

home and business loans. College education is free within the kingdom, and heavily subsidized for those who study abroad. Electricity, domestic air travel, gasoline, and telephone service are available at far below cost. Many of the kingdom's best and brightest have little motivation to do any work at all."

Foreign workers hold 70 percent of the jobs in the kingdom, and 90 percent of the private-sector jobs. "For decades, the Saudi government has been attempting to replace foreigners with native workers," writes journalist Lawrence Wright in *The New Yorker* (Jan. 5, 2004), "but it has run into resistance from employers who don't want to hire their own people. 'Saudis aren't qualified,' Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdul Aziz, the secretary-general for tourism, told me. 'Showing up for a job is not a priority for them. Even the culture of working as a team is not there.'"

The Saudi government used to hire nearly all university graduates, until oil prices plunged in the mid-1980s. "Unemployment and idleness became central facts of life for young Saudi men," Wright observes. It's not surprising that all but four of the 19 hijackers in the 9/11 terrorist attacks were Saudis. Al Qaeda's Osama bin Laden "gave young men with no control over their lives an identity, and a wanton chance to make history."

Saudi Arabia's atmosphere of extreme sexual repression may be another incubator of radicalism, Wright speculates. "The most unnerving feature of Saudi life" is "the self-

effacement of an entire sex, and, in consequence, of sexuality itself. The only places I was sure to see women were at the mall and the grocery store, and even there they seemed spookily out of place. Many of them wore black gloves, and their faces were covered entirely. It felt to me as if the women had died, and only their shades remained." According to Wright, it's not hard to see why young men such as the 9/11 hijackers might be "propelled in part by the notion of being rewarded in the afterlife with the company of virgins."

Last year, reports staff writer Faye Bowers in the *Christian Science Monitor* (Jan. 8–13, 2004), the government began stressing the virtues of tolerance and moderation to the clergy, reining in the zealous religious police, and purging textbooks of "objectionable references to Jews, Christians, and Hindus, and the inappropriate use of the word 'jihad.'" The government also arrested three clerics for issuing fatwas promoting terrorist activity; all three went on TV to recant their views.

Even so, it would be as hard for Riyadh to truly divorce radical Wahhabism as it was for the Soviet Union to renounce communism, contends Michael Doran. "Clearly, there are forces in the kingdom who would be willing to support the efforts of a Saudi Gorbachev, but it is not clear when or whether one will appear. Wahhabism is the foundation of an entire political system, and everyone with a stake in the status quo can be expected to rally around it when push comes to shove."

The Allende Affair

"Kissinger and Chile: The Myth That Will Not Die" by Mark Falcoff, in *Commentary* (Nov. 2003), 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

The 1973 military coup d'état that deposed Chile's president Salvador Allende, ushering in a decade and a half of repression during which more than 3,000 Chileans were murdered or mysteriously "disappeared," is often blamed by the Left on Henry Kissinger and the United States. Journalist Christopher Hitchens has made the case for the prosecution in a BBC documentary and other forums. Falcoff, a Latin

America specialist at the American Enterprise Institute, rises to the defense.

In the presidential election of September 4, 1970, three years before the coup (and his death), Allende, a Marxist with "strong Soviet-bloc and Cuban connections," says Falcoff, received 36.3 percent of the vote—1.4 percentage points more than his nearest rival—and the Chilean Congress was expected to confirm him as the winner on October 24.



Salvador Allende shaking hands with Chileans shortly before his overthrow by Augusto Pinochet in 1973.

In Washington, President Richard Nixon was “deeply distressed” at this turn of events, Falcoff notes, and ordered the Central Intelligence Agency to prevent an Allende presidency. Covert efforts were made, but without success. Roberto Viaux, a cashiered Chilean general, was eager to take on the challenge but was judged “not a good bet,” according to Falcoff. On October 15, national security adviser Kissinger “ordered the Viaux coup ‘turned off.’”

Hitchens contends that Kissinger merely wanted “deniability.” The October 15 memo of a meeting in which he took part and a cable the next day from the CIA to its station in Santiago directed that Viaux be warned against “precipitate action” but did not “turn off” the general; if anything, they incited him “to redouble his efforts.” Falcoff says there is no evidence that Kissinger saw the CIA cable, and cites the transcript of an October 15 phone conversation in which Kissinger told Nixon, “This looks hopeless. I turned it off. Nothing would be worse than an abortive coup.” Nixon responded, “Just tell him to do nothing.”

In the event, Viaux continued with the scheme, as did the CIA station in Santiago. Just why the plot went forward is “not clear,” according to Falcoff, but Kissinger “seems to

have been unaware” of it. Blocking the plotters’ way was General René Schneider, commander in chief of the Chilean army, who refused to go along with their scheme. The plan was to kidnap him and take him to Argentina for a while. But Viaux’s men bungled the kidnapping and ended up murdering Schneider on October 22. Ironically, by turning Schneider into a martyr for the Chilean army’s “constitutionalist” traditions, Falcoff says, the assassination helped assure the orderly transfer of power to the Allende administration.

Despite the tough talk in the White House in 1970, writes Falcoff, once Allende was in office, “the thrust of U.S. policy shifted to sustaining a democratic opposition and an independent press until Allende could be defeated in the presidential elections scheduled for 1976.” The “real causes” of the 1973 coup, he believes, are to be found not in Washington but in “the devastating collapse of the Chilean economy that took place during the Allende presidency, as well as in Chile’s increasingly polarized political environment.” The Allende administration itself, he concludes, brought about the situation that “drove the military into action” and led to General Augusto Pinochet’s murderous right-wing dictatorship.