it discussed the history of the Jordanian press and commended its performance. I wish that the role of the Jordanian press and media men in promoting the democratic process had been discussed. I feel, like Mrs. Asma has noted, that the media is playing the role of obstructionist to the democratic process. It is true that we wish the press had been the fourth power. However, regrettably, the press supports the government , or it is as if the press is an orphan child and the government is its guardian, particularly when it comes to parliament. We, as parliament deputies, feel that the media's role is to undermine the role of parliament and to convince people that this experience, on which they pinned great hopes, is much below their expectations.

Furthermore, I have heard that the Jordan Satellite Channel transmits the sessions of the House of Representatives in full for external consumption purposes while locally, only distorted portions of the sessions are shown to people. A parliament deputy, out of politeness, would start speaking in the session by commending the government, and then he goes on to say, "But...." The television shot ends here without giving the deputy the chance to elaborate or make his critical remarks of the government heard. Consequently, he would appear to the viewer as if he is commending the government performance and supporting its policies, when in fact the contrary is true. This has prompted many deputies to cut short these preambles and start talking directly about the issues. Once we had to ask the television camera to leave one of the sessions held by the House of Representatives.

On the question of women, it seems to me that some women activists have tried to portray Jordanian women from their own perspective which does not represent the real social and cultural conditions of Jordanian women. An example of this was the acute shortage of nurses in the country due to the lack of desire of Jordanian girls and women to join the nursing profession. The government had to produce a film which cost JD 1.5 million to convince Jordanian women and girls to work as nurses. Meanwhile, the Islamic Hospital succeeded in attracting girls to the nursing profession by requesting nursing students who were being trained at the hospital's expense to be clad in decent clothes that are compatible with their Islamic Faith. Thus, things can be changed if the women movement understands the real social and cultural conditions of the nation and acts accordingly.

Mrs. Asma Khader spoke in detail about women's rights when in fact she should have focused on women's role in the democratic process, which she has spoken only a little about. Dr. Eidah dealt with this dimension very well. I want to remind women of the time when a group of women dominated the women's union and obstructed the nomination of women with differing views from their own. Is this compatible with the democratic attitude? Aren't these methods similar to martial law actions?

Dr. Ahmad Kassem

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My thanks also go to al-Urdun al-Jadid Research Center. I will focus on one point only which may not have been discussed by Dr. Eidah, although it is very important. My point is about the ratio of women's participation in and contribution to the democratic process. This point involves the economic dimension. I believe that the economic conditions of the family in general have a clear impact on whether women participate or not in public activities. The economic conditions in any society affect the social changes in it. The more the income of the family improves, the more there will be a favourable family environment encouraging women to get involved in political activities.

We have spoken about the retreat of the party press and the parties themselves due to financial reasons. Therefore, I believe that women participation in the democratic process will be limited unless women themselves become convinced that they should choose a woman representative in parliament in particular and in democratic institutions in general.

Dr. Hosni Al-shayyab

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have two remarks to make. The first is that I want to congratulate Mr. Ayman Masanat for his paper, particularly his reference to the absence of a philosophy in the performance of the television. But I wish that Mr. Ayman had applied the notion of the absence of democracy to the major political and cultural issues which we have been encountering since we have entered the democratic era. It is true that Mr. Ayman Masanat cited some examples. But there remains a big problem: Why is the opposition prohibited from having access to the television? Why is the state media

maintaining a blackout on the activities of the opposition and even distorting their image at times? This has been clearly discussed by Mr. Uwaideh when he spoke about the stand of the opposition within the institutions of the constitutional government, namely, the House of Representatives?

Furthermore, what is the impact of the absence of a philosophy on cultural programmes in our society, particularly if we take into consideration the trivial programmes offered by the state television? How can the state television maintain silence over this flood of satellite dishes installed above the roofs of Amman's homes and the new notions they convey to us? The programmes, notions and culture transmitted by these television stations should prompt us to immunize and reinforce our cultural and media instruments, because by immunizing them, we would be immunizing the minds of our people against this cultural invasion which is coming to us from abroad. The only sure way of doing so is to reinforce and strengthen our own cultural programmes to neutralize this cultural invasion.

As for the women's issues, it is worthwhile to note that women's activities in Jordan are restricted to the cultural and social elite, while the vast majority of working or non-working women in our society does not belong to this elite, although it is these women who are the more productive on the one hand, and the more underprivileged and deprived of political and cultural participation, on the other. My question is: Why should this gap exist between the women movement and the majority of the working women?

I dare say that the image of women in our culture is an inferior image, and sometimes women are looked at as something which is below human. But I also dare say that culture changes, but how? Culture, of course, has its own influence on changing economic and social realities. I think that the proper approach toward changing women's realities and to give them the rights they are entitled to is to work through cultural techniques within their social and economic dimensions. As long as democracy is not translated into change in cultural, economic and social ways of life, the increase in the number of women in parliament or the cabinet will not change anything.

Mr. Fuad Hussein

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since we are pressed for time, my intervention will be restricted to the paper presented on the press. The

paper said so many things, but in fact did not say anything, with all my due respects to Mr. Salman Qudah. In his capacity as president of the Jordanian Press Association and the editor-in-chief of the largest Jordanian daily, Mr. Qudah knows all the details. However, he escaped from the present and its problems by falling back on history through his review of the phases of progress of the Jordanian press. What we really needed is to discuss the impact of the Jordanian press on the democratic process, or vice versa, not a historic narration of the development of the Jordanian press.

Mr. Qudah said at the outset that the laws governing the Jordanian press have not kept pace with the advanced standards attained by our press institution. From my experience, whether in the state media or in daily or party press, I have become convinced that the problem of the Jordanian press is not one of laws or legislations. Even if we had laws and legislations much better than those that exist in the world's known democracies, I do not think that it would change anything. It is true that we have entered the era of democracy, but those who are in charge of the press are the same persons who were running the press during the Martial Law period. Therefore, nothing has changed regarding the freedom and democracy for the Jordanian press.

Mr. Qudah pointed out that there were positive points in the legislation which facilitated the task of granting licenses to the press. It is true that the new Press and Publications Law has opened the way for licensing new newspapers. However, the government has placed enormous obstacles to contain the constructive impact of this legislation by imposing an increase of 30 per cent in customs duties on the imported paper used by the press. This has created difficulties for new newspapers, particularly the party newspapers. Furthermore, paid government advertisements and announcements are restricted to the three daily newspapers. The government does not place any of its advertisements in the party or opposition press, thereby depriving these newspapers from an important source of income.

A final point: Mr. Qudah said that the Jordanian press has scored a tangible progress in all the editorial and technical aspects. He also called for introducing new blood to the press. Mr. Qudah knows very well, as the editor-in-chief of a leading daily, that the Jordanian press organizations have become like feudalist fiefs which do not allow anyone to enter the castle unless he is a loyalist, and those who enter the castle are people who do so for reasons totally unrelated to qualification or efficiency. I am really astonished when he says that we

have a great deal of democracy...Where is this democracy you have?

Thank you.

Mr. Ramadan Rawashdeh

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have some quick comments on the paper submitted by Mr. Qudah regarding the party press. The paper did not evaluate the party press although it has been about one and a half years since these papers started publication, and some have had licenses since 1990. One of the problems which the party press is suffering from is that the government is not placing any of its paid advertisements or announcements with these papers. This is in fact a negation of the principle of pluralism. There is political pluralism in the country, but this pluralism does not apply when it comes to the way the government deals with party newspapers regarding advertisements. On the question of the right of the journalist to acquire information, the cabinet minister concerned would rather give the information he has to the three leading official dailies than to the party press. An example of this is that we sent a set of questions to a cabinet minister to reply to them, and for more than one month, he did not answer these questions. Finally, we were surprised when the minister had an interview with one of the three leading newspapers, *Al-Rai'*, where he gave answers to some of the questions we had addressed to him.

As for banning journalists who work for party newspapers from joining the Jordanian Press Association, the legal opinion of some of our best attorneys in this regard is that journalists employed by the party press or other press institutions are entitled to join the Jordanian Press Association. The law of the Jordanian Press Association should be amended, because it was enacted during the Martial Law rule to serve the purposes of this phase in 1983. The working paper overlooked the daring attempts made by the press to create a free Jordanian press. At that time, we had a magazine which was critical of corruption in the state bureaucracy, but it was suspended after the publication of 20 editions.

The truth is that the history of the Jordanian press is impregnated with government violations. Since 1979, the government has banned dozens of journalists from writing in the press. Dozens of others were dismissed from their jobs. The passports of some journalists were seized by the intelligence machinery and they were banned from traveling abroad. Some newspapers were closed down, and the licenses of some

were revoked. There are many examples on the governmental repression of the press, and all these examples are documented. What shining history is Mr. Qudah talking about? While the constitution itself did not place any restrictions on the freedom of the press, except within the limits of the law under the Martial Law and State of Emergency rule. The country lived under Martial Law from 1967 until 1990. This simply means that there was no freedom of the press during this period.

Thank you.

Dr. Khalil Shamma

Thank you all. I do not want here to defend Jordanian democracy. However, I am surprised to see many politicians, thinkers and analysts are really expressing extreme concern over the democratic process in Jordan, as if it is about to collapse. They are overlooking the fact that Arabs in most Arab countries are living under conditions of despotism, dictatorship and repression where there is no respect for human rights or freedom of political or professional organization. We should understand democracy as a process which undergoes historic phases, because there are many changes on the Arab, regional and international levels which affect the growth of democracy, whether for good or bad. Some may ask what if we compare the type of democracy that exists in Jordan with the type of democracy that exists in developed countries? The answer is definitely that there is a difference, qualitative and quantitative. However, we should keep in mind that it took these countries many years before they could reach this advanced standard of democracy. Democracy in Jordan is a "newborn" and we should take care of this newborn and give it a chance to grow in a healthy way. We do not need to exaggerate in our criticism, but should treat gaps and shortcomings wisely and according to the dictates of national unity and the interest of the Arab and Islamic nations. Thank you.

Dr. Suleiman Sweiss

Thank you. I would like to thank Mr. Ayman Masanat for his valuable presentation on the state-run Jordan Television. I have a question addressed to Mr. Suleiman Qudah: The press and publications law places limitations on the definition of a journalist. About a year ago, a new association was formed under the name of the "Jordanian Media Association." What is the status of this association? Are they journalists or not?

When we come to the women's movement, I can say that democracy did not strengthen the position of women and did not help the women's movement advance its cause within the country. I think that there should be self-criticism on this issue. I agree with what has been said that a great part of the problem is the framework within which the women's movement is functioning. For example, the women's movement did not support the few women candidates for parliament in the 1993 election. I wish I could have an answer for this phenomenon.

Thank you.

Mr. Rasmi Hamzeh

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to begin my comments on Mr. Suleiman Qudah's paper. I would like to say first that our media has not succeeded in dealing flexibly with the democratic process which we began about five years ago. The media that shapes public opinion in this country, namely, the state-run Jordan Television and the three main daily newspapers have failed. The failure of the state-run Jordan Television was discussed by Mr. Ayman Masanat in his remarkably drafted paper. The failure of the media and the daily newspapers in this country was manifested in the attitude of their columnists, who have always tried to belittle the role of the democratic process and the political parties and their leaders by trying to conceal and marginalize their effective role in society.

The other point I want to comment on is the women's issue which was discussed by Dr. Eidah Mutlaq's paper and Ms. Asma Khader. The Jordanian Women's Union has also failed to deal with the women's issue. When we speak about women, which women in Jordan are we talking about? Are we talking about women in Amman or in the rural areas? What happened to the role of the rural woman. The union says it wants to improve her lot? The Jordanian constitution guarantees women rights in full. The question really depends on the role women play in the Jordanian Women's Union in reaching rural women who constitute 70 percent of the total women in Jordan. There are no programmes for the advancement of these women. They lack guidance and care. They lack the education that can guide them to form views on their own. I believe that the problem rests in the women who should strive to resolve their own problems, not in the man who is requested to think of solutions for these problems.

Thank you.

Dr. Muhammad Ibn Mahfouz

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. After hearing yesterday's and today's papers, I have really begun to worry. I have really begun to worry about the future of the democratic experiment in Jordan, because it is based on specific concepts of democracy, namely, the organizational and participatory concepts. These were the original concepts which appeared in ancient Greece. However, these concepts were enriched afterwards with new ideas and values. Democracy has become now a mechanism of government and a comprehensive philosophy that govern all the activities of life. What I really fear is that Jordan might enter a democratic experiment that is basically marred by its own shortcomings, such as the Lebanon experiment, rather than entering a successful experiment like those charted by modern democracies.

Therefore, I believe that all the papers which were submitted today were marred by these shortcomings. The paper on the media made a presentation on the Jordanian experiment and the obstacles standing in its way, and ended up with a specific proposal calling for a philosophy by which we could assess the media performance. I would like to make a reminder that democracy is an institution which depends on freedom: the freedom of conscience, the freedom of opinion and the freedom of expression. If we say that culture or the media output is not based on a philosophy governing the form and content of this output, I would be apprehensive that this philosophy may be a unilateral philosophy that would not tolerate opposing views or the freedom of opinion and in the final analysis, would undermine the freedom of expression and the freedom of conscience. Consequently, democracy will fail. I agree with Dr. Shayyab that the satellite dishes have become a major source for receiving news and information. I must add here that we should define the landmarks, principles and basis of the philosophy transmitted through these dishes before we counter their influence with a philosophy of our own.

The other thing which really makes me worried or even shocked is the women's issue. I thought, like Ms. Asma Khader said, that the women's issue is something which involves a basic value, such as equality, and I waited for her to explain what she means by the value of equality for Jordanian women from the legal, economic, social and functional aspects. But she has not done so, and this explains some of the interventions which said that the Jordanian Women's Union has failed to attract the interest of Jordanian women.

Thank you.

Dr. Nizam Assaf

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My thanks also go to the panelists and discussants. I would like to pause for a moment to think about an idea which I believe poses the biggest problem for the media performance in all countries of the world, including Jordan. If we look at this problem from a democratic perspective, we can see it as one stemming from the hegemony of the ideological approach in presenting and portraying the various activities of life, as the ideologists see it. The other side of the problem is due to the lack of employment of the scientific approach in the way which the mass media deals with the various social activities. In other words, there is a general trend which prevails in the mass media, whether it is official or private, saturated with ideological "isms". An example of this is the way the media is presenting the painful and tragic events in Yemen. In these presentations, one can see the ideological touches prevalent in portraying the picture. The media tells us about fighting between government forces and secessionist forces in Yemen. Why doesn't the media present the situation as it really is. Consequently we would take sides according to an assessment based on true facts. But the media has already given specific descriptions of the two combatants, based on the ideological convictions of the people in the media, when in fact, the media should only provide us with the true facts and leave it up to us to make conclusions. Evidently, the development of any society on the path of justice, equality and progress can never materialize unless it is done within a democratic framework that eliminates ideological bias from the facts presented by the media. Fortunately, societal development in the world in general is proceeding in this direction.

Thank you.

Mr. Ghassan Abdul Khaleq

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At the outset, I would like to thank the panelists and discussants. Mr. Qudah said in his paper that capital in earlier years was oriented towards investment in the field of education and that journalism and media was one of the main disciplines taught at the community colleges to which these investments went. Thousands of students in Jordan were deceived into enrolling, and when they were graduated, they could not find jobs. The same thing happened to the mass communication graduates of Yarmouk University, who could not find jobs either. My question is: What was the role of the Jordanian Press

Association in the rationalization of teaching this new discipline to avert the large-scale unemployment rate in this sector.

My comment about Mr. Ayman Masanat's paper is ethical and humanitarian in content. If we agree that one of the main obstacles encountering the performance of the state-run Jordanian Television is the failure of its personnel to understand the nature of the new era, what is the mechanism that you would suggest to restructure this corporation without being unfair to the old guard? I cannot really tell a television employee, who is a victim of a philosophy that he had nothing to do with, that I want to send him to retirement and bring someone else in his place. How can we then enable the old guard to keep pace with the new media policy and introduce a new philosophy and resources to the television?

And what is the method which you suggest for opening a dialogue between the television and the people? And how can there be a mutual relationship between sender and receiver? Should Jordan Television print questionnaires and mail them to people? Or should we do this through specialized research centers, or through contests organized by the television for choosing the better?

Mr. Amin Dhiyab

Radio, television, mosques, forums and even universities usually place restrictions on views that are not in harmony with theirs. What does this really mean? Does democracy necessarily mean the freedom of expression? Theoretically, yes, but realistically, no. In fact, Western democracies do censor many views and ideas. Hasn't Western democracy been the defender of the consumer's society, spreading the idea to people who are unable to express their will or sovereignty? Isn't this a big issue?

As for the women's issue, the papers presented by the two ladies give the impression that political activities in Jordan are restricted to a 25-man Council of Ministers and a 120-man National Assembly (the Upper House of Parliament and the House of Representatives). I do not believe that is really what the issue is. Political action is not restricted to the government and parliament alone. It is a civic function which a citizen can exercise anywhere. Unless political action turns into a civic action which needs no licensing or approval by anyone, the nation cannot take its proper place under the sun.

About the women's issue, I want to cite an example of a lady named

Arwa Salihiah, from Ismailia, Egypt. This lady has left an enormous impact on her society in Egypt and in Yemen as well vis-a-vis the advancement of the cause of women. She was known to be a reformer, and never asked her tribe or anyone else for permission to be appointed as a women leader. She decided herself to become a leader, and so it was. It seems that women here in Jordan are incapable of doing the same.

Thank you.

Mr. Hassan A. Ayed

I have a short intervention about the women's cause. The Research Department of the National Assembly had once conducted a field study on the women situation regarding the parliamentary elections. I have noticed that some of the participants held the Jordanian Women Union responsible for women's failure to make significant strides on the path of advancement. However, the outcome of the study primarily blamed the mass media for failure to generate the necessary awareness in women. The shortcomings of the Jordanian Women's Union was listed as the sixth factor, according to the study. Nevertheless, I believe that since there is no political party in Jordan which could help women reach parliament through an election list, women could be given a specific number of seats of those allocated to the minorities. Without a quota system, I believe women will never reach parliament in the next decade or the decade that will follow, because the problem is not with the women, as Dr. Eidah Al-Mutlaq rightly pointed out. Women are part of the problem and part of the solution. The problem is also the problem of men and the problem of the Jordanian society which has not given women their proper role in the political life of the country. Therefore, I suggest that seats should be allocated to women in parliament, and this is the only sure way for representation of women.

Thank you.

Dr. Eidah Mutlaq

I will try to be as brief as possible, because there are interventions on the women's question, and there are also other questions about the women's union. I begin with the question of the dual role of women as having a star status and an elitist strata. My remarks are addressed to Dr. Uwaideh. As a participant in the women's movement for a long

time now, I am pained at the pre-determined views and ideas about women by many members of our society, who have the impression that the women's movement is an authoritarian one. Although I am a member of the women's movement, I cannot see this status you are talking about. I agree that there are some women who like to identify themselves as stars, but they are not part of the women's movement. Such women do exist at all social levels and in all civil society organizations. In fact, the women's movement was in harmony with the natural social development of our society. Therefore, its evolution was not revolutionary or in opposition to the values of our society. What was really wrong with the women's movement was that its evolution was slow in line with the mechanisms of change in our society, and these mechanisms of change were old and could not change the conditions of our society. Consequently, they could not change women's conditions which were impregnated with sensitive problems and issues.

Another point, the question of elitism. People usually link elitism with the ability to do and to get results. We cannot really deny the role of the other social classes. In fact, the women's movement should grow and expand. But to do so, it needs a legal mechanism, and this legal mechanism cannot be provided by the Jordanian Women's Union. Thus we are restricted by legal ceilings, which means that we cannot organize any social sector unless there are specific legislations that respond to the needs of these sectors.

As for the issue of the Jordanian Women's Union, all those who commented on the subject were outsiders. The question is unrelated to differences with the Islamic Movement. In fact, we do not want any political movement to be isolated from the women's cause, nor do we want to marginalize any political ideology, particularly since we are living in the dawn of democracy. The problem is that the government used to interpret a certain legal article in a way that could have a dual meaning. Consequently, what was accepted in Amman was rejected in Irbid. In Irbid, the decision maker, which was the government, acted like a hypocrite in order to please the Islamic movement. In the general election for the Irbid branch, the government confirmed the names of the independent women members of the Islamic Movement and deleted the names of the women candidates who did not belong to any political grouping. The independents there actually constituted the majority and they have been active in the women's movement ever since the foundation of the Jordanian Women's Union. So the government neutralized the majority in favour of the minority for the sake of its own interests. This is the truth. We did not oppose the Islamic Movement.

We only stood for the right of the independent candidates, and we took the case to court. Again we did not oppose the Islamic Movement. In fact we amended our bylaws to become flexible enough to include all political currents and social sectors. We did amend our own bylaws but we could not amend the legislation, because this was something which was not in our hands. We have opened the door of membership to all women in the union. After the amendment, some 12,000 women joined the union within six months. We have absorbed the left and right, the Islamists and nationalists, urban and rural women, etc.

The last point involves the remark made by Mrs. Khadijeh Habashneh, whom I want to thank for her comments. My answer to her is that there is nothing wrong with theory. In any meaningful writing, we have to fall back on theory, and this is why I began with definitions and the methodology I was using. What I wanted to emphasize was that the culture of change stems from the culture of participation. In other words, when the cultural standards of any society becomes advanced enough to integrate people into a participatory culture, then the change follows. This is what I meant by the culture of change.

Thank you.

Mr. Suleiman Al-Qudah

Thank you. Briefly speaking, most of the comments made on my paper were very valuable, and I think that each comment probably needs another paper to answer. This is why I really focused on headings, because the title is general and the question is too serious to be discussed in such a short paper. I may not be exaggerating when I say that it is a question which involves all aspects of our life, whether political, economic, social or cultural. I sought to classify the questions discussed according to topic. Some of these questions dealt with the Jordanian press. Unfortunately, some remarks quoted what I said about the press as if it applied to the whole media. As president of the Jordanian Press Association, I have to defend the press. I have to highlight its positive performance and criticize its negative performance. But I did warn against the pseudo-awareness which the media is trying to drag us into. In other words, to stress the form and forget about the substance.

Many of the critical remarks made about the performance of the Jordanian press are true. I do really wish that we could overcome all these negative aspects. Nevertheless, I wanted to assert the point that

the press cannot change itself unless the objective conditions around it, particularly the legislative framework, undergo change. Clearly, without a modern law to govern its activities and functions, the press cannot become a modern press, irrespective of who is in charge of the press. I also wanted to say that there are several unfair judgments passed on the press, whether in the statements made about the journalists or the editors-in-chief. It is not the journalists or the editors-in-chief who are the problem. The problem rests in the combined social, political, legal, economic and professional factors which still exist to-date in many of our press institutions and in the media.

Mr. Salim Al-Zu'bi noted in his remarks about my paper that the paper glorified the press and paid tribute to its prosperous era. My answer to this is that I did not really seek to glorify the press as much as I sought to evaluate the stages of its development and how the surrounding conditions reflected on its performance whether in the democratic era or in the earlier era.

Unfortunately, none of the discussants made a reference to the fact that the state owns half of the shares of the major newspapers. The state owns 62 per cent of the shares of *Al-Rai'* daily, 67 per cent of the shares of *Al-Shaab* daily, and 45 per cent of the shares of *Ad-Dustour* daily. How then can newspaper policy be separate from government policy?

On the accusation that the Jordanian Press Association alienates newcomers, the truth is that the association is governed by law, and the law needs to be amended. It is the legislative power which can do the amending, not the Jordanian Press Association. Our role as an association is to request the amendment and to draft the necessary articles which should be amended.

Some comments were made about unemployment, particularly by Mr. Ghassan Abdul Khaleq. The unemployment question suddenly surfaced because of an erroneous policy followed by the community colleges or the Yarmouk University's school of journalism. They have been graduating students without taking into consideration the real needs of the press and media institutions for qualified people. Unfortunately, it is my view too that community colleges cannot really train qualified editors and professionals to work in the press.

As for the obstacles placed in the way of the party newspapers and the experience of the party press, I think that it is still too early to evaluate this experiment, because it is still too young. The obstacles which Mr. Ramadan Rawashdeh brought up are true, including the fact

that the government does not place its advertisements in these newspapers and denies them access to information. Actually, the government is denying access to information not only for the party press, but for the press in general, and this has really aggravated a problem which the newspapers are suffering from, whether daily, weekly or party newspapers. Generally speaking, we should not judge things by the form, but by the substance. We should try and find the substance and change it. Once we do the form will change also.

Thank you.

Mrs. Asma Khader

The issues that have been raised are very important and cannot be answered in a short period of time. But briefly speaking, I can say that there is a problem in the law and a problem in application, whether in the party programmes or in the literature published on democracy. Studies have been made on the aspects of inequality in the various spheres between men and women. Mr. Talal Ramahi, the secretary general of the Unionist Party, noted that my figures were incorrect, and that his party has the largest number of women founders and women in leading positions. I did mention this in my paper, although I did not cite the names.

Dr. Khalil Shamma noted that the women's issue is inseparable from other societal issues, and I fully agree with this view. However, we should not leave the matter for time to solve, because as long as there is a difference between the status of men and the status of women in society, with men having the upper hand, we will never reach a state of equality if we leave the matter to time. Women should be supported in their endeavours to achieve an equal status with men.

Mrs. Khadijeh Habashneh described the women's issue as a focal issue. I agree with her. The women's issue is a delicate and sensitive criterion of the degree of seriousness of respect for genuine participation and human rights that is free from any discrimination. Otherwise, the slogans about human rights, equality and participation would remain void of any practical meaning.

MP Dr. Muhammad Uwaideh spoke about stars in the women movement. I agree that there is a tendency by some women to become stars in the women movement. However, it is the mass media which is responsible for creating these stars. When the Jordanian Women's Union invites the media to cover an event in a remote village or in the Jordan

Valley, Maan , Mafraq or in the refugee camp, no one shows up. The television, radio and newspapers do not show up and do not send reporters to cover the event. But when we hold the event in Amman, in this place for example, they all come, and they see the elite women, but they do not see the women in less known venues. This is part of the problem. The Jordanian Women Union has 10 branches in Jordanian cities other than Amman. It also has 15 different centers in various popular areas.

As for the story of the women's union, I would like to explain that it was the General Union of Jordanian Women which ran into trouble with the law. It was a qualitative union embracing delegates from charitable women's organizations registered with the Ministry of Social Development. However, the union which I represent is a union in which members are accepted as individuals, and membership is open to any woman, provided that she is 18 years old and that she observes the laws and regulations of the union and pays her annual subscription of JD 2. We welcome all political leanings, provided that the women involved contribute to the advancement of the union.

Mr. Ahmad Qassem noted that it is the women who are responsible for the lack of progress in their cause. I would like to note here that women's issue is a societal one, not an issue of sex. There is a general social interest in women's issues, and the advancement of the status of women would certainly be of a great service to society. Men and women together, not women alone, should shoulder this task. Sometimes men's support of women issues is more effective than women's action.

I agree with Dr. Hosni Al-Shayyab that there is a prevailing culture, and to change this culture is a prerequisite, but how? The instruments of change are the legislation, the media, training and dialogue. But culture does not really change if we concentrate on one aspect only. As for the alienation of women from the union, this is not true. The General Federation of Jordanian Women attracted 12,000 members in a limited period of time, and in the last year, we attracted 6,000 new members.

The problem we have is the legal and financial resources and the technical infrastructure of the union. In other words, the resources available are not sufficient to absorb all the number of women who seriously and genuinely want to work along with us for the advancement of the women cause.

I agree with Dr. Suleiman Sweiss that three years have been lost in court battles. But perhaps you may notice that the ratio of women in the

two unions is higher than the total membership of any of the existing political parties or civil society organizations.

Mr. Amin Dhiyab made a remark about the mechanisms of leadership in a democracy. My answer to his remark is that these matters are different at the present time than they were at the time which he referred to.

Finally, I can say that the question of women and democracy is one that reflects the interests of all segments of society, not the interests of women only. A review of the number of women who are parliament deputies and cabinet ministers was not intended to say that this is a manifestation of democracy or political action. I agree with Mr. Amin Dhiyab that political action is a daily humanitarian work which does not need a permit or license from anyone, and that every citizen is capable of doing this kind of work.

Finally, I do not believe that theoretical trends motivate people to act, but the priorities of their daily needs, interests and issues. People usually act in the cultural direction and the socio-economic level that serves their interests. Women are part of this whole complex picture.

Mr. Ayman Masanat

In answer to the remark made by Mr. Uwaideh, I did not say that the media is performing a role that is obstructing democracy. What I said was that the media does not create democracy, and that a democracy does not necessarily make a good media. In other words, the relationship between democracy and the media is not really progressive or regressive.

In answer to the remark by Mr. Honsi Al-Shiyyab, I would say that it is true that I have not discussed applications or examples of political issues, because there is no room for going into detail. However, I would like here to assert that some of us have an erroneous concept about the opposition, whether it is a party or parliamentary opposition. No television in the world could become a platform for the opposition transmitting speeches that are indicative of specific political orientations. Pleasing the opposition is a very difficult matter. We have noticed in the previous House of Representatives that there were many deputies who protested because parts of their speeches were not transmitted by the television. But what can you choose when you are restricted to a specific time? The solution rests perhaps in the exclusive coverage of parliament and opposition news. If the deputies were merged into major blocs, the

media coverage would become easier. Specialized newsmen should be provided to cover the aspects of the news related to the opposition. The two voices -- the voice of the government and the voice of the opposition -- should be heard.

My answer to the remark made by Dr. Ibn Mahfouz on the dangers of the unilateral philosophy is that you have noticed that I have deliberately avoided using the phrase "media policy." I spoke about a philosophy which can become a key to a clear vision. We are not talking about a political line. If we started talking about politics or a political line, we would be running the risk of slipping into a unilateral dimension.

I agree with Dr. Nizam Assaf that the hegemony of ideology poses a challenge, but we must assert that an advanced media system, particularly in the area of television and satellite transmission, is really ideologically imposed, irrespective of the contents. However, this question needs further research and study.

I agree with Mr. Abdul Khaleq that the old guard of the television personnel should not be sacrificed as a victim, but should be trained and re-trained to be able to cope with the new situation. In all countries of the world, even senior managers are trained and re-trained in view of the development of technology. We must care for the employees, respect them and try to reach an understanding with them. Perhaps one of the problems of the television is the absence of constant contact between the management and the employees. By the way, television personnel are classified as employees, not media men or journalists and cannot join the Jordanian Press Association.

We have highly qualified people in the television service, but they lack communication with one another. An example of this, I served in the television for about seven and a half years, and during all these years we did not have one single meeting for evaluation, nor was any meeting held to discuss media philosophy or policy.

As for the question of how we start can a dialogue between the television and its viewers, I do not believe that there is a general viewer. This is why I used the phrase "qualitative viewers." The viewer is a citizen, but citizens belong to various and different social segments. I cannot take any man in the street and interview him and then say that this is a sample of viewers. Therefore, it is important to identify what a viewer is and what are his political, cultural and social standards. This is why we also have spoken about the classification of viewers. But we

should deal carefully and cautiously with the questionnaires. In order to judge a certain programme, a person must have the capability to form a point of view. Often we find people lacking this capability or having no information or ability to express themselves. They may criticize a certain programme, but they have no alternative to offer. In other words, they have no point of view. Therefore, it is very important to identify the segment of viewers you are dealing with. We cannot even impose the question on people: Are you for, or are you against?

Thank you.

Senator Abdul Latif Arabiyat (Chairman Of The Session)

Thank you all for your patience. These seminars and meetings are part of a process of revival of the exchange of views for the public good. In fact, when it comes to theory and practice, we should take into consideration the existing social conditions and identify the required social change. We should also realize that social change is the slowest type of change, and is the most difficult and the best as well. Therefore, we should be patient and persist in our work slowly but surely. This needs effort and a responsible freedom and responsible opposition.

As for the evaluation of our democratic process, we are proud of the participation and evaluation of our dear guests from abroad. I would like to express my satisfaction with this session and to emphasize the need for further meetings of this type in order to exchange views and learn from one another for the purpose of consolidating the principles of democracy, freedom and the cooperation and realization of all of the requirements of change.

Thank you.

Focus Number Five

- Jordan's democratic experiment: An Arabic view
- Political Islam and democracy
- Economic reform and political democracy
- General discussion

JORDAN'S DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENT: AN ARAB VIEW

Dr. Muhammad Ajalani

Introduction

To judge whether a country belongs to the commonwealth of democracy or not we should take its historic and social conditions into consideration. Within its geographic boundaries, Jordan confronts the challenge of having the longest borders with Israel. It is also encountering economic difficulties and a precarious political challenge manifest in the fact that its experiment in democracy is still a new one. Nevertheless, it has attained significant achievements due to the fact that it has followed a constant and principled policy. This experience should not be judged hastily, and a review of domestic and external conditions surrounding Jordan should be made, if the judgment is to be fair and objective.

I do not agree with those who say that democracy, as a political system, is not fit for our Arab societies. The world has changed, and we are now living in the age of information, liberalization and open borders. All these developments are an indication that it is no longer possible for dictatorial regimes to continue and that the base of rule or government should be the institutions rather than the individual, because persons come and go, but institutions stay. There are some people who are asking the following question: Can Jordan, with its tribal and clannish composition be responsive to the concepts of democracy? My answer to this question is most certainly yes. With the rapid developments currently taking place, the tribe or clan will gradually and slowly melt into the national fabric. There was a time when Japan was a feudalist, backward and divided country at the end of the 19th

Century. Japan choose the democratic system and copied from the West concepts that were compatible with the realities governing its society. Japan has now become one of the major industrial powers in the world. Furthermore, even if a large part of Jordan's society is a tribal one, should this form an obstacle for the modernization of the country?

Jordan: A Unique Democracy and Supportive Factors

Although Jordanian governments have not been liberal governments, Jordan has made headway on the road to democracy, performing much better than neighbouring Arab countries. It is noteworthy that regardless of the progress that Arab societies may have achieved, they basically remain traditional societies influenced by the persons ruling them, primarily because we are an emotional people who are attracted spontaneously and automatically to charismatic rulers. Charismatic legitimacy is the crux of our culture, because we have not yet reached the stage where our loyalty goes to the institution rather than the individual. Thus, we supported Nasser in the fifties, sixties and seventies, and now Saddam in the nineties.

Tolerance and Wise Judgment

Tolerance and wise judgment are among the prominent qualities of King Hussein. He has never resorted to violence, repression or domination as a method of governing, but always to dialogue. He has always listened to the demands of the people, and this has been the fundamental characteristic of his rule. He has kept contacts, even with his foes, and left it up to time to prove whether they were wrong or right. Many baathists, communists and radical Leninists, even the army officer who masterminded the 1957 coup against the king, Ali Abu Nuwwar, were not executed by the king as other Arab countries would have done. The king made Abu Nuwwar understand as time went on that he was wrong, after he had pardoned him and gave him an important post in the government. He did the same with figures from other Arab countries. Akram Hourani, the founder of the Socialist Party in Syria, which advocated in the sixties that King Hussein's regime should be toppled, eventually requested political asylum in Jordan.

Even in the most difficult times in the fifties, King Hussein did not let loose his security machinery to strike hard at the opposition as usually happens in other Third World countries when the regime becomes

endangered. On the contrary, he was eager to have his adversaries undergo a fair trial according to the principle of the sovereignty of the law. Meanwhile, he never severed contact with the opposition. This direct relationship between the king and his people has kept him fully informed on their conditions. He has never ruled from behind military barracks as other leaders have done, but has always been anxious to create a balance between the various segments of society. This in fact is sufficient evidence of the Jordanian ruler's respect of pluralism and belief in democracy as a way of life.

The King's Subject

Most Jordanian people are Sunni Muslims, and thus a homogenous group. This is an important factor for stability in a region that is composed of numerous religious and ethnic minorities. There is also a Christian minority which does not constitute more than 3 per cent of the population and is represented in parliament by 9 deputies. The Christians trace their origins to Ghassanite Arab tribes who lived in the region in earlier ages. The Circassians are another minority which constitutes about 2 per cent of the population. They are an ethnic group that fled and settled in Jordan to escape Russian persecution in the late 18th Century. The Circassians have three seats in parliament. Jordan's policy has always been based on the recognition of the full rights of religious and ethnic minorities.

All in all, citizens in Jordan, despite all these variations, are loyal to their state, because they feel that they are enjoying the full rights of citizenry. The principles of sovereignty of the law, equality before the law and justice for all have been enforced fairly and neutrally. Fortunately, these are the basic principles and substance of democracy. Democracy can never take root in a country where the government represses the civil society or where there is no justice.

Government's Relations with the Religious Movement

The king has understood the importance which the religious factor plays in the lives of his people. He himself belongs to a well-known religious family going back to the Hashemite dynasty. Not only has he justified his rule on such grounds, but he has allowed various religious groups to express their views, organize themselves and engage in political activity. The result is that parliament deputies has been elected from these groups. This is a phenomenon which is worthy of examining.

In all Arab countries, only Yemen, besides Jordan of course, has allowed representatives of an Islamic political movement to run and win seats in parliament.

Educational and Cultural Standards

Compared with other Arab and Third World countries and even with some East European countries, Jordan has achieved a quantitative and qualitative progress in the sphere of education and culture. Jordan now has universities and specialized colleges. It has 12 universities for a population of 4 million people. There are state and private universities. The state spends a large amount of money to maintain the high standards of its universities. Jordan prides itself that it is among the few Arab states that has a very low rate of illiteracy.

Jordan has also achieved significant progress in the sphere of infrastructures. It is far ahead, in this area, of other Arab countries. It has built international, inter-state and local roads, supplied the rural areas with electricity and piped water. It has built the King Talal Dam, water networks for agricultural purposes in the Jordan Valley, and sewage treatment stations. I have been impressed with the many cultural and sports facilities I have seen in Jordan.

The Hussein Medical Center is regarded as one of the most sophisticated medical centers in the region in terms of the high quality of medical services it offers to patients, the most advanced equipment and apparatus under its possession and its well-trained doctors. It is a symbol of the scientific and technological advancement Jordan has reached.

Circumstances of the 1989 Elections

In the 1956 parliament, there was the Palestinian faction represented in the deputies elected from the West Bank. The Pan-Arab and pro-Nasser trends were evident in the 1956 parliamentary elections. But in the late eighties, Jordanians were closer to Islamic conservatism, with less desire for Pan-Arabism and more emphasis on local issues of livelihood.

After the mid eighties when the Iraq-Iran war was over, the purchasing power of Jordan's local currency, the dinar, dropped sharply due to the suspension of aid from Arab countries to Jordan. As Iraq regained control of its sea-ports and started to export its commodities

from these ports, Iraqi exports via Jordan dropped by almost half. Jordan was suddenly compelled to depend on itself. The problems of unemployment and inflation surfaced. What made things worse at that time was that the government of Prime Minister Zaid Rifai did not take any measures to control expenditures or savings. Corruption and chaos increased in government departments and the civil service.

Thus the parliamentary elections were conducted under difficult economic conditions. Unfortunately the restoration of parliamentary life was associated with these conditions. Ordinary citizens were effected by these bad economic conditions, and they certainly influenced the thinking of their deputies in parliament. Most people, particularly in the cities, boycotted the 1989 elections because they believed that this was not the solution to the economic problems. Other people were prepared to vote for whomever was running in opposition to the government. Candidates of the Islamic Movement had the lion's share in these elections, because they were the only licensed and best organized party in Jordan following the dissolution of political parties in 1957. They raised the slogan: "Islam is the solution." A solution to the growing problems was the dream and the hope of every citizen, particularly since all other projects and slogans had failed to provide the required solutions.

Election of the 12th Parliament in 1993

Extraordinary circumstances have been associated with the 1993 parliamentary elections, such as the consequences of the Gulf war, the acute economic crisis and the Middle East peace process. Nevertheless, the elections were a genuine phenomenon which we must consider. For the first time in any Arab country, elections were held within a proper legal framework and under a National Charter that defined the rights and duties of citizens, emphasizes the sovereignty of the law, and recognized party and political pluralism. Thus the 1993 elections were conducted under political, legal and constitutional pluralism, and all political parties were allowed to nominate their candidates and to participate in the elections.

Generally speaking, the 1993 parliamentary elections were fair and free, despite the few excesses which are bound to happen in a country that is a newcomer to democracy. I certainly do not agree with Mr. Muhammad Abu Fares, the losing candidate from the fifth constituency in Amman, who told the magazine "Shihan" on 13

November 1995: "I never expected, neither in the past, nor the present, nor in the future, that there would ever be fair elections in Jordan." Mr. Abu Fares, an Islamist, tried to justify his defeat by saying that his troublesome views were unacceptable to the government. If this is true, why didn't the government try to block the victory of two other fundamentalist Islamists, Abdul Muni'm Abu Zant and Hamzeh Mansour, who were running in very sensitive areas of the Jordanian capital in opposition to the government. Needless to say, the government acted in accordance with the pledges made by King Hussein that the elections would be free and fair.

Dr. Uwaydi Abbadi, who also lost the elections, said in a statement that the government had interfered in the elections to block the victory of opposition candidates. Such a statement might give the wrong impression about Jordan, when in fact Jordan is the most stable and freest country in the Middle East. Perhaps there were some excesses at vote counting in some districts, as was the case with Dr. Ahmad Koufahi, who was wrongly listed as the seventh, when in fact he was the first candidate in terms of the number of votes he received. Administrative mistakes were also made, but unintentionally, i.e. the repeated ballots. Furthermore, some voters who did not have ballots were allowed to vote, and ballots which were not endorsed by the relevant committees as valid were found in the ballot boxes, thereby casting doubt on the validity of these ballots, and the relevant election committees refused to accept them. Some candidates said that the Ministry of Interior should be held responsible for not stamping the ballots before the voting began.

In the future, the Interior Ministry and the relevant administrative committees and competent authorities should avert such mistakes, although they could happen in countries which have a long tradition of democracy. There is also a need to review the election procedures and the way they are organized and to allocate more time for polling, vote counting and the declaration of results. This matter dictates that the electoral law be amended. So will the new House of Representatives amend the Electoral Law?

Criticism of Jordanian Democracy

1- Bureaucracy: Bureaucracy is associated with administrative privileges that prevent qualified and competent persons from reaching advanced positions in the state bureaucracy. It is a reflection of a behavioural and administrative pattern that contradicts the principle of

the "right person in the right place." It also contradicts with the concept of democracy. Indifference to one's duties, lack of feeling of responsibility, and reluctance of administrative personnel to make decisions out of fear that they might lose certain privileges or that they might displease the boss are some of the common diseases that are still afflicting Arab societies including Jordan. All this is happening at the expense of public interest which is being sacrificed in this case. The government should devise ways and means to implant the democratic attitude in the behaviour of the administrative personnel of the Jordanian civil service.

2- Corruption in the civil service: Corruption in the civil service is like a virus dismembering the civil service and undermining the remaining constructive values in the state bureaucracy. Its damage extends to include the entire society. Favoritism is the antithesis of justice and equality, whether as regards the personnel of departments and organizations or members of society. Favoritism means that an influential person, for example, intercedes on behalf of another person, whether qualified or not, to get him appointed to the civil service or to occupy a certain post. When the deserving person is deprived of his right to government appointment, work or promotion and this right is given to an undeserving person, the former develops a feeling of frustration, loss of hope in progress and unbelief in values and in the democratic process in the country.

Creativity and innovation should be the only criterion for promotion. We should develop the work ethics that civilized societies have. This, of course, can never be achieved unless administrative leaders in all their positions exercise an honest role and devise a clear criterion to evaluate and assess the efforts of innovators and to reward them materially and morally.

3- Erroneous practices: Some politicians believe that they alone have the truth. This belief is of course the result of a non-democratic attitude. We have heard parliament deputies from the Islamic Movement claiming a monopoly on truth and declaring that the solution of Jordan's problems can only be found in the Islamic way. This trend is the very antithesis of the scientific approach which is based on the constant search for truth that is a product of new experiments and renewed thought.

I have also heard Islamic Movement deputies claiming that they are more representative of the people because they received more votes than other candidates. Furthermore, among the non-democratic practices

used by some deputies are unreasonable accusations, slander and blackmail. Those who are resorting to such tactics are actually trying to drug the minds of their citizens and are in fact working against the interest of their people and country. We should emphasize realism and rationalism in our approach to our domestic problems and concerns. Jordan is currently undergoing difficult economic conditions, dictating the cooperation of all legislative, executive and judiciary powers to work together toward surmounting these difficulties.

Furthermore, the attendance of many members of the House of Representatives of the official sessions was not satisfactory, particularly when the House discussed the 1993 state budget. Only 42 deputies attended, prompting the chairman of the session to request that deputies not to leave the hall without his permission. Failure to attend an important House session devoted to the discussion of the state budget is an indication of lack of discipline and lack of cooperation with the executive power. There is also an important point which should be emphasized here, namely, deputies do not concentrate on the topic at hand. In the last session held to discuss the 1994 state budget, many deputies addressed the session and spoke about almost everything with the exception of the budget. Some of them discussed economic questions in generalized terms and quoted wrong figures and statistics. They requested that the government allocate additional funds to improve the lot of their districts at a time when the government is hardly capable of securing the original allocations. Only few minutes were spent on discussing the budget, which was supposed to be main topic of discussion.

The last observation is the large number of deputies who speak in the session. So far the deputies have not been able to form one single parliamentary bloc as is the case in most democratic parliaments of the world. They seem to be still incapable of working collectively.

Conclusions

It is difficult to make an advanced judgment on the democratic process in Jordan, because genuine parliamentary democracy cannot mature if it is interrupted every now and then. Bernard Shaw insists that it takes three generations to raise a democratic generation and a genuine democracy. Jordan's democracy has been an interrupted process, starting from the British Mandate of 1923 to 1946. The Second World War made democracy even grow smaller. However, after the declaration

of the independence of the State of Jordan, democracy began to gradually flourish. When the 1952 constitution was proclaimed and unified parliamentary elections for the West Bank and East Bank of Jordan were conducted, the democratic process was changing for the better.

The period that followed was unstable. Some Arab countries like Egypt and Syria interfered in Jordan's domestic affairs, and international conditions were unfavourable for democracy. Consequently the democratic process was suspended until 1989, a period where a peaceful regional and international atmosphere was prevailing, communist dictatorships were being dismantled for the interest of the Free World, and the principles of tolerance, justice and liberalization were gaining ground, and the revolution of communication was making the world into a global village.

The struggle for party pluralism and the respect of public liberties and human rights in Jordan cannot be left to the government, parliament and political parties alone. Democracy must become a way of life and a behavioural pattern reflecting on the attitudes of people. We should learn how to differ and how to resolve our problems through dialogue and persuasion. Democracy means constant and durable dialogue and the training of people to be patient and tolerant with opposing views. It also means that the majority cannot dominate the minority, but dialogue must grow between the government and the opposition.

We should raise this Jordanian generation to start learning about democracy in school at a young age. We should train these young boys and girls on methods of dialogue, on how to think creatively and how to make rational conclusions. Democratic curricula based on modern methodology should be introduced to the schools at all levels, to the university, to the union and to the political party.

Democracy can never be linked to the practices of one person or a group of persons, because freedom is for all and is one of the ingredients of democracy. Its defense is the duty of the free citizen. Otherwise, what is the use of advocating democracy without being prepared to offer the necessary sacrifices for the defense of its values?

Democracy above all is an ethical and cultural value which cannot be achieved unless people get rid of their selfishness and develop a strong feeling of responsibility and unless they place public interest before their own personal interest. Therefore, I have always emphasized the need for

democratic education. Needless to say, Jordan's democracy is still young and cannot be compared with the old democracies which have finally succeeded after hundreds of years of struggle.

Discussant Dr. Jihad Odeh

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. At the outset, I would like to thank his excellency Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber for presenting me in his kind words and Mr. Hani Hourani for inviting me to attend this exciting seminar to discuss the democratic process in Jordan.

It is not quite clear to me what is meant by some of the words and phrases used in this seminar, such as the word "process." The truth is that there is no such a thing as a democratic process. Rather, there is a democratic transformation. This is a very important point. Therefore, Jordan is undergoing democratic transformation, and what we are discussing is the democratic transformation, not the process. The process comes after the transformation. It is the transformation which defines how the process will be like. Another phrase "an Arab view" was used in the seminar. I do not know what it means either. Does it mean Jordan's experience compared to the experiences of other Arab countries, or the way Jordan views other Arab experiences? I want to assume that it means a comparison between the experience of Jordan and experiences in other Arab countries.

The first question which could be raised then is: What are the components or ingredients of Jordan's experience in political democracy? I think that there are four components or ingredients that are essential for transformation to democracy: The first is the presence of political parties; the second is parliamentary elections like the ones which took place in 1989 and 1993; the third is parliament's exercise of power; and the fourth is liberalization and freedom of expression. These four factors or elements, from the theoretical point of view, are the elements needed for the initiation of a democratic life, but they are not enough to complete the building of a democratic life and create the

democratic process. Political parties have been legalized after an absence of 36 years and parliamentary elections have been conducted. In the 1989 and 1993 elections, views were almost unanimous that the elections were free and fair. The 1989 parliament exercised its powers but was later dissolved. The dissolution of parliament is an administrative measure which could be democratic or not. But none of the speakers has given a reason for the dissolution. We are talking here about political democracy which is by definition a combination of measures intended to achieve specific goals:

1- To change the legislative power periodically through election.

2- Transparency.

3- To balance sectoral interests of the various categories of people. I must emphasize here that democracy does not mean responsiveness to the interests of the people. In this seminar, I have noticed that a lot has been said about democracy and the masses. I must also emphasize that the masses are not democratic in their thinking. Democracy is based on groups, on interests, and how to make a balance among all these interests.

4- To check performance and introduce the principle of accountability of both the executive and legislative branches of government.

These are the four important ingredients of democracy, without which there can be no democracy. There has been a democratic transformation in the last five years in Jordan. Jordan is still undergoing this transformation. The question now is how can we continue this transformation until we reach the phase of consolidation? In other words, how can this particular phase continue with its own momentum, without needing a sponsorship from the government or any organ of the state?

Going back to the question of comparison with the experiences of other Arab countries, we will find that the question is not that easy because of the different circumstances that have been associated with each of these experiences. The Jordanian case is a special one, but is not unique in itself. The world has known similar cases. Perhaps Belgium in Europe was a similar case, but in the Arab World, there is no similar case to the one in Jordan. Why? Because the Jordanian case is different in many aspects from the those of Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Yemen and Mauritania. My question therefore is: Why is the Jordanian experiment undergoing an apparent state of transformation while other Arab experiments are in a state of stagnation, if not retreat?

The Egyptian experiment is undergoing a state of stagnation. In Algeria, democracy is being harshly and cruelly tested. In Yemen, the democratic experiment was aborted, and in Mauritania, bitter accusations were made about forgery and mismanagement. What a regrettable state of affairs. Why has the experience been different in Jordan? The reason is perhaps that the Jordanian case was different from the other cases. In fact, I can say that there are four reasons which give Jordan hope that its democracy will continue:

1- Jordan's strategic location in the heart of the geopolitical exchange of the Arab East. Consequently, the question of security is more urgent for Jordan than any other Arab country. This reason will probably explain to us why King Hussein has been merciful to his opponents. That is perhaps his personal reason. But what about the objective reasons? The objective reason is that Jordan is located in the heart of the Arab World. Jordan's democracy was initiated with a background of permanent recognition that there are genuine affiliations in society that reflect the general conditions in the Arab World. In other words, because of its strategic ingredients and location, Jordan is in a permanent state of preparedness for transformation. I do not agree with what other speakers have said about the April 1989 incidents. If we closely examine Jordan's policy, it will be easy to note that undeclared democratic policies have been applied in one way or the other throughout the past phases. These policies are being revealed at present. These policies were based on pluralism, which is an essential part of the formation of any society. Pluralism is not a special case for Jordanian society. It is a reflection of the conditions that exist in the Arab World, such as the presence of Jordanian political parties that have links outside Jordan. Therefore, Jordan's case is different than the Egyptian, Algerian or Moroccan cases. But there are some aspects of similarity with the Yemeni case, although there are important differences.

2 - The trend towards peace in the Middle East and towards peaceful competition with Israel. Some say that the reason for suspending the democratic experiment in 1957 was the Arab -Israeli conflict. In other words, Jordan needed all this time to improve its strategic position, which now requires democratic transformation. This means that the delay in democratic transformation in Jordan had nothing to do with domestic conditions, but with regional factors. To prepare for entering the era of peace, we cannot compete with Israel in tourism unless we have a democracy. Jordan cannot also compete with Israel in investments unless it has a democracy. We cannot even compete with Israel in peace unless we have democracy. Democracy is then a strategic

option for Jordan and a form of strategic planning.

3- Jordan has an advantage over several Arab countries in the fact that the legitimacy of the government is separated from the legitimacy of the regime. Only Morocco is somewhat similar to Jordan in this regard. In Egypt, for example, there is no separation between the legitimacy of the government and the legitimacy of the regime. If you criticize the government, then you are criticizing the regime. The April 1989 incidents were an example in this regard. There were moves against the government, but the people involved were supportive of the regime. The legitimacy of the regime is derived from the Great Arab Revolt, and the legitimacy of the regime is not questioned every time the legitimacy of the government is questioned.

4- The social composition of Jordan is characterized by its lack of a strong opposition political base. Thus, Jordan in this regard is different from Saudi Arabia or Morocco. The issue is not one of a monarchy or republic, but is related to the nature of social composition. Even the Muslim Brotherhood Group does not constitute an opposition in the real sense of the word, and they do not operate separately from the state. The talk about the bourgeois class in Jordan is probably inaccurate. There is no bourgeois class. Rather, there are bourgeois who completely depend on the state for their resources. The bourgeois class, in the European sense, that is a class that has a resource base separate from the state as in England or France, does not exist in Jordan. When it comes to the clans, they do not constitute a class in the sense of a center of opposition.

These are the four conditions which distinguish the special case in Jordan from the other cases. This is why I am optimistic that the Jordanian case will move from the state of transformation to the state of democratic process. It is noteworthy that the instruments used in the Jordanian democratic experiment are a mixture of the instruments used in the Egyptian and Moroccan experiments, whether as regards the laws pertaining to associations or in the way Jordan deals with the opposition.

The Jordanian case has the potential for democratic development. Nevertheless, it will be facing real dangers manifest in the forthcoming challenges of security and the strategic balance in the eastern part of the Arab World. The ability of the state to continue is more important than democracy. Therefore, I hope that democracy in Jordan will serve as an instrument of stability for the state. This lesson should be the star that guides the Jordanians in their march towards democracy.

POLITICAL ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY

Deputy Dr. Muhammad Uwaideh

What does political Islam mean? It means the Islamic movements who are involved in the exercise of political activities. This distinguishes them from other Islamic groups involved in preaching or education or social or other activities. Despite their different names and the countries they are stationed in, Islamic movements in the Arab World can be identified with the Muslim Brotherhood Group and the movements that were influenced by or split from them. Therefore, they have many factors in common, and there are almost no differences among them with the exception of some minor variations.

If we examine Islamic movements involved in political activities, it is easy to note the disparity in the number of years that each has existed or the political influence it has exerted. While the Islamic National Front reached power in Sudan, An-Nahda Movement in Tunisia is banned from carrying out any political activities. In the middle of these two extremes comes the Islamic movement in Yemen and the Islamic movement in Jordan. The Islamic political movement in the Arab World is in the ranks of the opposition. This opposition is being expressed in more than one way. In some countries like Syria and Algeria it is using the method of confrontation. In other countries such as the Gulf states, it is using the method of reform. In Jordan and Yemen, it is acting as an opposition within the official framework set by the government.

The Islamic Movement is playing the role of opposition because national and leftist governments advocate concepts that contradict with Islamic concepts. Furthermore, most of these governments are secular, separating religion from the other affairs of life, and have failed to solve

the problems which their people are encountering or to achieve the hopes to which they are aspiring. The Islamic Movement presents itself as the alternative which can resolve problems and achieve hopes and aspirations. However, the opposition here differs in the degree of its rigidity and flexibility. If the issue is ideological, the position of the Islamic movement will be very rigid. But if the issue is political, the Islamic Movement will act according to the public interest of the nation and be as flexible as it can be. If the parliament wants to take action on legislation involving alcoholic beverages or usury, the Islamic position will be very committed and rigid. But if the legislation involves issues related to interests of the country and citizens, the Islamic movement will act with a sufficient degree of flexibility to cooperate with other political forces for adopting a stand on these issues.

When we say the Islamic Movement is in the ranks of the opposition, this should not be understood as an opposition under all circumstances and in all cases. It is a principled opposition. There are issues of principles on which the movement cannot compromise. However, there are numerous other issues on which the Islamic Movement can find common grounds to work and cooperate with regimes or political parties.

Methods of Action

Islam draws a very clear difference between two spheres of activity : the doctrinal and ideological sphere on the one hand, and the political and social sphere on the other. The questions of doctrine are clearly interpreted, and there is no room for difference over these interpretations. Consequently, there is no room for compromise. However, when it comes to the political and social sphere, Islam had lays down a framework of ethical values and conduct of daily life without going into detail. It leaves the details to be decided by the changes and needs of life and the interpretations and circumstances of people in any given age.

On the question of government, Islam only lays down the principles, the frameworks and values that should govern political action and leaves it up to the people to decide the form of government in accordance with the dictates of life. It says that the government should govern according to the laws of God, that the ruler should be selected by the Muslims, that the rule should be based on the Shura (consultation), legitimacy and justice. It has enacted a set of ethics and

values which constitute the basis of government, but has not defined the form of the government or the title of its head or the form of the Shura or the institutions needed for this purpose. It has therefore, left a role for the people to chart their own lives and to devise ways and means, forms and institutions that help them in this regard as long as they are committed to the law of God and to Islam's ethics and values.

This should help us understand the variations in the forms of government, phrases used and institutions built to run the government throughout Islamic history beginning with the early Caliphs, who ruled the Muslim nation immediately after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, up to the last Ottoman Caliph.

Unfortunately, however, in contemporary history, Islam has been alienated from the daily life of people, and Islamists have not been allowed to exercise political activities. This has deprived the Islamic nation of a rich asset that it could have given to the political life of the nation. This explains why the Islamic Movement is offering itself today as the alternative for other ideologies and programmes with a strongly felt confidence that it can resolve problems and attain goals.

For well over 25 years, the Islamic Movement has been living behind bars in the countries where it had originally existed. Even in countries which allow Islamists a certain margin of political activity, severe restrictions are placed on the activities of the Islamists to the point where political action becomes meaningless. Political action cannot be produced in laboratories or in a vacuum. It cannot be carried out by pure theorization, but by actual daily practice and interaction with the institutions, people and events. The Islamic Movement is banned from doing so in numerous Arab countries despite its popular broad base.

This is why political participation and presence is essential, because it provides the opportunity for interaction and participation in the political sphere. Political participation itself is an Islamic demand. Islamists want to be present and participate effectively in programmes, plans, projects and alternatives. This is why democracy is important for the Islamic Movement because democracy opens an inlet for the Islamic Movement to get politically involved in dealing with an Arab World that is mostly governed by dictatorial regimes that deny the people the right to take part in governing themselves or chart their course according to their interests.

The Place of Democracy in Political Islam

Political Islam views democracy from two angles: First, democracy as a philosophy, and second, democracy as a meaning and content. Democracy as a philosophy meaning the rule of the people in the historic sense which the West inherited from Greece is contradictory with the Islamic concept. In democracy, the people are the reference or arbitrator, but in Islam, it is the Sharia (religious law) which is the reference or the arbitrator. In Islam, the people cannot, either directly or through their representatives, endorse what the Sharia has prohibited or prohibit what the Sharia has endorsed. I believe that the criticism of democracy by Islamists focuses on democracy as a philosophy. Nor do I believe that the democracy being offered to us here in the Arab World is the philosophy or the ideology, but some forms of application which could be formulated locally to fit our particular conditions in each country. As for the methods and forms of democracy, they differ from one country to another. Generally speaking, these methods and forms do not contradict with Islam, as each country has its own way of expression and practice.

Some people speak of democracy as a recognition of pluralism, or, in other words, a recognition of all ideas and concepts in the political arena, even those that contradict Islam. They are doing so to prompt the Muslims to recognize ideas and concepts that are alien to Islam. It is tantamount to an exercise in defiance and provocation of all Muslims. If Islamists unwittingly fall victim of such a game, they will take stands against certain ideas and concepts, and it will go on the record that Islamists oppose democracy, and consequently, they should be denied political participation. Meanwhile, those who are playing the game seek an Islamic recognition of these non-Islamic ideas and concepts in order to corner the Islamists and put them in a very difficult position.

Needless to say, democracy would be rejected in the Arab World if the outcome of the elections meant the peaceful transfer of power, the elimination of the ruling regimes or if the results were in favour of the Islamists, as was the case in Algeria. This is an indication that the democracy offered to the Arabs is not genuine. The West which is dominating the world today believes that it alone deserves democracy, while other people do not deserve it, and it will act along these lines with more persistence if the beneficiary of democracy is Islam.

Perhaps the recent municipal elections in Turkey are the latest evidence of what I am talking about. Turkey has alienated itself from Islam and the Arab World and became part of Europe and a member of

the NATO. Nevertheless, the problem of Turkey is that it is historically a Muslim state, that its people are deeply rooted in Islam, and that the Islamic Awakening Movement, which was one of the election winners, is growing larger and larger.

Democracy: Meaning and Content

If democracy meant the people's participation in decision making instead of the decision being made by one individual despot, if democracy were the alternative to dictatorship, repression and domination, and if it meant freedom and human rights, then the Islamic position towards democracy would be different. Popular participation in any form is an Islamic concept, and freedom, in all its expressions, is an Islamic value. Injustice, repression, individual domination and dictatorships in all their forms are concepts which are rejected by Islam. The second Islamic Caliph Omar Ibn Al-Khattab was quoted once as saying: "Can you enslave men whose mothers have born them free?" Islam also stands for equality in rights and duties and protects the freedom of belief and the freedom of expression, which are values cherished by the faith.

Needless to say, if Islamists are given the option whether to choose Islam or democracy in any of its forms, they will not accept any alternative to Islam. But this is not the issue, and the problem is not between Islam and democracy. The problem is the conflict between the rule of the individual and popular participation, between dictatorship and democracy, between repression and injustice on the one hand, and freedom, equality, justice and the sovereignty of the law on the other. I do not believe that anyone would choose a dictatorial system and discard a democratic one. Most certainly, dictatorship, repression, injustice and discrimination are not part of Islam.

This is the way the Islamic Movement views this question, while maintaining its theoretical position towards democracy as a philosophy alien to Islam. Needless to say, however, if democracy is applied in our society in full, we in the Islamic Movement still prefer it to the existing situation, because of the benefits it could bring forth and because Islam will gain under democracy more than it would gain under dictatorship.

The Islamic Movement and Democracy

At a time when the Islamic Movement declares its acceptance of the

democratic option, Islamist leaders state that many of the concepts advocated by democracy are Islamic values, although democracy is no alternative to the Islamic system of government. However, in the Arab countries, opportunities for the Islamic Movement to participate in the political activity of the country or to enter the democratic process differ vastly from one country to another. This really prompts us to place a big question mark on the so-called democratic transformation in the Arab World in terms of its seriousness, credibility and objectives.

The so-called democratic transformation was used in some Arab countries as a cosmetic for the regime and to absorb the wrath of the people who were very critical of the ruling authorities. In non-Arab countries, it was used to avert anticipated explosions, such as the one that stormed Rumania and killed its president, Nicolae Ceausescu, particularly in east European countries and former Soviet republics. Sometimes these so-called democratic transformations were the outcome of political pressure, and the ruling authorities had no option but to go along. An example of this is the turbulence in Algeria in 1988 which led to the 1991 elections.

In the first case, we have the model of Egypt and Tunisia, which claim to have democratic regimes based on political pluralism, when in fact the Islamic Movement are banned. In the second case, we have the Jordanian and Yemeni models, and Sudan after Numairi, where restrictions were imposed on Islamic participation, and laws were often enacted to minimize the role of the Islamic Movement. The third case is the Algerian model. When general elections were in favour of the Islamists, the military intervened with the support of the West, particularly the United States and France, to prevent the Islamists from reaching power. This is the unhappy relationship between democracy and the Islamic Movement in the Arab World.

As for the Islamic Action Front in Jordan, its articles of association frankly state that the front is committed to democracy and to the freedom of others to participate in the political process. We are even calling for freedom for everyone so that our turn will come and freedom will reach us. The Islamic Action Front was among the first political parties to apply to be licensed after the enactment of the Political Parties Law despite our reservations about this law. When the electoral law was amended and replaced with a provisional law stipulating the "one man, one vote" principle, we objected to this law and sought to revoke it. Nevertheless, we participated in the elections in order to provide the opportunity for the democratic process to grow and advance, although

we know that there are many others who are seeking to abort this process once and for all.

Briefly speaking, the problem of democracy does not rest with the Islamists, but with non-Islamic regimes and theoreticians, who want democracy their own way and with results that are in their favour. So they want a democracy tailored at specific measurements to suite them; otherwise, they will not accept it. Algeria is still an example reminding us of how some people understand democracy. It is worthwhile to note that former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker commented on democracy in Jordan by saying that the United States will not allow its enemies to gain power through democracy. Jordanian Columnist Fahed Al-Fanek wrote in his weekly column in *Al-Rai'* newspaper that we do not want democracy if it will bring the Islamists to power. Nevertheless, Islamists will continue their efforts to benefit from every occasion and opportunity allowing them to advance the values of Islam in which they believe.

Discussant Dr. Mahmoud Ibn Mahfouz

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to extend my thanks to Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center and to the Friedrich Ebert Foundation for inviting me to participate in this useful meeting. Before starting to comment on the paper of Dr. Muhammad Uwaideh, I would like to say that my invitation to attend the seminar came belatedly. Therefore, I could not read the paper as I should have, and I did not have sufficient time to prepare my comments. After taking a quick look at the paper, I realized that it was not easy to comment on it, because the author is known for his political and ideological skills, making my task all the more difficult.

The paper consisted of a prelude and three focuses: methods of political action from the Islamic perspective, the position of democracy in Islam, and the Islamic Movement and democracy. Though this clear sequence of thought is to be respected, I am not going to follow it in my replies in order to avoid repetition. Therefore, I have decided that it is more appropriate from the methodological standpoint to focus the discussion on the most prominent feature of the presentation, namely selectiveness. This selectiveness was evident in the presentation. Consequently, the results were irrelevant to the conditions of the contemporary Arab and Islamic worlds. Selectiveness was prevalent in the concepts, beginning with the prelude and proceeding to the various sections of the paper. The author defined political Islam as the Islamic movements which are involved in politics, when in fact he should have defined the relationship between Islam and politics from the theoretical standpoint as it is deduced from the general historical framework.

The author also made a distinction between the ideological and political spheres. In the ideological sphere, he left no room for compromise. But on the political sphere, he insisted that Islam laid

down the general framework of the principles of life according to ethical values without elaborating, thus leaving us a small margin of detail. The author was selective in applying these principles on the issue of government. He insisted that Islam defined the principles, frameworks and values which should guide the work of government and left for people to decide on the form of this government. Therefore, he stated that the government should abide by the laws of God, but the choice of the ruler, the form of the state, the Shura methods and the state institutions are matters to be decided by the people.

As for the concept of democracy, the author, again on a selective basis, made a distinction between the philosophy of democracy and the content of democracy. He decided, without reviewing the most important values and principles upon which democracy is based, that it is contradictory to Islamic jurisprudence, because the reference or arbitrator in the case of democracy is the people, while the reference or arbitrator in Islam is God. He only discussed democracy as a mechanism of government which Islamic movements could utilize through participation and party pluralism. He also suggested that democracy is preferable to dictatorial and repressive regimes, although Islam is the best. Therefore, the author indicated that the ultimate goal is to establish an Islamic regime and that democracy is one of the mechanisms or vehicles which could be utilized to achieve this ultimate goal. In other words, the function of democracy, according to him, is transitional.

The author also dealt with history in a selective way. He made no mention of the most important historic eras of Islam whether when the institution of the Caliphate was established and the Shura was organized in a credible way, or subsequent periods in the history of Islam when the Islamic nation departed from the original model or deviated from it. Even when he talked about contemporary history, he only cited some examples which do not really give a true picture of the real conditions in the Arab and Islamic worlds in general and political Islam in particular.

What were the results of such a selective approach? The results were stunning vis-a-vis the three levels. Islam was presented as a rigid philosophy incapable of evolution. We do not believe that such an outlook on Islam will be helpful even to Islam itself, because all philosophical, ideological, political and social theories which could not absorb theoretical and social evolution are eventually discarded by the people.

The author of the paper fell into evident contradictions. On the one hand, he asserted that it is up to the Muslim people to choose the ruler. On the other hand, he insisted that the title of the head of state is open to interpretation, overlooking the fact that the transfer of power in monarchical systems is done in accordance with the hereditary principle.

As for democracy, the author summed it up in two questions : participation and pluralism, without discussing the philosophical aspects of democracy. I must assert here that after all the developments that have taken place in all parts of the world in our contemporary age, democracy has been enriched and promoted in a comprehensive philosophy of life, because it is a set of durable values and principles that can help resolve the problems of mankind and present-day dilemmas.

Democracy in its principles and values means freedom, equality and justice and non-discrimination on the basis of sex, language, colour, culture or national affiliation. It is a combination of values which are now taken for granted and people should enjoy them as has been stipulated in the international conventions on human rights. These overall principles which constitute democracy were not discussed by the author of the paper, because he saw democracy as an instrument or a vehicle of government, not a philosophy constituting a comprehensive and integrated social system.

The author's selectiveness was also evident in historic narrations. He limited political Islam to the movement of the Muslim Brotherhood, overlooking the many Islam-based movements and political regimes, such as Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, which claim to apply political Islam in government. The author also did not discuss other Islamic movements which differ with the Muslim Brotherhood, such as the Islamic movement in Iran and Lebanon. He also overlooked the political regimes which state in their constitutions that Islam is the source of their governments. Some of these regimes proclaim Islam as the religion of the state. Others state in their constitutions that Islam is the reference point for legislation. It seems to me that the author has excluded these regimes and movements because he does not consider them to be compatible with Islam as a doctrine and philosophy.

Generally speaking, I can say this the selective approach has laid down a blackout on important aspects of Islam and democracy. Furthermore, this selectiveness is subjective by all standards, because it creates on the medium and long terms the factors of division, split and

weakness, simply because no political movement or regime, whether Islamic or secular, would be at ease in dealing with a political trend that utilizes democracy as a vehicle to gain power, while at the same time, does not conceal its intentions to topple this democracy when the proponents of this trend gain power. Consequently, Islamic movements accept participation in political action under the framework of parliament as a tactical move which can never be up to a strategic choice.

ECONOMIC REFORM AND POLITICAL DEMOCRACY

Dr. Fahd Al-Fanek

There are isolated examples in the world indicating that economic growth, development and reform can be done without political democracy, such as the progress achieved by South Korea under a military dictatorship, or the current progress being achieved by China in introducing substantive economic changes without parallel political changes in the style of government that is run by the one-party system. There are also other isolated example of the application of democracy in economically backward societies. India, for example, is regarded as the world's largest democracy although it is part of the Third World. Democracy flourished in Athens centuries ago alongside slavery and economic exploitation. But these isolated examples are the exception rather than the rule. The rule is that industrial and economic progress and development usually run parallel with political development and democracy.

This paper will discuss how the economic reform process in Jordan was associated with the application of the economic readjustment programme following the 1988-89 debt crisis. It will also discuss the political reform process which was associated with the democratic transformation that was initiated by conducting the first free general elections in Jordan in decades.

We believe that economic reform in Jordan would not have succeeded had it not been associated with political reform, and that democracy and political pluralism would not have been consolidated

and grown had it not been associated with the liberalization of the Jordanian economy and the free market mechanisms. There are still many people who are living under the illusion of the fifties, believing that it is possible to establish a liberal-based democratic and politically pluralistic system under socialism or a state-run system where the public sector dominates the economic life of the country and decisions are centralized. Why are Third World governments afraid of economic and political reforms and hesitate before taking any step in this direction? Dr. Alialuddin Hilal, professor of political science at Cairo University, says the following: "Not all regimes are capable of reform. Some regimes have no ability at all. Other regimes are capable of partial reform only. It all depends on the degree of legitimacy the regime enjoys and the social impact of the reform." This suggests that there is a contradiction between the political desire to protect the regime and the need to surmount the bottlenecks in the economy.

To understand the attitudes of governments towards political and economic reform, we should recognize certain facts. First of all, any government in power strives to stay in power, to enhance its strength, expand its base and deny opportunities to its foes. Each government wants to enhance and strengthen its legitimacy and please the largest possible number of individuals and groups. No government would want to take any action that would displease or provoke its popular base or source of support. Even when it is compelled to do so, it does it on a gradual basis in order to gain enough time to restructure its alliances and attract new groups of society to offset the groups that it will lose as a result of the action. Finally, a government is not an integrated unit. Within a government, there are contradictory trends and opposing factions.

The most prominent characteristic of Arab regimes is that they are authoritarian. There are few pluralistic regimes that are guided and controlled by the government itself.

Economic reform is very much like democracy in the sense that it may bring about instability at the beginning, but will lead to stability in the medium and long terms. The problem is that some Arab regimes are fragile and cannot hold out or probably survive through the transitional phase. Therefore, they hesitate at the beginning in order to maintain their survival. To them, what is the use of medium-term or long-term stability if they will not be in power when this stability finally comes?

Economic reform is only possible if it is done over a long period of

time, and it may not be politically viable for a government which thinks in terms of a period of one year. The reform may drive a certain government out of office, but it will provide the state and the regime with stability. Thus, the success of major political and economic reforms depends on the strong commitment of the ruling regime, not the government only, because the regime has a long-term vision and is ready to endure minor setbacks for the sake of achieving big successes in the future. The term of the government is one or two years, but the term of the regime is much longer. While the state outlives the regime, the regime outlives the government.

In the case of Jordan, the state and regime are almost one. It is not strange, then, to see in the person of King Hussein the guarantee of continuity of the democratic process and economic reform simultaneously.

At present, there are at least five Arab countries which are applying economic reform programmes in coordination with the International Monetary Fund. These countries are Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and Algeria. With the exception of Jordan, economic reform programmes have encountered enormous difficulties in Arab countries. In Egypt, these programmes do not seem to have a promising future, simply because the Egyptian policy towards economic reform is procrastination and postponement for the longest possible period. The Egyptian government is confident of its strategic importance to the United States and the West. Therefore, it is unlikely that the International Monetary Fund will pull the carpet out from under the feet of the Egyptian government, because the West wants Egypt to maintain its political role in serving American interests in the region, whether as regards Arab oil or the Middle East peace process. This is not only due to the fact that economic readjustment programmes require difficult decisions which can only be made by regimes that enjoy a high-level of legitimacy, but there are other factors which could turn economic reform into a predicament for Arab regimes, and Dr. Hilal has cited some of them.

First of all, economic reform is an international demand, not a local national one. Economic reform programmes come from abroad, not from within. Arab economists have not yet agreed on the translation of

the word "privatization " which was unfamiliar to us and did not come out of our own experiences. Furthermore, the economic and structural readjustment programmes have no clear supporters or strong local support. No specific segment of the population will be the beneficiary of these programmes, no particular social segment in our society will support or defend these programmes. They will only be supported and defended by the strong financial international institutions and by some local economists who have no popular base. The private sector is supposed to support these programmes. However, it hesitates a great deal, because it benefits from living as a burden on the public sector and on quick gains and short-term results. Among the phenomena which deserve attention is the fact that the economic readjustment programme is rejected by the political parties and by the man in the street. This rejection is taken to indicate a patriotic stand, exactly like the rejection of imperialism and its schemes.

Some Arab countries have accepted these programmes, not out of conviction or approval, but because they were afraid of the consequences of having to stop repayment of foreign debts. In fact, some Arab rulers have heeded the advise of their counsels that the application of these programmes, or at least pretending to apply them, is less costly than reluctance or refusal which would make these rulers pay a high political price.

There is of course a basic contradiction between the requirements of the economic readjustment programmes and the style by which Arab governments conduct the affairs of the state. Free economic reform requires the publication of information and figures, which Arab regimes handle secretly. A free economic system also requires a free and open political system. It is unlikely for Arab governments to become economically liberal and remain politically authoritarian. The process of reform also requires the disclosure of facts and information which these regimes consider secret and treat as a source of their own strength. The application of the minimum rules of human rights is viewed by these regimes as interference in their internal affairs. Finally, it is no secret that absolute rule and authoritarianism tend to protect corruption, to provide revenues through the use of power, to introduce a mandatory pricing system, and to allow or ban imports arbitrarily. How could all these instruments be forsaken as required by the economic reform process?

The economic reform programme was not born in this country. But, should we resist democracy, pluralism, human rights, technology, and

environmental protection because they were not born in our country, when in fact they constitute practical concepts, experiences and trends? Or should we oppose economic reform because it came from the International Monetary Fund? If we do so, we will become like the known Algerian nationalist struggler, Ibn Badis, who once said: " I swear by God, if France asks me to say, 'there is only one God,' I would not say it." The ruling regimes are tackling structural reform in different ways. The Soviet Union, under Gorbachev, tried to initiate political reform first and economic reform afterwards. Meanwhile, China tried economic reform first and adopted the free market economy, with political pluralism and democracy to come afterwards. However, in the two cases, the ruling regimes did not achieve the targeted goal. In the Soviet Union, people had high expectations and thought they would reach a Western standard of living as soon as they discard communism and regained their freedom of expression. Nevertheless, the economy is collapsing. In the People's Republic of China, people thought that to set the private sector free to deal with the market meant that democracy was close. The results show that the centralized economies were incompatible with political liberties. Furthermore, the free market economy does not prosper under a non-pluralistic regime. Therefore, we have to choose between a non-pluralistic regime that runs a centralized economy, or a liberal, pluralistic system that allows interaction among the market forces within the social and legal restrictions and criteria that are placed, and consequently allows energies to be released.

Jordan has decided to embark on economic reform (the economic readjustment programme) and on political reform (the democratic process) simultaneously. It was evident that the attempt at economic reform without democracy had failed when the April 1989 protests broke out. Fortunately, King Hussein is known for his far-sightedness, which is a unique talent he is gifted with among all other Arab rulers. Therefore, he decided to commit the state (not a certain government) to the programme. Meanwhile, he fixed the date for the first free general elections in our age.

So far, the Jordanian experiment, with its economic and political aspects, have succeeded, although it still has a long way to go before it is completed and democratic liberalization will turn into a durable institutional reality. However, the achievements that have been accomplished have defined the trends that should be followed and the goals that should be achieved. But, they have not received enough media coverage in the Arab World, because Jordan's success would

embarrass some other Arab regimes. Furthermore, on the international level, the results were not exactly as the West wanted, particularly during the Gulf crisis and war, where the Jordanian people took advantage of the climate of freedom to express the Arab nation's conscience in supporting Iraq. The West encourages democracy in the Third World, but its economic interests and national security are the things that really matter.

More important than all this is that the political and economic reforms did not weaken the ruling regime, but provided it with an additional strength. Democracy is a weapon which can only be embarrassing to regimes that have closed their doors in the face of change and popular participation. Jordan's economic programme has become the model and example for five other Arab states which are applying similar programmes, but are not achieving similar successes, because economic reform requires difficult decisions which are not popular with the people, and only a strong ruler enjoying legitimacy and credibility would dare make such decisions.

Raising fuel prices in Jordan led to a strong popular resistance in April 1989. But the sales tax imposed in November 1991 and the rise in fuel prices in February 1992 were received with understanding and endurance by the people. So what has happened in three years? The answer is simple. It was political reform, participation in decision making, holding the executive power accountable, providing the opportunity for expressing support or opposition by peaceful means, allowing people access to information, and refraining from issuing surprise, crucial decisions at the top without first preparing the minds of the people to accept them.

Jordan is a model and an example to be followed by other Arab countries. It is living evidence that the Arab individual is worthy of human rights and that he is capable of creativity and innovation under a strong democratic system which can strike harshly at those who violate or depart from the constitution and the law.

Discussant Dr. Fadiyeh Kiwan

A committee for comparative political studies was formed in the United States in the mid fifties. The committee was designated the task of defining the factors of growth and development of the new states that had begun to emerge successively at the end of the colonial era and of determining the factors that would encourage democracy in these states. Soon enough, researchers split into two groups, one advocating that there are special socio-economic conditions which are a prerequisite for political development and evolution towards democracy. The other group sought to examine the political developments and to advance political democracy in isolation from socio-economic development. The second group based its argument on similar examples cited by Dr. Fahed Al-Fanek in his paper.

However, the experiences of the last two decades have proven that there can be no stability for any democratic system unless there is a parallel socio-economic development. Democracy was given more accurate specifications. It was no longer restricted to political pluralism alone, but depended on several other criteria, such as the attainment of a larger degree of equality of opportunity regarding the participation of citizens in the political process and in the choice of their rulers and holding them accountable, the alternation of power, and the universalization of laws on the equal treatment of citizens. Thus, these criteria have taken us back to the socio-economic parameters. It is noteworthy that economic growth needs, in turn, intermediate variables that can reinforce political development and consolidate political democracy. This idea is of a special importance, particularly in this decade when most countries of the world are going back to the free market economy in the aftermath of failed experiences with the state-run socialist economy. However, the free market economy does

not necessarily lead to socio-economic development of developing countries, for two main reasons:

- 1- The globalization of the economy and the larger influence of external rather than internal mechanisms on the economies of developing nations.
- 2- The belated emergence of the social and civic forces that are capable of pressure to universalize the benefits of economic growth and to attain larger gains for under-privileged classes allowing them more opportunities to participate in political life and help achieve democracy.

Proceeding from these remarks, we could probably go back to the various options which each regime has and which make its political course different from the others. Dr. Fanek has successfully explained the Jordanian option of simultaneous political and economic reform, with the recognition that the latter depends on a supportive external factor, i.e. the policy of the World Bank towards Jordan. No doubt, the World Bank's constructive policy towards Jordan is based on the Jordanian option to encourage and consolidate political pluralism in the country. It is an option which indicates that the Jordanian regime is capable of achieving a local political liberalization that will absorb all the political forces and guarantee their participation in the political life of the country. Dr. Fanek has done well to indicate that these basic options were due to the far-sighted vision of King Hussein, which he said was a unique gift which the king enjoys among other Arab rulers. I would also like to stress the significance of the distinction which Dr. Fanek made between the state and government, when he said that King Hussein has decided to commit the state, not any certain government, to economic and political reform simultaneously.

Needless to say, such options need a powerful authority capable of vision and the formulation of a comprehensive strategy for the state and society. An authority like this cannot be manifest in governments that come and go, but in the state which is durable despite the ordinary political changes that normally take place in any democracy. Consequently, the Jordanian democratic process is unique because of the nature of the Jordanian regime. The state and the regime are durable and this offsets the negative impact resulting from the weakness of civic and social forces in a developing country and allows a comprehensive outlook to planning for integrated economic, social and political development. No doubt, Dr. Fanek was right in describing the rare gifts and vision of the king. However, there is a big difference between a monarchial and a republican system. There are also differences among

the republican systems themselves.

For example, the Lebanese system which is based on conciliatory democracy and sectarian participation in power by a quota allocated to each sect does not encourage Lebanese politicians to develop a comprehensive or integrated outlook or even have a vision. Lebanon was a forerunner among Arab states in adopting a system of political democracy and a free market economy which witnessed decades of prosperity and affluence. How was then the relationship in Lebanon between economic development and political democracy, and how is it now?

Since the early modern decades of its development, Lebanon has had a liberal political system running parallel with a free market economy. The political system was based on political and party pluralism, and the various sects that constituted Lebanon's population were the prominent feature of this liberal system. A liberal system usually finds its way easily towards democracy, and this was so in the Lebanese system. In talking about the economic and political process in Lebanon, we can distinguish three different eras in the history of Lebanon

- 1- The first era begins with the formation of the State of Lebanon in 1920 and extends to 1975, when the civil war broke out.
- 2- The second era extends from 1975 until 1990, when the civil war was over and the second republic was launched.
- 3- The third era starts in 1990 and continues to-date. It is the era of cofreconstruction and the restoration of civil life in Lebanon.

In the first era, particularly since independence in 1943, the free market system in Lebanon ran parallel to a liberal political system which guaranteed individual and public liberties and allowed the emergence of dozens of political parties of various leanings. Hundreds of civil organizations also appeared and became active in the various spheres of life. Unions and associations were formed, and all of them played a prominent role in the development of the Lebanese system. The economic and social growth that Lebanon witnessed in the fifties and sixties was due to the atmosphere of freedom that was prevalent in the country. This, in turn, influenced the political course as new social forces aspiring to change and to the consolidation of democracy began to appear gradually. Lebanon was then the bastion for all intellectual and political movements in the Arab World. For a certain period of time, Lebanon became the manifestation of the conscience of the Arab World and was active in the making of the forces of change around it. It also became a refuge for democratic forces in the Arab World, because

it had a free press, radio and television, publishing houses, cultural centers and clubs and unceasing intellectual and political activity.

Nevertheless, the sectarian nature of the Lebanese liberal system resisted the blowing winds of democratic change. External factors had also been pressuring the country since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. In the early seventies, Lebanon was heading in rapid steps towards civil war, which broke out in 1975. The politically liberal pluralistic system was breaking down, and the door became wide open for a bloody conflict that lasted 16 years during which all individual and public liberties were held captive and the free market economy turned into a war economy.

In the second era, which covers the civil war years, public liberties were totally suspended. Non-Lebanese military forces entered Lebanon expediting the disintegration of the liberal system. Israel occupied some Lebanese territories and entered into alliance with Lebanese militia forces imposing repression of Lebanese citizens and denying them the opportunity to exercise their simplest rights of belief and expression. Moreover, the forces involved in the war had expedited the immigration of significant numbers of citizens, killed, kidnapped or tortured citizens for political reasons or for no reason at all. It was an era when the Lebanese economy was thrown out of balance. Life was no longer normal. National production receded, economic installations were destroyed, unemployment rates were rising, the exchange rates of the national currency was sharply decreasing, and an acute economic crisis was at hand. People with limited income were the class most hurt by the crisis. The civil war gave rise to two groups of people in Lebanon. The first group consisted of wealthy people who were employing their funds in quick profit businesses, such as currency exchange operations. The other group was the middle class which suddenly became poor and linked their poverty with the civil war and the armed militias that were conducting the war. Thus they sought to end the war in order to restore their standard of living and the authority of the state.

While war meant repression for the citizens, it opened the door for chaos in public life. There was no law to be enforced. Anarchy was the prevailing law. Each warring militia had its own media which spoke for it and defended its views. Lebanese citizens were twice victimized. The first time when their liberties were trodden and repression was imposed on them, and the second time when the various media of the warring militias sought to nurture prejudices and to tear down Lebanon's national and social fabric.

Naturally, there were also social forces which aspired to apply

democracy in Lebanon. These forces expressed themselves in the form of a civil resistance to the war system, and did all that they could to stop the war. In the meantime, a parallel economy was emerging. Some people made fortunes from transactions they concluded under such circumstances, particularly the commanders and leaders of the armed militias. An alliance was quickly emerging between the armed militias, the capitalists and businessmen. The war created new interests for some groups, which wanted to prolong the war as much as possible in order to continue reaping gains. Meanwhile, large numbers of Lebanese joined a national unionist movement calling for an end to the war, respect for public and individual liberties, attempts at economic development, and moves toward social development. As for political parties, the mechanisms of their democratic action were completely paralyzed.

In the third era, efforts were made by numerous Arab and non-Arab states to stop the civil war in Lebanon. These efforts culminated in a national reconciliation accord which put a final end to the war. Thus a new era of reconstruction began. But how did the economic and political situations look in that era? Economically, there was a feeling of the enormity of the reconstruction job that had to be done in view of the huge damage inflicted on infrastructures and economic facilities. The government of Prime Minister Rafiq Al-Hariri supervised the reconstruction process. Hariri, who is a well-know and respected businessman in Arab and international circles, used his personal influence to restore fleeing capital to Lebanon. Laws and regulations were enacted to encourage business investments in Lebanon. The reconstruction of Lebanon was well underway. Nevertheless, there was an increasing popular pressure demanding the government to improve the standard of living of the people and not to lay the whole cost of reconstruction on the people. The government had imposed heavy taxes to improve its resources, but later eased the burden on the people and opened a dialogue with unionist movements in which it approved some of the demands made by the unions.

During the process of reconstruction, the government has offered huge construction projects for implementation, including the reconstruction of central Beirut. A real estate company won the bid for the project, although questions were raised about the real intentions and motives of this company, and whether the reconstruction in the way it was done was appropriate for the purposes and needs of the Lebanese people. As for the war forces, they merged into the economic life of the country and they constituted a significant support of the free market economy.

Meanwhile, there was still confusion on the political front. The Second Republic tried to normalize political life in Lebanon. It dismantled all the militias, with the exception of the Hizbollah militias. It reached reconciliation with the war forces, and some prominent figures of the war forces held cabinet posts in the national reconciliation cabinet of Prime Minister Rafiq Al-Hariri. The government also sought to enact a new electoral law and to conduct new parliamentary elections. Elections were held in the summer of 1992 and this was a significant achievement by the state on the path of reconstructing national institutions. But, these elections were fiercely opposed by some and became a cause of the same national division that was prevalent during the war and that escalated as a consequence of the circumstances that accompanied the Taif Accords. The government acted by stopping all news bulletins in the private media, which was not acting in the best interests of the country. The government was facing a double-edged dilemma. First, it had to protect the freedoms that are stipulated in the constitution. This is one of the distinct features of the Lebanese system. Second, it had to restrain the forces which were threatening the unity and order of Lebanon in order to preserve the unity of the people and the land. We cannot be sure at present whether democratic life has been actually restored to Lebanon, for the following reasons:

- 1- The majority of the Lebanese did not join the national reconciliation which was reached in Taif, Saudi Arabia in 1989.
- 2- Israel is still occupying parts of southern Lebanon and the Western Biqa' valley, and this occupation is an obstacle in the way of a permanent peace in Lebanon.
- 3- Syrian forces maintain an intensive presence in several Lebanese regions, and this Syrian presence reflects on the relations with the Lebanese and among the Lebanese themselves.

The truth is that the restoration of civilian political life to Lebanon was not coupled with the restoration of public liberties, which Lebanon had been accustomed to. Social forces aspiring to achieve democracy are still incapable of working in that direction because the dynamics of political life in Lebanon are directly affected by the Middle East peace process, and the domestic situation in Lebanon is very sensitive to the regional developments.

Lebanon's economy has now recovered and has the potential for significant economic growth. Nevertheless, forces aspiring to the achievement of democracy are incapable of action. A serious gap may ensue unless there is a far-reaching vision of integrated development,

the achievement of social justice and the improvement of the opportunities for the participation of all Lebanese in the political life of the country. Only then can Lebanon have a free and prosperous economy. Without economic and social development and political liberalism based on the pluralism of the sectarian composition of the country, Lebanon may be heading to an oligarchy, not a democracy.

This danger posed to Lebanon is real. But the Lebanese people are aware of this fact. In fact, there are civil society forces that are deeply rooted in Lebanon's political history and they can rectify both the economic and political courses in a way that would allow the simultaneous integrated development of the country on the economic and political levels. We should not overlook the fact that Lebanon was a bastion of democratic thought before the civil war, and that its people have neither lost their memory nor their resolve.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Mr. Yasser Abu Hilaleh

The comments made on Dr. Uwaideh's paper spoke about democracy as if it is something absolute and definite. Inasmuch as we refuse to talk about Islam in absolute and definite terms, we also refuse to talk about democracy. Human experiences, whether we learn them from history or devise them from the midst of our human suffering, have various forms of application. Exactly as some people are monopolizing the truth about Islam, there are people who are monopolizing the truth about democracy. It should be noted that democracy is sometimes used as an instrument of infiltration, as is the case in southern Sudan, where the demand for democracy is used as a pretext for secession. The same thing is happening in Iraq, where democracy is being used as an instrument of infiltration and secession. Of course, we oppose this trend, although it is happening in the name of democracy.

As a member of the Muslim Brotherhood Group, I can say that Imam Hassan Al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, had ideas much more advanced than the age he lived in. He was quoted as saying that we will never accept any alternative to the constitutional system. It seems that there has been a retraction from some of the concepts which Imam Banna preached. For example, when his writings were reprinted in the seventies at Egyptian universities, there were footnotes saying that the Imam did not realize then the danger posed by nationalism to Islam. I think that the reason for this retraction is that dictatorial regimes cooperated with the Islamic Movement to suppress thought. Consequently, we ended up with the erroneous concepts we are now talking about. Briefly speaking, Islam is open to any human achievement, whether it was attained in the past or will be attained in the future. Whether this human innovation comes from the West or East,

people are capable of absorbing and digesting it.

This seminar is about to be concluded. It has raised many questions. But I must admit that we do not have the full answers. Maybe in the future, someone will come up with the full answers.

Thank you.

Deputy Samir Habashneh

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to comment on the optimism which Dr. Ajalani displayed. I want to say that we have as much concern as optimism, and we are afraid that the democratic experiment in Jordan might suffer a setback. There are two factors which justify my fears. The first is represented in the groups which have lost their interests since the launch of the democratic transformation. These groups are currently recovering their positions within the Jordanian society and are posing a threat to the democratic process. The second factor is related to our Arab surroundings which are apprehensive of this new and contagious democracy.

Dr. Jihad has raised the question of the strategic location of Jordan. Please allow me to say that I am not convinced that this is one of the reasons for the transformation of the political system in Jordan towards democracy. The second is the question of legitimacy, which has two parts: a historic legitimacy and a legitimacy of achievement. I dare say that unless the historic legitimacy is coupled with achievement, the historic achievement would lose its justifications. Many one-party regimes in the Arab World are still justifying themselves on the grounds that they are revolutionary regimes. However, they have forfeited their legitimacy because of failed achievement despite the fact that they have held power for several decades. Therefore, the loss of the legitimacy of achievement is a permanent threat to legitimacy itself.

Third, when Dr. Jihad spoke about the bourgeois, it seemed to me that he overlooked the importance of social development in the formulation of the institutions which are suitable for any phase. I must admit that Jordan in the nineties is more qualified to succeed than the Jordan of the fifties in its march towards democracy. In the fifties, the existing social forces did not absorb the full meanings of democratization. But now it is one of the advanced features of our society's progress towards democracy. I believe that we have covered significant social and economic strides in this area, and this is one of the factors of optimism which Dr. Ajalani spoke about.

Thank you.

Mr. Ayman Jadallah

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have two remarks to make. The first is related to the dialogue which took place between Dr. Uwaideh and Dr. Ibn Mhafouz. The dialogue indicates that there is a wide gap attracting and polarizing our societies to two focuses. The first focus appeals for the restoration of a historic experiment believed to have been useful to us with an emphasis that the reinstatement of this experiment will resolve all our problems, as is manifest in the gospel of proponents of the religious trend. The second focus tries to attract and polarize us to the trend of modernity and contemporarilization which is believed to have solutions for the problems of our societies.

In my modest view, I believe that there has been a misunderstanding of the historic course of the evolution of our society. This is why each side is adopting a particular viewpoint and taking up a position to defend. As an Arab-Islamic society, we have not tried in the last fourteen centuries anything other than Islam as a faith and social system. The problem is that the intellectual conflict in the early ages of Islam was settled with the help of the political authority in favour of the proponents of the school of written rules against the proponents of the school that called for the critical use of the mind in our attempt to reach the truth. Thus our intellectual system is now governed by rigid rules which do not tolerate any further discussion or interpretation. This has reflected on the overall progress of our societies. Meanwhile, the contemporary experiments of our societies have failed in most, if not all, Arab countries despite the different approaches, instruments and vehicles used. The solution is perhaps that we should re-read our history from a different perspective.

My other remark is related to the presentation made by Dr. Fahed Al-Fanek. It is important here to note that there is a theoretical difference between liberalism and democracy, and that the association between liberalism and democracy in the historic experience of the West was restricted to the theoretical sphere only. However, liberalism is part of political thought that can be divided into three parts. First, economic liberalism which leads to the capitalist and the free market economy. Second, political liberalism which leads to political pluralism. Third and last, intellectual liberalism which leads to the multiplicity of ideologies and ideas.

When we come to the Athenian democracy, it is important to note that it was a democracy from the political standpoint, but from the economic standpoint, it was never liberal. In contrast, Southeast Asian

societies were economically liberal but not democratically. We could also cite the analysis which Dr. Fadiyah Kiwan made about Lebanon, i.e. the political system was liberal and the economic system was capitalistic. Nevertheless, it was not a democracy.

Mr. Ibrahim Gharybeh

Dr. Uwaideh proceeded in his paper from the assumption that political action is derived from proper interpretation, interaction with the goals and circumstances, and the accumulation of other experiences. The famous Islamic jurist, Ibn Al-Tayyeb once said: "Whatever is just should be embraced by the Sharia." In other words, public liberties, political pluralism, and human rights are a strategic, not a tactical demand of the Sharia. The Islamic political system cannot be but a democratic system. In fact, democracy and Islam are inseparable, or in the words of Ghanushi "Islamic democracy."

Imam Hassan Al-Banna says in his message to the Fifth Congress of the Muslim Brotherhood Group: "The constitutional system, which is based on the separation of powers, holding the ruler accountable to the people, and the participation of all people in the choice of the ruler and in the making of decisions, is the closest system to Islam."

The Muslim Brotherhood Group views countries whose constitutions stipulate that the religion of the state is Islam and that Islam is a main source of legislation as Muslim states although they may not apply Islam or may violate it in their legislations and stands. Here the Muslim Brotherhood Group is no different than the socialists or communists, who also have a doctrine or ideology they believe in. In Jordan, the constitution states that the religion of the state is Islam, which is also the source of legislation. Thus all the political parties that exist in Jordan should be viewed as Islamic because they are bound by the constitution. Consequently, the application of the Sharia and adherence to Islam and democracy is the responsibility of all political forces, and is not restricted to the Islamic Movement. The programmes forwarded by the Islamic Movement to apply the Sharia or to amend laws to become compatible with Islam is a question of a political platform. It is like another party submitting programmes about environment or economic reform. As for the word "Islamist," it should not be the monopoly of anyone, and should not mean that others are non-Islamists, exactly as another party would call itself constitutional or democratic. As for Dr. Uwaideh's assertion that democracy is an evil tactic which we cannot

avoid, I must say that such a notion is at odds with the basic teachings of Islam.

Thank you.

Dr. Hosni Al-Shayyab

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The statements reiterated by Dr. Fahed Al-Fanek probably need a great deal of discussion because they are related to the daily suffering of the citizens of this country. However, I was really shocked to hear Dr. Fanek say that economic reform cannot be done outside the framework of liberalism and the market economy. Historic experiences indicate that the countries which were the origin of liberalism as a philosophy and political system gradually headed towards state intervention to influence the economic activity and to meet social demands. This could be clearly noticed in countries such as France, Italy and others. To say that liberalism and the market economy, without government intervention, are capable of introducing economic reform is historically untrue, and could not be justified on the pretext that socialist systems have fallen. I would like to raise the following question : When reform measures were applied in Jordan in 1989, were these economic measures taken according to the dictates of liberal conditions, or were they taken to contain an economic catastrophe that can be attributed to a political and administrative reasons ?

The economic reform programme, despite the insistence on it, is void of any national legitimacy and is supported by no one. It has come to us from abroad. Nevertheless, Dr. Fanek is striving to market the programme. As for privatization, Dr. Fanek described the private sector as a fragile sector living at the expense of the public sector, while the talk now is about privatization, or the transfer of the public sector to the private sector. Where does privatization lie vis-a-vis the question of economic reform and the national needs, particularly when we know that the privatization programme is coming to us from abroad?

Mr. Muhammad Awwad

My first remark is about Dr. Fanek's paper and is related to the separation between political democracy and economic democracy. I believe that it is logically impossible to apply the concept of political democracy under economic liberalism. All the talk about attempts to achieve social progress is not sufficient to achieve substantive gains,

because there are psychological and economic reasons that block this progress.

On the paper of Dr. Uwaideh, I would like to quote Mr. Gharaibeh who said that the basic principles in the democratic system are purely Islamic principles. I agree with him on this, because these principles are the product of the mind and reason. Islam dignified the mind and called for its utilization. The conclusion then is logical and true, namely that democratic principles are necessarily Islamic.

My second remark is related to the reference point which Dr. Uwaideh spoke about. He said the reference point in democracy is to the people, while in Islam, it is to the Sharia. It is really nonsensical to say that the reference point is to the Sharia, because in the final analysis, the Sharia is no more than linguistic expressions which have no value unless they are uttered by this or that person. In other words, the Sharia is of no value unless it is uttered and expressed by the people. This again takes the reference point back to the people.

My third remark is about the basic principles which Dr. Uwaideh said constitute the crux of the political system in Islam, or the set of the general principles, not the details. These principles are true because they are contained in the Holy Koran. However, the Koran did not call on the people to establish the Islamic state in accordance with the Koranic rules. We could understand from these rules that these general principles were fit for an Islamic state in the era in which the Prophet Muhammad lived. Thus what was being dealt with was a special not a generalized or universal case. The Koranic rules do not call for the universalization of these principles. Consequently, they are not binding to the establishment of the state. The principles that are binding did not come from the Koranic Book, but from the Prophet's sayings or consensus of jurists.

Thank you.

Mr. Abdul Qader

Reform is not linked to the free market economy. But there should be an authority capable of carrying out the economic reform. We should not overlook the fact that there should be inter-Arab economic cooperation and integration if this nation is destined to have an advanced economy.

As for democracy, I would like to say that it is not an absolute

concept, but has several functions. I wish that panelists and discussants had focused on the importance of political pluralism as an essential product of democracy.

Thank you.

Mr. Amin Dhiyab

It seems to me that Dr. Fanek loves to death the free market economy. I would say that the free market economy is not oriented towards the human being whether he is an individual or a group. It deals with him as something abstract, and this is evidently not a healthy approach. As for Dr. Uwaideh, he is talking about an historic Islamic political system. But, we are talking about a new political system which we should reproduce. He should have identified the new political system which should be reproduced. As for Dr. Ajalani, I do not know why he insists that democracy is a political concept. It is a form of government. The best thing about democracy is that the people elect members of the House of Representatives for four years. These deputies have the power to give the government their confidence or to withhold confidence. They are also supposed to handle legislation and hold the government accountable for its actions. But these duties are not absolute, as the government could stop the House whenever it wants by dissolving it.

Dr. Muhammad Ibn Mahfouz

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Ajalani cited a comparison with Western countries. He said Western countries have allowed the formation of Christian democratic parties, so why do not we allow the formation of Islamic democratic parties in Tunisia. Here I would like to warn against superficial comparisons. Christian democracy rose in isolation from the democratic systems in the Western countries. In Islamic countries, however, Islamic parties still insist that they belong to the democratic system. So there is quite a large difference which has its repercussions for the paper.

Deputy Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Uwaideh's paper sought to persuade Muslim extremists to accept the position of Muslim moderates towards democracy as a temporary or transitional acceptance. I am really

horrified to think what they would do with democracy if they ever reach power as long as democracy for them is non-Islamic. I believe that democracy is an Islamic system. We are not talking here about the democracy of Rome, but about the sum total of a human thought to which Islam made a significant contribution. It is not true that political Islam is manifest in the Islamic movements operating in the political sphere. As for the Sharia being a point of reference, this applies to the durable doctrines and tenets of the faith. When it comes to changing matters, which political Islam deals with, the door is absolutely open for interpretation, provided that the basic principles and constants remain untouched. The paper did not discuss the attitude of political Islam towards the form of government which we should have, and which political Islam should have explained. It is regrettable that doctrinaire ideologists view democracy as a vehicle to reach power, not as an end by itself. As for the economic aspect of the discussion, I agree with Dr. Fahed Al-Fanek, who rarely can find someone to agree with him, that political parties still chart their platforms on the basis of the attitudes of the masses, which are not always in the best interest of the country. Furthermore, these political parties have not offered any alternative programmes to be a substitute for the economic programmes they have rejected.

My last point is that those who are advocating economic liberalism in Jordan are the socialist zealots who are leading the impoverished socialists of this country. Liberalism no longer means political rights only, but includes government intervention to safeguard social rights as well. Thus when we talk about liberalism, we mean economic and social rights. Finally, I would like to say that it is the courageous men who can make and shape the future, and faint hearts can never build a country.

Thank you.

Dr. Nizam Assaf

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to thank the panelists and discussants. My intervention is intended to open channels of communications. I think that the optimistic reasons cited by Dr. Jihad Odeh about the continuation of the democratic process in Jordan are objective reasons. I may add here that in view of the composition of the Jordanian population, democracy becomes a must for Jordan. Dr. Jihad Odeh spoke about parliamentary elections as one of the ingredients of democracy. I believe that parliamentary elections should be expanded to

include not only the House of Representatives, but the Upper House of parliament as well.

My final remark, which I will present in the form of a question, is: Taking into consideration the present circumstances which we are undergoing, is it useful to continue to keep the three branches of government with the separation of powers that exist among them, or, since our society has reached a significant degree of development, would it be sufficient to keep two powers only? We could have a judiciary power and a legislative power. Executive bodies would perform the functions of applying the programmes approved by the legislative power. Consequently, the executive bodies should have the same power as those of the judiciary or legislative powers.

Mr. Salim Al-Zu'bi (Chairman of the Session):

Dr. Assaf is proposing something completely new on the question of the three powers of government and the relationships that govern them. He is suggesting the abrogation of the executive power, although constitutional law experts and political scientists always speak in terms of three powers: the executive, the legislative and the judiciary. In any case, we respect his viewpoint.

Dr. Yossef Al-hassan

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first point is procedural. I am astonished how this focus on political Islam was chosen as a theme of discussion when we should be discussing independent political party activities. I agree to a very large degree with the statements made by his excellency Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh. I wish that Dr. Uwaideh had avoided the use of the phrase "political pluralism" because that was tantamount to no more than playing with words. Perhaps the Ghanoushi movement in Tunisia was more open. The movement was modernized in order to gain a pluralistic status.

Pluralism means to me the freedom of opinion and expression, the freedom of peaceful congregation, and the right to form associations. These three elements have deep roots in Islamic jurisprudence. There is also the right to life, the right to freedom, and the right to equality, and finally, the right of the minorities not to be coerced into Islam.

My third point is that people have genuine fears that Islamic movements may discard democracy and suppress liberal, leftist and

nationalist parties if these Islamic movements ever gain power. We must have a solution to this problem through contractual guarantees to protect democracy.

Mr. Rasmi Hamzeh

My comment is about Dr. Uwaideh's paper. Islamic movements are internationally viewed as terrorist and extremist. But we know that this is not true. There is something wrong somewhere which makes this view persist. Probably what is wrong is the way we present our Islamic movements. Doesn't Dr. Uwaideh think that we should re-examine our approach in addressing the various communities of the world on the basis of the constants and variables which Mr. Rawabdeh spoke about ?

My second remark is addressed to Dr. Jihad Odch who has analyzed and assessed the situation in Jordan very cleverly. But I disagree with his statement that there is no bourgeois class in Jordan. There is in Jordan a large bourgeois class exercising pressure on the government and acquiring gains at the expense of the broader segments of society, and I would appreciate it if we could hear dr. Fanek's views on this.

My third and last remark is addressed to Dr. Fadiyeh Kiwan. The Lebanese are a strong people , and we trust them very much. I am very confident that the Lebanese people will manage to surmount their current predicament, and they are fully capable and qualified to do so.

Dr. Ahmad Qassem

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to comment on Dr. Al-Fanek's remarks on the Korean experience. The South Korean experiment succeeded because the war was over between the two Koreas 40 years earlier. Had the war been still going on between the two Koreas, there would never be a successful Korean experiment. It seems that South Korea wants to build on this model and universalize it in other Asian countries. It was not the democratic factor which determined the success of the South Korean model, but it was the capital investments from abroad.

My second remark is about the statement Dr. Ajalani made on the corruption in the civil service. I think that this point needs further clarifications. However, it is important to note that while the government is talking about placing the right man in the right place and securing justice and fairness for all, its actual practices are to the contrary.

Mr. Hussein Da'seh

I would like to comment on the remarks of Dr. Uwaideh and Dr. Fanek. My first remark is about the Western media which is stereotyping Islamists as fundamentalists, hard liners, extremists, etc. These terms are flowing to us via the Western media and we are receiving them without examining the meanings or intentions behind the use of these terms. What is the position of political Islam on this question?

My second remark is about the economic reform programme. What is important in my view is how we should deal with our social conditions before thinking about economic reform. We have high rates of poverty. Public life in our thinking is linked to a government job. Have we launched any social reform within the framework of the Jordanian society before we start talking about cooperation with the World Bank, etc.?

Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber

I would like to appeal to intellectuals in the Arab World to be patient with the democratic experiment, whether in Jordan, or in any other Arab country. I would like to give a reminder that the modern Arab state was formed under very difficult conditions in this century, particularly in the Arab East. During the reign of the Ottoman Empire, Arab states derived their legitimacy from their affiliation with the empire. Now that the Ottoman Empire has collapsed, in 1924, its offspring are still looking for legitimacy. Democracy is capable of giving legitimacy to these offspring. There are also domestic challenges, manifest in the need for socio-economic development in order to raise the standard of living of the people and to improve the quality of their lives. There are also external challenges, particularly the challenge posed by the Palestinian issue, and the problem of social and political modernization. This really places us in front of a very complex situation, and it explains the phenomena of inaction and confusion which we sometimes find ourselves facing. It also explains the nervous shifts from left to right and vice versa and the multiplicity of views we have about a single issue.

The Jordanian experiment was launched within this context, and did not come from vacuum. So it needs to be cared for by all groups, whether they are rightists or leftists. Perhaps under the current circumstances in the Arab World, it is difficult to reach consensus on any certain issue. So let us look for other methods to achieve what we

might call the majority's view through the respect of pluralism, of opposing views and of the minds of citizens.

Dr. Muhammad Ajalani

I share with MP Samir Habashneh his concern about the future of democracy in Jordan. I had wanted to write about these challenges. But when I saw the papers which dealt with the economic challenge and the problems of unemployment and poverty, I decided not to discuss these topics.

Democracy in Jordan should not be restricted to the legislative and constitutional institutions only, but should reach the grass roots. It should be introduced in the educational system, whether in school or university. It should also be introduced in the trade unions. We should also pay attention to the methods of teaching human rights on the widest possible scale. Democracy has many enemies, not only in the Arab countries, but in the world at large, and they usually take advantage of its mistakes. Therefore, we should be careful.

Jordan has planted a fruit-bearing tree in the middle of the thorns. The great challenge which democracy is facing requires efficient and qualified personnel in management, because democracy is a building process, and building has never been easy. I am concerned about interference by other Arab states. I am also concerned about the high rates of unemployment in Jordan. This is the real danger encountering the democratic process.

The second point: I have spoken with Dr. Ibn Mahfouz. Apparently, my statements were misunderstood. The question was: How could Christian democratic parties be represented in the European parliaments at a time when the State and Church are separate entities while Islamist parties in several Arab countries are banned access to parliament? I have met with Ghanoushi in France, and we had a lengthy talk during which he said: "We wanted to secure for the parties in Tunisia access to parliament, but we could not do this in any Arab-Muslim country."

It is very important to restore dialogue between the political power and the civil and Islamic society. There are Islamist organizations which want to participate in the democratic game. So, what is the objection to this? It is much better that they enter parliament rather than engage in violence and political assassinations, as is happening in some Arab countries. Had the democratic process in Algeria been left to proceed to its very end, Algeria would have avoided the turbulent events it has witnessed.

Deputy Dr. Muhammad Uwaideh

The remarks that have been made were very useful, and I can assure you that I have benefited from them. Dr. Ibn Mahfouz cited some Arab regimes which call themselves Islamic and rule in the name of Islam. For us here in this part of the Arab East, this question has been decided. These regimes are not Islamic regimes in one way or the other, and I am talking here about the system, the legislations and the values, not the beliefs of individuals.

On the question which Dr. Ibn Mahfouz cited, I would say that a researcher is not bound to cite references which are irrelevant to his topic. He said that I was subjective, and that the Islamist Movement wanted to gain power via democracy and then discard democracy. I can assure you that it is not so. Of course, we in the Islamic Movement here say that we want Islam and we want democracy as a means to reach the position of power. But this does not mean that we will not tolerate others. If we reach the position of power and become the rulers of the country, we will certainly rule according to the principles of Islam. But an Islamic rule does not eliminate others or eliminate the alternation of power. If non-Islamists come after us in the position of power, we will respect this and will adhere to legitimacy. Our acceptance of pluralism and democracy does not mean that we have relinquished Islam, and our choice of Islam does not eliminate the democratic choice.

To say that democracy is a set of values and principles which could help people resolve their problems and that it is based on freedom, equality, non-discrimination and justice means to us that democracy is Islamic, and we will stick to this name "Islamic democracy."

Mr. Rawabdeh and others spoke about the constants and variables. They also said I wanted democracy as a means to achieve an end, and that democracy for me is not an Islamic concept. The truth is that I did not say that. What I said was that if democracy means freedom, justice, etc. then it is an Islamic concept. I also stressed the need to focus on the substance and the content, not on the form or outside appearance. I have spoken in detail about the constants and variables. I explained that regarding the constants, our position is unchangeable. But, when it comes to the variables, such as the social and political issues, they are subject to interpretation and we are flexible in this regard.

Dr. Yossef Al-Hassan spoke about contractual guarantees. I think this is a very good idea. I am for it, and I would like to invite all political parties to declare their commitment to a mandatory, collective

contractual agreement accepting the democratic option. Some people who advocated democracy did not act accordingly when they reached the position of power. I wish the Islamic Movement would reach a position of power in any Arab country just to prove that it will be fully committed to the democratic option. I am sure that we will be at least more committed than others to the option of democracy.

About the boycott of Sudan and Iraq: Two years ago, there was martial law in Sudan. Now things are completely different. It is heading towards democratic relaxation. So why would I want to boycott Sudan? If I want to compare Sudan with Iraq or Tunisia, Sudan would certainly be worthy of a medal.

As for the way in which we approach the West and the need to change our style in addressing the West, I think that this is a very good idea and I am wholly for it. There was an example cited by Mr. Ibrahim Gharaybeh, member of the Islamic Action Front, about how pluralism works. A communist living in a Muslim country may promote his views and I will not stop him, although I disagree with him. But, I do disagree with the notion forwarded by Mr. Muhammad Awwad about the Islamic rules on government and politics. He says they are dispensable, and I say they are indispensable. They belong to the constants, not the variables. There are more verses in the Koran speaking about government than verses speaking about prayers and fasting. So, I completely disagree with Mr. Awwad.

Mr. Salim Al-Zu'bi (Chairman of the Session)

Thank you for this clarification. It was a clear reply to the question of pluralism and democracy as well as the issue of transfer of power and the democratic beliefs of the party you belong to. There were many questions and comments on Dr. Fahed Al-Fanek's paper. Will Dr. Fanek please reply to them.

Dr. Fahd Al-Fanek

I would like to begin with Dr. Husni Al-Shayyab. I think that he has reiterated a common mistake that a free market economy means that the state should not intervene in the economic activity of the country. No, sir. State intervention does not contradict with liberalism. All that there is there are limits for the intervention of a liberal state, while an authoritarian state controls the economy tightly and there are no limits

for its intervention. Unless there is state intervention in the economy, the market system would become like the law of the jungle. Therefore, the free market economy needs state intervention much more than authoritarian regimes do. The kind of state intervention which is rejected is intervention at random to serve private interests, fixing the prices of consumer commodities as well as other exceptional measures, such as the measures which had been taken by the Economic Security Commission. This is the worst kind of intervention. Nevertheless, the role of the state is indispensable.

The reform measures of 1989 came from the top and were rejected because they were not democratic. It has been said that they were not reformative measures. But to the contrary, they were measures of reform according to the definition I have given. I have said that what was meant by reform was the economic readjustment programme. The 1989 measures were the preliminary signs of the economic readjustment programme. But it was carried out by a government that did not enjoy complete legitimacy, and therefore, it failed. The programme is in harmony with the interests of the country, not the interests of the International Monetary Fund or the creditors.

To prove that the programme is in the best interest of the country, let us take a look at the alternative. What would have happened without this programme? Without this programme, it will be impossible for Jordan to repay U.S. \$1300 million per year. We could not even repay one tenth of this amount. Consequently, the alternative to this programme is to find a solution to the problem of foreign debts, and we encountered this problem in 1989. The cancellation of the programme would have meant a return to the 1988-89 crisis, which meant an acute shortage of hard currency and the continual sharp decline of the local currency.

Privatization is part of economic reform, not the merger of one sector with the other. Playing with words in economics does not do any good. It is not essential for the government to own and run newspapers, hotels, buses, tourist companies, etc. However, this is what the situation is like now. Privatization means the transfer of these activities to the private sector, because a state bureaucracy can accommodate a judge, not a production worker.

What Ceasescu did in Rumania was not reform, as some of the participants said. He squeezed and starved the people in order to repay the creditors. Repayment of Rumania's debts was not accompanied with a market or liberal economy, or political democracy. We in Jordan do

not intend to repay debts as a measure of reform. Repayment of debts is not economic reform. Reform could lead to repayment of debt or it may not help the country repay. Nevertheless, we should not worry about the foreign debts. When Jordan's debts are due after 30 years, they will be 40 years old.

Arab economic integration is not something we are forgetting about, and we are not an obstacle in its way. But, until Arab economic integration or Arab unity is achieved, we should not stand by idle, but work for the reform of our country. I would like to remind Mr. Dhiyab that the free market is an Islamic system. The Islamic system is characterized with a free market and free pricing. There is also supply and demand. Here, sitting next me, is someone who can testify that the free market is not contradictory with Islam.

A bourgeois class does exist in Jordan, but it is a parasitic, not a productive bourgeois, though there are some exceptions.

The South Korean economic experiment began under a military dictatorship, and it was dictated by specific circumstances. However, the success of the economic experiment and the rise of the Korean bourgeois made the continuation of the dictatorial rule impossible. So dictatorship fell, and democracy was launched. This is another evidence of the close association between economic and political reform.

We should not expect from the economic readjustment programme more than it can produce. It is not oriented towards administrative reform, but is primarily oriented toward fiscal and monetary reform.

The social conditions of the people are important, and the social conditions of the various classes should be taken into consideration whenever reform is introduced. This could be done by giving momentum to the policies of economic growth, because without economic growth, we cannot eliminate poverty. The cake which is distributed to all classes of people must first become bigger. Economic growth is essential to generating an increased income. Investment is also essential to creating new employment opportunities. Low-income people should be kept in mind whenever tax laws are enacted, and this is something easy to do, as I said yesterday. Whenever we want to raise the price of electricity, we should not raise the price of the first 50 kilowatts consumed by the poor, and whenever we raise the price of water, we should not raise the price of the first 50 cubic meters of water consumed by the poor. Ironically, the protest at raising prices comes from the rich under the pretext of protecting the poor. The poor could

easily be protected. But we do not want to protect the rich, and it is the rich who have the loud voice, and it is they who are speaking on behalf of the low-income groups.

We have, for example, the Development and Employment Fund, which offers loans to low-income people to begin their own small businesses. We have also the National Aid Fund to help unproductive families or families that lose their means of support.

Finally, consensus is not a condition for democracy, as one of the colleagues said. Democracy is the mechanism of decision-making, or the management of the differences. We differ on many things. The question is how should we manage our differences. Here comes the role of democracy.

Thank you.

Dr. Fadiyeh Kiwan

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not going to speak for long, particularly since I have noticed that my Jordanian colleagues are focusing on the discussion of their own issues, and have made no attempts at comparison.

First, I would like to thank the colleague who expressed his goodwill towards the Lebanese people. This is not something new for Jordanians who, for several reasons, are showing such noble sentiments. We in Lebanon reciprocate this kind feeling.

I raised a point on the title of the seminar: "The Democratic Process in Jordan," earlier during the discussion. Now I want to come back to it. We should define this phrase accurately. The pluralism which exists in Jordan is different from democracy, although it is the beginning of the road in that direction. If the political forces which will benefit from the pluralistic climate realize that the function of democracy is to universalize a political culture among the people based on the principle of equality, irrespective of sex, religion or social differences, and on the principle of respect of human rights, these forces could then change the political attitudes of Jordanians to a democratic attitude. Needless to say, democracy should be protected by social forces which should appear in due time for this purpose. Otherwise, there would not be any useful function for pluralism.

Thank you.

THE ROUNDTABLE

PROSPECTS FOR THE DEMOCRATIC
PROCESS IN JORDAN

Intervention by Mr. Hani Hourani

Your excellencies,
Dear participants,
Honourable guests,

Good evening. I am pleased to open in this short address of mine the sixth and last session of your conference, the conference evaluating the democratic process in Jordan. I would like to pay tribute to the persistent efforts you have made in the last three days, wishing this roundtable further success for the progress of our country on the path of democracy, freedom, development and dignity.

Before I give the chair to His Excellency the Honourable Taher Al-Masri, the speaker of the House of Representatives, to chair the first part of this roundtable, I would like to speak briefly about the proceedings of this conference, taking into consideration that some participants in this roundtable did not attend some of the earlier sessions. Meanwhile, I would like to commend the interest and punctuality of many participants who are attending this roundtable with us today.

I said earlier that the main goal of this conference is to evaluate the five-year experiment of the democratic process in Jordan. The aim of this conference is not to judge this process, whether in the positive or the negative, or to lay down a quantitative or qualitative criterion for its achievements. The aim of this conference is to analyze and assess the influential factors and elements that have led to the path of democratic transformations and policies of relaxation and liberalization, and to examine the degree of continuity of these factors, whether on the local, inter-Arab, regional or international levels. The conference has also discussed the performance of the various institutions, particularly the

government, parliament, political parties, labour unions, professional and women associations, the media and cultural institutions.

We have had the opportunity in this conference to listen to Arab intellectuals and researchers who presented their own views on this democratic experiment in Jordan. These views have enabled us to show the democratic experiment from a different perspective, a perspective that sees many positive elements in this experiment, in contrast to our national perspective that has been critical of its performance.

This morning, the conference discussed other issues and challenges which coincided with the issue of democracy, particularly the issue of the participation of political Islam in the democratic process and the way they see this process as well as the mutual relationship between economic reform and political liberalization. 15 working papers were submitted to this conference, and 17 discussants commented on them. No less than 90 participants from various professional, social and political backgrounds took part in the discussions that have been underway in the last five sessions. Inasmuch as the conference constituted a national platform for dialogue on our particular experiment of transformation towards democracy, it provided the opportunity for participants from other Arab countries and other observers from different countries to examine this experiment and the method by which we conduct our internal dialogue. I will not be exaggerating if I say that this dialogue and discussion has revealed a mature democratic spirit and a high sense of responsibility and acceptance of opposing points of view.

Gentlemen, the last five sessions were intended to allow researchers and academics to present their analysis and assessment of the various aspects of the democratic process. When we planned for this conference, we were convinced that if we were to come out with an objective assessment of the democratic process in Jordan, we had to invite people with practical and field experience to attend and to present their views, underlying the frustrations that have been encountered, the successes that have been achieved, and the prospects of progress in the future.

This roundtable is an opportunity for all of you to present this future perspective. I am honoured to give the chair now to the honourable Taher Al-Masri to moderate this session.

Thank you.

Intervention by Mr. Taher Al-Masri

Thank you, brother Hani. I would like to welcome the participants and guests at the end of this conference to this roundtable dialogue to discuss an important and essential topic, namely our expectations of the future of the democratic process and the impact of this process and the obstacles standing in its way. We hear many people saying that we are still at the beginning of the democratic process and that this process needs further consolidation and reinforcement. Some people do not even call it a process, but a democratic experiment. Is this true? We are here together with this respectable elite to discuss these notions and prospects. I do not want to speak for long, want to give the chance to the participants. However, I want to suggest some points for discussion. The prospects of the democratic process depend on several requirements which should be met. Some of these requirements are domestic, and some are external.

We should strive to surmount the economic and social bottlenecks in this country. The democratic process will certainly be affected by our accomplishment on this matter. As for the institutional development, we are in a dire need to build a constitution-based political institutionalism in this country. The ability of the executive power and the legislative power to deal appropriately and truthfully with democracy and its concepts is a very essential matter. There are political changes which are currently taking shape and will become much clearer in the future. There are also changes in the region, and we cannot overlook this fact when we assess the prospects of the democratic process. Furthermore, we should also be aware of how the masses and the popular organizations understand democracy and deal with it. These are points which will certainly affect the democratic process, whether the positively or negatively.

In any case, these are points for which there are requirements that must be met so as to learn how to handle the democratic process in the future.

I will stop here to give a chance to the participants to present their views. I regret that I have to fix the time while moderating this session because our time is limited.

Intervention by Mr. Ahmad Obeidat

I have never been more enthusiastic about democracy than on this day. However, the era of peaceful transformation towards democracy has revealed a number of important facts. The most important of these facts is that there are people in this country who can genuinely and honestly lead the democratic transformation, while there are others who falsely claim that they are supporters of democracy. At the outset, I would like to thank Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center for the efforts it has made. I believe that the convening of this conference at this particular time is an important step for the continuation of the national dialogue which began nervously and tensely in the aftermath of the 1989 disturbances in southern Jordan. The national dialogue expanded, and its first fruit was the general parliamentary elections in the country in the same year, and it has continued to expand throughout the term of the Eleventh Parliament.

I can safely say that the national dialogue has turned into a methodological approach, particularly during the discussions of the Royal Commission that was aimed at formulating the National Charter. Under the umbrella of democracy, various groups gathered together in an effort to look into the future. When the features of democracy began to form, it was evident that there were internal and external forces which did not want this trend to continue or grow. So they began to work in the opposite direction when they felt that they were losing their special privileges. Slowly but surely, the echo of the dialogue was becoming lower instead of higher and a reflection of the government official position, even in the recent sensitive years. It seemed as if the national dialogue had been contained by the government. This is the reason why we view conferences such as this conference with hope and optimism that they might revive the democratic process and give it momentum to surge forward and to surmount the deadlock which the various sides involved in the dialogue have reached.

I must say that early feverish attempts had been made to cordon off and to preempt the democratic process from its content and substance. Various tactics and justifications were used to achieve this purpose. The "one man, one vote" law was the latest of these tactics. The law has significantly contributed to the neutralization of the efficient performance of the current House of Representatives. Events are daily

confirming that the official media has been instructed to promote the Middle East peace process at a time when we did not participate effectively in this process, not even on the official level. Furthermore, a media blackout has been imposed on the future dimensions of the serious and sudden political and economic developments pertaining to the Jordanians and Palestinians. These developments are being handled by the official media in extreme secrecy and naive selectivity. An example of this is the future Jordanian-Palestinian relationship which is being handled in an ambiguous and partial way that reflects indecision, suspicion and lack of common grounds for dialogue, particularly in light of the new facts created by the Palestinian-Israeli accords and the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty that followed.

Third, I believe that neither of the two sides of the so-called Jordanian-Palestinian relationship has any desire for discussing any substantive issues pertaining to this relationship. Neither the Jordanian government or the Palestine Liberation Organization has even defined these issues. The political parties in Jordan with all their trends and leanings are not in a better position. Nor has the National Assembly, with its Upper House of Parliament and House of Representatives, tackled this substantive issue.

Brothers and sisters,

When we had no constitutional institutions, parliamentary elections and a House of Representatives, we complained about the constitutional vacuum. Now that constitutional institutions had been built and we have begun an era of peaceful transformation towards democracy on the basis of party and political pluralism, and after we have enacted the National Charter, I still feel that this vacuum has not been bridged.

Again if we go back to the National Charter, it is noteworthy that it called for specific constitutional reforms which would not cause any harm to the regime. On the contrary, these reforms would consolidate the position of the regime. However, these constitutional changes would open the door to all kinds of reform, whether legal, political, economic or social and would consolidate the basic liberties of citizens, safeguard human rights, build state institutions on constitutional a basis, and give momentum to the democratic process.

I believe that what is required of the members of the executive and legislative power is to prove that the public attitude toward the state institutions is not biased in favour of or against any individual, group,

party or region in the country. Only through this can we promote people's rights and enhance their confidence in the institutions of the state and their performance which should be based on justice, equality before the law and the equality of opportunity. Regrettably, the overall governmental performance is contrary to these ideals.

Political parties should play their real role in leading the democratic process and think seriously about the priorities of this country and the priorities of its people. They should also be bound with the ethics of democratic action and its national and cultural values. As for the press, it should report the facts without bias in favour of or against and without acquiescing to any governmental or personal pressure as long as it obeys the constitution and the law and acts in accordance with human dignity.

Finally, I think that the enforcement of the National Charter has become an urgent demand and a national priority which cannot afford any postponement.

Thank you.

MP Samir Habashneh

Thank you, sir. I agree with the presentation of His Excellency Ahmad Obeidat, who has diagnosed our situation properly. I would like to review quickly some points which I believe will help us surmount the current national deadlock.

The first point is that we should review the terminology we are currently using, such as nationalist, leftist, Islamist, etc., which we have inherited from earlier times. The truth is that we have nationalists with an Islamist vision, nationalists with a leftist vision on how to resolve socio-economic problems, leftists believing in Arab unity, and this is a major difference between nationalists and leftists in the past. We also have Islamists who recognize Arab Nationalism and strive for solutions to the social and economic problems we are facing outside the framework of the clerical teachings. All this should prompt us to say that there are no longer nationalists, leftists or Islamists in the traditional sense. I believe that a review of these terminologies would enable many forces to discover how close they are to one another, and this is something which has not yet been discovered. The merit of the National Charter Commission was that it allowed the various political forces to

sit next to one another around a table and engage in a dialogue, only to find out that they were closer to one another than they had originally thought and that the barriers separating or alienating them were superficial.

My second point is addressed to the nationalists and Islamists. I think that one of our top national priorities is to strive to assimilate the political attitudes of the nationalists and Islamists into one attitude. There is one single Arab-Islamic thought which we have inherited and it is inseparable, though nationalists have been alienated from the Islamists in the conduct of contemporary politics throughout the Arab World. To effect a merger, two major conditions should be provided. First, Islamic forces should stop acting as if they are the representatives of God on earth. They are political forces which adopt an Islamic reference as much as other political parties adopt a point of reference. Islamists, like others, are vulnerable to mistakes when they exercise politics. If the Muslim Brotherhood would allow me, I would call on them to get rid of this inferiority complex and to open the door for Ijtihad, which is one of the pillars of the Islamic Sharia. Only through dialogue and the quest of truth can we devise national programmes that can deal with our contemporary problems. The second condition involves both the nationalists and Islamists. They should have faith in democracy, pluralism, freedom and human rights. They should also refrain from dealing with these ideals as tactical or transitional vehicle which carries them to power, and once they are in power, they would undercut all these ideals and principles. I think that the Islamists in Algeria committed a very grave mistake when they declared, after the preliminary results of the elections were announced, that this would be the last election in the history of Algeria. It is possible to open a serious and rational dialogue between nationalists and Islamists whereby they could successfully identify their points of agreement.

My third point is about the professional associations whose structures, frameworks and trends should be rectified to keep pace with the new constructive era of democratic transformation which we are witnessing. Members of these associations should re-organize themselves on the basis of new priorities. Professional associations represent inherited social interests and embrace employer and employee, the pharmacy owner and the waged pharmacist working for him, the owner of an engineering firm and the engineers working for him, etc. The conflict of interest was not apparent in the era that preceded the democratic transformation, because the associations were playing an emergency national role at that time. But, we now have to

review the functions of these associations and to focus on their professional, functional role rather than their political role. While we are still talking about this point, I would like to say that there are labour unions whose members still do not know what their role is, like the Jordanian Drivers' Union, which has tens of thousands of members. It is noteworthy that membership in this union is mandatory on the grounds that members are drivers of public vehicles. These types of unions should be terminated.

On the role of political parties in development, we should re-employ the available material resources on the basis of viability and fairness. If we adopt this as one of the goals we should strive to achieve, we will be doing justice to our masses regardless of the geographic distribution or social strata. We should admit that none of the political parties has been able to chart a national programme more efficient than the National Charter which embraced all the political forces under its umbrella. The National Charter is now being marginalized by people who harbour no goodwill for it. It is a programmed marginalization sponsored by reactionary forces which are trying to abort this great national achievement.

The fourth point is about the channels of communication between the political leadership and the political parties. When the democratic process was launched, communication between the political leadership and the political parties became one of the national traditions in our country. However, these channels of communications are closed now, and they should be re-opened. There should be regular channels of communication between the political leadership and the political parties.

Finally, I would like to call on this roundtable to issue an appeal to all the active political and social forces in the country, which are still criticizing the political parties' experiment in Jordan without ever participating in it, to join party ranks so that the experiment can succeed, if these forces really believe that political parties have the major role to play in the success of the democratic process in Jordan.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Musa Al-Kilani

This conference has focused on the evaluation of the democratic experiment in Jordan in the last five years. However, none of the papers

submitted to the conference was devoted to the discussion of future prospects, although it is part of the focus of this conference. Most papers focused on the descriptive methodology, while others focused on an objective analysis of the economic, political and social causes that have influenced our experiment in the last five years. No specific proposals were made by any of the panelists, as I had hoped. My question here is: How can we effect a transformation to real democracy through the legislative means? How can this transformation be done through the constitutional and legal means? But before all of this, how can we effect an educational transformation within the family, at school and in the home? There is one significant point which has been completely overlooked: How do we create the guarantees that would safeguard the survival and continuation of democracy and the protection of its achievements? No specific practical proposals were submitted to this effect.

Some panelists argued that the promotion of the political-constitutional institution would be the right remedy. Others argued that the right remedy rests in the political parties. Right from the very outset, I would like to voice my disagreement of presenting political parties as the right remedy that can create guarantees against attempts to outmaneuver and abort democracy. In the last election, presidents of only two political parties won, and we have here with us on this roundtable three presidents of political parties who did not win. The Islamic Action Front Party won in the election because it was responsive to the wishes of the masses. Some said in their comments that nationalist forces should merge into an alliance. However, the people are keeping their distance from these nationalist parties, whether they are Nasserite or Baathist. The reason for this is the excesses committed in Egypt in the sixties, in Syria in the seventies, and in Iraq in the eighties. Furthermore, democracy was slaughtered by the nationalists, whether they were the parties that ruled in Aden or the parties that ruled in Cairo, Damascus and Baghdad.

In this roundtable, we are speaking freely, daringly and in a democratic atmosphere. I would like to cite Mrs. Laila Sharaf who said that the democratic discipline is an attitude and behaviour that begins at home and then is taken to school. Therefore, if we want to promote democracy in the ranks of the Jordanian people, we should begin with the promotion of democratic education. The exclusion of 25 per cent of the Jordanian people, namely the Armed Forces, from the exercise of the right of election will certainly not serve the cause of democracy.

As for the question of the press, I would like to present a practical proposal to rectify the situation of the press. First, the government should not be allowed to monopolize the electronic media. The radio and television should not remain as a monopoly of the government, particularly since the government will not permit the existence of private sector electronic media. Second, government control of the boards of directors of the three daily newspapers should be lifted. The government still controls well over 39 percent of the boards of these newspapers. Third: Revoke the laws which protected newspaper cartels, particularly the customs law which was enacted two years ago raising the customs duties on imported printing paper. Consequently, production cost rose by 50 percent, and the logical result is that only rich people can produce a newspaper. I wish, in this regard, that UNESCO recommendations, which Jordan had ratified, would be enforced.

Deputy Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh

The subject we are discussing is very big, and cannot be handled in one session only. Therefore, I will speak about one aspect of the subject, the obstacles to democracy. I believe that the first obstacle rests in the fact that the exercise of politics through the political parties was absent from the country for well over 40 years. Since man is a social being by nature, he has gone back to his traditional loyalties, whether tribal, family, sectarian or geographic. All these traditional loyalties are like a disease afflicting the body of democracy, causing divisiveness in the body of the nation and prompting people to make the wrong choice when they elect their candidates to parliament. The second obstacle is that Jordanians have a stronger sense of national affiliation to the Arab Homeland than they do to Jordan, in contrast to other Arab citizens in other Arab countries. The reason for this is that when Jordan was created as a state, it was not intended to be a homeland for Jordanians as much as it was intended to be a springboard for the liberation of the Greater Syria Region. Thus, the administrative and military leadership of Jordan was representative of the whole Arab nation. Ever since the state of Jordan was created, its loyalty was to the Arab Homeland. Jordanians have a stronger sense of Pan-Arabism than citizens of other Arab countries.

Every Arab country enjoys its privacy and its own sense of national

identity except Jordan. If a Jordanian says I am a Jordanian, he is accused of being a reactionary regionalist transgressing on Arab nationalism and betraying the Palestinian cause. Jordan is the only Arab country where Pan-Arabism and regionalism are two common terms used alternately to denote a patriotic stand on the one hand, or a regionalist, isolationist non-patriotic position towards Pan-Arab causes, on the other.

The third point is the Palestinian national crisis that exists in this country in view of Jordan's close historic and demographic relationship with the Palestinian issue. This has created two national identities in Jordan, one is a national identity enjoyed by anyone carrying a Jordanian passport, and the other is the identity of a struggle for national liberation for citizens of Palestinian origin whose ultimate goal is the liberation of Palestine. Often the two identities are mixed, and the result is strife and the division of the unity of the people. Maybe a final solution of the Palestinian issue would lead to a separation between the two identities. There should be a national identity for Jordanians despite their origins or backgrounds and that should embrace all the citizens of the country. The identity of struggle for national liberation should not be monopolized by one segment of the Jordanian people, as all the people of Jordan identify with the Palestinian cause. Furthermore, Palestinian opposition to or support of the Palestinian leadership is taking place on Jordanian soil by Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin. This factor will remain a source of weakness for the Jordanian society, unless opposition to or support of the Palestinian leadership is done on Palestinian soil. It is our duty here in Jordan to promote the ties of fraternity with the Palestinians in particular and the Arabs in general.

Nevertheless, there are groups in this country which are classifying the political forces in Jordan as either regionalist or Pan-Arabist. It has been a mistake that Jordan committed in failing to identify its future relationship with the would-be Palestinian state as a fraternal state with which we should have very close relations. But, what is important in this whole thing is that the relationship should be clear. We are speaking about relations between two states which have exchanged ambassadors. Nevertheless, the relationship has not been fully defined. Our successive governments have been maneuvering to avert having to identify this relationship, either because of fear or appeasement.

My fourth point is about the Arab political crisis. The soil of Jordan is the only soil in the Arab World that is used for fighting inter-Arab conflicts, since the soil of Lebanon has been freed from this burden. Lebanon had been a soil upon which Arab countries waged their media,

party and intelligence wars. Now only the soil of Jordan remains as the soil for the infiltration of the various Arab political parties. These parties were not part of Jordanian organizations to start with, and they are requesting Jordanians to make sacrifices beyond their capabilities. Jordanians, according to these parties, should confront the United States in its war with Iraq, should take the initiative to establish Arab unity, should confront and block the Middle East peace process, should silence the guns of the two warring factions in Yemen, and should even support North Korea in its conflict with the United States. These are evidently burdens beyond Jordan's capabilities to shoulder.

My fifth point is about the crisis of the ideological political parties. I hope that ideologues will not hasten to react. Even centrist parties have their crises. The crisis of the ideological parties rests in divisions, splits, conflicts and the wasting of resources. It is worthwhile to note here that there are many political parties in Jordan, not because new parties have emerged, but because of the split and conflict among ideological parties. Each old ideological party has split into four or five parties competing for revolutionary purity without presenting any programme fit for the Jordanian society. Their approach is characterized by emotional appeals to the masses, extremism and over-reaction all expressed verbally without any sign of a practical approach or an alternative to resolve the problems that face our society.

My sixth point is that centrist parties, which are made up of elite persons holding power and wealth, have failed to entrench their roots deep into Jordanian society. We have come to the point where it is difficult for us to know the name of the party without knowing the name of its president. It is the president who identifies the party to us, and not vice versa. The president of the party is more important than the party itself.

My last point is that we do not have popular leaders who can lead the masses at this critical stage of the life of the country. Consequently, these masses are left leaderless.

I am sorry I have to stop at point for time considerations.

Thank you.

Deputy Abdul Hadi Al-Majali

First, I believe that the reason why we were invited to this roundtable is that we are representatives of political parties. I understood this dialogue as an attempt to evaluate the last five years, not to whip ourselves because of our shortcomings. If we can assess the last five years and learn the lessons from them, we can improve our performance in the future.

Second, the National Charter, which allowed the formation of political parties, was the most important element in the political and economic reform. Moreover, it was the main support pillar for democracy and the political parties. It is the political parties which can lead us to the proper political reform. Political parties have been registered and licensed. They have become part of our life. Therefore, any dialogue should aim at promoting the performance of the political parties so that they can undertake the initiation of the required reform. This requires a clear political thought. I agree with my colleague, Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, that there is no consensus yet on political thought in Jordan, particularly on the issues of national identity and the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship. All these are obstacles in the way of promoting party and political activities in the country.

Third, I agree with Mr. Samir Habashneh that we should identify nationalism and political Islam and bridge the gap that exists between parties that could find a lot in common to work for. Political parties have formulated principles and objectives, though they differed in political thought. However, the press was averting coverage of political party activities. We at Al-'Ahd Party formulated an economic and developmental programme, but the press completely ignored comment on the programme, as if people do not want to believe that there can be patriotic parties. Therefore, we are now suffering from the crisis of the disbelief of citizens in the ability of political parties to initiate any political and economic reform in Jordan.

I want to appeal to the official government media to assist us, not in explaining our political position, but in introducing our principles, ideas and programmes to the citizens. The state should also support the political parties. I do not mean financial support. But, there are many ways the state could help the political parties indirectly until they could become strong enough to stand on their feet. The political parties should

be viewed as national institutions and should have access to information.

Thank you.

Mr. Salim Al-Zu'bi

I would like to congratulate Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation for their successful efforts in organizing this conference. I hope that we will avert in this conference getting involved into a contest of words. There are many things which are evident to everyone, and to differ on them will not be a service to the cause of democracy. I want to speak in this intervention of mine about the barriers standing in the way of establishing a modern democracy in Jordan. The first barrier is the imbalance in the principle of equality among citizens in rights and duties. This constitutional principle has been established and confirmed for well over 40 years. It is noteworthy that the Jordanian constitution has identified the two aspects of democracy: Political democracy, and social democracy which guarantees the equality of opportunity, safeguards the right of work, the right to education, etc. These are things intended to secure a minimum of a decent dignified life for citizens. Our problem is that we are dealing with political democracy only, overlooking the fact that social democracy is as important, if not more. In our application of political democracy, we often forget the legal and legislative provisions. Thus, the gap between theory and practice becomes all the wider. The only thing I want to insist on is that we should enforce the texts of the legal and legislative provisions in a manner that would serve the interests of the citizens and fulfill the principle of equality among all of them in rights and duties.

The second obstacle to democracy is the media and the press. Regrettably, the media and the press are supposed to be the supportive pillar upon which democracy could lean. However, facts are to the contrary. The press and the media, which are called the fourth power in some countries, including the radio, television, newspapers and other means of mass communications, always support the government, any government, as if the opposition is not that important, or as if the opposition is an outlaw, though it is clearly understood that there are

constitutional provisions for the opposition and that there can be no democracy without an opposition. Nevertheless, the opposition is completely overlooked by the press. Therefore, one can conclude that the press is not doing any service to the cause of democracy, when in fact its duty is to educate people and make them aware of the issues that affect their daily lives.

The third obstacle is the consequences of the Martial Law regime and the Defense Law, which we should eliminate completely. The truth is that we should not blame the political parties for the shortcomings we have been critical of, because these parties have lived publicly and openly for four years only. Therefore, the new parties were formed after a long period of suffering. This is why I am saying that before we ask the political parties to improve their performance, we should first eliminate the harmful consequences of the Martial Law regime and remove the effects of the Defense Law according to which the country was governed from 1939 until 1992.

The fourth and most serious obstacle is the frequent government resort to the enforcement of provisional laws without any real justification or need. Perhaps the most important provisional law recently enacted was the "one man, one vote" law which has been severely obstructive of the democratic process and is a barrier in the way of the consolidation and strengthening of the political parties. I have said more than once that according to the "one man, one vote" law, candidates in the general elections could not have been nominated by their own parties and had to go back to their clans to get a consensus from them before the party could nominate them as its own candidates. Therefore, the parties that won in the last parliamentary elections made it because of clan support or the popular personality of the candidate.

The fifth obstacle is the risk and danger inherent in the Middle East peace settlement and how to cope with this risk and danger. The method of coping with this risk and danger should be clear on the governmental and civic levels. Unfortunately, many people who are either for or against the settlement have no appropriate programmes they could offer for the coming phase. This is a very serious question, and we should initiate a position to cope with the dangers of the Middle East peace settlement, which is knocking at our doors day and night. We should have a clear dialogue with the broad base of the masses, because they are the ones who are targeted by this settlement. We should also agree on the pattern of democracy we seek to adopt for our country. Is it an American-style political democracy? Is it a socio-political democracy? or

is it a socialist democracy? The style of democracy we choose should be compatible with our cultural identity and mission. I have said more than once that our choice should be a socio-political democracy.

Finally, I would say that among the most important obstacles are the economic and social ones. The state is not economically strong enough, the rates of unemployment are very high, and there is chronic corruption in the government bureaucracy.

Thank you , Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Issa Madanat

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to begin by commending the noble feelings displayed by his excellency Mr. Ahmad Obeidat, whom I am sure is one of the most enthusiastic people for public liberalization and the consolidation of democracy for the purpose of enabling the Jordanian people to tackle their political, economic and social problems in a collective spirit.

Jordanian masses entertained great hopes after April 1989 and the parliamentary elections that took place in the same year. They were hopeful that this era would be an historic and decisive turning point in Jordan's political history in view of the successes achieved by the eleventh parliament, which cooperated with three successive cabinets in enacting a series of legislations that have released all forms of public liberties. Martial law, extraordinary laws and the Defense Law were abrogated. Many laws such as the Political Parties Law, the Press and Publications Law and the law governing the functions of the State Security Court , and other democratic legislations were enacted

The launching of the National Charter was an important step on the path toward consolidating democracy in this country. It was a product of a collective effort by all political forces in Jordan, and there was hope that the contents of this historic document would be translated into legislations. It is true that the Jordanian constitution has several provisions allowing for personal and public liberties, but the National Charter would have entrenched political life in Jordan had its contents been translated into legislation. The National Charter was not restricted to the liberties contained in Articles 5 to 23 of the constitution, but cited international conventions and agreements approved by the United Nations such as the International Declaration on Human Rights, the

International Convention on Political, Economic and Social Rights, maternity and childhood and equality between men and women.

Thus, had the National Charter been translated into law, and the constitutional amendments stipulated in the charter been introduced, we would have reached an advanced stage on the path of democracy and the consolidation, institutionalization and codification of the democratic process. We should continue work to introduce these constitutional amendments, because our experience indicated that when the executive power had authority to legislate, the door was wide open for administrative and financial corruption. Corruption was also widespread in government tenders, and enormous amounts of public funds were misused.

Vast sectors of our people now feel that the great hopes attached to the 1989 parliamentary elections are gradually diminishing. I must here refer to the "one man, one vote " law. One of the speakers noted that he had in front of him three party presidents who did not win in the elections. Perhaps he meant to say that these candidates had nothing to offer. He is free to make his own conclusions. But I must say that I am one of those three. I am here talking about myself in the 1989 elections. Voters were left to vote in an atmosphere that was free from all kinds of sectarian, tribal, clannish and other prejudices which we have witnessed in the last election.

Dr. Fahed Al-Fanek noted that only 29 per cent of the voters cast their votes in the 1989 election, while 39 per cent of the voters cast their vote in the election that followed. But, we should note here that winning candidates in the last election received many fewer votes than the winning candidates of the 1989 election. The institutionalization and codification of democracy are still at their very beginning. The institutionalization of democracy should have a social content. In other words, social justice should be enhanced, the economic crisis, foreign debts, unemployment and the high cost of living should be tackled. Meanwhile, there should be coordination among the Arab parties involved in the peace process in order to keep the door open for Arab solidarity. We must realize that democracy has its own enemies outside and inside the Arab region.

Dr. Honsi Al-Shayyab

I would like to commend the statements made by his excellency Mr. Ahmad Obeidat as they have summed up many of the major problems we are facing. I believe that it is extremely important for this session to surmount controversy and the different points of view and look to the future in the clarity that will enable us to explore its horizons.

As for the obstacles in the way of democracy, I would say that the democratic experiment has not yet proven its viability and has not yet been confirmed as a fact of life which our people are living. On the contrary, in the last five years of the democratic experiment, social problems have aggravated, poverty and unemployment rates have risen, the gap between the rich and the poor has widened, the cost of living has rocketed and people are now finding it difficult to make ends meet. Simply speaking, this is not a favourable climate for democracy. On the contrary, unless democracy leads to tangible and constructive results reflecting positively on the lives of the people, an anti-democracy reaction will develop. Let us handle our national problems on the basis of the factual conditions governing our society, not on the basis of political or social theories. Dr. Fanek has indicated that the people are making economic sacrifices under democracy much more than they had made before. However, this should not mean that the broader base of the masses should continue to make these sacrifices, which literally means more poverty and more unemployment. To create balanced social growth, we need to review our economic policy and to embark on genuine administrative reform. But unfortunately, reform is something which we just talk about, but never do anything to translate our words into action. Regardless of how efficient the economic readjustment programme is, it remains threatened with failure as long as the programme is implemented by a corrupt bureaucracy.

The second obstacle I see in the way of the progress of democracy is the way the Middle East and Palestinian conflicts are being settled. They are being settled in an atmosphere of Arab division and disunity. Arab sides involved in the settlement are even competing with one another. Consequently, they are making one concession after another in Israel's favour. This will certainly create difficulties in our national and political life. I mean here all Jordanians, including those of Palestinian origin. Let us discuss this problem frankly, and let us be honest with each other and with ourselves. Let our goal be the prevention of Israel from further

expansion at the expense of the Jordanians and Palestinians alike and eventually at the expense of all the Arabs.

My last point is about the media. Briefly speaking, the media we have is a government media. The media should become an instrument for the transmission and dissemination of information to enable the people to form the right picture about the issues which concern us and to allow them to freely express their views on these issues. In other words, the government media should be transformed into a national media under the rule of democracy.

Mr. Mazen Al-Saket

There were several domestic and external reasons and numerous local, regional and international factors which prompted Jordan to opt for democracy in 1989. It was logical for the political developments which happened after 1989 to affect the democratic process in Jordan. This is what we are calling today the evaluation of the symptoms of setback of the democratic experiment. The political developments that have taken place after the Gulf crisis and war have certainly left a direct and clear impact on the democratic experiment in Jordan. Thus, the parliament was dissolved and the "one man, one vote" law was enacted. We had hoped that the last election would be an advanced step over the 1989 election. I believe that the most negative aspect of the "one man, one vote" law is that it has deprived the Jordanian voter of the several options that would permit him to vote for a certain political programme. The "one man, one vote" law has left a very negative impact on the growth and development of political action and political parties and on the institution of the bodies involved in politics.

It might be a historic coincidence that the launching of the democratic experiment in Jordan coincided with the collapse of many ideologies, values and systems in the world. Naturally, the collapse was rapid, but the re-birth will be slow and will need a long time. Therefore, I believe that the forthcoming tasks are momentous and demand the efforts of all. By and large, we should stop engaging in altercations and controversy which are futile and harmful to our cause. This is certainly one of the obstacles standing in the way of democracy.

There is another important factor which pertains to Jordan's close relationship with the Palestinian issue and people. The current Middle

East peace settlement has created another problem for us, adding to the already existing problems we have at hand. We should avert a trend that might, by focusing on our self-interests, lead us into Balkanization or Lebanization. National unity is the only guarantee for the protection of the country against Balkanization or Lebanization. National unity should be based on justice and equality for all citizens and the unity of the Jordanian identity. We should think seriously about initiating a modern political movement capable of representing the various options of our people based on new, democratic and participatory formulas.

Dr. Eidah Al-Mutlaq

As we are launching a new democracy, we need to review the overall legislative system, beginning with the constitution and ending up with democratic legislations, some of which have flaws that should be rectified. The overall review is necessary in order to preclude contradiction between one legislation and the other.

I would like to point out that corruption is still a prevalent phenomenon in the public administration. We thought that democracy would put an end to financial and administrative corruption in the state bureaucracy. But what is really happening now is that the civil service is much more worse than ever before. Furthermore, we are now undergoing a stagnation in development, contrary to the decade of the seventies and early eighties when the economy was booming. I am also concerned about the vulnerable conditions of the civil society organizations, which are the cornerstone of the democratic transformation. They certainly cannot lead a process of democratic transformation if they cannot stand on their own feet.

I have heard a lot of talk here about Arab failure. Some have attributed this failure to the nationalist parties. The truth is that the nationalist parties were victims of the military who seized power by force, not through a democratic institution. Arab nationalism, despite its setbacks, remains the genuine reply to the state of disunity and division that is prevailing in the Arab World. We should recall that the Arab masses rallied behind Arab nationalist thought in the fifties and sixties. It was military dictatorships which aborted the Arab nationalist thought. By the same token, we cannot attribute the failure of an Islamic party to Islamic thought or ideals.

As for the crisis of confidence we are facing, the center ridicules the left, and the right ridicules the center, and thus we are revolving in a vicious circle. We should stop this mockery which cannot help in building democracy or national unity. Under this crisis of confidence, Pan-Arabism has been ridiculed in Jordan at a time when one of the basic political and cultural features of Jordanians is that they are Arab nationalists. Arab nationalism should be utilized in the process of building democracy, because it can help us overcome domestic quarrels that are of no use to our cause.

As for the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship, it should be based on Pan-Arab principles that do not view Jordanians and Palestinians being in conflict, but as one people sharing common goals and destiny.

As for the economic readjustment programme, we should devise our own instruments for coping with this challenge and for the consequences of the programme for our economic, social and cultural development. If this programme continues for the next 10 or 15 years, we will probably become incapable of building schools or other facilities for our future generations, particularly since we have one of the highest rates of population growth in the world.

As for the type of democracy which should fit our society, I believe that we do not need all the concepts of the West about democracy. Democracy should meet our needs, confirm our identity and respond to our aspirations. It is not a commodity we should import from abroad.

Dr. Zaid Hamzeh

I think that the most serious obstacle to democracy in Jordan is the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship. It is well known that this is a very sensitive issue, and involves the future of both peoples. Unfortunately, no one is publicly speaking about this relationship in clear terms. Courteous statements are being made in public, but this does not solve the problem. A great deal is being said in private and in behind-closed-door meetings. This secrecy will not serve the interests of anyone. We should come out into the open and say what we think, and consequently, try to reconcile and compromise the positions of the two sides for their own interest.

Mr. Ibrahim Izzulddin

After having heard all this interesting and useful talk, I hardly can find anything to add. However, there is one point I want to comment on. In the last four or five years, we have laid the cornerstone and infrastructure for the democratic process, particularly as far as the enactment of legislation is concerned. I agree with Mr. Issa Madanat that some of this legislation was good and some needs to be reviewed. We need to review the legislations regulating the freedom of opinion, political pluralism, the sovereignty of law and the protection of human rights.

Genuine efforts were made in the past decade to reach a national reconciliation, and the result was that the National Charter was launched. This is a very significant achievement, because the National Charter is a social contract binding for all Jordanians. In the past decade also, a healthy spirit of dialogue had emerged. The dialogue we are having in this conference is a manifestation of this healthy spirit.

The most important thing in the new decade is that we consolidate the civil society organizations and focus our attention on the educational process. It also requires the redistribution of roles: the state has a role and we should remind the state of its role. Political parties, the press and the civil society organizations all have roles to play. The role of the state is to be bound by the democratic process, and the role of citizens is to remind the state that it should be fully committed to this process, to protect freedom of opinion for all people, and to be responsive with any changes that may be introduced to consolidate the democratic process. As for the press, I think that the present law allows a reasonable degree of freedom of the press. What is needed here is to encourage the press to be more professional and more capable of responding to the dictates of the era, and certainly, this has nothing to do with any press law. I must admit that there are many gaps in the current press law, but none of these gaps is responsible for the low standard of professional performance which the press should work hard to overcome.

As for the official media, it should be recalled that the National Charter was specific on this question. It said that the official media should be the media of the state, not the government, that it should be independent and that this independence should be guaranteed by civil councils or joint governmental and civil councils to run the media. We have to devise a new structure or framework to bypass this

predicament. I think we are in a predicament regarding the official media. All speakers in this conference who discussed the official media were critical of its performance, but none of them proposed any solution. The solution, in my view, begins with devising a new structure for the official media.

As for the political parties, I think that the Political Parties Law guaranteed the freedom of action for these parties. The predicament of the political parties is unrelated to legislation. The problems which the political parties are suffering from are financial, administrative and political. But as citizens, we should support and give momentum to these political parties until they become capable of entering the public sphere and operating in the best interests of the country. We should also support human rights organizations and encourage them to coordinate their activities and to operate at a higher level of professionalism.

Dr. Muhammad Uwaideh

When we talk about the obstacles facing the democratic process in Jordan, there are certainly internal and external obstacles. But as citizens of one country, we should have consensus on our national identity. Sometimes when you say you are for Islam, it sounds as if you are doing something wrong. If you say you are for Jordan, it sounds as if you are denying your affiliation with the greater Arab Homeland. I think we should settle this conflict. It is not wrong to say that we are for Jordan, or for Palestine, or for Islam, or for the Arab World. There are no contradictions among any of these affiliations. On the contrary, this is our genuine Arab-Islamic affiliation.

Political parties in this country should end their internal squabbles and define their priorities. There is lack of understanding among these parties of the doctrines of each. For example, my friend Mr. Samir Habashneh called on the Islamists to stop acting as representatives of God on earth. In fact, if anyone declares that he is the representative of God on earth, we will pronounce him an infidel, and I will be the first to pass this judgment on him. Are you satisfied now brother Samir? What you said was unreal, but this is what we get when there is a lack of understanding and confidence.

There is another point: We need to have guarantees that the

government will not reverse the democratic trend. We have chosen democracy as an option to achieve our common goals. Therefore, democracy should be protected. We have all agreed on this option. Thus we must cooperate. The people and the political parties have accepted democracy. But unfortunately, the various government machineries are not serious about democracy. This is due to our martial law background, to the fact that we have lived so many years under martial law. The martial law mentality lives deep inside us.

Finally, I am speaking as an Islamist of Palestinian origin. We are all Jordanians, working for the progress and prosperity of Jordan. To say other than this would be tantamount to high treason. We are all for Palestine and for the Arabs in confronting the Jewish project.

Thank you.

Dr. Fahd Al-Fanek

I want to comment on the remarks of Dr. Uwaideh. He has rightly said that we have a martial law mentality, and this mentality is not restricted to the ruler but applies to the ruled as well. It will certainly take a long time to drive this attitude out of the minds of citizens.

The Middle East peace settlement is progressing, but we have not prepared for ourselves a strategy as intellectuals to counter the Israeli strategy for the settlement. We should have a strategy of our own so that the settlement will serve our interests. Otherwise, Israel and the United States will formulate this strategy and chart the features of the new Middle East as they wish, and we will accept it as a fait accompli, even though we will not be happy about it.

I may have quoted wrong figures the other day when I spoke about the general elections in Jordan for the two parliamentary sessions. The true ratios were as follows: In the Eleventh Parliament, winning candidates received 27 per cent of the total votes cast in the election, while in the Twelve Parliament, winning candidates received 29 per cent of the total votes cast in the election. Consequently, the Twelve Parliament represents the Jordanian people more than the Eleventh Parliament. I am not saying that it was better representation; I am only saying that it was more representation.

As for the amendment of the constitution, I am afraid if we open the door for the amendment, everyone of us will have something which he

does not like and would like to amend, and we may end up amending the constitution in the way which we had never intended at the beginning. As for the question of setback of the democratic process, we have heard this for the last three days. They say public liberties, development and everything else is retreating. I believe that this is an exercise in self-torture. Those who are insisting that democracy is retreating are the ones who themselves are retreating, and they think that the world is retreating with them, when in fact they are retreating alone. Reversal of democracy is out of question. Who wants to reverse democracy, the regime? The regime is the first beneficiary of democracy. Never has the Jordanian regime been stronger than it is now.

As for the question of unemployment, the rate was 24 per cent in 1991, and our estimate for this year is that it stands at 13 per cent. I am giving these figures, not the government, and I can prove it. The same thing applies to poverty. A study conducted on poverty showed that after the increase which the civil servants were given on their salaries, the rate of poverty dropped 18 per cent compared to 1987. I have heard some people talking about the disappearance of the middle class and about the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. This may be true, but whoever says so must prove it. We cannot treat assumptions as facts and then go on to build on these facts.

Mr. Ahmad Obeidat

I would like to explain an important point related to the constitution and the constitutional amendments. I would like to remind Mr. Fanek that the Royal Commission that was in charge of drafting the National Charter agreed on a number of constitutional amendments. I explained earlier that they were amendments that do not threaten the political constants of the regime. On the contrary, these amendments would consolidate the political constants of the regime. The Royal Commission consisted of people of various political trends and convictions. Nevertheless, they reached agreement on the amendments. These amendments would certainly enhance the respect and status of the constitution.

Mr. Hani Hourani

I do not have much to add to what you have all said except to thank you again for the confidence you have given me and for the seriousness with which you have conducted the works of this conference .

I hope that we will meet again, maybe next year, with a better organization and agenda and more specific points to discuss. However, this is the beginning. We are indebted to you for any positive results which may have come out of this conference, while taking the responsibility ourselves for any mistakes or shortcomings in the preparation for this conference. I would like to remind you that the rapporteurs, the unknown soldiers whom we did not introduce to you, will draft the final statement of this conference, which will not include resolutions or recommendations, but a description of this conference. We are not a specific government or popular body, but a conference, and the aim of the report is to reflect the deliberations, not to promote a specific trend.

Thank you again.

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