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For almost thirty years Mike and I roomed together at the annual MESA meeting. Ironically, for all I knew of Mike including his love of Arizona's football and basketball teams, there was one topic Mike was reluctant to discuss—himself. His commitment to his family, his students, his friends and his scholarship were his primary focus and he was clearly very happy with those priorities. The profession has lost an active, wide-ranging scholar, a dedicated teacher, and a highly qualified administrator, and for me and those who knew him, a wonderful friend. ✧

Jere L. Bacharach
University of Washington

Friedemann Büttner **1938-2012**

FRIEDEMANN BÜTTNER, EMERITUS PROFESSOR IN THE POLITICS of the Near and Middle East at the Free University Berlin, lost his courageous fight against cancer on 4 September 2012. Born on 18 May 1938, Friedemann studied political science, Near Eastern Studies, and theater in Göttingen, Munich, London, and Oxford.

The 1960s, when Büttner was a student at Ludwig-Maximilian University, Munich, were the most tumultuous years in post-World War II Germany (then still West Germany). In 1962, the “Spiegel Affair” racked the still fragile democracy of the country, and the Schwabing riots in Munich were harbingers of more protests to come in 1968 against German authoritarianism and U.S. policies in Vietnam. Consistent with his earlier support for the independence of Algeria, Büttner was deeply involved in these events and participated in many demonstrations. His studies, as well as his political engagement, were inspired by his thesis advisor, Eric Voegelin, a political philosopher who had fled Nazism in 1938 and had returned to Germany from the U.S. in 1958.

After a British Council scholarship in 1964 at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London and St. Antony's College, Oxford, Büttner completed

his studies in Munich in 1969 with a D.Phil. dissertation entitled “The Crisis of the Islamic Order: A Study of the Destruction of this Order in the Ottoman Empire (1800-1926)” (in German).

In 1979 Büttner was appointed to the newly established Chair in Middle East Politics at the Free University of Berlin. Initially endowed with a generous grant from the Volkswagen Foundation, the Chair’s Institute rapidly turned into a buoyant research center, obtaining additional funding from other sources and providing support to a growing number of Ph.D. candidates and research fellows. A facilitator by nature, Büttner convened or supported several major initiatives to further local teaching and research on the contemporary Middle East and North Africa and to enhance the Institute’s international visibility and reputation. For many years, the interdisciplinary research program “Ethnicity and Society in the Middle East” influenced research on the political dynamics of “ethnic groups and boundaries,” in the sense of Fredrik Barth, or “we-groups,” as Georg Elwert preferred to term them. During his weekly graduate student seminars, Büttner provided a lively forum for theoretical and methodological debates that subsequently produced a range of seminal publications on economic, societal, and political transformations in the Middle East and North Africa, mostly based on extensive fieldwork.

It was only natural that Professor Büttner should develop an ambitious publication policy and convene numerous panels at international conferences, such as MESA and the European Association of Middle East Studies (EURAMES) where he delighted in taking his students and younger colleagues. Büttner also played an important part in the creation of the German Association of Near Eastern Studies (DAVO) and contributed to its early growth and later consolidation as a learned society and professional organization. He was also active in the German Association for the United Nations and in the Association for German-Arab Friendship.

In his scholarly work, Professor Büttner analyzed responses by key constituencies of the Ottoman Empire to what they perceived as their decline and reform efforts by Muslims in the first half of the twentieth century. He discussed the role of army officers in the “revolutions” of the 1950s and 60s, Muslim Brothers and other Islamists in the 1970s and 80s, and the contemporary “development community.” His research on reforms and revolutions questioned easy assumptions about tradition and modernity in processes of political change and in the transformation of religious doctrines and practices. Other foci of his work included the Arab-Israeli conflict, the politics of Egypt, and German and European relations with, and academic approaches to the Middle East.

Professor Büttner continued to teach and to supervise Ph.D. students for several years after he reached the age of mandatory retirement in 2003. His hope was to return to his own research once he had secured the survival of his Chair. In the eyes of local decision makers, however, the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 not only entailed new spending priorities aimed at unifying the country socially and economically, but also heralded the much celebrated “end of history” that would inevitably globalize supposedly backward places such as the Middle East and make them perfectly intelligible to any generalist. Thanks to Büttner’s diplomatic perseverance, reason ultimately prevailed and in 2007 a successor was appointed.

Professor Büttner is survived by his wife, Inge Klostermeier-Büttner, his daughter, Nicole Fierek, and his two sons, Jan Mermin and Peter Büttner. ✨

Eberhard Kienle
CNRS/Sciences-Po, Paris/Grenoble

Peter von Sivers
University of Utah

Katherine Payne Moseley **1941-2012**

KATHERINE PAYNE MOSELEY (K. P. MOSELEY) PASSED AWAY PEACEFULLY ON 4 October 2012. Her often cited work with Immanuel Wallerstein on pre-capitalist social structures initiated a long list of studies and publications on the Trans-Saharan trade, the political economy of West Africa including Sierra Leone and Nigeria, and most recently the economic and social history of the larger oasis band of the northern Saharan edge including Morocco and Mauritania. Kay also actively promoted water and other environmental issues, as represented by her paper entitled “Development or Ecocide? Dilemmas of Water Exploitation in the Sahara.” A Ph.D. in Sociology from Columbia University, she did her fieldwork in Dahomey and taught at Fourah Bay College (Sierra Leone) and at the University of Port Harcourt (Nigeria), as well as at Vanderbilt, Brooklyn College, the University of Connecticut- Storrs, and several other American universities.