December 11 at Mansion

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

December 12 at the Orient-Institut

9.00- 7.15  Panels and Roundtables

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

December 13 at the Orient-Institut

10.00- 05.45 Panels

6.00  Keynote Speech: Gilbert ACHCAR

اليسار العربي الجديد في الستينيات والسعنيات: لماذا يشتركون اليسار الجديد
العالمي و لماذا يختلف عنه؟

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

Organizer: Laure GUIRGUIS, postdoctoral researcher, OIB

In collaboration with Mansion-Nadi Lekol Nas, Zokak El Blat. Beirut
With the support of the ERC-Programme WAFAW (When Authoritarianism Fails in the Arab World)
At one time, not too long ago, radical left-wing trends were predominant in the Arab world — and throughout the world. After socialist revolutions as well as pan-Arab and Third-Worldist projects “melted into air” (Fadi Bardawil), left-wing activists turned to Islamism and to liberalism or converted to advocacy militancy, while security states strengthened in the Middle East in spite of growing contests and revolutionary waves during the first two decades of the twenty-first century.

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

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

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

Then, we will pay attention to (Counter-) Revolutionary Circulations in the Interplay of Transnational Networks and Local Challenges, following four paths of investigation: foreign militants’ mobility towards the Middle East; motivations, organizational contexts and impacts of Arab militants’ circulations abroad; dynamics of translation and appropriation of revolutionary models; power play and the external frontier of the left in the Cold War Arab world. We will continue by
reflecting on the linkages and disjunctions between the three worlds at the theoretical level, analyzing “Left-wing Egyptian Intellectuals' Readings of the Frankfurt School in the 1960-70s” (Ali) or deciphering the multilayered influence of trends such as “Pan-Africanism and Black Marxism in the development of a Sudanese radical thought within a Marxist framework” (Scarborough).

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

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

L.G.
DECEMBER 12

9.00      Welcoming Address__Introduction
9.15-12.45  (ARAB) NATIONALISM AND THE LEFT: CONVERGENCES, TENSIONS, APORTIA
Discussion: Marlene NASR, Researcher, Doha Institute, and Musa BUDEIRI, retired Professor, Bir Zeit University

09.15 Dyala HAMZAH, Assistant Professor, University of Montreal
Editing “Marxism” in and out of Pan-Arab Histories. The Case of Darwish al-Miqdadi (1897-1961)

09.35 Michaelle BROWERS, Professor, Wake Forest University
Communism, Socialism, Arab Nationalism, and the Imperative of Nation-Building: A Moment of Enthusiasm?

09.55 Matthieu REY, IREMAM, CNRS
Baathism: An Original Experiment with Leftist Ideas (1943-1970)

10.15 Sune HAUGBOLLE, Associate Professor, Roskilde University
Reconstructing Discord through Everyday Ideology: Khaled Bakdash and the Palestine Question

10.35-11.00 Coffee Break

11.00 Jeffrey BYRNE, Associate Professor, University of British Columbia
Of Cosmopolitanism and Color: Reconciling Arabism, Pan-Africanism, Maghribism, and Socialist Internationalism in Algeria's Postcolonial Revolution

11.20 Eid MOHAMED, Assistant Professor, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies
From Identity to Politics in the 1960-70s: The Great Shift in Arab Culture, Society and Identity

11.40 Gennaro GERVASIO, Senior Lecturer, Roma 3 University
Between Pan-Arabism and Communism: the Radical Left in Egypt in the 1970s

12.00-12.45 Discussion

12.45 - 02.00 LUNCH

02.00-04.00  GENEALOGIES OF AN ARAB TRADITION OF RADICAL THOUGHT
Discussant: Dyala HAMZAH, Assistant Professor, University of Montreal

02.00 Jens HANSSEN, Associate Professor, Toronto University
The Arab Radical Tradition in Comparative Perspective

02.20 Leyla DAKHLI, Marc Bloch Center, CNRS
Was the Arab Left ever Feminist? Revisiting the Arab Movements and their Leftist Counterparts (1920s-1960s)

02.40 Giedre SABASEVICIUTE, Postdoctoral Fellow, Oriental Institute (Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague)
The Journal Al-Adab and Transnational Intellectual Network between Cairo, Baghdad and Beirut

03.00 Tariq MEHMOOD, Assistant Professor, AUB, and Virinder KALRA, Senior Lecturer, University of Manchester
Poetry of Lotus and the Narratives of Hope

03.20-04.00 Discussion

04.00 – 04.30 Coffee Break
04.30-05.15 Years of Revolutionary Joy
سنوات السعادة الثورية
(Dar al-tanwir, Beirut, 2015)
Discussion with Dalal al-BIZRI, Columnist for al-Modon

05.15-06.15 Paradoxes and Legacies of the Southern Yemeni Left
Discussion around South Yemen under the Rule of the Left. A Personal Testimony (Riad El Rayyes Books, Beirut, 2015) By Fawwaz TRABOULSI
جنوب اليمن في حكم اليسار. شهادة شخصية
Anne-Linda AMIRA AUGUSTIN, PhD Candidate, Centre for Near and Middle East Studies, Philipps-University Marburg
Abdulsallam ALRUBAIDI, PhD Candidate, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg
Fawwaz TRABOULSI, Visiting Professor, AUB

06.15-07.15 The Dhofari Revolution: Model and Exception?
Roundtable
Abdel Razzaq TAKRITI, Associate Professor, Houston University
Dr Kamel MHANNA, President of Amel Association

07.30-10.00 Screening and Diner-Aperitif
A Hundred Faces for a Single Day (1972), 60’, by Christian Ghazi

December 13

10.00-11.50 Left-Wing Trends in the 1960-70s: Intellectual Linkages and Disjunctions between the Three Worlds
Discussant: Yasmeen DAIFALLAH, Assistant Professor, UMass-Amherst
Abdel Khaliq Mahgoub: The Question of Sudanese Spontaneity between European, Arab and African Marxist Milieu
Margaret SCARBOROUGH, PhD Candidate, Columbia University
Haggag ALI, Assistant Professor, Academy of Arts, Cairo
An Egyptian Leftist Reading of the Frankfurt School in the 1970s
Idriss JEBARI, ACSS Postdoctoral Fellow at CAMES, AUB
Perspectives, the Tunisian Student Movement (1963-1974) and the European New Left
Alexander FLORES, Professor Emeritus, Hochschule, Bremen
Coping with Decline: Trajectories of the Arab Left and their Perception by European Leftists
10.00-11.50 Discussion

12.00-12.50 Digital Histories of the Underground: Teaching the Palestinian Revolution
Abdel Razzaq TAKRITI, Associate Professor, University of Houston
12.50-02.00 LUNCH

02.00-05.30 (Counter-) Revolutionary Circulations in the Interplay of Transnational Networks and Local Challenges
Discussants: Laure GUIRGUIS, OIB Postdoctoral Fellow, and Aline SCHLAEPFER, Swiss National Science Foundation Fellow, University of Geneva & AUB

02.00 Orit BASHKIN, Professor, Chicago University
Iraqi Jewish Communists in Iraq and in Palestine - Trans-regional Communism and the Question of Palestine

02.20 Philipp WINKLER, PhD Candidate, Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen Nuremberg
The "Che Guevara of the Middle East": Khalid Ahmad Zaki and the Revolutionary Struggle in Iraq’s Southern Marshlands

02.40 Maher CHARIF, Researcher, The Institute for Palestinian Studies
الشيوعيون الفلسطينيون وإشكالية العلاقة بين "الخاص" و"العام" في النضال الفلسطيني
Palestinian Communists: The Problem of the Relationship between the ‘Particular’ and the ‘General’ in the Palestinian Struggle

03.00 Nicolas DOT-POUILLARD, Researcher, ERC-programme WAFAW
The Fatah’s Student Brigade (Katiba tullabiya): between Maoism, “Asian models” and Islamism (1972-1979)

03.20-03.50 Coffee Break

03.50 Malika RAHAL, Researcher, Institut du Temps présent, CNRS
The Algerian PAGS Inside Out: Circulating Between Clandestinity and Legality from Dakhil to Kharij

04.10 Elliott COLLAR, Associate Professor, Georgetown University
Elegy for a Movement: Amal Dunqul’s “Ughniyyat ka’aka hajariyya”

04.30 Nate GEORGE, PhD Candidate, Rice University
“The Day of Judgment Has Fallen Upon this Generation”: The Front for Freedom and Man in Lebanon and Global Counterrevolution

04.50 Elizabeth HOLT, Assistant Professor, Bard College
Covert Cold War in the Arabic Press: Archives of 1950s and 1960s Beirut and Cairo

05.10-05.50 Discussion

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

اليسار العربي الجديد في السبعينيات والستينيات: لماذا يشترك مع اليسار الجديد
العالمي وبدافع؟

The New Arab Left of the 1960-70s and the Global New Left: Commonalities and Differences
Discussant: Elizabeth Suzanne KASSAB, Associate Professor, Doha Institute