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**ISLAMISM AND ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM IN THE  
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**

**A Thesis submitted to the Department of Political Science & Public  
Policy**

**of the University of Waikato, in fulfillment of the requirement for  
the  
Degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis analyses the impact of Islamism in the Middle East and North Africa. In the name of Islam, Islamist groups have embarked upon a path of violence and terrorism. The primary objective of the thesis is to critically analyse the ideas, approaches and implications of Islamism. Firstly, by examining whether economic despair breeds Islamism or what is happening in the Middle East and North Africa, which is a revolt against its own decay and humiliation, has taken the form of a return to the roots of radical Islam. Secondly, the way in which few Muslim governments dare to challenge the Islamists on theological, political and economic grounds. Thirdly, the manner which this influences modernisation and development in the region? Fourthly, the way which regimes respond to the challenge?

The second objective of the thesis is to analyse the compatibility of Islam with democracy. It is argued that Islam has difficulty absorbing the idea that mankind is destined to progress, and that innovation can bring improvement to life. This argument is further explored in the light of cultural, theo-political, and socio-economic issues.

The thesis also provides a terminological definition of Islamism and Fundamentalism. It analyses the activities of Islamist organisations in the Middle and North Africa, and argues the potential threat, which they present. In this manner the circumstances of the Islamists religious justification for their actions are analysed. At the same time the thesis examines the complexities underlying the concepts of jihad, holy war, and terrorism.

The thesis also analyses the confrontation between the rhetoric of Islamist activists and the reality of Muslim politics. It is suggested the growth of these extremist organisations may be linked first and foremost to the social and economic problems created by underdevelopment and economic stagnation. Moreover, it is argued that lack of good government and corruption, which

have characterised large parts of the Arab and Muslim world in the past few decades have played a significant role in this confrontation. It argues these hardships have led many ordinary Arabs and Muslims to embrace radical Islam, which offers them an escape from the difficulties of daily life, hope for social justice and the expectation that religion would provide the answer to all their aspirations. It is argued that the general trend of 'returning to Islam' aims to correct society in a step-by-step process to instil the values of the religion as a way of life, while the Islamist organisations have turned the phenomenon into a lever to fulfil their political aim through violence and terrorism.

The thesis examines a country-specific case study of the activities of Islamist groups in seven countries of the region: Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Iran, Lebanon, Israel and Saudi Arabia. This approach enables conclusions to be reached that Islamism presents a genuine danger to the stability of many regimes in the region, and involves a tireless struggle to subvert government authority by employing terrorism aimed at destabilising and toppling the regime.

The thesis concludes that in the likely trend of Islamist influence in the Middle East and North Africa, one would need to pay more attention to those variables that are in constant change in a period of rising Islamisation.

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## **Introduction**

For the past 30 years 'Political Islam' has been a key feature of Middle Eastern political discourse. Those in power use it to bolster their legitimacy, and those in opposition as a language of criticism on a wide range of issues related to culture, the economy and society as a whole.

It has become a commonplace to speak of "Islamic fundamentalism" as a threat to regional stability, if not a global threat to Western interests. In the West, the term rings immediate alarms because it arouses images of violence and fanaticism, which, despite their validity in particular contexts, distorts a complex phenomenon. Moreover, governments under domestic pressure from Islamic opposition groups appeal to Western fears of fundamentalism either to emphasize their claims to Western economic aid, and/or to avoid the challenge of democratization.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the impact of 'Islamism' upon the Middle East and North Africa during the last three decades. A critical discussion in this area will offer an insight into the history of political Islam, regional politics and the effect radical Islamist approaches have had in destabilizing the whole region. Similarly, an understanding will be gained of the ways in which the ruling elite has approached their dealings with Islamist groups and how they have attempted to handle the violence and terrorist activities afflicted by the Islamists.

The term 'fundamentalism' is itself controversial, thus, there is a need to define 'fundamentalism' and "Islamic Fundamentalism", and explore the use of possible alternatives. The diversity within Islam translates to diversity within the notion of fundamentalism itself. Once these problematic terms have been identified and discussed in depth the central focus of the thesis would be analyzed.

A country-specific case study of the activities of Islamist organisations in seven North African and Middle Eastern states- Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Iran, Lebanon, Israel, and Saudi Arabia, will be presented. The case studies will examine why Islamist groups have become disillusioned with state leaders, political systems, and what factors or events have influenced the growth of Islamist ideals.

After examining the case studies, there are four relevant aspects that the thesis will analyse in order to discuss the impact of Islamist activities in the Middle East and North Africa. The first seeks to discover why there has been a proliferation of Islamist groups in the Middle East and North Africa from the 1970s to the 1990s. The next aspect will examine whether Islamists perceive religion to be the solution to the problems that the Middle East and North Africa faces as a result of rapid change to society. Islamism and its effect on the operations of the state has impacts on modernization and the development of society, therefore the third aspect inquires as to what the implications are for modern life and development in the region. Finally, the attitude of the state and ruling elite towards Islamists, and government attempts at retaining control of society will be examined.

It will conclude with reflections on the viability of Islamic groups that cluster and cohere as Islamist cadres.

## **PART ONE: HISTORY OF POLITICAL ISLAM**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Before discussing the role of Islam in the politics of the Middle East and North Africa, a preliminary observation has to be made, as well as some considerations regarding the character of Islam in that part of the world.

First of all, in Islam there is no separation between the realm of the religious and that of political, or, as commonly stated in the West, between church and state. While all religions affect and are affected by the political, to a greater or lesser degree, Christianity early on claimed such a separation, expressed in the New Testament as “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's”.<sup>1</sup> The whole history of Christianity contradicts this statement, from the quarrel of the Two Swords in medieval times to the war of religions in the age of the Renaissance and Reformation, to the temporal powers of the Papacy and many other instances down to the present time. But, in Islam, there has never been such a disclaimer. Islam was political from the very first day, concerned with the governing of the religious community and with any and all political questions, as well as with dogma and religious problems. Over time, and in different historical and geographic context, the connection may have loosened, but it is always in the background and ready to reassert itself.

The second question that arises, keeping in mind that Islam originated in the Middle East, is whether the form of Islam practiced in the Middle East and North Africa is any different from that practiced in Asia and else where. While one can expect that distance from the beginning and source of Islam as well as different geographic and cultural contexts in the areas affected by the spread of Islam might somewhat modify the character of the religion, the essential factors of differentiation between Middle Eastern / North African

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew, chapter 22 verses 15-22, Revised Standard Version of the *Bible*.

Islam and Asian Islam are related to the historical circumstances in which Islam reached various countries.

### **Factors Affecting The Impact of Islam**

Before discussing the role of Islam in the contemporary politics of the Middle East and North Africa, one has to recognize that it is determined, or at least affected, by three sets of factors: geography, colonialisation and population, which are sometimes intertwined.

#### Geography

The first factor is the way Islam came to being. From its birth in the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century, Islam spread its political control through military conquest over the Middle East, Persia, North Africa, Asia and Spain with extreme rapidity. The Islamisation of the conquered territories, however, took place progressively, given the tolerance displayed by the Arab conquerors towards the religious beliefs of the conquered people, essentially various brands of Judeo-Christianity, considered worthy of protection (*dhimma*). This first phase in the spread of Islam is marked by a close relationship between the religion, the Arabic language of the conquerors and of the Qur'an, the fusion of the spiritual and temporal powers of the caliph, and consequently the intertwining of political and religious questions.

In the second phase of the spread of Islam, the leadership of the Muslim community had passed from the hands of the Arabs into those of Turks from Central Asia, the Ottomans, following the destruction of the Abbassi Caliphate in Baghdad. It is during this phase that Islam really reached the South Asian subcontinent. The impact of Islam on South Asia was marked by somewhat contradictory factors. The first wave of Arab conquests in the Middle East and North Africa, along with subsequent Islamisation, was accompanied by a fair amount of toleration due to the fundamental closeness

of Islam to Judeo-Christianity. Moreover, the conquered Christians and Jews in the Middle East and North Africa found their Muslim masters more lenient in terms of both taxation and religious dogma than their previous Byzantine overlords, who practiced a different form of Christianity and persecuted them for that reason.

### European Colonization

The arrival of European traders in the sixteenth century and later European colonization constitute the second factor that has had direct and profound effects on the place and role of Islam in the Middle East and North Africa. It is ironic that initially the first Europeans, the Portuguese, unwittingly helped the spread of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago.<sup>2</sup> Their missionary zeal was so brutal and heavy-handed, and marked by a mix of crusading, Iberian peninsula re-conquest spirit, visceral anti-Muslim feelings, not to mention the spirit of lucre and plunder, that they often succeeded in unifying the local populations under the banner of Islam, perceived as a barrier against such abuses.

### The Muslim Population

The third factor that has affected the place and role of Islam in this region is the size of the Muslim population in various Islamic countries at the present time. With respect to population, there are three categories of countries. Some countries have an overwhelmingly Muslim majority. These include, Saudi Arabia 23.513,330 (100%), Egypt 70.712,315 (94%), Iran 66.622,704 (99%), Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world, with a total population of 231.328,092 million people, of which 203.568,721 million, or 88 percent, are Muslims; Pakistan, with a total population of 147.663,429 million, of which

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<sup>2</sup> Hall, D.G.E., *A History of Southeast Asia*, 4th ed., New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981, p. 231.

97 percent, 143.233,526 million are Muslims; and third, Bangladesh, with a total population of 133.376,684 million, of which 83 percent, 110.402,647 million are Muslims.<sup>3</sup>

The second category comprises countries like Malaysia, which has a bare majority of Muslims 11.380,704 out of 22.662,365 million, Lebanon and Nigeria.

The third category comprises several countries with a Muslim minority. In India, the minority is nevertheless large in numbers, with 125.501,427 million geographically dispersed Muslims composing a mere 12 percent of the population. In the Philippines, the Muslims number 4.226,281 million, constituting 5 percent of the total population of 84.525,639 million; in Thailand, they are 2.369,467 million, 3.8 percent of the total population of 62.354,402 million; in China, they are 25.686,074 million, or about 2 percent of the total population of 1,284.303,705 million.<sup>4</sup> In the case of Philippines and Thailand, however, the Muslims are concentrated in specific geographic areas and, in the case of Thailand, Muslims belong to a different ethnic group from that of the Buddhist majority of the population.

All three factors discussed above- the spread of Islam, European colonization, and population patterns- have had a direct correlation with the behavior of Muslims and the role of Islam in the various countries mentioned. Looking at the record since independence, one can determine two periods regarding the role of Islam in the politics of Middle Eastern and North Africa. Following independence, with the exception of Pakistan, the leadership in most of these countries was essentially secular, concerned with problems of foreign policy, nation building, modernization, and development. Then, from the late 1960s, and in some places even earlier, one witnesses the alleged resurgence of Islam, the rise of Islamism. In point of fact, this was not the resurgence of a religion, which has always been there, but an attempt to interpret Islam

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<sup>3</sup> Total Population of every country is found in *The C.I.A. World Factbook*, which is found at: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook>. Percentage of Muslim Population is located at: <http://members.tripod.com/arabicpaper/country.html>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

holistically by using principles derived from Islamic teachings to guide politics and economics, as well as society in general. What attracted the attention of the West was, and still is, the political dimension, which used Islamic idiom instead of Western terminology and which distanced itself from Westernization while preaching reform.

Revivalism or fundamentalism- whatever term one uses- is not a new phenomenon in Islam. It has occurred many times in the past centuries. The present conditions in the world, in terms of rapid change and modern means of communication and transportation, have given this resurgence a global character that it could not have had in the past.

## CHAPTER 1: WHAT IS ISLAM?

Islam is an Arabic word which means: ‘submission to the will of God (‘Allah’- a shortened form of *La’ Ilaaha Illa’llah*, the One who alone exists of the Judaic ‘I am that I am’), ‘resignation’, ‘striving after the truth’, the highest State of ‘being’, absolutely free from all opposites.<sup>5</sup> Those who submit to Allah are called ‘Muslims’ and must believe and proclaim publicly that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger (*Rasuul* or Prophet) of God. On the other hand the word can be used to convey at least three different meanings:

- (a) Islam means the religion expounded by Prophet Mohammed and embodied in the Qur’an;
- (b) Islam is the subsequent development of the religion as a result of the work of eminent Muslim jurists and theologians and this includes the *Sharia*, the holy law of Islam;

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<sup>5</sup> Qari, Mohammed Sarfaraz Husayn, *Islam*, Calcutta 1910, p. 2.

- (c) Islam means not what the Muslims believe in or are expected to believe in, but what they have actually done through the Islamic civilization.<sup>6</sup>

Translated from the religious plane, the term also means the establishment of a regime of social and economic equality and the abolition of all injustices and inequalities of privileges and wealth, which impede the fullest development of natural faculties and potentialities of human beings.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Meaning of Islam**

“Islam” is derived from the Arabic root *salaama* – peace, purity, submission and obedience. In the religious sense, Islam means submission to the will of God and obedience to His law.<sup>8</sup>

Everything and every phenomenon in the world, other than man and jinn is administered totally by God-made laws, they are obedient to God and submissive to His Laws, i.e. they are in the state of Islam. Man possesses the quality of intelligence and choice, thus he is invited to submit to the good will of God and obey His Law, i.e. become a Muslim. Submission to the good will of God, together with obedience to His beneficial law, i.e. becoming a Muslim, is the best safeguard for man’s peace and harmony.

According to Islamic sources, Islam dates back to the age of Prophet Adam. It’s message has been conveyed to man by God’s Prophets and Messengers including Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. Islam’s message has been restored and enforced in the last stage of the religious evolution by God’s last prophet and Messenger Muhammad.

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<sup>6</sup> Joommal, A.S.K., "What is Islam", *The Muslim Digest*, vol. 35, no. 10, 11, May-June 1985, pp. 127-30. Also see Dorothea Selye Franck, ed., *Islam in the Modern World*, Washington, 1961, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Ul Haque, Zia, "Islamisation of society in Pakistan" in Asghar Khan, *Islam Politics and the State: The Pakistan Experience*, 1985, p. 117.

<sup>8</sup> Maududi, Sayyid Abu Al-'Ala, *Islam: Its Meaning and Message*, in M. Tariq Quraishi (ed.), American Trust Publications: Indianapolis, Indiana, 1984.

The word ALLAH in the Arabic language means God, or more accurately The One and Only Eternal God, Creator of the Universe, Lord of all lords, King of all kings, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. The word Allah to mean God; is also used by Arabic speaking Jews and Christians.

### The Purpose of Life

A Muslim believes that the purpose of life is to worship Allah. Worshipping Allah does not mean we spend our entire lives in constant seclusion and absolute meditation. To worship Allah is to live life according to His commands, not to run away from it. To worship Allah is to know Him, to love Him, to obey His commands, to enforce His laws in every aspect of life (The Sufis may aspire to get closer to Allah), to serve His cause by doing right and shunning evil and to be just to Him, to ourselves and to our fellow human beings.

### Status of Human Beings

A Muslim believes that human beings enjoy an especially high ranking status in the hierarchy of all known creatures. Man and woman occupy this distinguished position because they alone are gifted with rational faculties and spiritual aspirations as well as powers of action. Man and woman are not a condemned race from birth to death, but dignified beings potentially capable of good and noble achievements.

A Muslim also believes that every person is born Muslim.<sup>9</sup> Allah endowed every person with the spiritual potential and intellectual inclination that can make him/her a good Muslim. Every person's birth takes place according to the will of Allah in realization of His plans and in submission to His commands. Every person is born FREE FROM SIN. When the person reaches

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<sup>9</sup> Dr. Juweidi, Darwish, *Al Ahaadith Al-Qudsiyah*, Al Dar Al-Namudijiyah, Beirut, 2003, Ch. 13, p. 25.

the age of maturity and if s/he is sane, they become accountable for all their deeds and intentions. Humans are free from sin until they commit sin. There is no inherited sin, and no original sin. The Prophet Adam committed the first sin, but he prayed to Allah for pardon and Allah granted Adam pardon.<sup>10</sup>

### Salvation

A Muslim believes that s/he must work out his/her salvation through the guidance of Allah. No one can act on behalf of another or intercede between him and Allah. In order to obtain salvation, a person must combine faith and action, belief and practice. Faith without doing good deeds is as insufficient as doing good deeds without faith.

Also, a Muslim believes that Allah does not hold any person responsible until he has shown them the Right Way. If people do not know and have no way of knowing about Islam, they will not be responsible for failing to be Muslim. Every Muslim must preach Islam in words and action.

### Acceptance of Faith

A Muslim believes that faith is not complete when it is followed blindly or accepted unquestioningly. Humans must build their faith on well-grounded convictions beyond any reasonable doubt and above uncertainty. Islam ensures freedom to believe and forbids compulsion in religion (one of the oldest synagogues and one of the oldest churches in the world are in Muslim countries).

A Muslim believes that the Qur'an is the word of Allah revealed to Prophet Muhammad through the Angel Gabriel. The Qur'an was revealed from Allah on various occasions to answer questions, solve problems; settle disputes and to be man's best guide to the truth. The Qur'an was revealed in Arabic and it

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<sup>10</sup> The Holy *Qur'an* 2:36-37.

is still in its original and complete Arabic version today. It is memorized by millions of Muslims.

A Muslim also believes in a clear distinction between the Qur'an and the Traditions (called Hadiths) of the Prophet Muhammad. Whereas, the Qur'an is the word of Allah, the Traditions of Prophet Muhammad (Hadiths i.e. his teachings, sayings, and actions) are the practical interpretations of the Qur'an. Both the Qur'an and the Hadiths of prophet Muhammad are the primary sources of knowledge in Islam.

### **The Prophet and the Sources of Islam**

The founder of this religious faith was Muhammad (sometimes spelt Mohammed) who was born in Mecca circa 571 A.D. and died in 632 A. D. He claimed to have experienced direct revelations from Allah through the Archangel Gabriel. These commenced in 610 A.D. and continued until his death. In all they number 114 units called Suras. Collectively they form the holy book of the faith, the Koran or Qur'an, which means 'recitation', since the Suras are in metrical form. The Qur'an is the prime source, but there are two others. One is the Hadith (sayings), which is a collection of the actions and sayings of the Prophet, regarded as 'commentaries' on the Qur'an and recorded after his death. The other is the Sunna (traditions, which is the Prophet's day-to-day practices). The Islamic calendar dates from 622 A.D., the occasion of Prophet Muhammad's Hijra (migration) from Mecca to Yathrib later renamed Medina (refuge), which gave him shelter until his triumphal return to Mecca in 630 A.D.

## Introduction to the Five Pillars of Islam

### The Pillars of Islam and Application of Faith

Islam is built on five pillars<sup>11</sup>, the first of which is a state of faith, the other four are major exercises of faith of which some are daily, some weekly, some monthly, some annually and some are required as a minimum once in a lifetime. These exercises of faith are to serve man's spiritual purposes, satisfy his human needs and to mark his whole life with a Divine touch. The five pillars of Islam are:

1. **Shahadah** – the Creed, witnessing that Allah is One, and Muhammad is His Messenger. This statement of faith must be declared publicly. It should be a genuine belief, which includes all the above articles of faith. The witnessing of the Oneness of Allah is the rejection of any form of deity other than Allah, and the witnessing that Muhammad is His Messenger is the acceptance of him being chosen by Allah to convey His message of Islam to all humanity and to deliver it from the darkness of ignorance into the light of belief in, and knowledge of, the Creator. The statement of *Shahadah* in Arabic is:

*Ashhadu Ann Laa Ilaha Illa Allah Wa Ashhadu Anna Muhammad Rasulu Allah*

An English translation would be:

I bear witness that there is no other God but Allah and bear witness that Muhammad is His Messenger. The word prophet does not appear in the *Shahadah*.

2. **Salat / Salah**– Prayer

This is performed five times a day and takes this form:

“In the name of Allah, The Merciful, The Compassionate.

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<sup>11</sup> *Hadith Sahih Bukhari* Vol. 1, Book 2, No. 7.

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all worlds.

The Merciful One; The Compassionate One.

Lord of the Day of Judgment.

Thee alone we serve, to Thee alone we cry for help.

Guide us in the straight path.

The path of those that thou hast blessed (the Muslims).

Not of those with whom Thou art angry (the Jews).

And not of those that goes astray” (the Christians).

This is also the first Sura of the Qur’an, al-Fatiha (The Exordium), and is to Muslims what the Lord’s Prayer is to Christians.

Praying to the Creator on a daily basis is the best way to cultivate in a man a sound personality and to actualize his aspiration. Allah does not need man’s prayer because He is free of all needs. Prayer is for our immeasurable benefit, and the blessings are beyond imagination.

In prayer, every muscle of the body joins the soul and the mind in the worship and glory of Allah. Prayer is an act of worship. It is a matchless and unprecedented formula of intellectual meditation and spiritual devotion, of moral elevation and physical exercise, all combined.

Offering of prayers is obligatory upon every Muslim male and female who is sane, mature (15 years and over) and in the case of women free from menstruation and confinement due to child birth.

Requirement of prayer: performing of ablution (*Wudu*), purity of the whole body, clothes and ground used for prayer, dressing properly and having the intention and facing the *Qiblah* (the direction of the *Ka’bah* at Mecca).

Obligatory prayers: Five daily prayers, the Friday’s noon congregation prayer and the funeral prayer.

Times of obligatory prayers:

1. Early morning: After dawn and before sunrise.
2. Noon: After the sun begins to decline from its zenith until it is about midway on its course to set.

3. Mid-afternoon: After the expiration of the noon prayer time until sunset.
4. Sunset: Immediately after sunset until the red glow in the western horizon disappears.
5. Evening: After the expiration of the sunset prayer until dawn.

Highly recommended prayer: Those accompanying the obligatory prayer and the two great festival prayers – *Eid ul-Fitr and Eid ul-Adha*.

Optional prayers: Voluntary prayer during the day and night.

### The Call for Prayer

Made by a Muezzin (caller) from the Minar (Minaret) of a mosque.

“Allah is most great!” Allah is most great!

I bear witness that there is no God but Allah!

I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah!

Come to the Prayer! Come to the Success”! And “Prayer is better than Sleep”! in the early morning prayer only.

Prayer should be offered in its due time, unless there is a reasonable excuse. Delayed obligatory prayers must be made up. In addition to the prescribed prayer, a Muslim expresses gratitude to God and appreciation of His favours and asks for His mercy all the time. Especially at time of, for example, childbirth, marriage, going to or rising from bed, leaving and returning to home, starting a journey or entering a city, riding or driving, before or after eating or drinking, harvesting, visiting graveyards and at times of distress and sickness.

### 3. Zakat (Zakah)– Obligatory Charity, or Almsgiving

Once a freewill offering, but later made obligatory and prescribing fixed proportions of both income and capital gain. Obligatory charity is an act of

worship and spiritual investment. The literal meaning of Zakah is purity and it refers to the annual amount in kind or coin which a Muslim with means must distribute among the rightful beneficiaries. Zakah does not only purify the property of the contributor but also purifies his/her heart from selfishness and greed. It also purifies the heart of the recipient from envy and jealousy, from hatred and uneasiness and it fosters instead goodwill and warm wishes for the contributors.

Zakah has a deep humanitarian and social-political value; for example, it frees society from class warfare, ill feelings, distrust and corruption. Although Islam does not hinder private enterprise or condemn private possession; it does not tolerate selfish and greedy capitalism. Islam adopts a moderate but positive and effective course between individual and society, between the citizen and the state, between materialism and spiritualism.

Zakah is paid on the net balance after paying personal expenses, family expenses, due credits, taxes, etc. Every Muslim male and female who at the end of the year is in possession of the equivalent of 85 grams of gold (approx. US\$1400 in 2002) or more in cash or articles of trade, must give Zakah at the minimum rate of 2.5% gross income. Taxes paid to government do not substitute for this religious duty. The contributor should not seek pride of fame but if disclosing his/her name and his/her contribution is likely to encourage others, it is acceptable to do so.

The recipients of Zakah are: the poor, the needy, the new Muslims converts, the Muslim prisoners of war (to liberate them), Muslims in debt, employees appointed to collect Zakah, Muslims in service of foreigners in need of help.

Note the obligatory nature of Zakah; it is required. Muslims can also go above and beyond what they pay as Zakah, in which case the offering is a strictly voluntary charity (*Sadaqa*).

#### 4. Sawm - Fasting

Fasting is obligatory with a few exceptions (fifteen year-olds and under,

sickness, pregnancy, travel and sometimes battle) and occupying the lunar month of Ramadan.

Sawm is abstaining completely from eating, drinking, intimate sexual contacts and smoking from the break of dawn till sunset. It is a matchless Islamic institution, which teaches man the principle of sincere love to God. Fasting teaches man a creative sense of hope, devotion, patience, unselfishness, moderation, willpower, wise saving, sound budgeting, mature adaptability, healthy survival, discipline, spirit of social belonging, unity and brotherhood.

Obligatory fasting is done once a year for the period of the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic year. Recommended fasting includes every Monday and Thursday of every week, three days in the middle of each Islamic month, six days after Ramadan following the Feast Day and a few days of the two months before Ramadan. Fasting of Ramadan is a worship act, which is obligatory on every adult Muslim, male or female if s/he is mentally and physically fit and not on a journey. Exceptions are: women during their period of menstruation and while nursing (breast feeding) their child, and also in case of travel and sickness for both men and women.

##### 5. Haji – The Pilgrimage

It is a pilgrimage to Mecca, at least once in a Muslim's lifetime and it is not obligatory upon every Muslim male and female who is mentally, physically and financially fit, but if unaffordable then contribution to the traveling expenses of somebody undertaking it is meritorious. It is the largest annual convention of faith on earth (in 2003: 2-2.5 million). Also, a Muslim may trade while performing the Haj.

Peace is the dominant theme. Peace with Allah, with one's soul, with one another, with all living creatures. To disturb the peace of anyone or any creature in any shape or form is strictly prohibited.

Muslims from all walks of life, from every corner of the globe assemble in Mecca in response to the call of Allah. There is no royalty, but there is loyalty

of all to Allah, the Creator. It is to commemorate the Divine rituals observed by the Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael, who were the first pilgrims to the house of Allah on earth: the Ka'bah. It is also to remember the greatest assembly of the Day of Judgement when people will stand equal before Allah. Muslims go to Mecca to glorify Allah, not to worship a man. The visit to the tomb of Prophet Muhammad in Madina city is highly recommended but not essential in making the Hajj valid and complete.

### **The Six Central Articles of Faith**

True piety is this:

#### 1. To believe in Allah, the One and Only God

A Muslim believes in ONE GOD, Supreme and Eternal, Infinite and Mighty, Merciful and Compassionate, Creator and Provider. God neither has father nor mother, neither son nor was He fathered. None equal to Him. He is God of all mankind, not of a special tribe or race.

God is Highness and Supreme but He is very near to the pious thoughtful believers; He answers their prayers and helps them. He loves the people who love Him and forgives their sins. He gives them peace, happiness, knowledge and success. God is the Loving and Provider, the Generous, and the Benevolent, the Rich and the Independent, the Forgiving and the Clement, the Patient and the Appreciative, the Unique and the Protector, the judge and the Peace. God's attributes are mentioned in the Qur'an.

God creates in man the mind to understand, the soul and conscience to be good and righteous, the feelings and sentiments to be kind and humane. If we try to count His favours upon us, we cannot, because they are countless. In return for all the great favours and mercy, God does not need anything from us, because He is Needless and Independent. God asks us to know Him, to love Him and to enforce His laws for our benefit and our own good.

#### 2. Messengers and Prophets of God

A Muslim believes in all the Messengers and Prophets of God without any discrimination. All messengers were mortals, human beings, endowed with Divine revelations and appointed by God to teach mankind. The Prophets are those earlier messengers sent by Allah – twenty-eight in all of whom Muhammad is the last. The Holy Qur'an mentions the names of 28 messengers and prophets and states that there are others. They commence with Adam and include Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, David, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad but vigorously deny the divinity of Jesus and denounce the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Their message is the same and it is Islam and it came from One and the Same Source; God, and it is to submit to His will and to obey His law; i.e. to become a Muslim.

### 3. The Angels

They are purely spiritual and splendid beings created by Allah. They require no food or drink or sleep. They have no physical desires nor material needs. Angels spend their time in the service of Allah. Each is charged with a certain duty. Angels cannot be seen by the naked eye. Knowledge and the truth are not entirely confined to sensory knowledge or sensory perception alone.

### 4. Revelations and the Qur'an (The Books)

A Muslim believes in all scriptures and revelations of God, as they are complete and in their original versions. Allah, the Creator, has not left man without guidance for the conduct of his life. Revelations were given to guide the people to the right path of Allah and sent down to selected people, the prophets and messengers, to convey it to their fellow mankind.

The message of all the prophet and messengers is the same. They all asked the people of their time to obey and worship Allah and none other. Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus and Muhammad who were revealed their own book of Allah, were sent at different times to bring back straying human beings from deviation to the right course.

The Qur'an is the sacred book of the Muslims. It is the last book of guidance from Allah, sent down to Muhammad, peace be upon him, through the angel Jibraeel (Gabriel). Every word of it is the word of Allah, It was revealed over a period of 23 years in the Arabic language. It contains 114 Surahs (chapters) and 6666 verses.

The Qur'an deals with man and his ultimate goal in life. Its teachings cover all areas of this life and the life after death. It contains principles, doctrines and directions for every sphere of human life. The theme of the Qur'an broadly consists of three fundamental ideas: Oneness of Allah, Prophethood and life after death. The success of human beings on this earth and in the life hereafter depends on obedience to the Qur'anic teaching.

The Qur'an is unrivalled in its recording and preservation. The astonishing fact about this book of Allah is that it has remained unchanged even to a dot over the past fourteen hundred years. No scholar has questioned the fact that the Qur'an today is the same as it was revealed. Muslims till today memorize the Qur'an word by word as a whole or in part. Today, the Qur'an is the only authentic and complete book of Allah. Allah is protecting it from being lost, corrupted or concealed.

## 5. The Day of Judgment

A Muslim believes in the Day of Judgment. This world as we know it will come to an end, and the dead will rise to stand for their final and fair trial. On that day, all men and women from Prophet Adam to the last person will be resurrected from the state of death for judgment. Everything we do, say, make, intend and think are accounted for and kept in accurate records. They are brought up on the Day of Judgment.

One who believes in life after death is not expected to behave against the Will of Allah. S/He will always bear in mind that Allah is watching all their actions and the angels are recording them.

People with good records will be generously rewarded and warmly welcomed to Allah's Heaven. People with bad records will be fairly punished and cast into Hell. The real nature of Heaven and Hell; is only known to Allah but they are described by Allah in man's familiar terms in the Qur'an.

If some good deeds are seen not to get full appreciation and credit in this life, they will receive full compensation and be widely acknowledged on the Day of Judgment. If some people, who commit sins, neglect Allah and indulge in immoral activities, seem superficially successful and prosperous in this life, absolute justice will be done to them on the Day of Judgment. The time of the Day of Judgment; is only known to Allah and Allah alone.

#### 6. And His Qadaa' and Qadar (His Divine Decree and Fate)

A Muslim believes in Qadaa' and Qadar which relate to the ultimate power of Allah. Qadaa' and Qadar means the Timeless Knowledge of Allah and His power to plan and execute His plans. Allah is not indifferent to this world nor is He neutral to it. It implies that everything on this earth originates from the one and only Creator who is also the Sustainer and the Sole Source of guidance.

Allah is Wise, Just, and Loving, and whatever He does must have a good motive, although we may fail sometimes to understand it fully. We should have strong faith in Allah and accept whatever He does because our knowledge is limited and our thinking is based on individual consideration, whereas His knowledge is limitless and He plans on a universal basis. Man should think, plan and make sound choices, but if things do not happen the way he wants, he should not lose faith and surrender to himself to mental strains or shattering worries.

Islam, therefore, is a religion encompassing both the spiritual and temporal aspects of life. It is a totality. Part of the central message of it is: (a) that there

is only one God; (b) that all men are equal; (c) that man achieves dignity through knowledge.<sup>12</sup>

Islam functions as an integrative force, not only on the level of national sovereignty, but also to a certain extent on the international level by promoting organizational movement among all Muslim states. Muslim people are regarded as acting always and everywhere as Muslims and nothing else. This fundamentalism is considered a real possibility in all Muslim countries.<sup>13</sup>

Islam, however, by its very nature is diverse. It has spread throughout the world encompassing different ethnic groups and civilizations, speaking different languages, living in different environments and interpreting the world in different views. Thus, within this framework of diversity, ideas on how Islam is implemented in society are equally as disparate. It can range from total separation of religion from the state (as in Turkey), to a secular government (like Egypt, Jordan, etc), which incorporates some religion, and a total Islamisation of the state, like Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Iran, and Pakistan.

This notion of variation continues through the ideas of the groups labeled as "Islamist". Some may act within the current political system in order to gain political participation or authority, while others may resort to militant means and the use of violence in order to create instability and/or an opportunity to gain power or influence. Butterworth and Zartman state that Islam's "manifestations are varied and contradictory, and no single expression can be taken as evidence of the nature of the whole".<sup>14</sup> To understand Islam, one must understand its diversity.

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<sup>12</sup> Stoddard, Philip H., David C. Cuthell, and Margaret N. Sullivan eds. *Change and the Muslim World*, Syracuse, 1981, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Karaosmanaglu, Ali, L., "Islam and Foreign Policy: A Turkish Experience", *Foreign Policy*, Vol. XII, No. 1-2, 1985, pp. 64-69.

<sup>14</sup> Butterworth, C. E. and Zartman, I. W. (eds.) "Preface" in the *Annals of American Academy of Political & Social Science*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1992, p. 8.

Islamic unity is not, however, directed against any country or any bloc. Islam is a religion of peace. It preaches tolerance, universal brotherhood and it does not permit its ideology to be imposed on others by force, just as it does not want other ideologies to be imposed on Muslims. Islam believes in the principle of peaceful co-existence. As most moderate Muslim intellectuals point out, there is really no reason why Americans should be hostile towards an Islamic renaissance. It is a religious phenomenon rooted in certain basic values that are not alien to the Judeo-Christian tradition; yet, instinctively, many Westerners are perplexed by this development.<sup>15</sup>

The present resurgence of Islam and the reawakening among the Muslims of the world is a welcome phenomenon. It should be regarded as a revitalizing force that could bring peace to a weary world and hope to a distraught humanity. It is not a religion that forces itself on others. The Qur'an explicitly reminds us: "There is no compulsion in religion".<sup>16</sup>

In spite of the fact that Islam is a religious phenomenon rooted in certain values which are common to the broad ideals of Judeo-Christian ethics, it is depicted as anti-Western, a religion of intolerance, a creed of violence and terrorism, uncompromising, and bent on conquering the non-Muslim world by *jihad* (holy war). Some actions of violent groups' such as the 'Soldier of God' (*Jund Allah*) and 'Party of God' (*Hizbullah*) have been misinterpreted by the West as the work of the entire Islamic world. The so-called threat of 'Islamic Fundamentalism' is most unfortunate and potentially dangerous for the emerging world order after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The vast majority of Muslim countries cherishes and value closer and friendly relations with the West, in particular with the United States. They are engaged in a major process of modernization, including technological, scientific, educational and economic development.

When the Muslim world wants to recover its glorious past, it has nothing against any other religion or group. Islam is a religion of peace; it preaches

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<sup>15</sup> Primary source: as a participant observer.

<sup>16</sup> *The Holy Qur'an*, Sura II, Al-Baqara: 256.

tolerance, universal brotherhood and does not permit its ideology to be imposed on others by force. Islam believes in the principle of live and let live. Coercion is strictly forbidden in Islam.<sup>17</sup> If any individual or group indulges in acts of violence or terrorism, they are not true followers of Islam. Islam is noted for strict adherence to the rule of law.

Islam was destined to become a world religion and to create a civilization, which stretched from one end of the globe to the other. Already during the early Muslim caliphates, first the Arabs, then the Persians and later the Turks set about creating a classical Islamic civilization. Later, in the 13th century, both Africa and India became great centers of Islamic civilization and soon thereafter Muslim kingdoms were established in the Malay-Indonesian world, while Chinese Muslims flourished throughout China.

Islam is a religion for all people from whatever race or background they might be. That is why Islamic civilization is based on a unity, which stands completely against any racial or ethnic discrimination. Such major racial and ethnic groups as the Arabs, Persians, Turks, Africans, Indians, Chinese and Malays, in addition to numerous smaller units, embraced Islam and contributed to the building of Islamic civilization.

The Islamic world remains today a vast land stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, with an important presence in Europe and America, animated by the teachings of Islam and seeking to assert its own identity. Despite the presence of nationalism and various secular ideologies in their midst, Muslims wish to live in the modern world but without imitating blindly the ways followed by the West. The Islamic world wishes to live at peace with the West as well as the East but at the same time not to be dominated by them. It wishes to devote its resources and energies to building a better life for its people on the basis of the teachings of Islam and not to squander its resources in either internal or external conflicts. It seeks finally, to create better understanding with the West and to be better understood by the West. The

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

destinies of the Islamic world and the West cannot be totally separated and therefore it is only in understanding each other better that they can serve their own people more successfully and also contribute to a better life for the whole of humanity.<sup>18</sup>

In spite of the peaceful nature of the Islamic civilization, Professor Samuel Huntington of Harvard University predicts a cultural conflict and a conflict of civilization between the world of Islam and the West. He elaborates his views by pointing out the following:

- a) We are moving out of the era where the nation state is the central focus, although obviously it will remain the leading entity on the world scene.
- b) The conflicts among civilizations will be increasingly central: the West and Islam, Islam and Hindu civilization in India, Islam vs. Slav Orthodox Russian civilization, China and Japan as civilizations. These are going to be the major entities among which international relations will take place.
- c) A civilization is the broadest level of cultural identity a person has. Civilizations to a large extent are defined by religion. It is a much more absolute distinction than others. A person could be half French and half Arab, but it would be rather difficult to be half Catholic and half Muslim. This has been most obvious in Islamic countries.
- d) Islam is the strictest religion in the world outside of Christianity. There is no separation between religion and politics. Also, there is the feeling that the West, exploited, has abused the Muslim world and that some form of renaissance is under way. The conflict will take many forms. Yet one does not want to think of this as the great apocalyptic world war between Islam and the West.

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<sup>18</sup> *Islam: A Global Civilization*, prepared by the Islamic Department of the Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington D.C. 1993

- e) All the Middle Eastern Islamic states are increasing their military strength. There is this Confucian-Islamic connection between China and North Korea on one hand and Middle Eastern states like Iran, Iraq, Syria and Libya on the other hand. It is primarily a military connection, where the Confucian states provide weapons and weapons technology.<sup>19</sup>

Professor John L. Esposito has in contrast rendered great service to Islam by explaining the Islamic message in his various books. In one of them, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality* (1992) he raised the questions:

Are Islam and the West on an inevitable collision course? Are Islamic fundamentalists medieval fanatics? Are Islam and democracy incompatible? Is Islamic fundamentalism a threat to stability in the Muslim world and to American interests in the region? These are critical questions for our times that come from a history of mutual distrust and condemnation.<sup>20</sup>

It's useful to quote Esposito's thoughtful and perspective remarks about the alleged Islamic threat:

The West often reinforces the equation of Islam with dangers or threat, viewing the Islamic world with catchwords like 'militant Islam', 'Islamic fundamentalism', and 'terrorism'. Our selective memory then blocks our ability to appreciate the other side of the equation- the sources of Muslim images of the West in turn as the 'real' threat to them. Many in Arab and Muslim world view the history of Islam and of the Muslim world's dealings with the West as one of victimization and oppression at the hands of an expansive imperial power. Thus many counter that it is 'militant Christianity' and 'militant Judaism' that are the root causes of failed Muslim societies and instability: the

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<sup>19</sup> Huntington, Samuel, 'The Next Battleground', *Time*, 28 June 1993.

<sup>20</sup> Esposito, J.L., *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality*, New York, 1992, p. 3.

aggression and intolerance of Christian-initiated Crusades and the Inquisition; European colonialism; the breakup of the Ottoman empire and artificial creation of modern states of Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Jordan, and Palestine; the establishment of Israel; Israeli's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and its invasion and occupation of Lebanon; and the extent to which oil interests have been the determining factor in support for autocratic regimes.

However, in principle if we condemn government repression of the opposition, cancellation of elections, and massive violation of human rights, then the same concern must apply to many current regimes, such as those in Tunisia and Algeria, where the results of the Arab world's first free parliamentary elections have been denied and the winners imprisoned. The track record of these governments on political participation and pluralism and respect for human rights we know already.

For many Muslims, Islamic revivalism is a social rather than a political movement whose goal is a more Islamically minded and oriented society, but not necessarily the creation of an Islamic state. For others, the establishment of an Islamic order requires the creation of an Islamic state. In either case, Islam and most Islamic movements are not necessarily anti-Western, anti-American, or anti-democratic. While they are challenge to the outdated assumptions of the established and to autocratic regimes, they do not necessarily threaten American interests. Our challenge is to better understand the history and realities of the Muslim world. Recognizing the diversity and many faces of Islam counters our image of a unified Islamic threat. Our image of a unified Islamic threat lessens the risk of creating self-fulfilling prophecies about the battle of the West against a radical Islam guided by our stated ideals and goals of freedom and self-determination. The West has an ideal vantage point for appreciating the aspirations of

many in the Muslim world as they seek to define new paths for their future.<sup>21</sup>

It must be noted that any movement of Muslims based on the true spirit of Islamic principles or ideals cannot be a threat to the world; nor are there any reasons to haunt us with a new global conflict between the world of Islam and the West, replacing the East-West Cold War. Assistant Secretary Edward Djerejian supported this view in 1993. He informed Congress as follows on 12 May 1993:

Islam, one of the world's great religions, is not our enemy. What we do oppose is extremism and fanaticism, whether of a religious or secular nature. We part company with those who preach intolerance, abuse human rights or resort to violence in pursuit of their political goal.<sup>22</sup>

Islam, it may be observed, is in agreement in opposing this violence and abuse of human rights as argued by Djerejian.

### **The Islamic Fundamentalists**

Before discussing the conflicts of the Islamic fundamentalists and others and the alleged 'danger' or 'threats' posed by 'Islamists', it is useful to examine who the 'Islamic fundamentalists' are? Obviously there cannot be a universally accepted definition of 'fundamentalists'. Broadly speaking the word 'fundamentalists' may be categorized in two main ways:

(a) As the word is understood or at least should be understood in accordance with the proper teaching and guidelines of Islam and (b) As the term is widely used to describe the current conflicts, real or imaginary, between Islamists and their opponents.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 211-217.

<sup>22</sup> Djerejian, Edward P., *“War and Peace: The Problems and Prospects of American Diplomacy in the Middle East”* (Address delivered to the World Affairs Council, Los Angeles, November 30, 1993.)

In accordance with Islamic fundamental principles, one may call a follower or *mu'min* a (genuine) Muslim who unconditionally and unequivocally believes and practices 'The Five Pillars of Islam': faith in one God: Allah; five daily prayers; almsgiving (*zakat*); fasting in the holy month of Ramadan; and the pilgrimage, once in a life time, to Mecca. To analyze the true significance and spirit of these fundamentals of Islam, they are not merely rituals. They are for self-purification and for acquiring the virtues as enjoined in the Qur'an and as practiced by the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, as the 'Qur'an in Practice'. Therefore, all Muslims are considered to be fundamentalists.

If any Muslim believes in these principles he or she cannot, indulge in acts of violence, terrorism, hijacking or any kind of action which goes against the universal principles of truth, justice, peace and universal brotherhood. If anybody in actual practice commits any such violation of human rights, he or she may be anything- nationalist, patriot, or believer in any 'ism'- but certainly he or she is not a true follower of Islam. In fact, by committing any such activities, s/he ceases to be a follower of the true spirit of Islam. Islam at the cost of its reputation, we may say, is a religion of peace, justice, tolerance of other religions, of universal brotherhood and peace. So the definition of a true Muslim or Islamic fundamentalist is completely different from what is currently used in the Western and non-Muslim world, whether by a serious scholar, or politicians, or by any news media.

Islamic fundamentalists have been described and defined in many other ways. Thus, Yousuf M. Choueiri in his *Islamic Fundamentalism* argues:

Islamic Fundamentalism is a vague term, currently in vogue as a catchphrase used to describe the militant ideology of contemporary Islamic movements. It is, however, adopted in this book to refer to Islamic systems of thought and political movements that emerged from the eighteenth century onwards in countries as far apart as Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Nigeria and India.

He continues:

However, not all movements designated 'Islam' is necessarily right wing or fascist. In Egypt, for example, Hassan Hanafi, Professor of Philosophy at Cairo University, leads a school of thought that calls itself 'the Islamic Left'. This particular instance only goes to show that political classifications have become a worldwide phenomenon, by passing local cultures or pure religious beliefs. It also serves to draw attention to the multi-faced attributes and specifications of Islamic ideologies.<sup>23</sup>

It is the groups that resort to militancy and the impact they have had on the Middle East and North Africa throughout the last three decades that this thesis will focus on in this research. As has been shown, the terms "fundamentalist" and "fundamentalism" are problematic due to the diversity that is apparent in Islam. Thus, the term "Islamist" will be used to describe the people who wish to use Islam to organize and guide society, and "Islamism" as the idea that Islam encompasses not only social life but also politics and economics. It is viewed as a total way of life.

### **What is Islamism?**

Islamism can be interpreted as a theocratic totalitarian political ideology bent on establishing a puritanical Islamic state based on the literal (as Islamists see it) interpretation of Islamic *Sharia* law.

Though anchored in a religious creed, Islamists are a radical utopian movement closer in spirit to other such movements (communism, fascism) than to traditional Islam. By nature anti-democratic and aggressive, anti-Semitic and anti-Western, it has great plans. Indeed, spokesmen for Islamists see their movement standing in direct competition to Western civilization and challenging it for global supremacy.

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<sup>23</sup> Choueiri, Yousuf M., *Islamic Fundamentalism*, Boston, 1990, pp. 9-10. 12.

Outside their own movement, Islamists see every existing political system in the Muslim world as deeply compromised, corrupt, and mendacious. As one of their spokesmen put it as long ago as 1951, “there is no {sic} one town in the whole world where Islam is observed as enjoined by Allah, whether in politics, economics or social matters”.<sup>24</sup> Implied here is that Muslims true to God’s message must reject the status quo and build wholly new institutions.

(To build a new Muslim society, Islamists proclaim their intent to do whatever they must; they openly flaunt an extremist sensibility. “There are no such terms as compromise and surrender in the Islamist cultural lexicon”, a HAMAS spokesman declares.<sup>25</sup> If that means destruction and death for the enemies of true Islamism, so be it. Hizbullah’s spiritual leader, Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, concurs: “As Islamists we seek to revive the Islamic inclination by all means possible”.<sup>26</sup>

Seeing Islamism as the basis of a political system touching every aspect of life, Islamists are totalitarian. Whatever the problem, “Islamism is the solution”. In their heads, Islamism is transformed from a personal faith into a ruling system that knows no constraints. They scrutinize the Qur’an and other texts for hints about Islamic medicine, economics, and statecraft, all with an eye to creating a total system for adherents and correspondingly total power for leaders. Islamists are revolutionary in outlook, extremist in behavior, and totalitarian in ambition.

Revealingly, they vaunt Islam as the best ideology, not the best religion—therefore exposing their focus on power. Whereas a traditional Muslim would say something like, “We are not Jewish, we are not Christian, we are Muslim”, the former Malaysian deputy leader Anwar Ibrahim made a very different comparison: “We are not socialist, we are not capitalist, we are Islamic”.<sup>27</sup> While Islamism differs in its details from other utopian ideologies,

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<sup>24</sup> Sivan, Emmanuel; *Radical Islam: Medieval Theory and Modern Politics*, New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1985, p. 65.

<sup>25</sup> *Keyhan*, Tehran, Oct. 31, 1992

<sup>26</sup> *Ash-Shab*, Cairo, June 3, 1994

<sup>27</sup> *New York Time*, March 28, 1980

it closely resembles them in scope and ambition. Like communism and fascism, it offers a vanguard ideology; a complete program to improve man and create a new society; complete control over that society, and cadres ready, even eager, to spill blood. A good example of this would be Bin Laden's *Al-Qaeda* network.

Like Hitler and other dictators who exploited the democratic process to reach power, the Islamists actively take part in elections; too, which they have done dismayingly well. Islamists swept municipal elections in Algeria in 1990 and won the mayoralties of Istanbul and Ankara in 1994. They also have had successes in Lebanese and Jordanian elections.

Once in power, would Islamists remain democrats? There is not much hard evidence on this point, Iran being the only case at hand where Islamists in power have made promises about democracy. In all other Islamist regimes—Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Pakistan—kingship and military leaders have dominated. But, even in Iran, there is an important catch: Parliamentarians must subscribe to the principles of the Islamic revolution. The regime in Tehran thus fails the key test of democracy, for it cannot be voted out of power.

Judged by their statements, other Islamists are likely to offer even less democracy than the Iranians. Indeed, statements by Islamist spokesmen from widely dispersed countries suggest an open disdain for popular sovereignty.<sup>28</sup>

Ahmad Nawfal, a Jordanian Muslim, says that: “If we have to choose between democracy and dictatorship, we choose democracy. But if it is between Islam and democracy, we choose Islam”.<sup>29</sup> Hadi Hawang of Partai Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) in Malaysia makes the same point more bluntly: “I am not interested in democracy. Islam is not democracy; Islam is Islam”.<sup>30</sup> Or, in the famous words of Ali Belhadj, a leader of Algeria's Islamic Salvation

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<sup>28</sup> *Middle East Quarterly*, March 1995

<sup>29</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 4, 1993

<sup>30</sup> *Abbas and Magnum Photos*, 1994, p. 137.

Front (FIS): “When we are in power, there will be no more elections because God will be ruling”.<sup>31</sup>

This notion of variation continues through the ideas of the groups labeled as Islamist. Some may act within the current political system in order to gain political participation or authority, while others may resort to militant means and the use of violence in order to create instability and an opportunity to gain power or influence.

It could be argued that Islamism was invigorated by the success of revolutionary Islam in Iran. It was also strengthened by the ability of Islamists groups to force the former Soviet Union out of Afghanistan and Israel out of southern Lebanon. Above all, however, Islamist reaction focused on declining social mores, and unrestrained Westernization, and the spread of drugs, alcohol and sexual promiscuity.<sup>32</sup> Violence is a legitimate tactic for preventing close relations with infidels. Hashemi Rafsanjani, former president of Iran, has stated what every Islamist believes ‘Islam is important because it is capable of defeating Western culture’.<sup>33</sup>

Islamists portray Western civilization as aesthetically loathsome, ethically corrupt and morally obtuse. They whisper dark run modes of conspiracy, claiming that the West spreads its culture to weaken the Muslims and to steal their resources. They ignore the West’s economic and cultural achievements, harping on its unemployment and pornography. To discredit secularist and reformist Muslims, Islamists call them lackeys of the Western powers. Islamists discern a strong crusading component to U.S. foreign policy. “The U.S. attitude is motivated by several factors, but the most important, in my view,’ writes Umar at-Talmasani, the Egyptian Islamist leader, ‘is religious fanaticism ... This attitude is a continuation of the crusader invasion of a thousand years ago’.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Le Point*, August 6, 1994

<sup>32</sup> The Middle East: Myth & Reality, special report in *World and I*, New York, 1990, p. 37.

<sup>33</sup> *B.B.C. World Service News*, Auckland, 1994.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, see note 28 above.

In sum, the more attractive an alien culture, the more Islamists fear it and fight it. A leading Iranian mullah declared that the main objective of the Islamic revolution is to ‘root out’ American culture from Muslim countries”.<sup>35</sup> U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East has become a real sore point for Muslims in general and for the Islamists in particular. Analyzing the American political process and U.S. Middle Eastern policy, Paul Findlay writes: ‘In respect to the Middle East policy, our government is not a superpower- not even a minor power- in its captivity to the pressures by a lobby devoted to the interests of a foreign government. Muslims have become increasingly aware of the power of the Israeli lobby, which to them appears to have “hijacked” the American government and subverted it to Israeli interests’.<sup>36</sup> Other Americans who have experienced the power of the lobby share their view. To some Washington experts it is quite evident that America is unable to execute an independent American foreign policy in the interests of the United States. Former Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy grumbled that American policy is controlled by Israel and its allies, whose approval is necessary before any action can be taken. Identifying Jordan as a friend in need of American assistance against outside aggression and terrorism, he acknowledged that this assistance could be provided only when we are able to persuade Israel that the security of Jordan is in Israel’s interests.<sup>37</sup> Donald McHenry, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, expressed a similar opinion when he acknowledged that the Israeli lobby prevents the United States from freely pursuing its own national interests in the Middle East.<sup>38</sup>

Of all the problems in the region, none inflames public opinion more than the inability of Muslim governments to put an end to the suffering of the Palestinians under Israeli occupation. It is indeed a measure of how important

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<sup>35</sup> ‘Between America and Russia’, in *Foreign Affairs*, Summer, 1986.

<sup>36</sup> Findlay, Paul, ‘The American Political Process and the U.S. Middle East Policy’ in *American Arab Affairs*, 16, Spring, 1986.

<sup>37</sup> Haddad, Yvonne Y., *The Muslims of America*, New York, 1991, p. 223.

<sup>38</sup> Murphy, Richard, cited in *ibid.*

and potentially explosive this problem is that it hovers at all times over any discussion of the Middle East crisis.

The majority of the people in the region blame the continuation of the problem on the United States. The latter is seen as Israeli's protector because it guarantees financial and political support and refuses to pressure Israel to come to the negotiating table<sup>39</sup>, in good faith.

Islam has brought comfort and peace of mind to countless millions of men and women. It has given dignity and meaning to drab and impoverished lives. It has taught people of different races to live in brotherhood and people of different creeds to live side by side in reasonable tolerance. It inspired a great civilization in which others besides Muslims lived creative and useful lives and which, by its achievement, enriched the whole world. But Islam, like other religions, has also known periods when it inspired in some of its followers a mood of hatred and violence. It is our misfortune that part, though by no means all or even most, of the Muslim world is now going through such a period, and that much, though again not all, of that hatred is directed against the West.

One should not, however, exaggerate the dimensions of the problem. The Muslim world is far from unanimous in its rejection of the West, nor have the Muslim regions of the Third World been the most passionate and the most extreme in their hostility. There are still significant numbers, in some quarters perhaps a majority, of Muslims with whom the West share certain basic cultural and moral, social and political, beliefs and aspirations; there is still an imposing Western presence- cultural, economic, diplomatic- in Muslim lands, some of which are Western allies. But there is Al-Qaeda, Iran, and Iraq, and a surge of hatred that distresses, alarms, and above all baffles Americans.

At times this hatred goes beyond hostility to specific interests or actions or policies or even countries and becomes a rejection of Western civilization as such, not only what it does but what it is, and the principles and values that it

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<sup>39</sup> Haddad, *op. cit.* p. 223.

practices and professes. These are indeed seen as innately evil, and those who promote or accept them as the “enemies of God”.

The idea that God has enemies, and needs human help in order to identify and dispose of them, is a little difficult to assimilate. It is not, however, all that alien. The concept of the enemies of God is familiar in pre-classical and classical antiquity, and in both the Old and New Testaments, as well as in the Qur’an. And then came the great change, when the leaders of a widespread and widening religious revival sought out and identified their enemies as the enemies of God, and gave them “a local habitation and a name” in the Western Hemisphere. Suddenly, or so it seemed, America had become the archenemy, the incarnation of evil, the diabolic opponent of all that is good, and specifically, for Islamists, of Islam. Why?

But why the hostility in the first place?! If we turn from the general to the specific, there is no lack of individual policies and actions, pursued and taken by individual Western governments, which have aroused the passionate anger of Middle Eastern and other Islamic peoples. Yet all too often, when these policies are abandoned and the problems resolved, there is only a local and temporary alleviation. The French have left Algeria, the British have left Egypt, the Western oil companies have left Iran- yet the generalized resentment of Islamists and other extremists against the West and its friends remains and grows and is not appeased.

The cause most frequently adduced for anti-American feeling among Muslims today is American support for Israel. This support is certainly a factor of importance, increasing with nearness and involvement.

Another explanation, more often heard from Muslim dissidents, attributes anti-American feeling to American support for hated regimes, seen as reactionary by radicals, as impious by conservatives, as corrupt and tyrannical by both. This accusation has some plausibility, and could help to explain why an essentially inner-directed, often anti-nationalist movement should turn against a foreign power. But it does not suffice, especially since support for

such regimes has been limited both in extent and, as the Shah discovered, in effectiveness.

This revulsion against America, more generally against the West, is by no means limited to the Muslim world; nor has Muslims, with the exception of the Iranian mullah and their disciples elsewhere, experienced and exhibited the more virulent forms of this feeling. The mood of disillusionment and hostility has affected many other parts of the Muslim world, that the most publicized explanations- and justifications – of this rejection of Western civilization and its values have of late been heard.

The accusations are familiar. The West is accused of sexism, racism, and imperialism, institutionalized in patriarchy and slavery, tyranny and exploitation. Some Western powers, and in a sense Western civilization as a whole, have certainly been guilty of imperialism, but is it really believable that in the expansion of Western Europe there was a quality of moral delinquency lacking in such earlier, relatively innocent expansions as those of the Arabs or the Mongols or the Ottomans, or in more recent expansions such as that which brought the rulers of Muscovites to the Baltic, the Black sea, the Caspian, the Hindu Kush, and the Pacific Ocean?

Of all these offenses the one that is most widely, frequently, and vehemently denounced is undoubtedly imperialism- sometimes just Western, sometimes Eastern (that is, Soviet) and Western alike. But the way this term is used in the literature of Islamists often suggests that it may not carry quite the same meaning for them as for its Western critics. In many of these writings the term “imperialist” is given a distinctly religious significance, being used in association, and sometimes interchangeably, with “missionary”, and denoting a form of attack that includes the Crusades as well as the modern colonial empires. One also sometimes gets the impression that the offense of imperialism is not- as for Western critics – the domination by one people over another but rather the allocation of roles in this relationship. What is truly evil and unacceptable is the domination of infidels over true believers. For true

believers to rule over misbelievers is proper and natural, since this provides for the maintenance of the holy law, and gives the misbelievers both the opportunity and the incentive to embrace the true faith. But for misbelievers to rule over true believers is blasphemous and unnatural, since it leads to the corruption of religion and morality in society, and to the flouting or even the abrogation of God's law. This may help us to understand the current troubles in such diverse places as Chechnya, Mindanao, Palestine, and Indian Kashmir, Chinese Zinkiang, and Yugoslav Kosovo, in all of which Muslim populations; are ruled by non-Muslim governments. It may also explain why spokesmen for the new Muslim minorities in Western Europe demand for Islam a degree of legal protection, which those countries no longer give to Christianity and have never given to Judaism. Nor, of course, did the governments of the countries of origin of these Muslim spokesmen ever accord such protection of religions other than their own. In their perception, there is no contradiction in these attitudes. The true faith, based on God's final revelation, must be protected from insult and abuse; other faiths, being either false or incomplete, have no right to any such protection.

The movement nowadays called Islamism is not the only Islamic tradition. There are others, more tolerant, more open, that helped inspire the great achievements of Islamic civilization in the past, and one may hope that these other traditions will in time prevail. But before this issue is decided there will be a hard struggle, in which the West can do little or nothing. Even the attempt might do harm, as the Islamists see it support for dictators and Western influence, for these are issues that Muslims must decide among themselves. And in the meantime one must take great care on all sides to avoid the danger of a new era of religious wars, arising from the exacerbation of differences and the revival of ancient prejudices.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE POLITICAL CONCEPTS OF ISLAMIC REVIVAL**

### **Introduction**

The current politicized Islam in the Middle East and North Africa is not a continuation but a reconstruction of the historical paradigms. In the pre-modern era, there were two Islamic paradigms. One was of an integral state and society unified under the political and moral leadership of a charismatic religious leader; the other, of a society divided between state and religious institutions and differentiated political and religious elites, the latter being the custodians of the true Islam. The second tradition made room for purely secular monarchical concepts and a secular political culture. In the modern era, the historical Islamic paradigms have little influence on state formation. Even the avowedly Islamic states do not really hark back to the past but represent, for the most part, contemporary national states appealing to a new concept of national-state Islam.

The Islamic revival is once again of urgent importance. Now, in the midst of a worldwide Muslim struggle over the role that Islam should play in contemporary societies, one is faced with compelling questions: How much does this revival reflect the desire to turn to a golden age of the Muslim past? How much is it a contemporary phenomenon? Indeed, what is the Islamic and, in particular, the Middle Eastern political heritage, and what is its impact in the present?

### **Islamic Political Heritage**

The Middle Eastern Islamic heritage provides not one but two basic constellations of historical society, two golden ages, two paradigms, each of which has generated its own characteristic repertoire of political institutions and political theory. The first is the society integrated in all dimensions,

political, social, and, moral, under the aegis of Islam.<sup>40</sup> The prototype is the unification of Arabia under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century. The Prophet brought together the Meccans who left their home to join his community, the Medinans who accepted Islam, individual Arabians who emigrated to Medina, factions of clans, converts made among the aristocratic families of Mecca, and various tribes in western Arabia; he unified a disparate and fragmented population into a single community. The Prophet functioned, on the one hand, as an economic and political leader and, on the other, as an exemplar of individual righteousness and morality. In this community, no distinction was made between religion and religious authority and the state and secular authority.

The second historical paradigm is the imperial Islamic society, built not on Arabia or tribal templates but on the differentiated structures of previous Middle Eastern societies. By the advent of Islam, Middle Eastern societies had already been organized into differentiated tribal, state, and church institutions. After the Arab conquests, the early caliphate underwent a similar differentiation. Newly recruited client forces that were expected to be more dependent upon, loyal to, and obedient to their rulers displaced tribal armies; and administrative cadres drawn from the conquered populations replaced tribal chiefs. At the same time, the caliphate was transformed from the charismatic succession to the religious authority of the Prophet into an imperial institution and a regime governed not by religious norms but by laws of political survival. As the caliphate took on an increasingly secularized political identity, the religious heritage of the Prophet came to be embodied in his companions and their disciples and successors, scholars, and holy men. Eventually, the caliphs retained only a nominal role as the official representatives of Islam and the official fount of state and religious authority, while the Muslim populace came to be organized into schools of law, theological sects, Shiite communities, Sufi lineages, and brotherhoods

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<sup>40</sup> Watt, W, Montgomery, *Muhammad at Mecca*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1953; *Muhammad at Medina*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1955.

representing the legacy of the Prophet.

Such religious groups were commonly independent of state regimes. Most withdrew from participation in government and were concerned with community solidarity, worship, education, law, personal morality, and the upholding of the symbols of Islam. While religious scholars maintained their aspiration for an ideal society in which state and community were integrated as in the time of the Prophet, they were not actually committed to bringing it about in practice. In return for state support, they commonly legitimised reigning governments and taught acceptance and submission to the common people.

Thus, despite the common statement that Islam is a total way of life defining political as well as social and family matters, most Muslim societies did not conform to this ideal. They were in fact built around separate institutions of state and religion.

The separation of state and religion yields a second image of the golden age of Islam. This image is embedded in the Ottoman Empire; it is an image of a world-conquering empire, establishing the dominion of Islam over all peoples and fulfilling the Islamic "providence" or "manifest destiny" to rule the world. This was a golden era of security, pre-eminence, and world domination. This was a golden age also because the Ottoman Empire upheld the true practice of Islam. It was the protector and patron, indeed the organizer and master, of the scholars and holy men who managed Muslim education, legal and judicial affairs, and Muslim worship.<sup>41</sup>

The practical tradition of separation of state and religion also generated a socio-political theory. Muslim political theorists, such as al-Baqillani, al-Mawdudi, and Ibn Taimiyya, devised a theory of the caliphate that symbolized the ideal existence of the unified *umma*, while at the same time allowing for historical actualities. The conclusion of their theorizing was that the state was not a direct expression of Islam but a secular institution whose

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<sup>41</sup> Inalcik, Halil, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973.

duty it was to uphold Islam. The community of scholars and holy men were the ones who truly carried on the legacy of the Prophet.<sup>42</sup>

In this tradition, the real of Islamic authenticity lies within the soul of the individual and in the relations of individuals to each other within small communities. This is the Islam that sees holiness and religion as incompatible with state power. Politics are expected to be violent and corrupt. The control of the state is justified only by conquest; obedience is legitimated by the need to submit, to minimize further warfare, and to prevent anarchy in society, but the state cannot embody a religious ideal. This renunciation of political utopianism may help explain some cases of acquiescence to patrimonial regimes and the relative weakness of democratic or other secular utopian movements in the present-day Middle East.

### **The Non-Islamic Political Heritage**

This second paradigm allows for a differentiated non-religious concept of political authority. Alongside the Islamic concept of the caliph as the upholder of Islam, there is a concept of political rationality inherently valid in its own terms as a source of political behaviour. This level of political thinking, is expressed in the Persian political heritage in which the ruler is the shadow of God on earth and bears a divine authority independent of religion. He both upholds order and serves as a moral example to his subjects. Rulership and statehood, in a sense, serve a religious purpose apart from Islam and apart from the spokesmen of the religious establishment.<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, behind the formal and literary concepts of the state and the ruler, there were also working assumptions, axioms, and premises about the nature and organization of political power that did not reach the level of formal

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<sup>42</sup> Ibish, Yusuf, *The Political Doctrine of al-Baqillani*, Beirut: American University Press, 1966.

<sup>43</sup> Rosenthal, E.I.J., "On Persian Political Theory", *Political Thought in Medieval Islam*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1958.

theory but are nonetheless crucial to understanding Middle Eastern politics. One is that state power is not an expression of the total society but rather the prerogative of certain individuals or groups. Control of the state belonged to certain families, tribes, dynasties, or military castes. Not only did some groups rule over others, but also elites and subjects were of a totally different standing. Government was the prerogative of the one and not of the other. In the Middle Eastern societies, there was a caste-like bifurcation between the military elite and the subject population.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, there is not one but two paradigms, two concepts of the Muslim golden age. One looks to a unified state and society under the leadership of the caliph, whose authority extends to all realms of personal and public concern. This is the integralist concept of Islam, and countries like Saudi Arabia and today's Iran would be good examples. The second, in both its classic and Ottoman versions, tacitly recognizes the institutional division between the structure of state and religion. These would include in today's secular states of Turkey, Egypt and Jordan. In this paradigm, Muslims look to the religious sphere for personal and communal fulfillment, to Islam as a personal and social ethos and not a concept or institution of the political regime. Finally, the differentiation of state and religion allows for an imperial and secular notion of the state and for the incorporation of Middle Eastern but not Islamic institutions and concepts into the theory, legitimation, and operation of political regimes.

### **Islam in the Modern Era**

The modern era has brought a radical transformation of political and social institutions and inevitably of the ideas that shape, accompany, and reflect these institutions. There is a renewed struggle over the role that Islam should

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<sup>44</sup> Gibb, H.A.R. and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1954 and 1957.

play in the constitution of contemporary Muslim societies. The role of the historical culture is being reconstructed by political struggle. There are two main arenas for the contestation over Islamic and traditional political values: the domain of the state, its definition, legitimation, and institutional organization; and the domain of the civil or non-state society.

### The Islamic States

In the domain of the state, the avowedly Islamic states are a conspicuous minority. Only Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Iran, Pakistan and more recently the Sudan today professes to be legitimated or regulated by Islamic norms. The contemporary Islamic states, however, do not simply return to either of the two traditional paradigms. Absent from contemporary political rhetoric is any appeal to the concept of the caliphate.

Saudi Arabia and Morocco are in many ways closest to the traditional image of Islamic states and Muslim rulers. This is due to the continuity of pre-modern regimes. The Saudi state was founded in the eighteenth century by the alliance of a religious reformer, deliberately copying the precedents of the Prophet, and a tribal chieftain, using allegiance to the principles of reformed Islam, as the basis of an integrated state. The Saudi state continues to use Islam as the basis of its legitimacy, reinforced by the seizure of Mecca and Medina in 1926, by control and patronage of the pilgrimage, and by the sponsorship of international Islamic educational, missionary, and political activities. Combining religious teachings with the formation of a polity transcending tribal groups, the Saudi state seems to repeat the early Islamic experience, but the community of the Prophet was based upon his sole leadership, while the Saudi state is based on a separation of authority and an alliance between religious and secular chieftains. While the Saudi rulers have tried to take on the religious aura of imams, there remains a lingering division

between political authority vested in the state and religious authority vested in the '*ulama*'- the descendants of ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab.<sup>45</sup>

The Moroccan regime is also based on the Islamic identity of the monarch, who is considered a caliph, an executor and defender of Islam, a personal descendent of the Prophet, a bearer of Sufi virtues, a charismatic holy man, and dispenser of *baraka*, God's blessing in the world. He is the high priest of the great Moroccan Islamic festivals such as the birthday of the Prophet and the celebration at the end of Ramadan. Like the Saudi regime, the Moroccan government is one of the few Middle Eastern or Islamic states to have survived the colonial era and the transition to the national state. It survives because the French helped preserve the monarchy as a vehicle of colonial control, while the sultans managed to maintain themselves as the personification of Moroccan national identity. While the sultan continues to bear the Islamic marks of legitimacy, his political power is actually based on the administrative strength of a modern territorial national state.<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, Islamic Iran is not built on a return to past models but rather on a radically new concept of the Islamic state. The Islamic Republic of Iran is based on a modern type of national state, constructed between 1925 and 1979, on the same organizational bases and secular concepts as Turkey. It differs in that it was the one Middle Eastern country in which the religious elites remained a powerful social and political force antagonistic to the state elites; laid claim to direct political authority; and were able to mobilize mass support to overthrow the state. The Iranian Islamic republic, much as it is Islamic in identity, remains a national state in terms of its institutional bureaucratic structure and the kinds of political and economic policies it pursues.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ochsenwald, William, "Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Revival," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 1981, 13:271-86.

<sup>46</sup> Halstead, J.P., *Rebirth of a Nation: The Origins and Rise of Moroccan Nationalism, 1912 - 1944*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967.

<sup>47</sup> Keddie, Nikki R., *Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Iran*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981.

Pakistan, despite its nominal Islamic affiliation, is also a modern national state. It originates in an Islam that has been defined in nationalist political terms but excludes both the personal and moral dimensions of Muslim religiosity. The leaders of the movement to establish an independent Pakistan were entirely secularised in their education and life-styles and had no commitment to Islam in the traditional personal or local communal sense. Their rhetoric was Muslim in form, but the content was wholly nationalistic. A nationalist concept of Pakistan expressed in religious and Muslim rather than in secular terms was necessary for various reasons. First, religiously based nationalism was the only rhetorical solution to the political dilemma of the Muslim elites of the Indian subcontinent. They used Islam to differentiate themselves from the Hindu Indian nationalist movement and to carve out a domain in which Muslim military and bureaucratic chieftains and Muslim merchant leaders would have a territory of their own and a more favourable opportunity to maintain their position in the post-colonial era. Second, Islam was essential to unify a population divided by tribal, ethnic, linguistic, caste, and local differences.<sup>48</sup>

### The Secular National States

Apart from these cases of Islam refashioned, it is striking how little influence the historical Islamic traditions have had on modern state formation. The Islamic heritage is no longer invoked, is largely ignored, and sometimes expressly repudiated. In the great waves of state building that followed World War I and World War II, old empires were liquidated and replaced by new national states built around secular cultural identities. In Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Jordan, Islam was disestablished. It is no longer the officially supported religion of the state. Though these states sometimes give special consideration to Muslim symbols and Muslim practices, Islam no

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<sup>48</sup> Binder, Leonard, *Religion and Politics in Pakistan*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961.

longer legitimates the state and no longer defines its social and moral vision. All of these states abolished the *millet* system and set up secular educational and judicial systems, which actually compete with the primary functions of Islam. Muslim religious life, in general, became separated from these institutions and flourishes as a differentiated element of the "civil society".<sup>49</sup>

The Turkish state was the most radical example of modern secularisation. The republic of Ataturk was founded on nationalist and republican principles and undertook a variable cultural revolution to liquidate the attachment of the Turkish people to their Islamic past. It included changing the script in which Turkish was written so as to make the Ottoman language inaccessible. Muslim religious organizations were disestablished, formal instruction of Islam was abolished, changes in style of dress were mandated, and a new legal code replaced the *Shari'a*. Perhaps the most important change was the increased scope given for the participation of women in public life. All of these transformations, including the idea of constitutional government, the standards of technical, social, and political modernity, and the concept of the total mobilization of society to reach its economic and political goals, were of European inspiration.<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, these states strive for secular national identities. The nationalist concept did not rise spontaneously from the people or the historical culture but came into being as the preferred doctrine of opposition intelligentsia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The primary reason for the adoption of nationalism was that Middle Eastern intelligentsia wanted to reject the political dominance of an older generation of Ottoman imperial rulers and the moral dominance of Islam. Furthermore, nationalism served to articulate domestic opposition to European colonial rule precisely because Europeans accepted it as the basis of political society. Thus nationalism conveniently expressed the opposition of a new elite both to the older

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<sup>49</sup> Lapidus, Ira M., *History of Islamic Societies*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 571-717.

<sup>50</sup> Robinson, R.D., *The First Turkish Republic*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965.

imperial and religious elite of their own societies and to their colonial rulers. For people who no longer belonged to the older order, and for whom the colonial political societies could offer only positions of subordination to a foreign elite, nationalism defined a new identity.

With the formation of modern states and the coming of independence, nationalism was diffused from the elites to the masses. For these masses, now subject to new state regimes bent on the social and economic transformation of their societies, nationalism would again serve as a concept replacing loyalties to more parochial family village, and religious associations.<sup>51</sup>

Still, nationalism is not an old-age concept but a modern synthesis of elements of cultural traditions that previously did not belong together. In the Middle Eastern past, national, ethnic, or linguistic identities had never been important bases for political solidarity. Before the modern era, Middle Eastern peoples defined political loyalty in terms of family, lineage, or tribal ties, in terms of religious affiliation, and in terms of service to the state. While Middle Eastern cultures recognized that there were important linguistic and ethnic differences between populations, these differences were never the basis of political action.

### Islamic Orientations in Modern Societies

In the contemporary situation there is a subtle, if negative, role for Islam and the historical political culture in shaping the general orientations, attitudes, dispositions, and practices of Middle Eastern states. The historical orientations within Islamic culture may affect the role of modern states in economic development. For example, an important strand in the Islamic tradition may contribute indirectly to the limited commitment of many contemporary Middle Eastern regimes to economic development. Both rulers

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<sup>51</sup> Kushner, D., *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism 1876-1908*, London: Frank Cass, 1977.

and subjects often expect the state to be concerned with the maintenance of power and the exploitation of their populations, but not necessarily with economic development as the primary goal. These expectations may also reflect the traditional attitude of Muslim societies that high status is gained from education, piety, or power, to which money may contribute but is not the defining component. As opposed to European cultures, where the accumulation of wealth was the central value and was validated by high status for successful merchants and entrepreneurs, in Middle Eastern societies maintenance of power and religious piety seem to have been the dominant values.

Furthermore, modern states can be seen as an expression of the historical separation of state and Islam. This separation allows the state to be a purely political and power-based entity. Stripped of its Islamic functions, the modern state no longer has a transcending importance as the locus of ultimate values and is no longer expected to fulfill the ultimate religious yearnings of its subjects and citizens. All hope of salvation has been concentrated in the non-state realm, in the religio-civil community, and in personal piety. This leads again, in practice, to an acceptance of the state as necessary for political power, military security, and public order, but it removes the expectation that the state itself can be a source of worldly justice and dignity. Utopian expectations that the state can embody genuine secular democratic, socialist, or egalitarian ideals are also subverted.

### Islam and Identity

While Islam has a limited role in the construction of contemporary national states, it has a pervasive importance in the constitution of civil society, society outside the state, and, therefore, a profound potential for the reconstruction of modern states in Islamic and neo-Islamic terms. Despite the success of secular national states, Middle Eastern identities have never been fully secularised. Rather Islam has been parochialised in national terms. Today nationalism is

the single most important bearer of Islam. For example, the concept of Turkish national identity includes kinship to the Turks of inner Asia, the Hittite ancestry of Turkish peoples in Anatolia, a history of the dominance of Turkish-speaking military elites, and also the historical allegiance of Turkish peoples to Islam. Latent Islamic identifications are the ultimate basis of Turkish national identity. In Turkey, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, though Turkish speaking, have not been accepted as part of the nation. What makes Turks, in the minds of many, is Islam, just as what makes Arabs for many Arabs is being Muslim. Much of the emotional power of nationalism in the Middle East is derived from the capacity of Islam to signify social solidarity and channel the force of Muslim faith into national commitments.<sup>52</sup>

In some cases Islam enters into the formation of national identity in a more direct way. Since the nineteenth century, throughout North Africa, Islamic reformism has been particularly important in overcoming parochial, localistic identifications and creating a broader sense of identity among the populations of Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. The reform movements created a new universal standard of religious values and religious practices; they stressed the importance of education, literate knowledge, and responsible commitment to Islamic social goals. These sentiments helped create a sense of commonality and political solidarity and became the basis of national identifications throughout North Africa.<sup>53</sup>

Islam continues to define national identities precisely because it remains the basis of local community life and personal religious belief. There are strong trends in all Middle Eastern countries toward new types of Islamic communal activities. Ethnic associations, religious congregations, welfare associations, charities, discussion groups, educational organizations, women's groups,

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<sup>52</sup> Piscatori, James, *Islam in a World of Nation-States*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

<sup>53</sup> Shinar, P., "The Historical Approach of the Reformist 'Ulama' in the Contemporary Maghrib," *Asia and African Studies*, Jerusalem, 7:181-210, 1971.

economic cooperatives, and paramilitary training organizations have become more common.<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, even where Islamic movements are not strongly organized, Islam remains important as a personal or private religion. While it no longer regulates the public world, it continues to be vital to people's ethical and psychological needs. In highly secularised Middle Eastern societies, Islam becomes more and more a quest for meaning without being linked to political purposes. In these milieus, a new kind of Islamic community emerges, one that is based on personal piety rather than on commitment to political institutions, and an Islam of private belief and private social identity that is dissociated from the communal political matrix in which such identity was once embedded.<sup>55</sup>

This reconstruction of Islam has an important implication for political and social behaviour. Firstly, Islam, especially in its reformist and revivalist versions, is the basis for a more fully self-disciplined and self-directed autonomous personality. The neo-Islamic movements seem to cultivate in their members a sense of social responsibility, moral dynamism, and an active engagement in the affairs of the society with a view to Islamising contemporary Muslim populations. They provide through religious identity a sense of dignity, self-esteem, and self-discipline. This focusing of individual loyalties upon religious values is a critical factor in mobilizing people for moral, social, and political action.

Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, Islam is the basis of political opposition movements. These movements appeal precisely to the excluded elements in the formation of modern political states, to the petite bourgeoisie, and sometimes to workers, students, and rural migrants to cities; they have a new urban class base in contrast to the historically rural character of reformist

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<sup>54</sup> Berger, Morroe, *Islam in Egypt Today*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970; Kepel, G., *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

<sup>55</sup> Lapidus, Ira M., *History of Islamic Societies*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 551-70 and 879-917.

movements. They try to define the principles of a new Muslim morality by going back to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, but their idea is not to create a prescriptive program of detailed rules for behaviour but to find general values to allow people living in new social conditions to reorganize their daily lives. These movements also attempt to meet the need for social solidarity in disorganized populations. They build up extensive networks of cells or chapters and mosques, schools, clinics, clubs, cooperative workshops, and industries. Ultimately, they aspire to the creation of an Islamic state.

Yet the goals of many of these movements are not, strictly speaking, political. The movements are not committed to particular institutions or to political principles such as democracy and equality. They are concerned rather with individual morality and ethical behaviour, and to them the state is simply the force that encourages or requires the people to adhere to Islamic norms. The true domain of Islam is still the righteous small community and the ethical individual.

### **CHAPTER 3: THE ORIGINS OF POLITICAL ISLAM**

Before rushing to castigate as benighted, backward, and hopelessly illiberal those Middle Eastern peoples who long to govern themselves by religious laws and thus to ensure a higher level of communal moral decency, the modern Westerners would do well to pause and reflect momentarily on their own cultural origins. Though now almost universally rejected in the West as a valid description of the proper attitude toward government and its functions, the following admonition once held great sway among faithful Christians:

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore the one resisting authority goes

against what God has appointed, and resisters will incur judgment.<sup>56</sup>

Nor is it all that different from the injunction laid upon pious Muslims:

Oh, you who believe, obey God and obey the Apostle and those charged with authority among you. If you disagree among yourselves about anything, refer it to God and the Apostle.<sup>57</sup>

Not until sometime after Marsilius of Padua (c. 1275-1342) were Paul's strictures forsaken and the famous advice offered by Jesus about distinguishing between the things belonging to Caesar and those belonging to God raised to the elevated rank it occupies today.<sup>58</sup> Though of a piece with the prophet Samuel's dire predictions about the harsh demands a king would make upon his subjects,<sup>59</sup> Jesus' suggestion is not consonant with the larger Old Testament teaching about the need for the faithful to let themselves be guided in all matters by God. Nonetheless, by the late fourteenth or fifteenth century, Westerners began to turn away from the notion that political authority is divinely inspired. Whatever the reasons for that change- deeper understanding of the base demands of politics on rulers, however honourable their intentions; convictions that political and temporal concerns differ radically from spiritual and moral ones; doubt about the existence of a divine or natural order- it finds a clear and all too familiar expression in the middle of the eighteenth century with Rousseau's famous, albeit completely unsubstantiated, assertion that "man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains".<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> See Romans Ch. 13:1-2, of the Revised Standard Version of the Holy *Bible*.

<sup>57</sup> See the Holy *Qur'an* 4:59.

<sup>58</sup> See Matthew Ch. 22:15-22, the Revised Standard Version of the Holy *Bible*.

<sup>59</sup> See Sam. 8:20-21, 1-9, the Revised Standard Version of the Holy *Bible*.

<sup>60</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Book I, Chapter 1, published in 1762.

It is a major sentiment standing behind Western repugnance for political regimes that take their bearing from revelation, that is, for regimes that are or would be self-consciously Islamist. Convinced that natural human freedom- and the equality that necessarily accompanies it- must be respected and preserved by a political regime if it is to be deemed legitimate, the West condemns those regimes that aim at instilling moral virtues and sacrificing human liberty for a higher goal.<sup>61</sup> Although particular actions- for example, Ayatollah Khomeini's sentence of death against Salman Rushdie- or promises of actions to be taken- such as the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front's declaration that once in power it would put an end to the democratic systems that allowed it to come to power- reveal all too clearly the lack of patience that Islamist regimes have for the freedoms and procedures that Westerners hold essential hallmark of good government, it is also utterly manifest that, precisely because those hallmarks are merely procedural, they are not the only guarantors of good government.

For this reason, it is appropriate to inquire why others prize the non-democratic and even non-liberal political rule that is to be found in the revelation-based politics. To this end, it is proposed first to consider the older Arabic and Islamic analyses of political regimes and their goals. Then to explain why, in a more recent past, thoughtful thinkers within that same cultural milieu called for independence while endorsing non-democratic and non-liberal regimes. Finally, I will suggest why thinkers today continue to do the same. There is no intent here to apologize for Islamist doctrines in the distant or recent past or in the present, for such apologetics would serve no purpose. If anything, my approach merely points to the failure in current Western analysis of political Islam to pay sufficient attention to the rhetorical transformations that arguments for something like an Islamic regime have undergone in the course of history as the character of the audience addressed

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<sup>61</sup> Binder, Leonard, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, pp. 1-4; also Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York: Free Press, 1992.

has changed over time and as the goal pursued by the various speakers has been altered.

### **The Distant Past**

There is little need to insist that Islam offers as much practical as it does spiritual guidance to the faithful. Whether we look back to the community founded by the Prophet Muhammad while he was in Madina (622-30) or to the way it was continued during the two years after he returned to Mecca, whether we think about the tradition of the four rightly guided caliphs (632-61)- the first successor to Prophet Muhammad- or about the caliphs who guided the Umayyad (661-750), Abbasid (750-1258), and Spanish Umayyad (756-1031) empires, or whether we consider the princes and commanders who ruled the Arab and Berber dynasties in Spain and North Africa (1031-1492) and the sultans who ruled the Ottoman empire (1453-1918), we see political rule linked with religion. From the very opening of the Qur'an and the plea that the Lord of the universe show the faithful the straight path to the assurance that He has made of Muslims "a balanced nation that [they] may be witnesses to people" and on to the promise that He will bring victory to those who enter His religion, the close link between Islam and power is evident.<sup>62</sup>

During the Golden Age of Islam, referred to above, Islamic thinkers argued that Islam should be joined to politics. Nominally, of course, it was joined. The rulers were supposed to represent a continuation of the Prophet Muhammad's rule; they were his successors and, as such, something like the vicegerents of God. Yet, as noted above, there was a great gap between intention and achievement, between what was supposed to be and what actually was. Jurists, theologians, and philosophers sought in their writings as well as in their deeds to resolve this discrepancy. They addressed themselves to a small, but learned, audience, namely, to individuals schooled in the

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<sup>62</sup> See the *Holy Quran* 1:2-4, 5; 2:143; 110:1-2.

sciences of Islam (the sayings and deeds of the Prophet, jurisprudence, and theology), in grammar, poetry and literature, and in philosophical writings.

The jurists and theologians strove to make revealed doctrine more apparent. With a jurist like al-Mawdudi (c. 985-1058), this resulted in explanations of the qualities needed for a person to become a Caliph, the ways matters of state could be administered without infringing on revealed laws, or the conditions for military incursions to be in accordance with Qur'anic strictures. However, neither al-Mawdudi nor any of his fellow jurists raised the larger questions of whether it was appropriate to change political rule itself or how a wise rule might expand the liberty of his subjects. In the writings of a theologian like al-Ghazali (1058-1111), one finds a defense of doctrines of the faith and attacks upon groups and individuals whose thinking appeared to threaten the well being of the community. Even in his efforts to quicken religious faith, the emphasis is on particular issues- above all, on morals- rather than on how a ruler intend upon following in the path of the Prophet might best fashion his regime. Furthermore, in speaking about moral improvement, al-Ghazali dwells on personal endeavour; he does not allow that laws or institutions might shape moral conduct.

For reflections on the goals of political life and how a regime might be structured to achieve them, one must turn to the philosophers. The best guides in such matters are Alfarabi (870-950), Avicenna (980-1037), and Averroes (1126-98), not least because they dare to look back beyond the advent of Islam to the wisdom of Greece in order to suggest what can make political life best. In looking back, however, they never forget the importance of revelation and its influence on politics.

Alfarabi draws attention to this new phenomenon in his *Enumeration of the Sciences* by setting forth two accounts of political science. Both presuppose the validity of the traditional separation between the practical and the theoretical science, but neither is adequate for the radically new situation created by the appearance of revealed religion. The first account puts forth a

political science that is simply practical.<sup>63</sup> It begins abruptly, not by defining political science and its general scope or what it consists of, but by stating what political science investigates, namely, the distinctively human things: voluntary actions and ways of life. The investigation looks back to what leads to these actions and ways of life, as well as forward to why the actions are performed.

The first political science thus provides a general overview of individual and civic human morality without ever leaving the immediate domain in which humans find themselves. At no point does it look beyond human beings and human things. This first political science also shows why political association is beneficial. In addition, it sets forth the general guidelines that thoughtful individuals can use to judge between different regimes.

The second account of political science goes beyond the practical limits of the first without presenting a fully theoretical political science. Indeed, even though this political science is said to include the “theoretical and practical sciences”, such exclusive attention is paid to what it has to say about actions that nothing is said about how it handles opinions set forth in religion.<sup>64</sup> Alfarabi designates it at first as political philosophy, explaining that it is limited to investigating general rules and to giving general descriptions or patterns for determining the voluntary actions and ways of life it investigates. This second political science starts, then, from where the first political science left off; it presupposes the investigations already undertaken by the first political science and moves from them to the formulation of general rules and patterns.

From this sketch it should be manifest that neither the first nor the second account of political science in the *Enumeration of the Sciences* can lead to the kind of rulership or to the royal craft needed for the new phenomenon of

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<sup>63</sup> Lerner, Ralph, and Muhsin Mahdi, eds., *Enumeration of the Sciences in Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, translated by Fauzi Najjar, New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963, pp. 22-30.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 104:16-107:4

revealed religion. Nor can either speak about the opinions or actions that the jurisprudence and theology of revealed religion address. Such a rulership or royal craft can come only from a political science that would both combine theoretical and practical sciences along with prudence and show how they are to be ordered in the soul of the ruler. This kind of political science would be more theoretical than the one first set forth in the *Enumeration of the Sciences* and go beyond the understanding of the sciences presupposed in the second one, an understanding that is based on what has preceded the *Enumeration of the Sciences*.<sup>65</sup> In his other writings- most notably his *Book of Religion*, but also in the *Political Regime*, the *Aphorisms of Statesmen*, and the *Principles of the Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City*- Alfarabi develops this broader political science. It speaks of religious beliefs as opinions and of acts of worship as actions, and notes that both are prescribed by a supreme ruler or prophet; for a community.

Opening with a discussion of religion centered in political community, then moving to political science, the *Book of Religion*<sup>66</sup> present Alfarabi's restructuring of political science. As in the *Enumeration of the Sciences*, two accounts are provided, but here they are preceded by an account of virtuous religion. It begins with a description of a supreme ruler whose goals are similar to those of the Prophets and an analysis of his prescriptions. The reason for everything done by this supreme ruler are tracked back to philosophy so incessantly that religion appears to depend on philosophy, theoretical as well as practical. Similarly, the art of jurisprudence, presented as providing for what the supreme ruler did not accomplish before his death, is portrayed as both dependent on practical philosophy and a part of political science.<sup>67</sup> Obligated to say something about practical philosophy, Alfarabi

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<sup>65</sup> Mahdi, Muhsin, in "Science, Philosophy, and Religion in Alfarabi's *Enumeration of the Sciences*", in *The Cultural Context of Medieval Learning*, ed. J.E. Murdoch and E.D. Sylla, Dordrecht: B. Reidel, 1975, p. 137.

<sup>66</sup> Butterworth, Charles E., in *Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, ed. Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi, New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1993.

<sup>67</sup> *Enumeration of the Sciences in Book of Religion*, paras. 5 -10.

complies by again offering two accounts of political science. The deficiencies of the first resembles those that came to light in the *Enumeration of the Sciences*, but the second account provides what is needed by presenting a political science that can offer a comprehensive view of the universe and indicate what kind of practical acumen permits the one who possesses this understanding, either the supreme ruler or a successor endowed with all his qualities, to rule wisely. Able to explain the various ranks of all the beings, it also stresses the importance of religion for uniting the citizens and for helping them attain the virtues that prolong decent political life.<sup>68</sup> This view of the harmony between good government and the activity of the Prophet finds similar expression in Avicenna's most extensive discussion of politics that set forth at the very end of the *Metaphysics* in his *Shifa*.<sup>69</sup> It differs from any of the accounts to be found in Alfarabi because Avicenna is silent on the different sorts of virtuous and vicious regimes, rulerships, and civic communities. He says nothing about what distinguishes them or how to bring them about. He is equally silent about what would cause each one to cease to exist and how each one might be transformed into one opposed to it. Political science for Avicenna, at least insofar as it is presented here, centers around an explanation of the political characteristics of prophecy and divine law.

Nonetheless, the attention that he gives those two subjects leads him to raise questions fundamental to politics: the nature of law, the purpose of political community, the need for sound moral life among the citizens, the importance of providing for divorce as well as for marriage, the conditions for just war, the considerations that lie behind penal laws, and the goal of human life. Avicenna's description of the way the political community arises and the provisions made for it by a ruler as wise as a prophet shows why traditional Islamic political rule is praiseworthy and alludes to what is wrong with regimes that prize freedom, the purpose of wealth, or conquest rather than

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<sup>68</sup> See *Ibid.*, paras. 15-27.

<sup>69</sup> See Avicenna, *Kitab al-Shifa, al-Ilahiyyat*, ed., G. Anawati and S. Zayid, Cairo: al-Hai'a al-'Amma li-Shu'un al-Matabi' al-Amiriyya, 1960, book 10, chps. 1-5.

adherence to moral virtue. To underline his purpose, Avicenna constantly refers to the ruler who sets down the laws he praises here as one who gives “traditional law” (calling this lawgiver a *sannin* and his law *sunnah*) or as one who gives “divine law” (calling this lawgiver a *shari’* and his law *shar’ia*).

For reasons too involved to discuss here, Averroes perceives his task differently from either of his two predecessors. Seeing the pursuit of philosophy threatened in his day and saddened by the bickering between the proponents of different religions or sects, he attempts to show why philosophical investigation warranted by the divine law. In the most famous of his work, *The Decisive Treatise*, he likens the lawgiver to a physician: just as the latter strives to preserve the health or cure sicknesses of the body, so does the former for the soul.<sup>70</sup> The lawgiver, like the physician, knows what preserves health and prevents sickness. He understands what good health is and how it can be achieved as well as how to preserve it. Because those whom he seeks to heal do not understand these things, he speaks to them in language they can understand. He no more enters into the details or the premises of his actions than the physician does of his. To gain the people’s acceptance of his prescriptions, he uses whatever kind of speech the people can most readily understand- again, as does the physician.

The problem, notes Averroes, is that many jurists and theologians do not understand that the lawgiver or prophet spoke indirectly and thus try to explain things to the people that only confuse them. By this analogy, Averroes shows why one cannot interpret all the words of the Prophet literally and points to the need for those so qualified to investigate the health and sickness of the soul as well as the ways to preserve or attain the one and avoid or repel the other. To do so is to understand the Prophet’s goal with respect to the people for whom he legislated, for the Prophet’s prescription are his laws, and they presuppose political community. Like Alfarabi and Avicenna before him,

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<sup>70</sup> See Averroes, *Kitab Fasl al-Maqal*, an English translation by Hourani, George F., is to be found in *Medieval Political Philosophy*, 1963, pp. 163-86.

then, Averroes seeks to preserve philosophical inquiry because it provides the understanding and explanation of what is sound about that legislation.

None of these philosophers explicitly rails against the rulers of the day, although Averroes does suggest on occasion that things are not as good as they might be in “these cities in this time of ours”.<sup>71</sup> Their goal is not to urge radical change or to cajole actual rulers to act better by offering advice about how to rule, but to show what goals are to be pursued by a good ruler and what conduces to the achievement of those goals. For them, the purpose of living together in community is to acquire the human excellences impossible to attain in solitary existence, and they investigate how the prescriptions of the prophet as well as the practices traditionally derived from them lead to these excellences. Because the goal of association is excellence, intellectual as well as moral, rule by one who has such excellence is preferable. Though it is admittedly difficult to find rulers so qualified, rule by such a one remains the standard. Similarly, the pursuit of excellence- not the pursuit of freedom, wealth, or conquest- remains the standard. The philosophers of the Arabic or Islamic distant past stand out as guides to that goal, guides ever cognizant of its arduous demands and abundant riches. Moreover, acutely aware of the intellectual and moral differences between individuals and the groups they constitute, these philosophers see no reason to expect much from popular government.

### **The Recent Past**

Apart from Ibn Khaldun and perhaps Mulla Sadra, political reflection in the Arabic or Islamic tradition languished during the next six and a half centuries. Philosophical speculation was focused on metaphysical questions and issues of personal morality. When it did turn to politics, it usually took the form of particular advice to rulers and was directed to questions that would help them

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<sup>71</sup> Butterworth, Charles E., *Philosophy, Ethics, and Virtuous Rule: A Study of Averroes' Commentary on Plato's "Republic"*, Cairo: American University Press in Cairo, 1986, pp. 12-13, 87-88.

preserve their own reign. Only with the advent of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1837-97) does it turn to the larger questions raised by Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes.

Al-Afghani is troubled by the weakness that characterises the Islamic world in his day. Dominated by Western imperial powers, even in their own lands, Arabs and Muslim rulers seem to have lost all memory of the grandeur and greatness that were once theirs and to have no idea of how they might regain their former rank. His challenge to thoughtful Muslims, first formulated in lectures to university audiences and then distributed in occasional articles read by an educated few, won him the sympathy of Muhammad ‘Abdu (1849-1905). These two eventually joined forces to launch- from Paris, because no Arab or Muslim country would tolerate al-Afghani’s presence- a short-lived journal known as *al-‘Urwa al-wuthqa* (The most solid link). In it, they argue vigorously for independence from foreign domination but see no reason to replace monarchic rule with popular government. It is their conviction that the Arab and Muslim populace are not yet sufficiently disciplined to govern themselves well and thus still need the tutelage of a ruler who will train them in the skills needed for self-government.<sup>72</sup> Their total silence elsewhere in their writings about the possibility of future self-rule need not be taken as evidence that the promise here is no more than a diplomatic ploy to preserve the goodwill of otherwise sympathetic Westerners. Indeed, al-Afghani’s generous concession to Ernest Renan that philosophy and religion must always be in conflict also strengthens the case for postponing democracy, for he makes it clear that Middle Eastern peoples will not soon be ready to forsake religious guidance.<sup>73</sup>

The same theme is developed more extensively by ‘Abduh. In fact, he bases his own political teaching on an attempt to explain the reasonableness of letting political life be guided by Islamic precepts. His famous *Risalat al-*

<sup>72</sup> “Madi al-umma wa hadiruha wa ‘ilaj ‘ilaliha” [The Nation’s past, its present, and the treating of its ills], in *al-‘Urwa al-wuthqa* [The Most Solid Link], Cairo: Dar al-‘Arabi, 1957, pp. 13-21.

<sup>73</sup> Renan, Ernest, “L’Islamisme et la science”, *Journal des debats*, 30 March, 1883.

*tawhid* (Treatise on unity) presents a coherent exposition of how Islam helps human beings to live together in society so that they may eventually attain the happiness intended for them by the Creator. ‘Abduh focuses on the assistance that God offers mankind by sending prophets who show us how to get along in political community. By drawing our attention to something higher than self-preservation or immediate gain, they teach us how to work together without harming one another or causing evil. In learning to honour such a higher Being, we are prompted to love one another as fellow creatures of that Being, to control our desires, redirect our passions, and regulate our actions. Almost like another Alfarabi, ‘Abduh explains what prompts the opinions the prophets ask us to believe, and the actions they urge us to perform.

Whereas al-Afghani addresses his explanations to anyone who will listen, even to the supremely confident readers of the *Journal des debats*, his primary audience is those learned Near and Middle Easterners, Muslim or Christian, who suffer the degradation of imperialist rule. Even so, his references are primarily Muslim, and the past age of glory he recalls is distinctly one of Muslim hegemony. That tendency is taken further by ‘Abduh, with his emphasis on the soundness of living according to Islamic precepts; but the audience is still a learned one. With Hassan al-Banna (1906-49), as with Abu al-A’la al-Mawdudi (1903-80) before him, the audience and the teaching change radically. Both speak to the masses, al-Mawdudi in order to defend Islam and to show how easily it can be applied to all problems of daily life, al-Banna in order to reform Muslims and to awaken them to what they can be as self-reliant and fully conscious followers of their faith. The change in audience and goal are reflected in the quality of the arguments both offer, namely, ones far more rhetorical and hortatory than analytical or measured.

Each sees a need for founding an Islamic political regime. Al-Mawdudi considers it the only rule under which Muslims can live freely and fully as Muslims and thus deems it essential that the Qur’anic provisions for personal

and communal virtue be implemented. For al-Banna, it makes no sense to deny Muslims the right to national liberation natural to all peoples; moreover, only a Muslim regime can fight against the atheism, pursuit of pleasure, self-centeredness, and relentless profit seeking that he believes will destroy all of Western society. In addition, each is responsible for the formation of groups that seek to carry out the teachings of the founder. Yet whereas the Islamic groups patterned on al-Mawdudi's teaching arose almost accidentally, Hasan al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood from the very beginning in order to spread his call to other Muslims more readily and more efficiently.

### **The Present Issues**

The spokesmen for Islamic government who succeed al-Mawdudi and al-Banna share with them the desire to speak to a larger audience and the willingness to make popular arguments. But instead of railing against non-Muslims and Western colonial and imperialist powers, these spokesmen denounce the Muslim rulers who came to power after Near and Middle Easterners were moved to act on the teachings of al-Afghani, 'Abdu, al-Mawdudi, and al-Banna. Whereas al-Mawdudi and al-Banna simply ignore the philosophical teachings of the distant tradition on which al-Afghani and Abdu are only too happy to rely for guidance as well as for evidence of a rich cultural past, new spokesmen such as Sayyid Qutb (1906-66) and Ruhollah Khomeini (1900-89) dismiss the older philosophers as having been too influenced by a foreign tradition to be of any assistance in an authentic Muslim undertaking. Though they thereby demonstrate that they have learned nothing from Averroes' Decisive Treatise and its famous rebuke of al-Ghazali for this same error. They are not in the least concerned. Their goals are to defend Islam against the aspersions cast upon it by Westerners who have failed to understand its merits, to bring about a thorough moral change in Muslims themselves, and to achieve truly Islamic self-rule rather than an imitation of socialism, as in the Egypt of Nasser opposed by Qutb, or an

unbridled capitalist consumerism, as in the Iran of the Shah as portrayed by Khomeini.

Now others too numerous to name follow the lead of Qutb and Khomeini. Even were one to add the names of Egypt's Shaykh Kishk and Mustafa Mahmoud, the list would still not be exhausted. All those now calling for Islamic politics share the desire to replace errant rulers who have failed to enforce or to abide by the teachings of Islamic divine law, the *Shar'ia*, as well as to improve the material and spiritual well being of fellow Muslims through encouraging their close adherence to Islamic precepts. But despite opportunities for practical reflection afforded by current instances of Islamic rule in nations as diverse as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, these spokesmen have yet to set forth clear ideas about how Islamic government should function. Their rhetoric, addressed now more than ever to the unlearned masses of citizens, speaks of how these goals are to be reached without harming citizens along the way. It also ignores the major question of how to provide for prudent decisions once the goal of Islamic government has been reached.

Yet, properly understood, it is against precisely this tendency to ignore procedural safeguards that Western criticism of political Islam is addressed. There are other objections, of course. The West is more concerned with safeguarding freedom than with providing for citizen virtue. That is partly due to a prevailing confusion about what ought to be called virtue, one that has its roots in the thinkers to whom one turns for guidance about classical liberalism. Though they teach us that the greatest goods are life, liberty, and the pursuit of either property or happiness, they have little to say about the pursuit of virtue. Similarly, the high regard in which one holds life and freedom leads us to look dimly on coercive inducements to virtuous conduct—especially when those inducements threaten life or limb.

To the latter kind of procedural objections, proponents of Islamic government have a ready answer: the penalties are meant to serve as vivid signs that there

are boundaries or limits that human conduct should not transgress, and before the divine law that calls for such penalties is instituted, Muslims subject to them must undergo a thorough moral reform. For such thinkers- and those in this path are only too happy to cite the teaching of Hassan al-Banna with approval- the basic preliminary to an official return to Islamic law must be a thorough moral reform of the citizenry carried out at all levels of society. But the Western criticism is not merely procedural, at least not in this sense. It goes deeper, for it raises the very question of whether moral improvement is the proper concern of government or not. Until at least the days of Muhammad Abdu, the philosophical foundations for considering moral improvement a proper concern of government were clear; since then, the cogent philosophical defense tends to have been rejected, but the theological one goes back to basically the same principles.

## **Conclusion**

When all of these objections have been met, there is still another reason behind the Western criticism of political Islam. Whatever Western attitudes are today about imperialism and colonialism, it is clear that the West still considers itself as deserving to set the tempo for the rest of the world to follow. Patent as this is in the title and basic premise of Fukuyama's best-seller or in Binder's acknowledged presupposition that the whole world- and especially the Islamic part of it- must become politically liberal, it also prevails in the analyses of those who seek to explain what is truly fearful about calls for political Islam. Shireen T. Hunter insists, for example, that we should not consider these calls or the movements they engender as aberrations "in the social, economic, and political development of the Muslim world" that will soon pass away but should rather be alarmed about "the fundamentalists' animosity toward the great-power domination of the present international order".<sup>74</sup> To this there are only two replies. One calls for greater tolerance

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<sup>74</sup> Hunter, Shireen T., "Islamic Fundamentalism: What It Really Is and Why It Frightens the

with respect to the basic presuppositions of those who look to religion for guidance and thus serves as an especially appealing rejoinder to the proponents of liberalism.<sup>75</sup> The other, set forth here, points to the goals sought by those in favour of Islamism and argues for their validity both because they are part of a higher understanding of politics that Westerners once embraced and because the political liberalism the West now follows has not shown Islamists to be without benefit but merely difficult to achieve.

## **PART TWO: APPROACHES, IDEAS AND PROBLEMS OF ISLAMISM**

### **INTRODUCTION**

A summary analysis of the scholarly literature produced in the West about contemporary Islamic Fundamentalism- particularly in the Arab World- will show a considerable amount of anxious concern over the use of such terms as "Fundamentalism", "Revivalism, "*Integrisme*" and their equivalents and derivatives which refer to this religio-political phenomenon. The use in question is the legitimacy of transferring concepts generated by Western Christian experiences- especially Protestant experiences- to the presumably very different context of Islam, the Arab World and the Muslim universes of discourse and practice in general.

### **CHAPTER 1: THE MEANING OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM**

#### **The Terminological Debate**

One will now turn to a discussion of some representative examples of the terminological debates about Islamic Fundamentalism. Richard Mitchell, the

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West", *SAIS Review*, 6:189-91, 199-200, 1986.

<sup>75</sup> Abdul-Fadl, Mona, *Islam and the Middle East: The Aesthetics of a Political Inquiry*, Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1990, pp. 38-39.

foremost American expert on, and historian of the Muslim Brothers Organization in Egypt, suggests that there is no real equivalent for a term like "Fundamentalism" in Arabic, implying the illegitimacy of applying it to Islam.<sup>76</sup> Another specialist, struggling with the same terminological problem, seems it "unwise to bring preconceived categories to bear on these phenomena, especially when we are examining a non-Western religious tradition such as Islam".<sup>77</sup> John O. Voll, in an otherwise excellent study, notes the reservations of some contemporary Muslims thinkers and non-Muslim (i.e., Western) scholars concerning the use of the concept "Fundamentalism" in any study of Islam, but then proceeds to retain the term, on the purely practical grounds of convenience, widespread use and the absence of a better alternative.<sup>78</sup> Yousef N. Choueiri prefaces his first-rate book *Islamic Fundamentalism* with an observation that subverts the operative concept in his own title (Fundamentalism), as no more than a "vague term, currently in vogue as a catch-phrase used to describe the militant ideology of contemporary Islamic movements." He, like John O. Voll, retains it only "for lack of a better word" after noting its Protestant origins.<sup>79</sup>

In the same dismissive spirit Lawrence Kaplan explains that although the term "Fundamentalism" "is imprecise and an over-simplification," still it "somehow managed to take hold".<sup>80</sup> Similarly, the director of the massive Fundamentalism Project (sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences), Martin Marty, opts for a naive nominalism when addressing the terminological issue, and then concludes with much emphasis and plenty of

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<sup>76</sup> 'The Islamic Movement: Its Current Condition and Future Prospects', in Barbara Freyer Stowasser (ed.), *The Islamic Impulse*, Washington DC: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1987, p. 79.

<sup>77</sup> Ninian Smart, 'Three Forms of Religious Convergence', in Richard T. Antoun and Mary Elaine Hegland (eds.) *Religious resurgence: Contemporary Cases in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism*; Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1987, p. 223.

<sup>78</sup> 'Fundamentalism in the Sunni Arab World: Egypt and the Sudan,' in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (eds.), *Fundamentalisms Observed*; Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 1991, p. 347.

<sup>79</sup> Yousef N. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, London: Pinter Publishers Ltd., 1990, p. 9.

<sup>80</sup> Lawrence Kaplan, (ed.), *Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective*, Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1992, p. 5.

capital letters that "SUBSTANTIVELY, FUNDAMENTALISMS HAVE LITTLE OR NOTHING IN COMMON WITH EACH OTHER".<sup>81</sup>

In his influential book on *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, Gilles Kepel reaches the following conclusion concerning the study of the Islamist phenomenon:

It is not mere caprice to recall these elementary epistemological precautions, for few contemporary phenomena have been so superficially observed and hastily judged as this movement. This is evident even in the terms used to designate it: *intégrisme musulman* in France or "Muslim Fundamentalism" in the English-speaking world. These two intellectual tools were forged to interpret particular moments in the history of Catholicism and Protestantism respectively. There is no justification for such a transposition.<sup>82</sup>

In a discussion with Dr. Ahmad Shikara (an Honorary Research Fellow at the Department of Political Studies) at Auckland University in the winter of 1997, he insisted like Richard Mitchell, that (a) there is no real equivalent to the English term: "Fundamentalism" in Arabic and that (b) the Arabic concept now in very wide use- *Usuli* (Fundamentalist)- is no more than a recent translation into Arabic of the English original. In fact after agonizing over the terminological puzzle in the concluding chapter of his book, Kepel comes close to implying that somehow the Islamist phenomenon simply defies the categories of social science.

In the same vein and for the same reasons explained by Kepel, thinkers and experts as divergent and different as Bernard Lewis and Seyyed Hossein Nasr conclude that the use of the term "Fundamentalism" in the Muslim context is

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<sup>81</sup> 'Fundamentals of Fundamentalism', *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>82</sup> Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984, pp. 223-224.

"most unfortunate and misleading" (Nasr),<sup>83</sup> and that although the term is "now common usage" and "must be accepted" as such, "it remains unfortunate and can be misleading" (Lewis).<sup>84</sup>

When addressing the same terminological question, an expert on modern Iran, Evrand Abrahamian, leaves us in a situation of unresolved tension, if not conflict. On the one hand he argues against transferring the term "Fundamentalism" to the contemporary Muslim Middle East on account of its origins in early 20th century American Protestantism, but then proceeds to point out how "Khomeini's own followers, finding no such term in Persian or Arabic, have coined a new word *-bonyadgarayan-* by translating literally the English term fundamentalism." Like Kaplan, he observes that somehow the term not only "stuck", but became very popular with the Khomeinists as "a self-advertising label claiming that they are the only ones true to the 'fundamentals' of Islam, in sharp contrast to others who have been led astray by foreign concepts and historical misinterpretations of the Qur'an, the Prophet's Hadiths [traditions], the *Shari'a* [Islamic Laws], and the teachings of the Twelve Shi'a Imams." Abrahamian finds this situation "curious" but makes no attempts at explaining, (a) why Khomeini's followers should find a Christian term translated from a Western culture and language so expressive of what they actually believe and practice, and (b) why such a term did "stick" and become so popular with them. For an answer to these questions, one has only accident and randomness; somehow the "stuck" managed to take hold or "gain currency".<sup>85</sup> But this all-too-easy transmutation of an outside observer's category like "Fundamentalism" to an exteriorised self-descriptive category of the insiders and actors themselves, is too serious a business to leave to mere chance.

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<sup>83</sup> 'Present Tendencies, Future Trends', in Marjorie Kelly (ed.), *Islam: The religious and Political Life of a World Community*, New York: Praeger, 1984, pp. 279-280.

<sup>84</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988, p. 117.

<sup>85</sup> 'Khomeini: A Fundamentalist', in Kaplan, 1992, pp. 109-110.

Another interesting radical view simply admonishes to drop altogether terms like "Fundamentalism" and its sisters when dealing with Islam, (a) on the general principle that one should never "apply words to describe people that they would not accept and apply to themselves," and (b) on account of the fact that "fundamentalism is not, never has been, nor ever will be a term used by most Muslims to describe either their own religious outlook or the religious outlook of other Muslims with whom they disagree".<sup>86</sup> Barbara Freyer Stowasser summarizes this general position in the following words: "It is noteworthy that no indigenous word for 'fundamentalism' exists in Arabic, and that Muslims do not define themselves as fundamentalists or define others as such..."<sup>87</sup>

While the intention behind this concern and anxiety over terminology is undoubtedly the laudable desire to achieve greater critical self-awareness, the actual debates and discussions remain quite disappointing.

### **The Epistemological Legitimacy of Fundamentalism**

One would now like to argue broadly for the epistemological legitimacy, scientific integrity and critical applicability of such supposedly modern Western and Christian-derived concepts as "Fundamentalism" and "Revivalism" in the study of the contemporary Islamist phenomenon. One shall start with the now widely used Arabic term *Usuli*, as in "*Usuli* Islam" (Fundamentalist Islam), and the *Usuli* Islamic Movements (details discussed in Part Five).

To the dismissive argument that this term is no more than a recent innovation created to provide an Arabic equivalent for the original English concept of "Fundamentalism," one would reply that what is really important in this context is neither the origin of the term nor how it entered current Arabic usage, but what it actually says and does not say about its referent. One would

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<sup>86</sup> Bruce B. Lawrence, 'Muslim Fundamentalist Movements: Reflections Towards A New Approach', in *The Islamic Impulse*, Barbara F. Stowasser, 1987, p. 18.

<sup>87</sup> *The Islamic Impulse*, P. 5.

also remind their interlocutors here, (a) that as Arabs are constantly introducing and deleting terms, concepts and categories into their vital socio-political and religio-ideological discourses without much regard to whether these originate in the Islamic *turath* (heritage), European languages, colonial influences or contemporary experience; and (b) that while knowing something about the origins of any of these terms is undoubtedly instructive, fixation on "first meanings".

On the other hand, one may not be aware of any deep aversion or even objection to the employment of the term *Usuli* and its derivatives and equivalents either by the Islamists themselves or by their mainstream critics, secularist detractors and sympathetic defenders and apologists. The by-now large and varied body of writing in Arabic on the Islamists, against them, as well as for them and by them, has witnessed many a sharp debate and polemic over all kinds of substantive issues of politics, doctrine and interpretation, but none over concepts like "Fundamentalism" and "Revivalism" and their applicability to the phenomenon. In fact this body of literature is particularly distinguished for its generous use of these very concepts in its expositions, criticisms, apologies, rebuttals and counter-rebuttals. For example, all the books, commentaries, summaries and introductions produced by the most prominent Egyptian compiler and editor of the texts of the armed insurrectionary Islamists, employ very liberally these concepts, their equivalents and derivatives, in a very matter-of-fact way and without further apologies, hesitations or reservations.<sup>88</sup>

The work of Hasan Hanafi, one of Egypt's most prominent and prolific intellectuals and thinkers, provides us with another good example. Shortly after the assassination of President Sadat in October 1981 Hanafi proceeded to employ all the presumably objectionable concepts of "Islamic

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<sup>88</sup> Rifa'at Sayyed Ahmad, *The Armed Prophet: The Rejectionists*, published by Riad al-Rayyes Books, London, Vol. One, 1991. And Rifa'at Sayyed Ahmad, *The Armed Prophet: The Revolutionaries*, Riad al-Rayyes Books, London, Vol. Two, 1991. In what follows, I will refer to these volumes in the study as (Vol. I) and (Vol. II), followed by the page references.

Fundamentalism" (*al-Usuliyyah al-Islamiyyah*), and "Islamic Revivalism" (*al-Ihya' al-Islami*), in his spirited exposition and sympathetic defence of the teachings, politics and practices of Egypt's Islamists. The Islamist publishers of his book prefaced it with their own approval plus an endorsement of its contents.<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, Hanafi explains in his book that "Islamic Fundamentalism" means the search for *Usus* or foundations and then goes on to argue for the continued presence of a self-reinvigorating fundamentalist current in Islamic history, stretching from Egypt's present-day Islamists all the way back to the great classical jurist Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and his school.<sup>90</sup> Hanafi's argument is obviously a blatant *ex-post-facto* rationalisation without any historical basis or merit, but it disposes of the misconception that the Islamists reject being called "Fundamentalists" or "*Usulis*".

More specifically and importantly, a term like *Usuli* (Fundamentalist) has classical Islamic precedent in its favour. It means the primary distinction of all classical Muslim theology, jurisprudence, and learning (both Sunni and Shi'i), between the fundamentals and/or basics of the Islamic religion, on the one hand, and its branches, and/or incidentals, on the other. To this day, the most important faculty of Cairo's al-Azhar University- Islam's most prominent centre of religious learning and training for centuries- is the Faculty of "*Usul al-Din*" ("The Fundamentals of the Religion"). In addition, the two most decisive interchangeable concepts that invariably keep appearing and reappearing in the books, manifestoes, tracts and documents of the Islamists are simply, *Usul* (fundamentals, sources, basics) and *Usus* (bases, foundations). Obviously, the reference here is to the Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah, or tradition, as the two primary pillars and foundations of the Islamic religion.

Thus, one member of the team of four that actually assassinated President Anwar Sadat in 1981 (a cell of the famous Islamic *Jihad* organization),

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<sup>89</sup> Hassan Hanafi, *The Islamic Movements in Egypt* (in Arabic), Cairo: al-Huda Islamic Publishing House, 1986.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-12.

described his group's line of thought as "a fundamentalist *salafi* (traditionalist) call (*da'wa salafiyyah usuliyyah*) for a return to the understanding and doctrine of the good predecessors, in an age where corruption prevails".<sup>91</sup> A manifesto of the same Islamist organization entitled *The Charter of Islamic Action*; complains bitterly about the absence of Islam's "fundamentals" (*usul*) and "foundations" (*usus*) from the contemporary life of supposedly Muslim societies.<sup>92</sup>

*The Charter* explains that its purpose is "to show, clarify and recall the legitimate religious foundations (*usus*) and fundamentals (*usul*) which should never escape the attention of any Islamic movement that is concerned about regulating all its affairs according to the True *Shari'a* and is committed to that end". *The Charter* continues: "These foundations are neither invented nor an innovation, but fixed axioms that no Muslim can ignore, let alone deny. But unfortunately some, if not most, of them have escaped the attention of those working in favour of this religion ... And as their absence has endured for a long time ... we thought it our obligation to present, or, still better, to show them ... in an attempt to regulate the Islamic movement by its religious fundamentals, which if abandoned, all hope of victory would be lost".<sup>93</sup> It may add, also, that *The document of Islamic Revival* speaks clearly of the circumstances when "the return to Fundamentals and the call of the Truth and the Qur'an would become easy and quick";<sup>94</sup> while Rifa'at Sayyed Ahmad describes the Islamic "Revival", in one of his many introductions, as "the recuperation of Islam's fundamentals (*usul*) without any partiality to the theories and interpretations that we find in its history".<sup>95</sup> An organized Islamist group of Egyptians in Kuwait called themselves "Fundamentalists" (*Usuliyyun*).

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<sup>91</sup> Vol. I, page 113.

<sup>92</sup> Vol. I, page 167.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Vol. II, p. 227.

<sup>95</sup> Vol. II, p. 53.

This is why everywhere in the Muslim world today, the Islamists not only call insistently for an immediate return to Islamic "basis" and "fundamentals", but also claim, believe and act as if they have done nothing except recapture and revive these very fundamentals. Furthermore, most Muslims hold strongly that only these fundamentals are really capable, (a) of organizing people for radical socio-political action, (b) of mobilizing the masses for the coming struggles and fights against internal and external enemies, and (c) of providing a lasting and authentic solution to all the ills and problems plaguing present-day Muslim societies.

In light of the above considerations it seems quite reasonable to conclude that calling these Islamic movements "Islamists" is adequate, accurate, and correct. To turn the question around by asking the semantic skeptics and conceptual nominalists what more does one need to call, in good scholarly conscience, such movements, organizations and factions: "Islamist"?

Nonetheless, this defense of the concept should not be construed as an uncritical endorsement of all its sundry applications, implications, uses, and abuses. More specifically, calling these movements "Islamist" does not mean we accept at face value and indiscriminately either what they say about themselves, or what they claim about having actually succeeded in isolating and recapturing the basics and fundamentals of Islam. This last issue remains an open question, subject to further research. In other words, the question of what exactly it is that these movements and groups have isolated and recuperated, under the rubric of the fundamentals and basics of Islam, has to remain open for the time being.

Similarly, the concept of Islamic "Revivalism" (*al-Ihya al-Islami*) has classical precedent on its side, viz., the major work of Islam's foremost classical theologian al-Ghazali (often regarded in the West as the Augustine of Islam), entitled *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*. More important, however, is the appeal to the actual practices not only of the Islamists themselves, but of their Muslim critics, defenders and apologists as well. For

example, *The Document of Muslim Revival*, circulated by one of the *Jihad* groups in Egypt, speaks of the "Muslim Revivalist Phenomenon", the "Islamic movement of revival and Renewal", the "Resurrectionist Phenomenon", and the "call for renewal and revival by a return to the fundamentals of the *umma*".<sup>96</sup>

In addition, every active Islamist group today is convinced that it is in the process not only of going back to the basics and fundamentals of Islam, but of reviving them as well, after a long period of, let us say, hibernation. They are reviving them as active beliefs and efficacious practices in the lives of people. The same process, they claim, revives the hibernating Muslim masses by injecting into their lives, hearts, and minds the neglected fundamentals of Islam; this is simply their program of regenerating and revitalizing the individual and the *umma* (the Muslim nation or community) at one and the same time. They all strongly believe that without such a revival, no temporal or eternal salvation is possible either individually or collectively.

Significantly enough the basic theo-political document of President Sadat's assassins is entitled *The Absent Commandment*, because- as the text makes clear- the intention behind it is not only to go back to one of the neglected fundamentals of Islam, viz., the duty of *jihad*, but also to revive it in text, consciousness and practice after a long period of absence and forgetfulness.<sup>97</sup>

Similarly, the phenomenon of sudden religious conversion and the accompanying sense of being born-again, which have traditionally characterized modern Protestant religious revivalism, are not foreign to the Islamists either. Hassan Hanafi describes in his book on *The Islamic Movement in Egypt*, how young men in touch with Islamist organizations and/or influenced by the fundamentalist currents in society, come to live in "fear and trembling" on account of their sins, their immersion in the life and activities of an apostate (*jahili*) social order, and their neglect of the primary religious duty of *jihad*. Then a sudden conversion sets in, continues Hanafi,

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<sup>96</sup> Vol. II, pp. 199-243.

<sup>97</sup> Vol. I, PP. 127-147.

transporting them "from one state to another, as happens with Sufis [mystics] when the call comes through an accidental occurrence, a sheikh's call, an unknown voice, a cry of destiny, or a vision of the heart".<sup>98</sup> Thus, according to the same author, young people experience "a kind of sudden change which takes them from one state to another without gradation or persuasion: from corruption to purity, from unbelief (*kufr*) to faith, from Godlessness (*jahiyah*) to Islam".<sup>99</sup> The Messianic and chiliastic orientations normally accompanying such revivalist experiences are not lacking either, and they are noted in Hanafi's book in the form of an awaited temporal and eternal salvation of the *umma* and the individual at the hands "of a savior, Mahdi, or reformer".<sup>100</sup> One Islamist document emphasizes how the born-again experience "brings about a total and decisive break with a person's past", thus making "Islam the measure of all things for him".<sup>101</sup>

In addition the Arab world's Islamists choose their categories and concepts of "Fundamentals" and "Revival" carefully to distinguish themselves from secular nationalists and leftists. They generally shun terms like "*nahda*" / "renaissance", "*ba'ath*" / "resurrection" and "*yakazah*" / "awakening". In contemporary Arab politico-ideological discourse, the first couplet denotes the period of Islamic theological reform, intense latitudinarian scriptural reinterpretation and socio-economic modernization stretching from the last decades of the 19th century to the 1940s. Since the Islamists reject unequivocally and condemn unambiguously this phase in Arab life, they naturally prefer to speak of an Islamic "revival", "rebirth", "recovery" and "revival" in lieu of an Islamic renaissance or *nahda*.

Again, the two terms "ba'ath" and "revival" carry the same literal meaning and derive their subliminal positive emotional charge from traditional Muslim teachings about the Day of Judgment (*Yawm al-Ba'ath*) and Allah's power to resurrect or revive, on that day "bones that had turned to mere dust".

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<sup>98</sup> Hanafi, 1986, p.135.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>101</sup> Vol. II, p. 226.

Nonetheless, the Islamists opt for "*Ihya*" (revival) because "*ba'ath*" has become hopelessly compromised by too close an association, and in all minds, with the ruling *Ba'ath* Party in Syria and Iraq. "*Yakazah*" is par excellence the secular Arab nationalist's variant of the concept of "awakening", as in Najib Azouri's *Le Reveil de la Nation Arabe* (Paris, 1905), and George Antonius' classic work, *The Arab Awakening (al-Yakazah al-Arabiyyah)* (Philadelphia, 1939).

Consequently, the Arab Islamists deliberately polarized their own variant of the concept of awakening, viz., "*as-sahwa al-Islamiyyah*", in spite of the fact that *Yakazah* and *sahwa* mean exactly the same thing, and imply, in all instances, a prior period of either nationalist or Islamic sleep and hibernation, as the case may be. Thus, *The Absent Commandment* referred to above, explains one *hadith* (tradition) of the Prophet as heralding "the return of Islam in the present age following this Islamic *Sahwa* (awakening)", and predicts a "brilliant future economically and agriculturally for those who participate in it".<sup>102</sup> Of some relevance here is, also, the Protestant origin of the concept of a religious awakening as in the "Great American Awakening" radiating from New England in the 1730s and 1740s, and the later repetition of the same phenomenon in the early decades of the 19th century, both in Germany and the United States. It is, perhaps, of some significance to mention in this connection that the classic theoreticians of the modern Arab *Yakazah*/awakening were mostly of Christian backgrounds and origins, quite closely in touch with and deeply influenced by the goings on, socially, politically, religiously and intellectually in Europe and the United States.

Other terminologico-conceptual shifts and substitutions effected by the Islamists comprise the following: "Worldism" (*al-Alamiyyah*) in place of the socialist "Internationalism" (*al-Umamiyyah*) as in the sophisticated Islamist theoretical work which appeared in Beirut in 1979 under the title, *The Second*

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<sup>102</sup> Vol. I, p. 128

*Islamic Worldism (al-Alamiyyah al-Islamiyyah al-Thaniyyah*".<sup>103</sup> Also included among these shifts are "Overturning" (*Inkilab*) and its derivatives in place of "Revolution" and "Revolutionary"; "Protest" (*Ihtijaj*) in the place of liberal "Opposition" (*Mu'aradah*) as in the "loyal opposition"; "Action" and "Execution" (in the sense of carrying out orders), in place of Marxist "Practice" and "Praxis" (*Mumarasah*); "*Umma*" in place of the "Popular Masses"; "World Crusaderism" (*al-Salibiyyah al-Alamiyyah*) in place of "Colonialism" and "Imperialism"; "*Jahiliyyah*" in place of "Backwardness", "Underdevelopment" and "Dependency"<sup>104</sup>; and "Revival", and its derivatives and equivalents ("Recovery", "Rebirth", "Return") in place of "Progress", "Development" and "Growth". One note of caution is necessary here. The above transitions and substitutions remain in a state of extreme fluidity and occur on highly contested territory, allowing for plenty of terminological exceptions, shifts of ideological emphases and the introduction of new wines into old conceptual bottles, and vice versa. It also continues to be true that in spite of all these changes the current discourse of the Islamists remains greatly indebted- often spontaneously and unconsciously- to the typical concepts, categories, analyses, styles, etc., that had dominated Arab political thought and cultural and intellectual life during the earlier more nationalist, secular and leftist decades.

To add in passing that the Arab insurrectionary Islamists also mean to convey double meaning when they insist on being called *jama'at* (groups, communities, collectives) instead of the more common parties, fronts, organizations, forces, coalitions, etc. For them, all these currently familiar forms of political organization and association are foreign to Islam, divisive of the unity of the *Umma* and a manifestation of the progressive secularisation and pernicious de-Islamisation of Muslim societies in modern times. But above all the term *jama'at* is calculated to invoke the model and experiences

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<sup>103</sup> Muhammad Abdul-Kassim Haj Ahmad, *The Second Islamic Worldism*, (al-Masira, Publishers), Beirut, 1979.

<sup>104</sup> Vol. I, p. 180.

of the early Muslim minority in the middle of a hostile and *jahili* Meccan society. The Muslims then like now- so the Islamist argument goes- were no more than a powerless, stateless, persecuted and excluded *jama'ah* (group or community) preparing for the later construction of forms of power and statehood that Muslims could properly call their own.

Again, in light of the above considerations, it is quite reasonable to conclude that calling these contemporary Islamist movements "Revivalist" (in the strong sense of the word) is adequate, functional, and accurate. In fact what more does one really need to call such movements, in good scholarly conscience, than "Revivalist"? In this case, also, the question of exactly what it is these groups and organizations are reviving, should remain open for further research.

The related concept of Islamists (*al-Islamiyyun*) deserves one last observation. Since there is no known serious objections to the use of this term either on the part of the Islamists themselves or on the part of their critics, defenders, and apologists in the Muslim world. The concept is very useful for distinguishing the activist, militant "true believer", and born-again Muslim from the ordinary Muslim who takes his/her religion for granted, viewing Islam as a matter of *'aqa'id and 'ibadat* (a set of beliefs and specific acts of worship), plus a certain basic ethical code, inherited traditions, cultural conventions, and so on. In other words, it brings out nicely and accurately the difference between having fundamentals (which Muslims certainly do), and being Islamist. Of course the term "Islamist" has in its favour also the classical precedent of "*Maqalat al-Islamiyyin*" (*The Theses of the Islamists*) of al-Ash'ari, the classical Islamist opponent of the great latitudinarians of his age, viz., the Mu'tazilite School of theology. This point is of some special relevance here considering that Ibn Taymiyyah, the medieval theologian on whose teachings, texts and doctrines the Islamists depend and draw most, refers extensively to al-Ash'ari's work, praising greatly his strict orthodoxy, traditionalism, and piety.

In fact a still stronger case can be made for the term, considering that prominent Islamist leaders like Hasan al-Turabi of the Sudan (now the strongman and master of that country's ruling military-Islamist Junta) and important propagandists like Rida Idriss<sup>105</sup> use the term liberally for two purposes. First of all, they do so to distinguish themselves, their followers, organizations and movements from the vast majority of ordinary Muslims; and second, to identify certain other politically active categories of people, like socialists, nationalists, secularists, liberals and so on, as nominal, sociological, cultural and/or private Muslims, but certainly not as Islamists.

### **Some Historical Comparisons**

The fact that one finds concepts originally derived from Catholic and Protestant experiences with the modern world and in it, both applicable and adequate to the Islamist phenomenon is neither accidental nor arbitrary. After all the forces that have been shaping and reshaping Muslim life for the last 150 years or so are, in every instance, of European origin and provenance, such as: capitalism, nationalism, colonialism, secularism, liberalism, populism, socialism, communism, fascism, Marxism, modernism, developmentalism, evolutionism, the idea of progress, scientific knowledge, applied technology (both civil and military), modern nation-state building with all the attendant, structure, institutions and apparatuses, and so on and so forth. And since one knows by now that these forces respect neither political nor ethnic nor cultural nor religious borders and boundaries, why should anyone be surprised at the rise of politico-religious social movements, like Islamic Fundamentalism and Revivalism, which bear strong family resemblances to the original fundamentalisms and revivalisms generated in modern and contemporary Europe and the West in general, by the action of these same primary historical forces?

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<sup>105</sup> Rida Idriss, *Al-Insan* (Humankind), is a Paris-based Islamist Journal, published by AMANE editions (in Arabic), 1990, editorial on pp. 5-11.

Western scholars and Muslim thinkers and intellectuals have called the movement of Islamic reform of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, an awakening of a renaissance, a reformation, a liberal experiment, Muslim modernism, the liberal age of modern Muslim thought. Now if the religion of a social order such as the Muslim world can go through such a wide ranging and profound reformation; is there anything strange or mysterious about the occurrence of, let us say, a counter-reformation, as well as of a fundamentalist reaction to boot? In fact did not a counter-reformation of sorts raise its head in Egypt when the Muslim Brotherhood, the mother of all Islamisms in the Arab world, was formed in 1928? It would be useful to digress for a minute here, to remind oneself in this connection that Egypt's bourgeoisie and nationalist capital came of age at the time of the 1919 Revolution against British rule, embarking immediately on an even more accelerated course of rapid modernization, secularisation and capitalization than the country had ever witnessed before. Any wonder now, why the counter reaction made itself felt at the end of that same decade? Furthermore, since the formative process of Islamic Modernism embodied in a single moment the element of a theologico-legal reformation, a literary intellectual renaissance, a rationalist-scientific enlightenment of sorts, and a politico-ideological adjournment, it should come as no surprise if the overall Islamic counter-reaction should, also, define its self substantively as an anti-reformation, an anti-renaissance, an anti-enlightenment and an anti-adjournment, all at one and the same time.

Nonetheless, one should never lose sight of the fact that in the dialectics of history, counter-reformations are hardly ever either mere reactions or pure and simple restorations, for they are "reformations" in their own right, but on their own terms and within their own turf. In other words, when one speaks of counter-reformations, in these instances, the emphasis should fall on the "reformation" aspect of the process and equation, and not just on its "counter" side. The Islamic counter-reformation is no exception to this rule; for here also the past is really invoked not for its own sake, but for rectifying a

perceived rotten present and securing a precarious future. How successful such a counter-reformation can be in practice is, of course, a question of a different order.

This whole issue has been obfuscated by the inherited hostile gazes of Christendom and Islamdom vis-a-vis each other, each regarding the other as the menacing Other *per se*, and as the anti-self *par excellence*; all on account of the long history of conquests and counter-conquests that have characterized traditional relationships between the two realms. However, this outward hostility, exclusion and otherness should not be allowed either to eclipse or distort a certain more basic and abiding truth. One shall try to explain meaning *via* the simplest and most convincing argument one can think of.

The contemporary West prides itself on the Judeo-Christian tradition on the one hand and the Greco-Roman heritage on the other. Now, historically, theologically and in every other way possible, Islam is an offshoot and development of that Judeo-Christian tradition (it even conceives of itself as such), and is certainly far closer to the latter's two components than they can ever be to the unadulterated Greco-Roman heritage. In fact a more accurate regrouping of these categories would give us the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition on the one hand (with powerful affinities of every conceivable type, both positive and negative, among its constituents), and the Greco-Roman heritage on the other. Similarly, Middle Eastern Islamdom has never been innocent of the Greco-Roman influences, mediations and admixtures, as the standing enmity of the two realms seems to instantaneously suggest. After all, geographical Syria has more Roman ruins and reminders than Rome itself. Islam descended on Byzantium no less than on a culturally Hellenised Christian Middle East, while Hellenism underlay in varying degrees: the scholastic reason of Eastern Christianity, the scholastic reason of Islam, and the scholastic reason of Western Christianity (this is also the period of the greater Talmudic codification of Judaism). They all share Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus on the one hand, and Adam, Abraham and Moses on the other.

## CHAPTER 2: COMPARING CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALISM AND ISLAMISM

### The Syllabus of Modern Errors

At a more concrete and comparative level, one would like to support and illustrate my general argument by taking up two particularly interesting instances, (a) the most important Christian fundamentalist document of its time, viz., *The Syllabus of Modern Errors*<sup>106</sup>, issued by Pope Pius IX in 1864 (after many years in preparation and drafting), and (b) the fundamentalist movement of Dominion Theology in the United States of America.

One shall also draw on the teachings and preachings of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, the leader of the most prominent dissident fundamentalist Roman Catholic movement in Europe and the United States since the 1970s (now excommunicated). He vigorously combated the Papacy, church, theology, and clergy of the Second Vatican Council (1962) and after. Lefebvre's doctrines, views and criticisms are now available to the reader in two books, whose titles speak for themselves: *They Have Uncrowned Him: From Liberalism to Apostasy The Conciliar Tragedy*<sup>107</sup>, and *Archbishop Lefebvre and the Vatican: 1987-1988*.<sup>108</sup>

For purposes of comparison one shall depend primarily on the documents and writings of Egypt's insurrectionary Islamists as compiled and published by Rif'at Sayyed Ahmed; partly because their contents remain under-used by Western specialists, observers and commentators, but more importantly

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<sup>106</sup> 'The Syllabus of the Principal Errors of our Times', in G. A. Kertesz, *Documents in the Political History of the European Continent*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968, pp. 233- 241.

<sup>107</sup> Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him: From Liberalism to Apostasy the Conciliar Tragedy*, The Angelus Press Inc., Dickinson, Texas, 2<sup>nd</sup> printing, 1988. I will refer to this book in the thesis by the letter (U) followed by the page references.

<sup>108</sup> Father Francois Laisney, *Archbishop Lefebvre and the Vatican: 1987-1988*, The Angelus Press Inc., Dickinson, Texas, 1989.

because they represent the Islamists' ideas, teachings, analyses, plans, critiques, judgments, polemics and overall mind-set in their most pristine and unmediated form. As these documents and writings were never meant either for publication or unrestricted general circulation, but only for the internal organizational use of the Islamists themselves (recruiting and training members, ideological unity and self-clarification, etc.), they possess revealing qualities of radicalism, openness, authenticity, tactlessness and want of both honest and dishonest dissimulation that books, interviews, pamphlets, sermons and recorded cassettes (meant for the eyes and ears of the outside world and general public) necessarily lack. In other words, not having been moderated as yet by considerations of outward political circumspection, the tactical adjustment of limited means to forbidding ends and the restraining influence of temporary accommodation to hated existing realities, the contents of these documents remain raw, simplistic, unabashed and without the least trace of affectation.

This comes out clearest in the Islamists' harsh and sharp polemics against the outside world, the encircling socio-cultural environment, as well as against each other. For example, *The Absent Commandment*, referred to in Chapter One, contains not only detailed refutations, critiques and negative evaluations of the theses and methods of all the other Islamist groups and organizations active in Egypt at the time, but also a general polemic against all of them as well. Furthermore, the records of the trials, interrogations and responses of President Sadat's assassins possess similar qualities, considering that the defendants spoke their minds and convictions fearlessly and with total frankness; knowing they were doomed men who had nothing to fear or lose, and believing unshakably in what they were doing and in the absolute rightness and final triumph of their cause.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Rif'at Sayyed Ahmad, *Al-Islambouli: a New View of the Jihad Organization*, Cairo: Kabuli Publishers, 1988, (in Arabic). See also the same author's *Why They Killed Sadat? The Story of the Jihad Organization: A Study and Documents in the Political Thought of Khaled al-Islambouli and Abboud al-Zomor*, Cairo: Tounal Publishers and Distributors, 1986, (in Arabic).

As an index or catalogue of the 80 heresies condemned by the head of the Roman Catholic Church, the *Syllabus of Modern Errors* is modelled, interestingly enough, on the war waged by an early Church father known as Epiphanius of Constantia (Cyprus) against the 80 pagan-inspired heresies he identified as plaguing the Church in the first three centuries of its life. More particularly, Epiphanius was vehemently reacting against Origen's legacy and the penetration of the Church by Greco-Roman culture, leading to the proliferation of all sorts of "grievous errors and vicious heresies," Arianism being the most prominent among them. The point to keep in mind in this connection is the implication that the *Syllabus* was similarly a product of Pius' vehement reaction and valiant struggle against the renewed pernicious penetration of the Church by the pagan culture of European modernity, leading again to the proliferation of another set of 80 "most grievous errors, vicious heresies and depraved innovations" threatening the life of contemporary "Christendom".

The publication of the *Syllabus* aroused the most violent debates and polemics in Europe. In fact liberal Europe regarded it, then, as a declaration of war by the Catholic Church on modern society and civilization, leading to an intensified general *Kulturkampf* against the Papacy, particularly in Bismarck's Germany.

The *Syllabus*, along with the introductory Encyclical letter, the various Consistorial Allocutions, Encyclical and Apostolic Letters on which it is based and to which it constantly refers, plus the doctrinal constitution *Pastor Aeternus* (Eternal Shepherd) promulgated by the First Vatican Council in 1870, are all meant to "reprobate, denounce and condemn generally and particularly the most grievous errors, heresies and deprived fictions of innovators," such as materialism, rationalism, naturalism, pantheism, secularism, communism, socialism, liberalism, latitudinarianism, Americanism, indifferentism, pietism, modernism, democracy, civil society

(as a religiously neutral arena), scientism, freedom of conscience, the cult of religious tolerance, the principles of civil and religious liberty, the separation of Church and state, civil marriage, secular education, etc. Conversely, a few of these condemned heresies require brief explanations.

Latitudinarianism refers to the reform movement in the Church of England, which argued that the texts of Holy Scriptures allow for latitude of interpretation and proof based on reason as opposed to the pure authority of tradition. The debate within the Church over "Americanism" refers to those Bishops and priests in Europe and the United States who showed excessive zeal for constitutionally protected civil and religious liberties, and who pointed to the American Catholic Church as a model for reorganizing the Church's relations in Europe with such novel developments as secular states, democratic governments, rapid scientific progress, new critical scholarly methods of dealing with holy Scriptures and the history of Christianity, and all the rest. Although the *Syllabus* did not explicitly condemn Americanism or mention it by name, it did so in substance. It was left to Pope Leo XIII to make the implicit explicit by bringing the Church debates over this tendency to a conclusion by declaring Americanism, in 1899, a heresy which constitutes "a complete synthesis of contemporary errors". Thus the Americanists were accused, by the Catholic fundamentalist reaction, of undermining the faith and subverting the authority of the Church by "this combination of Catholicism and democracy", by supporting "liberals and evolutionists" and by "talking forever of liberty, respect for the individual's initiative, natural virtues and sympathy for our age".

Indifferentism refers to the view that all religions, sects, and confessions are (a) equal before the state, and (b) stand on the same footing as to their validity and truth-claims (except for their own adherents). Pietism refers generally to those who regard religion as a strictly private matter, and more particularly to those who regard its essence as an inward, personal and individual affair of

the heart which may or may not have any consequences for the outside world (justification by faith alone versus by works also).

The condemned Modernism is part of what is usually known as "The Modernist Crisis in the Catholic Church", spanning the papacies of Pius IX, Leo XIII and Pius X. It is basically a 19th century phenomenon (on the assumption that the 19th century ended in Europe in 1914), arising out of the Church's head-on collision with Europe's powerful secular and secularising states (particularly Italy and Germany), the scandalous conflict between Catholic teachings and modern science (particularly Darwinism and higher Biblical criticism) and the as-yet unmediated contradiction between religion in general, on the one hand, and secular modern culture and its institutions on the other. The Modernist crisis reached its climax in 1907, when Pius X declared it not just a heresy but "the synthesis of all heresies" and denounced the Modernists as "true children and inheritors of the older heretics" and the perpetrators of a "deliberate conspiracy to destroy the Church". In fact the arsenal of weapons brandished by The Church Fundamentalist against all the said errors, innovations and heresies of modern times, include (in addition to the *Syllabus*), the promulgation of the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and Papal Supremacy and Infallibility, as official Roman Catholic dogma (First Vatican Council 1870), and the later explicit condemnation of the two super-heresies of Americanism and Modernism, as mentioned earlier.

### **The Jahiliyyah of the Twentieth Century**

Although one can assume with certainty that the Arab World's Muslim Fundamentalists - from their master theoretician and ideologist Sayyed Qutb to the assassins of President Sadat and including the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood - have never heard of the *Syllabus of Errors* or given a second thought to Pius IX and/or any other pope, still their pronouncements, documents, books, manifestoes and practices give one, interestingly enough, a

no less ringing condemnation and emphatic rejection of exactly the same errors, heresies and *bida'* (innovations) of modernity that one find in the *Syllabus* itself.

Because classical Islam has had its Origenes and his like, the Muslim Epiphaniuses denounced with similar power of penetration of Islamic theology, doctrine, scholarship and learning by the pagan and Christianised Greek and Hellenistic culture of the old world that the Arab Muslims had only recently conquered. Thus the great theologian of orthodoxy, al-Ghazali, unknowingly continued the same old Epiphanian struggle by producing his own "syllabus" of the twenty major errors committed by the Grecophile philosophers of Islam (for example al-Kindi, al-Farabi and Avicenna), in a famous work appropriately entitled *The Destruction of the Philosophers*. Seventeen of these errors were denounced by al-Ghazali as heretical *bida'*, while the remaining three were consigned to the sphere of out-and-out apostasy or infidelity (*kufur*).

The present-day radical Islamists such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hizbullah and Al-Qaeda etc are even more violent and vociferous than the Syllabus of Errors in condemning their century's culture, civilization and society for paganism, apostasy, Godlessness and unbelief. This is their doctrine of the *Jahiliyyah* of the 20th Century, first formulated by the Indian theologian, theoretician and Muslim activist Mawdudi, and later elaborated and popularised in the Arab world by Sayyed Qutb and his brother Muhammad Qutb, especially in the latter's fat volume, *The Jahiliyyah of the Twentieth Century*.<sup>110</sup> More recently a judge intervened in the public debate on this issue by publishing in Cairo another volume on the subject entitled, *Introduction to the Jurisprudence of the Contemporary Jahiliyyah*;<sup>111</sup> to which Fahmi

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<sup>110</sup> Qutb, M., *The Jahiliyyah of the Twentieth Century*, Wahba Publishers: Cairo, 1964.

<sup>111</sup> Judge Abdul-Jawad Yasin, *Muqqadimah fi Fiqh al-Jahiliyyah al-Mu'asirah*, (Introduction to the Jurisprudence of the Contemporary Jahiliyyah), Cairo, 1986.

Huweidi replied in three articles that appeared in Egypt's foremost newspaper, *al-Ahram*.<sup>112</sup> In other words, the 20th century is simply declared an age of paganism, Godlessness, idolatry and false belief, more pervasive, dangerous, sinister and threatening to Allah's true religion than the earlier *Jahiliyyah* that Islam first confronted and triumphed over. The Tunisian Islamists make the direct connection between the modern and ancient *Jahiliyyahs* explicit in the following declaration:

If in the ages of backwardness, the tyrants hid behind the idols of Al-Lat, Manat, Hubal, and Baal [the pre-Islamic gods of Arabia], then freedom, democracy, equality, nationalism, humanism, progressivism, are the modern idols behind which [today's] tyrants hide the darkness of their souls and the ugliness of their deeds.<sup>113</sup>

In his *Epistle of the Faith*, Saleh Sirriyah denounces nationalism and patriotism as forms of this regression to the pre-Islamic age of Paganism and *Jahiliyyah*.<sup>114</sup> Similarly, an Islamist manifesto of 1987, entitled *The Philosophy of Confrontation* explains the aims of the militants adhering to its philosophy in the following unambiguous words: "We want to declare war on modern paganism and modern idolatry which have spread in our countries and in most of the countries of the Islamists, in imitation of atheistic and pagan Europe, just as our good predecessors fought ancient paganism and ancient idolatry".<sup>115</sup> Obviously the Islamists understand very well, that what is happening to their countries and societies, on this score, is an extension of what had already come to pass in European societies and the capitalist and communist West in general.

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<sup>112</sup> Fahmi Huweidi, 'Jahiliyyah Doctrine' in *al-Ahram* Daily Newspaper, August 5, 12, 19, 1986, p. 7.

<sup>113</sup> Abdel-Latif El-Hermasi, *The Islamic Movements in Tunisia*, Tunis: Bayram Publishers, 1985 (in Arabic), p. 111.

<sup>114</sup> Vol. I, p. 44.

<sup>115</sup> Vol. II, p. 296.

It is useful to emphasize here that the first section of the *Syllabus* is devoted to the denunciation of exactly the same pernicious errors, viz., (a) the atheism of 19th century Europe as in the condemned proposition that "There exists no Divine Power, Supreme Being... and Providence distinct from the Universe", (b) its paganism in the two most dominant forms, then, "Naturalism and Pantheism", and (c) its idolatry in the form of the fetishisation of human reason's supremacy ("Absolute Rationalism" in the terminology of Section I of the *Syllabus*), as in the condemned proposition that: "reason is the master rule by which man can and ought to arrive at the knowledge of all truths of every kind". In addition, the introductory Encyclical to the *Syllabus* does not short-change the Islamists concerning the emphasis on the continuity of current fundamentalist efforts to stamp out the modern versions of the above-mentioned ancient evils and damned heresies, with glorious deeds of the "good predecessors and ancestors"; and with "the illustrious founders whom they venerate upon their altar, and who constituted these societies under the inspiration of God".<sup>116</sup>

Shukri Mustafa, the leader of one of the most radical of the Islamist organizations in Egypt, known as: "The Excommunication and Emigration Group", denounced "modern civilization" as "the high idol now worshipped on earth instead of Allah,"<sup>117</sup> putting us all before the utterly exclusive choice of serving either the one or the other but not both.<sup>118</sup> In fact, like the *Syllabus*, Shirk Mustafa declared both institutional war on, and a *Kulturkampf* against, this innovation called modernity and modernization. If anything, the attacks of Islamists seem more mean-spirited and vicious than their Catholic counterparts. While this "modern civilization" was unquestionably indigenous

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid. See note 1 above.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. p. 119.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. p. 120.

to Europe and Christendom, it seemed totally alien and external to Islam in the eyes of these protectors of Islamdom.

At present Monsignor Lefebvre is the principle defender of the continuing validity and relevance of the *Syllabus of errors*, adopting unreservedly every one of its condemnations. His favourite and most quoted Popes are Pius IX, Leo XIII and Pius X (the fraternity he leads carries the name, "The Priestly Society of St. Pius X). In fact he denounced the Vatican II Papacy because it represents the exact opposite of what the *Syllabus* stands for; having been taken over by the very forces of evil that his preferred Popes were struggling to protect the Church and Christianity against. So like the Islamists, Lefebvre's fundamentalism discredits all these modern developments by tying them to ancient paganism in three steps:

(a) By propagating the doctrine of the *Jahiliyyah* of Islamic century in such words as: "To be sure, to live in a time of apostasy has in itself nothing of an exalting nature! Let us ponder nevertheless that all the times and all the centuries belong to our Lord Jesus Christ... This century of apostasy, without doubt in a different way from the centuries of faith, belongs to Jesus Christ. On the one hand, the apostasy of the great number manifests the heroic fidelity of the small number..."<sup>119</sup>

(b) By invoking the past model of the Alexandrian Arian heresy of the fourth century (pagan to the core) given its roots in the Origenistic tradition and the Hellenistic philosophical teachings of the time.<sup>120</sup> Thus Lefebvre denounces the Conciliar Church in terms that are as historically suggestive as those used by the Tunisian Islamists quoted above:

And behold! Instead of magnifying the royalty of Our Lord Jesus Christ, a pantheon of all religions is instituted! Just as the pagan

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<sup>119</sup> U, p. xvii.

<sup>120</sup> *Lefebvre and the Vatican*, pp. 250-251.

emperors of Rome had made that pantheon of all the religions, today it is the Roman authorities of the Church who are doing it!<sup>121</sup>

At the same time his followers intentionally compare him to Bishop Anthanasius "who, in times of similar general blindness in heresy (Arianism), was one of the few bishops to refuse with vigor to take any part in the politics of Pope Liberius, who favouring heresy...".<sup>122</sup>

(c) By contrasting the origins of the *Jahiliyyah* of European modernity and culture as a whole to "Protestant and Renaissance Naturalism" (*via* the French Revolution), which are then, traced back in their turn to the paganism of antiquity.<sup>123</sup> Even the Sistine Chapel does not escape Lefebvre's censure:

Under a pretext of art, they determined to introduce then everywhere, even in the churches, that nudism- we can speak without exaggeration of nudism – which triumphs in the Sistine Chapel in Rome. Without doubt, looked at front point of view of art, those works have their value; but they have, alas, above all a carnal aspect of exaltation of the flesh that is really opposed to the teaching of the Gospel: "For the flesh covets against the spirit", says Saint Paul, "and the spirit militates against the flesh".<sup>124</sup>

No Islamist could disagree, though s/he may want to supply his/her own sacred quotations against nudity and the exaltation of the flesh.

For another example, take the last item in the *Syllabus*, which condemns the proposition, that: "The Roman Pontiff can, and ought, to reconcile himself to, and agree with progress, liberalism, and civilization as lately introduced". Now translate the above to Islamic idiom by simply substituting for the

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. p. 234.

<sup>123</sup> U, pp. 3-11

<sup>124</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

"Roman Pontiff", the "Rector of al-Azhar" or simply "al-Azhar", and you will get exactly what Shukri Mustafa and his followers and comrades have been condemning for some time and inveighing against in their writings, speeches and adversarial practices. In fact all the Islamists attack al-Azhar and denounce its leadership and elite for having succumbed over the years the very forces and influences that Pope Pius IX was trying to keep at bay. Thus, Shukri Mustafa justified to the court his group's condemnation of the venerable Azhari Sheikh al-Zahabi, Minister of Religious Endowments for *kufir* (apostasy or infidelity) and his eventual abduction and "execution", by citing the fact that the victim had "worked for the Ministry of Religious Endowments, become its Minister, acted as the director responsible for "the mosques of mischief and infidelity" and vowed to rule in accordance with things other than what God had commanded, when he took his ministerial oath". Then Shukri Mustafa stressed that all this was not out of any ignorance on the victim's part of his "obligation to rule according to what God had commanded".<sup>125</sup>

Again, take item XIII of the Syllabus, which condemns the proposition that "The method and principles by which the old scholastic Doctors cultivate theology; are no longer suitable to the demands of the age and the progress of science". Translate the above to Islamic idiom by substituting for "Doctors," "Fuqaha" or "Imams" and you will have exactly what Shukri Mustafa and his like are both censuring, rebelling against and affirming in its stead, at one and the same time.

The following is a translation of typically extreme positions adopted by Shukri Mustafa concerning not only the above issues, but also the whole problem of the idolatry of human reason, its supremacy and arrogance, particularly in its most prevalent form at present, i.e., modern scientific reason:

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<sup>125</sup> Vol. I, p. 103.

(1) "I say, he who thinks that the burdens of building modern civilization are not in conflict with the commandments of worshipping God, and he who thinks it is possible for the Western scientists and builders of civilization to be also obedient servants of God at one and the same time, simply testifies to his own shamelessness and insolence; for they [the Western scientists] are the ones who have forsaken the other world in favour of this one".<sup>126</sup>

(2) "Was it really possible for the Prophet Muhammad and his companions - the hermits of the night and knights of the day, in God's service - to be also physicists, mathematicians, pioneers of space exploration and makers of modern civilization?"<sup>127</sup>

(3) "For thirteen years in Mecca, Allah's Prophet taught the Muslims Islam and nothing but Islam, neither astronomy, nor mathematics, nor physics, nor philosophy; where are those imposters who claim that Islam can not be established unless it becomes a pupil of the European sciences?"<sup>128</sup>

(4) "The knowledge willed by God for us so we do not exceed our bounds - i.e., so we remain obedient slaves of His - and the knowledge commanded by the Prophet on every Muslim - for the purpose of worshipping Allah - is the knowledge of the other world and no more".<sup>129</sup>

(5) "Concerning the question of science (knowledge), it remains for me to say that the whole of humanity that went astray and that God destroyed, prided itself on nothing but its science, and was able to exalt itself above God through nothing but the fruit of a science, cut off from the worship of God alone and no one else".<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Vol II, p. 120.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Vol. II, p. 122.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid. p. 124.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid. p.96.

(6) "We do not reject learning the number of the years and arithmetic connected to God's worship and within its confines... hence, all arithmetical knowledge which does not serve that worship is definitive idolatry and definitive deification [i.e., deification of man]".<sup>131</sup>

Here is Shukri Mustafa's appropriate Islamic idiom of the following pronouncement of Pope Leo XII, *a' propos* of his condemnation of the heresy of Americanism in 1899:

First, efforts to adapt the church's teachings to the modern world are misguided because, as the Vatican Council made clear, the Catholic faith is not a philosophical theory that human beings can elaborate, but a divine deposit that is to be faithfully guarded and infallibly declared.<sup>132</sup>

In fact one have here instances of a simple translatability test which shows that core Christian Fundamentalist theses and representative propositions and positions, can be readily and accurately Islamised to express equally core Islamist Fundamentalist theses and representative propositions and positions; without so much as needing more than a few minor terminological modifications and formal substitutions. This is why the list of modern idols one saw condemned in the *Syllabus* and denounced by the Tunisian Islamists quoted above will continue to repeat itself like a refrain - with minor variations and some expansions and extractions - in the fundamentalist teachings, preachings and thunderings of the other Islamists, as well as of Monsignor Lefebvre's movement and its adherents and spokesmen.

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Lester R. Kurtz, *The Politics of Heresy*, Berkeley, CA: University of California, Press, 1986, p. 47.

Consider for the moment, Lefebvre's attacks: (a) on "*the independence of reason and science in regard to faith*" (italics in the original)<sup>133</sup>, (b) on "the independence of man, with regard to God"<sup>134</sup>, (c) on "the dethroning of God and putting man in His place"<sup>135</sup>, (d) on "the idol of the 'cult of man', established in the sanctuary and sitting as if it were God"<sup>136</sup>, (e) on liberals who "wanting to be free from God, become slaves to earthly things!" and "reject God's Supremacy... and set up a new absolute: Liberty!" in His place<sup>137</sup>, and (f) his appeal to the Christian martyrs "who understood that man is not first, but God is first and must be given pride of place in our life, in our families, in our countries...".<sup>138</sup> What more does one need to call the Islamist movement a genuinely Fundamentalist phenomenon?

Although the Muslim partisans of the *Jahiliyyah* doctrine have not produced as yet a single unified list detailing the errors, heresies, and depraved innovations of the age, *A' la al-Ghazali's* index and/or Pius' *Syllabus*, their writings, teachings, documents and manifestoes leave no doubt that they are out to destroy and eliminate from the live contemporary Arab states, society and culture, their local and much weaker versions of modern materialism, secularism, liberalism, socialism, communism, latitudinarianism, modernism, indifferentism, pietism, democracy, religious tolerance, secular education, civil society (as a religiously neutral arena), and the *de facto* prevailing respect for the principles of religious liberty.

Let me note in passing that while the *Syllabus* condemned "these most fatal errors of Socialism and Communism", Egypt's celebrated tele-evangelist, Sheikh Mutawalli Sha'rawi, related the following incident before the millions watching his show: "When I learned of the Arab defeat in 1967 (the Six Day

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<sup>133</sup> U, p. 21.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. p. 24.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. p. 29.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid. p. xvii.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. p. xii.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. pp. x-xii.

War), I prayed twice to Allah thanking him for what had passed; and when my son asked me, 'how can you thank Allah for the defeat of the fatherland?' I replied, 'a victory, my son, would have tempted us away from our religion in favour of communism'<sup>139</sup>.

Abboud al-Zomor, a member of the *Al-Hijra wal Takfir* cell of the *Jihad* organisation that masterminded and carried out President Sadat's assassination, castigates Arab leaders for having committed all the following unforgivable sins:

[The rulers] have turned their backs on Allah's Book, and raised, first, the banner of democracy calling for secularism, patriotism, nationalism, parliamentarianism, personal freedom, the use cosmetics [by women], and the intermingling of the sexes... then they proceeded to raise the banner of socialism, shouting "long live socialism, freedom and unity", and to call for progress, upward development and the liberation of Palestine...<sup>140</sup>

Similarly, Saleh Sirriyah, leader of the attempted Islamist armed seizure of the Technical Military Academy in Heliopolis near Cairo in 1974, declared the apostasy of anyone who believes in such things as; "materialism, existentialism, pragmatism, ...democracy, capitalism, socialism, patriotism, nationalism, and internationalism"<sup>141</sup>; and then proceeded to define secularism as "collective apostasy".<sup>142</sup>

In the same vein, *The Charter of Islamic Action* declared a holy war (literally and not just figuratively) against secularism, (a) "as a call for the separation of state and religion," (b) "as a doctrine, idea, regime and rule", (c) "in legislation, government, the judiciary, education, information and the media",

<sup>139</sup> *Al-Watan al-Arabi* Weekly Magazine, March 17, 1989, p. 22.

<sup>140</sup> Vol. I, pp. 115-116.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid. pp. 42-43.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. p. 32.

and (d) as a "call to socialism, liberalism, nationalism and *shu'ubism*" (a pejorative code word for communism).<sup>143</sup>

### **Their Connections**

Let me note in this connection that article LV of *The Syllabus of Errors* condemns the proposition that "the Church ought to be separated from the State and the State from the Church", in addition to the entirety of its consequences such as: the destablishment of Catholicism's hegemony over not just "individual men, but nations, peoples, and sovereigns", "the exclusion of religion from the life of civil society", the notion that "the entire direction of public schools...may and must appertain to civil power and belong to it...", the idea that "there is no necessity that human laws should receive their sanction from God", the conception saying that "the Republic is the origin and source of all rights...", and those"...not content with abolishing religion in public society...desire further to banish it from families and private lives". Exactly like the radical Islamists, *Syllabus* denounced its manifold enemies for "promising liberty, while they are themselves the slaves of corruption", and as men "animated and excited by the spirit of Satan" thus "arriving at an excess of impiety". Like them also, it speaks of the "terrible conspiracy of Islamist adversaries against the Catholic Church" (Islam), and condemns the abolition of "Ecclesiastical Courts" (*Shari'a* Courts, abolished by Nasser in Egypt and by Mustafa Kemal before him in Turkey).

The Islamists similarly condemn present-day Arab governments because they "do not mean by Islam a total way of life", but only "acts of worship; imitating in that the states of the Christians", where "man becomes free to worship or not to worship his God". They further denounce as "apostate, he who holds that Islam is no more than a matter of acts of worship", and those who "want to insulate Islam from the affairs of society and to isolate it inside

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid. p. 173.

the mosque - after the fashion of what the Western states did to the Church - thus prohibiting Islam from interfering in social and economic matters as well as the rest of life's affairs; and leaving the field free to communism, socialism, and the Jewish declarations on society's other problems, as in the cases of Freud, Durkheim, Marx and others".<sup>144</sup>

Thus *The Epistle of Faith* of Saleh Sirriyah states, "apostate is he who raises the slogan 'religion belongs to God, while the fatherland belongs to all' because both religion and the fatherland belongs to the Lord of the creation and because those who raise that slogan not only refuse to submit themselves to religion's rule but want religion to submit to theirs".<sup>145</sup> Similarly, *The Document of Islamic Revival* addresses the subject by speaking pejoratively, sarcastically, and dismissively of "those patriots, Westernised with secular patriotism"<sup>146</sup>, while the document titled *The Position of the Islamic Movement vis-à-vis Political Parties in Egypt*, attacks the Wafd Party - Egypt's classical bourgeois party which led the nation against colonial rule - for its secularism, and more specifically for having raised the banner of Christian-Muslim Egyptian national unity under such slogans as: "religion belongs to God while the fatherland belongs to all" and "the embrace (or hug) of the Crescent and Cross".<sup>147</sup>

Interestingly enough, this kind of Muslim-Christian "ecumenism" is even more thoroughly denounced by Monsignor than by the Islamists, particularly in his attack on what he calls "The Reign of Religious Indifferentism", legitimated by the Second Vatican Council. He sarcastically speaks of Vatican II, inviting "Our Lord to come and organize and enliven society, in concert with Luther, Mohammed, and Buddha!" And then he adds:

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid. pp. 40, 41 and 45.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid. p. 45.

<sup>146</sup> Vol. II, p. 214.

<sup>147</sup> Vol. I, p. 152.

"To each his religion!" it is said. Or, "The Catholic religion is good for Catholics, but the Moslem one is good for Moslems!" Such is the motto of the citizens of the indifferentist City. How do you expect them to think otherwise, when the Church of Vatican II teaches them that other religions "are not devoid of significance and of value in the mystery of salvation"? How do you expect them to consider the other religions differently, when the State grants to all of them the same liberty?<sup>148</sup>

Again the Islamists do totally embrace a literal Muslim version of the condemnation of the following proposition in item XV of the *Syllabus of Errors*: "Everyone is free to adopt and profess that religion which he, guided by the light of reason, holds to be true". The Islamists are certainly more than a match for this Papal Fundamentalism when they reject categorically and on grounds of apostasy (punishable by death), (a) the notion that a person is (or should be) "free to worship or not to worship his God"<sup>149</sup>, and (b) the wicked indifferentism which fails to distinguish sharply and clearly between "faith and apostasy, right and wrong", and which lets "he who wishes to believe in any doctrine to do so, and he who wishes to renege his Islam to do so also, without any punishment or reproach...and which gives the right to he who accepts communism to call for it...".<sup>150</sup>

Of course, the *Syllabus* had made the same point by censuring the "pest of indifferentism and its representatives," who show no regard for the "distinction between true and false religion"; and by denouncing those who hold "that the best condition of human society is that wherein no duty is recognized by the Government of correcting, by enacted penalties, the

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<sup>148</sup> U, pp. 210-211.

<sup>149</sup> Vol. I, p.40.

<sup>150</sup> Vol. II, p. 188.

violators of the Catholic religion, except when the maintenance of the public peace requires it".

It is commonly known that Islamists are uncompromisingly calling for the formal, official and unambiguous reestablishment of Islam as the one and only recognized religion in Muslim countries; and for the prohibition and suppression of all "ideas that disagree with Allah's religion and law...such as calling for atheism, depravity and innovation".<sup>151</sup> Interestingly enough, the *Syllabus* has similarly condemned in item LXXVII the proposition that "in the present-day it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion shall be held as the only Religion of the State, to the exclusion of all other modes of Worship".

The very identical fundamentalist logic of Monsignor Lefebvre declares freedom of religion, (a) "Absurd...because it grants the same rights to truth and to error, to the true religion and to the heretical sects", and (b) "*blasphemous*...because it 'concedes to all religions equality under the law' and 'puts the holy and immaculate Spouse of Christ on the level of the heretical sects and even of Jewish perfidy'" (italics in the original)<sup>152</sup>. His conclusion states, "In a Catholic country, one is well entitled to prevent the false forms of worship from being publicly displayed, to limit their propaganda!"<sup>153</sup> And still more forcefully:

...And not the state have the duty, and therefore the right, to *safeguard the religious unity of citizens* in the true religion and to protect the Catholic souls against scandal and the propagation of religious error and, *for these reasons only*, to limit the practice of the false cults, even to prohibit them if need be? (Italics in the original).<sup>154</sup>

Ultimately, both sides share profoundly:

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> U, p. 78.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. p.172.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. pp.204-205.

(a) The fundamentalist conviction that real liberty of conscience means not only condoning, but also promoting falsehood, error, heresy and indifference to God's true religion; or in Lefebvre's words, "only truth has rights; error has no rights" and Catholicism alone is true.<sup>155</sup>

(b) The cynical practice of demanding that their faith be instituted as the sole established religion of the states and countries where Catholics and/or Muslims are in the majority; while appealing to the same discredited principle of the liberty of conscience where their flocks happen to be in the minority, as in Russia, India and China.

Monsignor Lefebvre concurs quoting approvingly the following "principled" argument offered by Father Garrigou-Lagrange:

We can...make of the liberty of worship an argument *ad hominem* against those who, while proclaiming the liberty of worship, persecute the Church (secular and socialising states) or impede its worship directly or indirectly (communist states and Islamic ones, etc.). This argument *ad hominem* is fair, and the Church does not disdain it, using it to defend effectively the right of its own liberty. But it does not follow that the freedom of cults, considered in itself, is maintainable for Catholics as a *principle*, because in itself is absurd and impious: indeed, truth and error cannot have the same rights (*italics in the original*).<sup>156</sup>

Small wonder, then, that this Papal Fundamentalism described the "Fundamental Law" of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867), decreeing "freedom of belief, conscience and doctrine", as "an abominable development"; while declaring the provisions of the same law, giving members of any religion in the realm the right to set up their schools (even in the totally Catholic provinces), null and void. The Islamists affirm exactly the

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid. p.190.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid

same monopolistic claims and exclusivist demands on behalf of their religion; and make no bones about their readiness to rigorously implement all that, if and when they seize power. In fact Fahmi Huweidi, the moderate Islamist thinker we came across earlier, did argue frankly that wherever Muslims are in the majority the state should be thoroughly Islamised and wherever they are in the minority it should remain secular and resolutely separated from and independent of the religion of the majority.

It follows naturally that both this old Papal Fundamentalism and its newer Islamist counterpart keenly seek to re-establish control over public education and exercise strict censorship over what is taught, published, projected and/or shown to make sure that nothing is disseminated that is contrary either to "true religion" or to "good morals". Thus Saleh Sirriyah writes in his *Epistle of the Faith* (castigating the present-day governments of Muslim countries), "The Islamic state is one whose objective is to carry the mission of Islam; to spread it and apply it in *total*, internally and externally...This is to prevail over all the state apparatuses and all the affairs of life. All information would be, then, at the service of the Islamic mission; and nothing contrary to Islam would be broadcast or published. The purpose of education would be to graduate generations, (a) that believe in Islam, (b) that know it well, (c) that accept it as their arbitrator, and (d) that sacrifice for its sake. So, all curricula would be turned in that direction, including the scientific ones. No man would hold responsibility in the affairs of information and education unless he is a missionary for Islam".<sup>157</sup>

Items XLV-XLVII of the *Syllabus* are neither ambiguous nor lenient in their censure of secular public education. For example, they condemn the proposition that the entire direction of public schools, in which the youth of Christian States are educated...may and must appertain to the civil power, and belong to it so far that no other authority whatsoever that shall be recognized

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<sup>157</sup> Vol. I, p. 41.

as having any right to interfere in the discipline of the schools, the arrangement of the studies, the taking of degrees, or the choice and approval of the teachers.

Lefebvre, for his part, strongly endorses his favourite Popes when they affirm; that "the Catholic State does not have the right to permit such liberties, like religious liberty, freedom of the press, and freedom of education".<sup>158</sup>

In similar fashion, Islamists devote a considerable amount of space in their documents, programs and propaganda to the denunciation of the entire public education system in the Muslim countries, not on account of its palpable failures and miserable shortcomings, but primarily on account of the predominantly modern and secular orientation of its curricula, methods of teaching, subject matter taught, pedagogical theory, school and university organization and so on. Even *al-Azhar* and its successive elites of '*ulama*' and clerical leaders have been vehemently attacked and severely criticized by the Islamists for allowing the "corruption and heresy" of secular education to infiltrate the traditional fort and guardian of Muslim learning, doctrine and orthodoxy. In fact their castigation of *al-Azhar* is in many ways similar to Monsignor Marcel Lefebvre's censure of the post Vatican II Papacy for having betrayed the faith.

For example, at Shukri Mustafa's trial, the defendant took up at length this whole educational question (*al Azhar's* situation and role) while under cross-examination, as well as in his extensive replies to, and altercations with, the court judges.<sup>159</sup> He explained that on account of the totally un-Islamic character of Egypt's educational system, some of his followers voluntarily withdrew from schools and universities (*al-Azhar*) while he advised others to do the same. In his *Document of the Caliphate*, Shukri Mustafa explains "the Jews succeeded in diverting people from learning Allah's Book and Wisdom to learning other sciences which they - i.e., the Jews - have founded, formulated and specialized in. This is the earthly knowledge with which the

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<sup>158</sup> U, p. 82.

<sup>159</sup> Vol. I, pp. 70-73; 92-97.

apostates busy themselves in lieu of worshipping Allah. This is the knowledge on which they have built their civilization, constructed their worldly life, and taken joy in, until it turned into their idol in place of Allah...These sciences that we study and the laws that we learn, are the primary means by which humanity exceeds its bounds, gets diverted from its true purpose and dispenses with its God - it is a temptation".<sup>160</sup> Needless to say, the above expressed crude anti-Semitism and Judeophobia is even more entrenched in the well-known varieties of Christian Fundamentalism - Roman Catholicism, Greek Orthodoxy, Protestantism - than it is among the Islamists. Monsignor Lefebvre is no exception.

Shukri Mustafa denounces the modern school system in Egypt as "the educational institutions of the *jahiliyyah*", which he and his followers are required to withdraw from, pretty much the way they withdrew from "the temples of the *jahiliyyah* [i.e., mosques other than their own] and its army [i.e., the Egyptian army]".<sup>161</sup> It is commonly known that fundamentalist Catholics of the variety one is considering here refuse to worship (attend mass) with other Catholics not of their own persuasion.

A more sophisticated Islamist critic and theoretician goes so far as to attack the substitution in today's Arab and Islamic countries of the modern European model of school and university instruction and organization (classroom, laboratory, competitive examinations, degrees), for the traditional religious system of teaching, training students and preparing scholars; a system based, according to him, on the paradigm of the circle of pupils surrounding a recognized *'alim*, scholar, *faqih*, or jurist, giving his lessons in a mosque. He recommends a return to the old practice of the certification of students by such individual senior scholars, advanced *faqih*s and recognized *shaykhs*.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Vol. II, p.p. 123-124.

<sup>161</sup> Vol. I, p. 93.

<sup>162</sup> Ali Kurani, *Hizbullah's [Party of God] Method of Islamic Action*, Beirut, 1985, (in

### CHAPTER 3: SOVEREIGNTY AND ISLAMISM

Another important feature shared by contemporary Islamism and the Papal Fundamentalism under consideration is the deep-seated enmity and open hostility against the whole idea and practice of popular sovereignty, along with its democratic, constitutional and institutional implications and applications. Thus, while the introductory *Encyclical of the Syllabus of Errors* assails those who "dare cry out together 'that the will of the people, manifested by what they call public opinion, or in any other way, constitutes the supreme law, independent of all divine and human right...'" the Islamists, for their part, push the logic of this kind of attack to its logical conclusion, by vociferously insisting on the total incompatibility of Islam with the notion of popular sovereignty in any form or shape.

During his trial, Shukri Mustafa discussed in detail Egypt's constitution, and more specifically those of its provisions which affirm that "sovereignty belongs to the people" and that "the people are the ultimate source of the powers of the state" and so on. For him the most salient "example of man's premeditated disobedience of God on earth and in society - all societies - are constitutions taken not from God's law, but emanating from the people's will, as they allege".<sup>163</sup> He explained to the court, furthermore, that article six of the Egyptian constitution, to the effect that "the people are the source of the power of the state," contradicts the fundamentals of Islam: (a) because in Islam "all things belong to Allah, He alone creates and commands...no one else - be it creature, nation or people - has any such power to legislate"; and (b), because such a provision "upsets the balance established by Him between the *umma* [Muslim nation] and its Imam; considering that God did not provide for any power whatsoever of the *umma* over the ruler, but did make

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Arabic), pp. 48-49. No publisher mentioned.

<sup>163</sup> Vol. I, p. 92.

provisions for the powers of the ruler over the *umma*; that is, if he rules it in accordance with Allah's Book and the Prophet's Sunnah".<sup>164</sup> Lefebvre argues the same point in the following words:

...Elected governments, even if they are called, as by Saint Thomas, "vicars of the multitude," are such only in the sense that they do for it what it cannot do itself, that is, govern. But power comes to them from God, "from whom all paternity in heaven and on earth draws its name".<sup>165</sup> The people in power are therefore responsible for their acts first of all before God, whose ministers they are, and only after that before the people, for whose common good they govern...the "general will" is null if it goes against God's rights. The majority does 'Make' the truth; it has to keep itself in the truth, under penalty of a perversion of democracy.<sup>166</sup>

He then concluded: "therefore, *all authority comes from God, even in a democracy!*" (Italics in the original).<sup>167</sup>

In his *Epistle of the Faith*, Saleh Sirriyah argues bluntly the following: "Democracy, for example, is a way of life which contradicts Islam's way; for in democracy, the people have the power to legislate and to permit and to forbid what they will...while in Islam the people who have no such competence over what is *halal* [permitted by God] and, what is *haram* [prohibited by God], even if they were to achieve total unanimity over the matter. Combining Islam and Democracy is, then, like combining Judaism and Islam, for instance; for as a person cannot be a Muslim and a Jew at one and the same time, he cannot be a Muslim and a Democrat at one and the same time".<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid. p. 90.

<sup>165</sup> Eph. Ch. 3:15.

<sup>166</sup> U, p. 55.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid. p. 52.

<sup>168</sup> Vol. I, p. 40

In a similar fashion to Shukri Mustafa and Saleh Sirriyah, the *Jihad* group devoted the greatest amount of hostile attention to the question of popular sovereignty and its implications and applications. The titles, topics and subjects of some of their documents speak for themselves: *The Position of the Islamic Movement vis-à-vis The Work of Political Parties in Egypt*<sup>169</sup>; *A God Beside Allah: A Declaration of War Against the People's Assembly* [The Egyptian Parliament]<sup>170</sup>; *Our Countries Are Ruled by Positive Laws and Not by the Laws of Islam*<sup>171</sup>; and, *Putting the Egyptian Political System on Trial*.<sup>172</sup>

The reader will find below a close summary and a somewhat free translation of the main relevant points in one of the above-mentioned documents.<sup>173</sup>

The *Jihad* Islamists argue that Democracy, as defined by Lincoln, is the rule of the people, by the people and for the people; and its most important principles are five in number: (1) sovereignty belongs to the people alone - affirmed in article two of the Egyptian constitution; (2) the people are the source of the powers of the state - article five of same constitution; (3) the guaranteeing of liberties and their protection - articles 41, 46-29, 55, 57, 62, 63 and others; (4) the plurality of political parties - article five; and (5) equality in the political and social sense of the term - article four. This diagnosis is then followed by a detailed point-by-point refutation from the point view of Islam.

(1) The fact that Democracy makes the people sovereign by giving them absolute power is something that no Muslim can ever approve of, because Muslims never grant that sovereignty belongs to anyone except to Allah.

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid. pp. 150-163.

<sup>170</sup> Vol. II, pp. 187-197.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. PP. 249-254.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. pp. 273-282.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. pp. 188-189.

Monsignor Lefebvre also holds that in a society where government is based on the principle of popular sovereignty:

The Sovereignty of God is ignored, exactly as if God did not exist, or were not at all interested in the society of mankind; or, indeed, as if men, either in particular or in society, owned nothing to God, or as if one could imagine any power whatsoever of which the cause, the force, the authority did not reside quite entirely in God himself.<sup>174</sup>

(2) Democracy makes the people the source of the powers of the state; i.e., the legislative, executive, and judiciary powers. The existence of a human legislative power, capable of legislating that which God had not permitted in accordance with its own views and inclinations and via a parliament or some other means, is a condition of *jahiliyyah* [idolatry and Godlessness]; for the right to legislate has never been given to any creature, as it belongs to God pure and simple.

(3) As for liberties, Democracy unleashes them unconditionally and to all citizens, without any distinction of right from wrong, good from bad, true from false, belief from unbelief; and it acknowledges no religion - whatever it may be... And as Islam approves of no such false conception of liberties, Muslims are free to call neither for an idea that is opposed to Allah's religion and law, nor for atheism, depravity and innovation...Furthermore, Muslims are not at liberty to dress the way they like, eat as they desire and learn what they wish; no, there is such a thing as what Allah permitted (*halal*), what He prohibited (*haram*), and what He required (*wajib*). What he prohibited is forbidden to us we have been commanded to abstain from it and to interdict it in our societies; what He permitted we are free to do or not to do; and what He commanded we are obliged to carry out.

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<sup>174</sup> U, p. 58.

As for Monsignor Lefebvre, the thrust of all his teachings, preachings and writings are wholly directed at the disparagement, rejection and undoing of exactly the same freedoms that the above Islamists inveigh against. Look randomly at any two or three pages of his books and an attack on liberty will hit you in the face. He summarized his own position on this matter in the following judgment, "the fruit that the Devil presents to the modern world to deceive it, is Liberty" (and he was speaking metaphorically about the Devil).<sup>175</sup>

(4) Democracy establishes the principle of the plurality of [political] parties - a principle radically opposed to Islam, also. The plurality of parties arise only out of the plurality of ideologies in society, whereby each one of them has a need to express itself, to develop its ideas and to recruit supporters...in its endeavour to reach the seat of power. But in a Muslim state, power is not subject to the conflicts of different ideologies; for the simple reason that it can never reside save in the hands of Muslims, who have but one doctrine, one religion, one method and are, hence, free of ideological conflicts, contrary to what is the case in democratic societies [remember the old maxim: *une foi, une loi, une roi*]. Therefore, there are only two parties in a Muslim society: the party of God, and we have been commanded to establish it; and the party of devil, and it is prohibited.

Again, the party of the devil is no figure of speech for Monsignor Lefebvre either, as part three of his book *They Have Uncrowned Him* carries (in all seriousness) the following suggestive title: "The Liberal Conspiracy of Satan Against the Church and the Papacy".

(5) Democracy calls for equality among all citizens - citizenship being the basis of their parity - regardless of their religion and piety. Islam rejects this,

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid. p. ix.

as it rejects the equality of the Muslim to the infidel...of the learned to the ignorant...and of the obedient to God to the disobedient...So, the rule of the infidel [over Muslims] is unlawful, while the people of the book [Christians and Jews] have to pay the tribute tax to the Muslim state.

For Shukri Mustafa, the famous slogans of liberty, equality and fraternity were invented by the Jews in the service of their long-term conspiracy to dominate the world to the detriment of everyone else.<sup>176</sup> Monsignor Lefebvre attributes the same to the equally long-term and pervasive conspiracy of the Freemasons, a codeword for the Jews also. This is how the fundamentalist Archbishop portrays and censures what he regards as the Second Vatican Council's servility to the enemy camp:

*"Freemasons, what do you want? What do you ask of us?"* Such is the question that Cardinal Bea went to ask the B'nai B'rith before the beginning of the Council. All the newspapers of New York where it took place announced the interview. And the Freemasons answered that what they wanted was: "religious liberty!" - that is to say, all the religions put on the same footing. The Church must no longer be called the only true religion, the sole path of salvation, the only one accepted by the State. Let us finish up with these inadmissible privileges. And so, declare religious liberty. Well, they got it: it was *Dignitatis humanae* (italics in the original).<sup>177</sup>

In a chapter of his book bearing the title: *Necessary Inequalities*, Lefebvre rejects the principle of liberty-equality (as he calls it) in favor of the following position:

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<sup>176</sup> Vol. II, p. 151.

<sup>177</sup> U, pp. 67, 214.

I insist on the fancifulness of this equality, according to, which men are born equal, or at least equal in rights? 'Men are born and remain free and equal in rights', proclaims the first article of the declaration of the rights of man, and of the citizen of 1791. Let us look at what the Popes have thought of this:

Pope Pius VI, first of all, condemning especially article II of this same declaration, goes from that to the principle itself of liberty-equality: he condemns it by calling it "idle fancies" and "words devoid of meaning...".<sup>178</sup>

Furthermore, if the inherent inequality of the Christians and Jews with the Muslims in the Islamic realm imposes on the former the obligation of paying the tribute tax, Monsignor Lefebvre has a more radical solution for the problem of non-Christians in the Catholic realm:

Pius IX teaches thus that the State governs in a better way when it recognizes that it has the function of representing the public practice of the erroneous, and not simply to safeguard the public peace; on the exclusive grounds that they go against the Christian and Catholic order of the city, and not only because the public peace or morality would be affected by them.<sup>179</sup>

The *Jihad* Islamists, on their side, remain consistent with themselves and with their principles, when they declare, addressing the present-day Islamic states, "...let no one think that we are petitioning these states to permit the establishment of a Muslim party, as we radically differ with democratic idea. We have announced more than once that we and democracy are the opposite

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid. p. 45.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid. p. 205.

terms of a contradiction; the two of us are as uncombinable as water and fire, light and darkness".<sup>180</sup>

Let one add that in their firm opposition to the modern egalitarian principle, the Islamists do not stray far from the comparable teachings of the Papal Fundamentalism that we have been examining. The First Vatican Council did declare the following:

But the Church of Christ is not a community of equals in which all the faithful have the same rights. It is a society of unequals, not only because among the faithful some are clerics and some are laymen, but particularly because there is in the Church the power from God whereby to some it is given to sanctify, teach and govern and to others not.<sup>181</sup>

In a place of egalitarianism and its politico-juridical implications and applications, the Islamists propose not only the restoration of the hierarchical structures of dependence and subordination embodied in the Caliphate, but also the practice of the *bay'ah*; i.e., the obligation of every Muslim to swear allegiance to a prince (*amir*) and to obey his commands thereafter (again, une foi, une loi, un *amire* ou un *calife*, or as formulated by Mawdudi himself "one God, one Prophet, one Book"). Reacting to similar modern egalitarian demands and pressures, the First Vatican Council reaffirmed that "this power of Jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff" is "truly episcopal" and "immediate"; and then proceeded to insist that all:

...Both individually and collectively, are bound by their duty of hierarchical subordination and true obedience, to submit, not only in

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<sup>180</sup> Vol. II, p. 190.

<sup>181</sup> 'The First Draft of the Constitution on the Church of Christ', in *The Teaching of the Catholic Church: As Contained in Her Documents*, edited by Karl Rahner, Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1966, pp. 219-220.

matters which pertain to faith and morals, but also in those that pertain to the discipline and government of the Church throughout the world, so that the Church of Christ may be one flock under one supreme pastor through the preservation of unity both of communion and of profession of the same faith with the Roman Pontiff.<sup>182</sup>

That is why for Lefebvre's fundamentalism and its followers, the enemy remains "the application of the false principles of religious *liberty*, *Ecumenism*, and *Collegiality* introduced by the Second Vatican Council".<sup>183</sup>

On the other side of the divide the late master of Pakistan's military regime and chief martial law administrator, General Zia ul-Haq, used the Islamisation of the state and implementation of Shari'a Law to exact an absolute obligation of obedience from his subjects. He typically argued:

One basic point that emerges from a study of the Qur'anic verses and the Prophet's sayings...is that as long as the Amir or the head of State... abides by the injunctions of Allah and his Prophet, his obedience becomes mandatory for his subjects or the people, irrespective of the personal dislike that someone may harbour for the Amir or any of his actions...Not only in my opinion but also in the opinion of legal experts and scholars, my Government, too, is a constitutional Government, which has been acting upon the tenets of Islam...We are ...devout Muslim. I concede, and I am proud of it, that the present Government is a military Government.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid. pp. 224-225.

<sup>183</sup> Lefebvre and the Vatican, p. vii.

<sup>184</sup> Address by the late President General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq, Islamabad, August 12, 1983, quoted by Ann Elizabeth Mayer, *Islam and Human Rights*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991, p. 41.

## CHAPTER 4: MODERNISM AND LATITUDINARIANISM

It follows naturally from the above comparative analysis that both the Islamists of today and the Papal Fundamentalists of Pius' time regard the Modernists and Latitudinarians of their respective religions as the "enemy within": whether taken as individual scholars and theologians, as schools of thought and interpretation, or as trends of social reform and religious reconstruction. In other words, Modernism and Latitudinarianism come to signify, in both instances, the siren calls for the departure from and corruption of the Fundamentals of the Catholic and/or Muslim faith, doctrine, teachings, discipline, symbols, realities, and practices, in favour of accommodating all the modern pagan heresies, alien errors, and contemporary idols cited and condemned above. Hence Lefebvre's endless railing against the Modernists for wanting the Church to assimilate such ideals as "liberty, equality, fraternity, democracy and pluralism", and his denunciation of such people as "traitors, turncoats and dangerous enemies of the Church".<sup>185</sup>

As a result of this internal enemy's expansive interpretations, cunning distortions, and unprincipled manipulations of the sacred, "the revealed truth", "the deposit of faith", the "*Usul*", "*Usus*" and authentic practices of Islam and/or Catholicism fall into an unholy state of "absence", "neglect", "loss", and "forgetfulness". Thus the *Syllabus of Errors* speaks of how "the doctrine and authority of divine Revelation" and "the true and germane notion of justice and human right" have been "obscured and lost"; while the documents of the First Vatican Council go out of their way to reaffirm, consolidate, and reinforce the doctrine of Petrine succession embodied in the Papacy and its supremacy and infallibility, all in fundamentalist opposition to the sceptical Modernists and the accommodationist Latitudinarians. Thus the "first

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<sup>185</sup> U, pp. 114, 119.

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ", issued by the First Vatican Council repeatedly emphasized the decisiveness of such matters as: "Of the Institution of the Apostolic Primacy in blessed Peter in the Roman Pontiff", "On the Power and Nature of the Primacy of the Roman Pontiff", and "Concerning the Infallible Teaching of the Roman Pontiff".<sup>186</sup>

Not surprisingly, Modernist attempts at mythopoetic readings, figurative interpretations and allegorical understandings of the "truth" of the sacred Scriptures are summarily rejected. Item VII of the *Syllabus* condemns the proposition that:

The prophecies and miracles, uttered and narrated in the sacred Scriptures, are fiction of poets; and the mysteries of the Christian faith, the result of philosophical investigations. In the books of the two Testaments there are contained mythical inventions, and Jesus Christ Himself a mythical fiction.

Obviously God could not have revealed himself to humanity through myth, fiction, poetry, philosophical discourse and all the other familiar modes of human speech; he had to do it in the form of accurate propositions about historical events and supernatural states of affairs.

Similarly, contemporary Islamists condemn endlessly the "absence", "neglect", and "loss", from the life of contemporary Muslim states and societies of the authority of Divine Revelations, of the Fundamentals of Islam, and, above all, of the original commandment to carry on the *jihad* against the infidels, both internal and external. The epitome of this line of thought is reached in the basic document of the *Jihad* group, *The Absent Commandment*, which goes out of its way to castigate the Muslim Latitudinarians and

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<sup>186</sup> MacGregor, Geddes, *The Vatican Revolution*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1957, pp. 187-197.

Modernists, for emasculating the Islamic imperative of holy war, by explaining it away as signifying no more than defensive battle against foreign invaders and for protecting the Islamic realm only. The author of *The Absent Commandment* wants, of course, to negate the "absence" by reviving *jihad* in the fullness of its original splendour and primarily as an offensive war now against all that is un-Islamic.<sup>187</sup> Abboud al-Zomor - member of the *Al-Hijra wal Takfir* cell that assassinated President Sadat - makes the same point by explaining that "it is not true that *jihad* has been legislated [by God] for the defence of Islam, without pursuing the infidels to and attacking them in their own house...".<sup>188</sup>

A no less "absent commandment" transpires through Monsignor Lefebvre's attack on the ecumenism and collegiality of the Second Vatican Council and the resulting Conciliar Church, viz., the imperative of returning to the Church Militant's mission and demands, or to Catholicism's traditional fighting spirit. As in the case of Islamists, the imagery of *jihad* dominates the Archbishop's discourse, including: a defence of the Inquisition and the Crusades, the use of such terminology (in describing the tasks ahead) as "holy war", "the true soldiers of Christ", and "the sword of the spirit", in addition to pronouncements like, "our Lord sent his Apostles not to dialogue but to preach"<sup>189</sup>, "we are forming an army intent on remaining Catholic no matter what the price"<sup>190</sup>, "and we must be an army, an armada which...follows Our Lord Jesus Christ who fights this crusade that Our Lord wishes to wage today, and through which we must convert the world..."<sup>191</sup> One's sense is that the old Fundamentals of the counter-reformation Church have found ardent advocates and devoted resuscitators in Monsignor Lefebvre and his followers.

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<sup>187</sup> Vol. I, pp. 127-147.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid. p. 122.

<sup>189</sup> U, p. 181.

<sup>190</sup> *Lefebvre and the Vatican*, p. 35.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid. p. 294.

Like modern day fundamentalists elsewhere, the Islamists go out of their way to vigorously reassert - contra the games of the Latitudinarians - the certainty of the simple meaning of the Qur'anic verses and the absolute unilaterality of their message, form and structure against all permeability, redefinition and innovative interpretation. In their war against the "enemy within", they also reaffirm, consolidate, and strengthen what may be called the doctrine of "Mohammedan Succession", i.e., the absolute imperative of restoring the Islamic Caliphate (and caliphate means succession), abolished by the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal, in 1924. *The Charter of Islamic Action* insists that the aim of the Islamists' struggle is to "establish The Religion in its entirety everywhere" and "to institute the Caliphate after the example of the Prophecy".<sup>192</sup> At the same time, another Islamist turns the famous fighting cry "The Republic or Death" into "the Caliphate or Martyrdom".<sup>193</sup> Let me note in passing that the "Republic or Death" was also the rallying and fighting cry of the Nasserist Yemeni Free Officers who overthrew the imam in the early 1960s; particularly during their heroic defense of the capital Sana', against the invading royalist troops and restorationist forces supported by the neighbouring Saudi Arabian monarchy.

Singled out for special attack by the Islamists is 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq, the prominent Azhari cleric who defended the abolishing of the Caliphate and argued for the separation of Mosque and State on grounds internal to the traditional Qur'anic, Prophetic, and legal Islamic discourses and narratives. His book *Islam and the Sources of Political Rule* (Cairo, 1925), turned, at the time, into a major literary-religious scandal in both the Arab and Muslim worlds, leading to the author's expulsion from al-Azhar.

For the Western reader to appreciate the utter radicalism, stunning impact and sheer enormity of Mustafa Kemal's abolition of the Caliphate and 'Abd al-

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<sup>192</sup> Vol. I, p. 168.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid. p. 191.

Raziq's defense of that drastic act, s/he should try to imagine what would have happened had the Italian nationalists in 1870 proceeded to simply abolish the Papacy after the annexation of Rome to the Italian kingdom, in lieu of recognizing the Pope's full sovereignty over the Vatican and his spiritual authority over all Roman Catholics!

Furthermore, just as the Catholic Fundamentalists look to a past European society, where Papal temporal and spiritual authority was supreme, as more representative of Christian ideals, social norms and practical behaviour, similarly the Islamists invoke a vague past Islamic order, where the spiritual and temporal power of the Caliph (especially the first four Caliphs) held sway, as the example of what a more representative - if not ideal - Muslim life could (and should) be. More specifically (and pure political opportunism and tactical hypocrisy aside), neither party seems to regard that past as an ideal for inspiration - a nostalgic desire of sorts - but as a practical model for present-day societies and states to copy and implement.

It is of interest to note in this connection the resemblance between: first, the organicist, corporatist, communalist, hierarchical and complementarian ideal conception of the Islamic state (*Caliphate*) as elaborated today by Islamic Fundamentalist ideologists, under the rubric of the *Tawhidist* state, society, economy and culture (where Islam moves the rich to give the poor their fair share, and where the poor remain contented and spiritually compensated for by obeying Islam's imperatives, living its life and taking to heart its other worldly message), and second, the no less organicist, corporatist, hierarchical, etc., ideal conception of the corresponding Christian state as put forward by Monsignor Lefebvre. The fundamentalist Archbishop also explains that in such a state society is harmonized "as an organism of coordinated and hierarchically arranged social groups", social classes "naturally complement" each other, "the common good of civil society" is "ordered to the heavenly city of the blessed" and "the Catholic City is the fruit

of the union between the Church and the Catholic state". The more or less typical historical realization of this ideal has been, we are told, "the French monarchy of the Old Regime" where "a whole order and hierarchy of multiple intermediate bodies" existed "between the monarch and the multitude of subjects".<sup>194</sup>

Now it remains to be seen, (a) how the Arab Islamists will actually behave vis-à-vis this proclaimed ideal, if and when they seize power, and (b) how the constraints of resistant modern realities and the responsibilities of power will condition their future actions on this score, and modify their utopian conceptions about the implement ability of that ideal. In Iran they gave up on the ideal in favour of the republic, popular elections and the nation state.

Let one note that *The Document of Muslim Revival* denies outrightly that the Modernists and Latitudinarians of the *Nahda*/Renaissance period are "true Muslim Revivalists". It characterizes them pejoratively as "pseudo-revivalists", because a revivalist movement cannot come about either by seeking means to make peace with *jahiliyyah* or by manufacturing a new mixture of Islam and *jahiliyyah*. True revival (or renewal) is the purification of Islam from every part of *jahiliyyah*..."<sup>195</sup> Similarly, the Islamist thinker Ali Kurani dismisses this adulterated form of Islam by labeling it disdainfully, "this deviation of secularist Islam".<sup>196</sup> Marcel assumes the same fundamentalist attitude and stance when he dismisses, with equal disdain, the whole world and achievement of contemporary modernist and liberal Catholicism.

The two forms of Fundamentalism under consideration regard the Modernist "enemy within" as a bridgehead for and/or a Trojan horse (perhaps a Trojan

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<sup>194</sup> U, pp. 18, 53, 210.

<sup>195</sup> Vol. II, p. 225.

<sup>196</sup> *Hizbullah's Methods of Islamic Action*, p. 64.

camel for the Islamists) at the service of the massive forces of modernity bent on destroying their respective religions and the attendant institutions, teachings and historical hold on people's hearts and minds. Naturally the result is, in depth, a militant defensive reaction, which sees the whole of the Christian and/or Muslim religion, the whole of European and/or Islam's societies under mortal threat from the encircling satanic conspiracy of the modern condition.

Thus in his diatribes against the errors of "our most unhappy age" and the heresies of our "utterly deplorable times", Pius IX spoke in his *Syllabus* of the "struggle between Christ and Belial", of "the terrible conspiracy of our adversaries against the Catholic Church and this Apostolic See", of "the numerous calamities of the Church and of Civil Society" and of the impious enemies "animated and excited by the spirit of Satan". Other declarations of the First Vatican Council spoke of how the "gates of hell with daily increase of hatred are gathering their strength on every side to upheaval the foundation laid down by God's own hand, and so, if that might be, to overthrow the Church...."<sup>197</sup> Pope Leo XIII identified the main force behind this terrible conspiracy in no uncertain terms:

In our time the instigators of evil seem to have formed a coalition in an immense effort, under the impulse and with the help of Society spread out in a great number of places and skillfully organized the Society of the Freemasons.<sup>198</sup>

Then he proceeded to praise the vigilance of his predecessors in the following words:

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<sup>197</sup> "The First Draft of the Constitution on the Church of Christ", in *The Teaching of the Catholic Church: As contained in Her Documents*, originally prepared by Joseph Neuner, S.J.; and Heinrich Ross, S.J.; edited by Karl Rahner, S.J.; translated from German by Geoffrey Stevens, Staten Island, New York: Alba House, 1966, p. 221.

<sup>198</sup> U, p. 10.

Our predecessors had very quickly recognized this principle enemy at the moment when, coming out of the darkness of an occult conspiracy, it sprang forth to the attack in the full light of day.<sup>199</sup>

And Monsignor Lefebvre follows suit by referring the conspiracy back to the French Revolution:

From the day after the Revolution, the devil raised up on the inside of the Church men filled with the spirit of pride and of novelty, posing as inspired reformers who, dreaming of reconciling the Church with Liberalism, attempted to bring about an adulterous union between the Church and the principles of the Revolution!<sup>200</sup>

The dark conspiracy acquires Orwellian dimensions of convolution and absurdity with the followers of Lefebvre's type of fundamentalism. Thus, just as the secret book of the dissidents in *Nineteen Eighty Four*; turns out to have been written by Big Brother's Thought Police in the first place, similarly "*the Master Stroke of Satan*", leading the Conciliar Church "*into disobedience to tradition*" turns out to have been executed "*in the name of obedience itself*".<sup>201</sup> In any case Lefebvre himself had been preaching for some time about explanations like: "This is not a human battle. We are in a close combat with Satan" and we face "in front of us an army directed by Satan".<sup>202</sup>

The writings and pronouncements of the Islamists, their thinkers and ideologists, are replete with exactly the same images of contemporary gloom and doom and of dire warnings to the Islamic world against the mortal dangers posed to Islam and everything Islamic, by the evil conspiracy of the

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> U, pp. xvi-xvii.

<sup>201</sup> *Lefebvre and the Vatican*, p. 219 (italics in the original).

<sup>202</sup> Ibid. pp. 17-18.

wicked forces constituting that overpowering Satanic creation known as the *jahiliyyah* of the Twentieth Century. For example, Shukri Mustafa left us a lengthy disquisition on the great international conspiracy against Islam, masterminded by the Devil and carried out primarily by the "World Jewish Government" (Lefebvre's Freemasons) without exempting the permanently crusading Christians either.<sup>203</sup>

Lefebvrian fundamentalism attacks the Conciliar Papacy for having succumbed totally (*via* the enemy within) to the secular anti-Christian and anti-Catholic powers that be, obediently carrying out their evil will. Consequently the Archbishop came to adopt a sedevacantist position, regarding the Seat of Peter as vacant and Rome as occupied by the Antichrist. He bolsters his case by quoting a supposed "prophetic vision" of Pope Leo XIII (reported by the Virgin herself), "revealing that one day 'the See of Peter would become the seat of iniquity'," and by citing the predictions of "Our Lady at La Salette" to the effect that "Rome will lose the Faith" and 'there will be an 'eclipse' at Rome".<sup>204</sup>

The Fundamentalism of the Islamists attacks I-Azhar, its 'ulama' (Islam's clerics and scholars) and rectors for exactly the same reasons. The "enemy within" has completely taken over the venerable institution, obediently carrying out the evil will of the secularist anti-Muslim powers that be. Shukri Mustafa damns the entire teaching curriculum of al-Azhar and denounces Sheikh Shaltut, one of its most prominent and enlightened rectors under Nasser's regime, for returning Muslim right into wrong and Muslim wrong into right, all in the service of the un-Godly secularist powers of the time.<sup>205</sup> The *Jihad* militants are equally adamant in their sarcastic attacks on "those who wear the robes of the 'ulama' filling the land with sound and fury..."

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<sup>203</sup> Vol. II, pp. 144-151.

<sup>204</sup> *Lefebvre and the Vatican*, pp. 139-140.

<sup>205</sup> Vol. I, pp. 62; 70-71.

those "who distort the word", support the reigning infidelity and justify - with their *fatwas* and rulings - the wrongdoing of apostate rulers.<sup>206</sup>

Obviously for Islamists, no less than for Lefebvre: there is an "eclipse" over al-Azhar these days and a loss of faith inside it. The Rector's Chair is only vacant, but has become a seat of iniquity as well.

All in all, the inescapable conclusion tells one that the Islamism of today is no less of an "Islam-of-crisis" than was the Papal Fundamentalism reviewed above a "Catholicism-of-crisis", all in counter-reaction and begrudging adaptation to the disruptive threats and mortal challenges posed by the incredible dynamism, teeming forces and irresistible pressures and lures of the modern condition.<sup>207</sup>

## CHAPTER 5: ISLAMISM AND SCIENCE

Where God is in charge some things cannot be allowed to be true.<sup>208</sup>

Although the scientific-critical study of Christianity is condemned in the *Syllabus* and dismissed by Monsignor Lefebvre as "the false critical science" and the "false immanentist philosophy of the age"<sup>209</sup>, one should all know something by now about the entrenched suspicion and hostility with which religious fundamentalists of all colours and hues have held modern scientific investigation, knowledge, and world pictures. For example, the Papal Fundamentalism discussed above inveighed endlessly, in its own time, against "Scientism", "false science", "Rationalism", "Naturalism" and "the abyss of

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<sup>206</sup> Vol. II, p.246.

<sup>207</sup> Berman, Marshall, *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, New York: Penguin Books, 1988.

<sup>208</sup> Rushdie, Salman, *Shame*, Jonathan Cape Ltd., 30 Bedford Square, London, 1983, p. 82.

<sup>209</sup> U, p. 112.

Pantheism", "Materialism and Atheism"; declaring the following beliefs anathema, *via* the pronouncements of the First Vatican Council:

1. If any one shall say that in divine revelation there are no mysteries, truly and properly so called, but that all the doctrines of faith can be understood and demonstrated from natural principles, by properly cultivated reason: let him be anathema.
  
2. If any one shall say that human sciences are to be so freely treated that their assertions, although opposed to revealed doctrine, are to held true, and can not be condemned by the Church: let him be anathema.
  
3. If any one shall assert it to be possible that sometimes, according to the progress of science, a sense is to be given to doctrines propounded by the Church different from that which the Church has understood and understands: let him be anathema.<sup>210</sup>

The Islamists are no exception to this rule, except for their greater crudity, extremism and virulence. The master theoretician of contemporary Islamic Fundamentalism, Mawdudi, expressed similar fears of and suspicion about modern science when he wrote:

Reflections on the nature of modern education and customs, immediately reveals their contradiction with the nature of Islamic education and customs. You teach young minds philosophy, which seeks to explain the universe without Allah. You teach them science, which is devoid of reason and slave of the senses. You teach them economics, law and sociology which, in spirit and in substance, differ

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<sup>210</sup> MacGregor, Geddes, *The Vatican Revolution*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1957, p. 183.

from the teachings of Islam. And you still expect them to have an Islamic point of view.<sup>211</sup>

The spokesperson on cultural and scientific affairs of Mawdudi's Fundamentalist political party, the *Jama'at-el-Islami*, explained the idolatrous nature of modern science in no uncertain terms:

All modernist ideologies are characterized by man worship. Man worship most often appears under the guise of science. Modernists are convinced that progress in scientific knowledge will eventually confer upon them the powers of divinity.

Modern science is guided by no moral value, but naked materialism and arrogance. The whole branch of knowledge and its applications is contaminated by the same evil. Science and technology are totally dependent upon the set of ideals and values cherished by its members. If the roots of the tree are rotten, then the tree is rotten; therefore all its fruits are rotten.<sup>212</sup>

Similarly, the American-based Iranian Islamist thinker, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, holds against modern science the fact that "so many present-day students lost their religious moorings upon studying modern mathematics and chemistry", and then proclaims that no amount of protestation on the part of Muslim Modernists "will prevent this kind of science from corroding the foundations of the citadel of Islamic faith". Consequently he affirms:

Whatever devout Muslim scientists may believe as individuals, they cannot prevent their activity from emptying the Islamic intellectual

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<sup>211</sup> Hoodbhoy, Pervez, *Islam and Science: Religious Orthodoxy and the battle for Rationality*, London, Zed Books, 1991, p. 53.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid. pp. 52-53.

universe of its content unless this science is shorn away from its secular and humanistic matrix where it has been placed since the Renaissance.<sup>213</sup>

Needless to say, the Muslim Fundamentalists, like their Christian counterparts, regard Darwin, Marx and Freud as the “Diabolical” enemy incarnate (the Jewishness of the latter two helps) and as the symbols of all that is wrong not only with modern science but with the modern world in general. The distinguished Pakistani nuclear physicist Pervez Hoodbhoy (Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) gives the following account of a major "scientific" keynote address delivered by the Rector of the Islamic University of Pakistan, A. K. Brochi, under the Islamisation policies of the late President of the country, Zia ul-Haq:

In his speech Mr. Brochi expressed little sympathy for the "dubious contribution of contemporary thought that is reflected in sciences like Physics and Chemistry". The textbooks used in universities today were the particular objects of his ire because they: "bear on the face of their pages indelible imprint of the findings that have been recorded by some, at least, of the outstanding irreligious thinkers like Darwin, Freud, Karl Marx". Mr. Brochi found Einstein's theory of relativity to be objectionable and incompatible with Islam: "In my considered opinion, the Einsteinian view of the behaviour of moving particles - or the ultimate constituents of matter - regarded from the Islamic perspective, is false".<sup>214</sup>

Under the Islamisation policies of present-day Sudan, the eminent biologist, Farouk Muhammad Ibrahim, was persecuted and imprisoned in 1990, because

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid. pp. 69-70.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid. p. 79.

he taught his students something about Darwinian evolutionary theory.<sup>215</sup> And in a document of the *Jihad* group devoted to an attack on Nasser and Nasserism, the following accusation can be reread: "The reader of the Nasserist discourse cannot but smell clearly the odour of Darwinism, the creed of self-interest, the marginalisation of religion, and its description as mere 'spiritual values'".<sup>216</sup>

Let me digress for a minute here to point out that this negative attitude towards modern science becomes even more striking (and interesting) when one reminds oneself of the lengths to which earlier Muslim latitudinarians and modernists went to reconcile Islam with science. Their main strategy was to naturalize science Islamically by first singing its praise and privileging the kind of knowledge it yields, and then arguing (a) that Europe borrowed the scientific method from Islam in the first place (*via* Spain), (b) that nothing in modern scientific knowledge and discoveries really contradicts true Islam, and (c) that when such seeming contradictions arise they can easily be mediated and resolved to the satisfaction of both sides by an improved understanding of the profounder meaning of Islam's scriptures and essential teachings. Needless to say the current radical Islamists follow the exact opposite strategy of privileging Islam alone or a certain conception of it, to the deliberate denigration and exclusion of science.

The general complaints about scientific knowledge remain the same: (a) Its inherent autonomy in the face of the totalising and overarching claims of traditional, conservative and fundamentalist religiosity; (b) Its abandonment of authority - especially religiously sanctioned authority - as a criterion of truth and acceptability; (c) Its constant sceptical bent of mind and materialist orientation; (d) Its explanation of the world in terms that inevitably challenge and contest the comprehensive - and ostensibly final - accounts of same given

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid. p. 47.

<sup>216</sup> Vol. II, p. 288.

by the long established and elaborate religious belief-systems; (e) Its powerful impact on the interpretation of the religiously sacred, leading, for example, to the understanding of the language of the Bible and/or Qu'ran in light of our scientific knowledge of natural phenomena rather than the other way round.

By way of example consider the following minor experiment:

The Qu'ran is absolutely infallible, without error in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as well as in areas such as geography, science, history, etc. The disintegration of our social order can be easily explained. Men and women are disobeying the clear instructions God gave in His Word.

These could have been the stereotypically fundamentalist words of Ayatollah Khomein, Shukri Mustafa, Saleh Sirriyah, the assassins of President Sadat, the leaders of the Islamist band that occupied the holy shrine in Mecca in 1979, but in fact they are the words of the famous and highly influential American fundamentalist leader Jerry Farwell, with the exception of a single word that is altered, viz., substituting "Qu'ran" for "Bible".<sup>217</sup>

In confronting the power and destabilizing impact of science, the Islamists resort to a variety of strategies and tactics that are well known and well tried in the West - the *locus classicus* of the explosive confrontation between religious orthodoxy and modern science. The most sophisticated strategy can be summarized in two main points:

1. Scientific knowledge is underrated and disparaged by turning its very distinguishing characteristics against it. In other words, the fact

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<sup>217</sup> Falwell, Jerry, *Listen America*, Doubleday, NY, 1980, p. 63; quoted by Nancy Ammerman, *Bible Believers: Fundamentalists in the Modern World*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987, p. 1.

that scientific knowledge is always incomplete, cumulative, approximative, contingent, corrigible, falsifiable, revisable and so on, renders it "not real knowledge" in their eyes. Knowledge, for them, is always of the Truth, while the known truths are not knowledge.

2. Science is stripped of all significant theoretico-epistemological value and cognitive content by reducing it to not much more than sets of successful guesses, useful calculations, practical techniques and effective operations for the manipulation of material objects and the satisfaction of human needs. As far as science is concerned, the radical Islamists come out as enthusiastic partisans of primitive operationalism and crude technicism. The more sophisticated theoreticians among them tend to add a dash of fashionable conventionalism and pragmatic instrumentalism.

All in all, it's safe to say that in practice they clumsily and unknowingly heed the substance of the advice Cardinal Bellarmino once gave to Galileo in order to avoid head-on collision with the fundamentals of the then reigning Roman Catholic orthodoxy and its guardians. According to that cunning piece of advice Galileo had, first, to stop affirming that his scientific inquiries were producing knowledge about the nature of the world (true propositions about floating bodies, sun spots, vacua, the motion of the earth, the moons of Jupiter and the mutability of celestial matter), in favour of only claiming that his science proposes no more than, (a) useful "hypotheses" that allow us to handle physical phenomena more effectively and efficiently, and (b) practical mathematical calculations, formulae and tricks for the improved manipulation of objects, their motions and relations. Of course, "hypotheses" are to be taken, here, in the older pejorative sense repudiated by Isaac Newton, *qua* scientist, in his famous denial: "hypotheses non-fingo". In other words, Galileo was advised to leave the truth about the affairs of this world also - and

not just the other one - to established religion by confining himself, as scientist, to the production of interesting speculations, useful hypotheses and practical calculations, but no more.

In the following the reader will find two concrete illustrations of this kind of contemporary fundamentalist response to the threat of modern scientific knowledge:

1. The devaluation of the theoretico-cognitive significance of science and modern scientific knowledge, in general is given by Ayatollah Mutahhari in the following words:

Another shortcoming of the scientific world view as a basis for an ideology is that science is unstable and un-enduring from a theoretical standpoint, that is, from the standpoint of presenting reality as it is or of attracting faith to the nature of the reality of being. From the viewpoint of science, the face of the world changes from day to day because science is based on hypothesis and experiment, not on rational and self-evidence first principles. Hypothesis and experiment have a provisional value; so the scientific worldview is shaky and inconsistent and cannot serve as a foundation for faith. Faith demands a firmer, an unshakable foundation, a foundation characterized by eternity... The importance of the scientific worldview lies in its practical, technical value, not in its theoretical value. What can serve, as the support for an ideology is a theoretical value, not practical one... The practical and technical value of science lies in science's empowering man in his work and being fruitful, whether or not it represents reality. Today's industry and

technology displays the practical and technical value of science.<sup>218</sup>

Then the Ayatollah concludes that:

One of the remarkable things about science in today's world is that, to the extent that its practical and technical value increases, its theoretical value diminishes.<sup>219</sup>

2. The condemnation of the following characteristics of scientific knowledge, is given by Monsignor Lefebvre:

(a) "*The independence of reason and science in regard to faith*"; i.e., their autonomy and "self-sufficiency" in general and their rejection of "*any foreign domination*" from outside, in particular (italics in the original).<sup>220</sup>

(b) The spirit of innovation (*bida'* for the Islamists) and its attendant attitude of intellectual curiosity so characteristic of and essential to the modern scientific enterprise of search and research. Or, in the words of this brand of fundamentalism, condemned are: "*the morbid love of novelty under the pretext of progress*"; the consequent "*curiosity*" and "*pride*" (in science and reason) leading to mortal error; the "lamenable spectacle" of "how far the wandering of human reason go once the spirit of novelty is given way to" (italics in the original)<sup>221</sup>; the "turning aside of all revelation...in order that access may be opened up to the

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<sup>218</sup> Muttahari, Ayatollah Murtaza, *Fundamentals of Islamic Thought: God, Man and the Universe*, Translated from the Persian by R. Campbell, California: Mizan Press, 1985, pp. 69-71.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> U, p. 21.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid. pp. 17-18.

discoveries or rather frenzies of unaided reason"<sup>222</sup>; the spirit of "unrestricted research" which in any case, very rarely leads "to religious and Philosophical truth"; "the philosophy of open investigation" which "results in Hegel" (who may, then, lead to Marx); and the fact that "a free researcher" is really indistinguishable from the proverbial enemy of religion, the "free thinker".<sup>223</sup>

(c) The idea of "evolutionism" in all realms: biological (Lamarck and Darwin), intellectual (rationalism and its myth of the indefinite progress of human reason), moral (emancipation from the 'taboos'), political-religious (emancipation of societies with regard to Jesus Christ)".<sup>224</sup> Condemned is also the accompanying notion "of a Church that evolves" and all those who "want an evolving faith", considering that for "the faith, evolution is death".<sup>225</sup>

The spokesperson on culture and science for Mawdudi's Islamist party referred to above, relayed the same message in the following terms:

[In Islamic society] originality, innovation and change were never upheld as intrinsic values. The ideal of Islamic culture was not mechanical, evolutionary progress but the permanent, immutable, transcendental, divinely revealed moral, theological, and spiritual values of the Qur'an and Sunnah.<sup>226</sup>

The Islamists are no less aware than their Catholic counterparts that the truths about the affairs of this world had slipped out of Islam's sphere of competence - with the help of earlier Muslim reformists, modernists, latitudinarians - and

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid. p. 176.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid. p. 16.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> *Islam and Science*, 1991, p. 53.

show signs of anguished struggle to redress the balance in favour of restoring religion's once paramount theoretico-epistemological position and domination. For example, Shukri Mustafa is so acutely conscious of the threat posed by modern science to the Islamic World picture and its edifying narratives, so suspicious of the destabilizing impact of the spread of scientific information, explanation and world views on the Islamic belief-system and its attendant practices, that he mounts a comprehensive and formidable assault on all forms of non-religious knowledge, sparing not even mere literacy and simple arithmetic. What was fear and suspicion of science with Mawdudi, resurfaces as pure phobia and obsession with Shukri Mustafa.

Thus for Shukri Mustafa also, scientific knowledge is no more than guess, surmise and hypothesis, because "the knowledge which Allah permitted human beings to acquire is strictly limited to what binds them to the one and only obligation He imposed on them, viz., to worship Him alone and no one else".<sup>227</sup> Furthermore, this radical Islamist is certain that the acquisition of any form of knowledge, which exceeds the bounds of meeting the immediate practical needs of the Muslim community and serving its urgent interests, simply leads to idolatry and apostasy. For him, "an atom's worth of learning intended for something other than the above objective, falls outside the bounds of servitude to Allah"; and is the beginning "of man's deification on earth".<sup>228</sup> Similarly, he holds that because all "learning should be tied to worship, the acquisition of the practical side of knowledge may take place, even in the religious sciences, only in case of pressing need.... The same applies to the sciences, such as astronomy, writing and foreign languages, considering that Allah wanted the 'best *umma* ever brought forth to mankind'<sup>229</sup>, to be an illiterate nation which can neither write nor calculate".<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Vol. I, p. 93.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> The *Holy Qur'an*, 3:110

<sup>230</sup> Vol. I, p. 94.

Basing himself on the additional fact that the Prophet himself was illiterate, Shukri Mustafa prohibits literacy in the Muslim community save in cases where practical necessity and urgent need require it. He explains to the court during his trial that, "the teaching of writing in the Muslim community is prohibited except when it relates to a practical and real need". For emphasis he added, "learning to write in excess of that limit is prohibited [*haram*]"<sup>231</sup>. All attempts by latitudinarians at figurative interpretations and/or expansive readings of the question of "illiteracy" (*ummiyyah*) in Islam, both as Quranic concept and as an important attribute of the Prophet himself (illiterate=*ummi*), are expressly rejected by him in favor of the narrowest and most literal of meanings, viz., plain inability to read, write and calculate. In brief, strict fidelity to Islam's Fundamentals and to the ideal of the imitation of Muhammad imposed an overriding preference for that sort of illiteracy.

Although the other Islamists do not subscribe to Shukri Mustafa's extremist radical condemnation of all learning and knowledge, they also want no more of them than is absolutely necessary and useful to Muslims. Thus Abboud al-Zomor divides knowledge into the two categories of "the religious sciences" and what he calls the "realistic sciences" (the natural and social sciences). His pamphlet explains that in addition to instruction in the sciences of the first category, the members of the Jihad group are taught "the necessary minimum of the legitimate 'realistic sciences' that are useful to the Islamic Movement so the member can correctly understand the reality he lives, the goals he is seeking to achieve, the nature of the path he is embarked on and the difficulties facing him; all this in accordance with a curriculum prepared by specialists in various fields".<sup>232</sup> The "realistic sciences", specifically mentioned by Abboud al-Zomor are, "the political, military, economic, administrative, organizational, informational and educational sciences".<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid. p. 95.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid. p. 119.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid. p. 114.

The Lefebvrians, on their part, also warn their flock against the dangers of over-expanding their reading lists beyond orthodox Catholic works, impressing on all concerned the truth enunciated by John of Salisbury in the 12th century to the effect that the safe and caution thing is to read only Catholic books. Accurate reading on a wide range of subjects makes the scholar, but careful selection makes the saint.

For the Islamists, as for Marcel Lefebvre, the way out is to reintroduce God into science. By this way, Islamists reproduce below the bizarre manner in which the Mawdudi Fundamentalists propose to achieve that end in Pakistan's schools as well as in correct Islamic scientific discourse and explanations:

No phenomenon or fact should be mentioned without referring to the benevolence of Allah. For example, in writing a science book for class 3 children one should not ask, "What will happen if an animal does not take any food?" Instead, the following question should be asked: "What will happen if Allah does not give the animal food?"... Similarly it is un-Islamic to teach that mixing hydrogen with oxygen automatically produces water. The Islamic way is this: when atoms of hydrogen approach atoms of oxygen, then by the will of God water is produced.<sup>234</sup>

## Conclusion

In Greetzian terms Part Two's approach is marked by a subtle analysis of multiple subtext on a broad cross-cultural spectrum. By contrast, most observers of Islamist movements tend to analyse at local actors, surface

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<sup>234</sup> *Islam and Science*, 1991, p. 54.

events, and nation-specific data, privileging them as unique signposts without parallel equivalents, for the understanding of Islamism.

The rest of Part Two consists of analysis of Roman Catholic and Protestant fundamentalist texts, which are cross-read with documents and writings from the most radical of the Egyptian fundamentalist groups. The result is a kind of cognitive polyphony which allows one to hear voices from three insular traditions talking to one another on identical issues and, more surprising still, often in the same semantic field.

Four emphases illustrate the degree to which all three groups - Protestant, Catholic and Muslim Islamists - concur. First, they detect errors, they declaim heresies, and debar innovations. Only one Truth - ageless and unchanging - endures. Second, popular sovereignty is not just flawed, because too many groups have divergent levels of awareness and conflicting ambitions, it is wrong. It is wrong because the masses never know, and can never know, what is true or right. In their opposition to popular sovereignty all three share a "deep-seated enmity and open hostility" to democratic ideals. Third, they mark out, and then attack, again and again, the enemy within, that is to say, the modernists or latitudinarians, all those who support reform, liberty, and revolution as worthy ideals for the present or modern era. Finally, they gird themselves with special zeal on the side of religion in its battle with science. Not only do they undervalue and disparage scientific knowledge but also, some go so far as to claim that all forms of non-religious knowledge are to be regarded as invalid.

Protestant and Catholic fundamentalists, who do not recognize each other as believers, are here brought into conversation with one another. And both in turn become conversation partners with an unimaginable third set of fundamentalists, their look-alikes who happen to be an Islamist.

## **PART THREE: DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL ISLAM**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the last three decades, the Middle East and North Africa has being marked by two major currents: democracy and political Islam. Islam itself is the subject of a contemporary theopolitical debate, between a modern form and an authentic form, out of which a synthesis tends to rise, only to be attacked again by a new authentic antithesis. Political Islam is the current antithesis, attacking the unpopular states for impiety and materialism. Democracy is also rising in popularity as a criterion of good government, with special meaning as the consummation of nationalism for new states recently free from colonial rule. In Chapter Two of Part One, the two currents are not necessarily incompatible but they have different sources and will have a profound effect on each other whenever they meet.

While many non-Muslim thinkers have considered the state, from its beginning, as an established order dealing with the worldly concerns of its members, Islamic thought in general has justified, in Chapter Two of Part Two, the existence of the state on more fundamental grounds. Everyday problems and survival are not seen as sufficient reasons for establishing a political system. The state protects and encourages morality. The specific reason that is usually cited for the existence of the state is the establishment of a moral society on the basis of God's teachings. The goal of politics is the attainment of the Islamic system. Politics should also aim at the realization of the good, the attainment of normative principles, and the application of prescriptive remedies to social problems. Two dominant interpretations have been put forward in modern times- modernism and fundamentalism.

## CHAPTER 1: ISLAMISM AND DEMOCRACY

Much of the Muslim world finds itself today at the crossroads of two historical political currents. One of these currents is democracy: the other, political Islam. It is unlikely that either current will win totally. More probably, the result will be a turbulent mixture of the two in varying proportions. The outcome, however, will have momentous consequences for the people involved and also for the rest of the world.

The confrontation concerns two rising tides of attention, surging from their own sources, spreading through their own dynamics, and flowing together in many places throughout the world. They meet wherever governance is debated in the land of Islam, but they also meet in the streets of Paris, in the hidden house of Salman Rushdie, author of *The Satanic Verses*,<sup>235</sup> and in the District Building in Washington, D.C, when it was taken over by the Hanafi sect in 1977. From one side, democracy, flowing from the West since classical Athens, has suddenly resurged as a popular demand and a political criterion in response to the failures of authoritarian rule in both the Second and Third worlds. On the other side, Islamic revival and its extension as a political formula have also arisen in reaction to the failures of modernization and secular socialism in developing countries.

This is not to say that Islam is the successor to communism as a threat to the West, as some U.S. government spokespersons have suggested.<sup>236</sup> Islam, as a personal religious belief, has no necessary consequences for either domestic governance or foreign relations, despite the inherent unity of social and religious life in Islamic teaching. It is only when the religious beliefs about piety and correct behavior are promoted as the basis of the political system that they shape the practices of domestic governance and international relations.<sup>237</sup> Even then, as other parts of this thesis will show, regimes that call

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<sup>235</sup> Rushdie, Salman, *The Satanic Verses*, Viking: Penguin Group, London, 1988.

<sup>236</sup> *New York Times*, World, 1 January 1992.

<sup>237</sup> Piscatori, James, ed., *Islam in the Political Process*, New York: Cambridge University

themselves Islamic may pursue their interests in cooperation with Western states, as governments in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Mauritania have done, whereas others also calling themselves Islamic may see themselves necessarily and primarily in conflict with the West, as governments in Iran and the Sudan have done. Moreover, in all of these states, opposition parties calling themselves Islamic have contested their own governments.

Nonetheless, as currents of political philosophy, and so of practice, both Western democracy and political Islam are systems of thought and action with their own integrity, neither containing the precepts of the other. In reality, in the workings of politics and governance each other wherever they meet. How to be a democrat in an Islamic state? The two sets of ideas and practices challenge and contaminate How to be an Islamist in a democratic state? How democratic can an Islamic state be? How Islamic can a democratic state be? All are real and important questions for sincere citizens not only in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Iran, the Sudan, and Mauritania but also in France, Nigeria, England, India, the Russian Confederation, and the United States.

### **The Cultural Dialectic**

Arab writers and Western analysts have long debated two poles of attraction for Muslim society in its search for a model for the kingdom of believers on earth. One is an Arabo-Islamic model of revealed values, calling for a return to religious inspiration to bring the kingdom of God to his followers. The other is a worldly model of materialist values, designed to bring modern success to the community of believers. To some, the first is seen as authentic but traditional, and hence outmoded; to others, the second is considered as modern but secularist and often foreign, and thus alien. This dichotomy represents not merely a clash of conceptions and of criteria for desirable

conduct but the basis of a dynamic process of conflict and creation that acts as dialectic.

Out of this clash between thesis and antithesis came not simply a clear-cut victory but rather, in time, a synthesis of the two cultures into a political system that combined the material values of the state with religious values for the individual, as recorded earlier in Part One of this thesis. In time, however, the synthesis itself has come under attack, usually from a new antithesis in the form of a religious revival that castigates the incumbent political culture for its materialism, mismanagement and corruption. The confrontation reopens, and is resolved in turn not by a clear defeat of one side but by a new synthesis combining elements of both models. The dynamic goes on.

This dialectic was the basis of the famous analysis of the fourteenth century Arab philosopher Abdurahman ibn Khaldun,<sup>238</sup> who saw the dynamic of history as a conflict between desert zealots and urban materialism. The rulers of Arab society became caught up in the corrupting material culture of their capitals, arousing the corrective zealotry of the hardy communities living on the desert fringes of the countries. They emerged from the wilds to conquer the cities and install austere government based on religious principles. But in time the urban life got to them and their rule became a synthesis of the two cultures. In a cyclical fashion, new zealot groups, bound together in their coarse life by a strong spirit of solidarity, again came over the mountains to clean out the urban fleshpots and, in turn, fall into them.

With the coming of Western colonialism, the dialectic took on a new meaning. The materialistic thesis became the colonial society, drawing in imitators fashioned by Western material success but which offended the colonized society because of its foreign and secular worldliness. This time the antithesis

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<sup>238</sup> Ibn Khaldun, Abdurahman, *An Arab Philosophy of History*, ed., Issawi, Charles, New York: Grove Press, 1950.

came from abroad, through contact with Europe, producing reform governments in the Ottoman core and in Tunisia at the end of the nineteenth century. In the Arab world, the clash of values produced a notable synthesis of faith and reason in the works of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani at the same time. However, the corruption of this synthesis through association with reinforced colonial rule in World War I produced a new antithesis in the ideas of Hassan al-Banna and the organization he founded in 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood.

Throughout the depression and World War II, Arab nationalism and Islam combined to form a powerful message to be used against colonial rule. The most successful nationalist leaders, however, were those who could not only wield that message but also could also speak the language of the colonizer and negotiate an agreement for independence to create a modern society based on both national and modern values. North African nationalist leaders such as Allal al-Fassi, the '*alim* ("doctor of theology") from Qarawiyyin University in Fez who led the Moroccan Independence Party, or Habib Bourguiba, the French-trained lawyer from Monastir who founded the New Constitution Party and for thirty years was Tunisia's first president, embodied the new synthesis of modern Western and Arabo-Islamic national values.

In time, however, this synthesis too, has come under attack from a new wave of corrective zealotry from the margins of modern society. Bourguiba, President Anwar al-Sadat of Egypt, King Hassan II of Morocco, and, outside the Arab world, Shah Reza Pahlevi of Iran, have drawn heavy attack for being too modern, materialistic, secular, and tied to the West.<sup>239</sup> Their governments have been charged with not only corruption, impiety and neglect of the national culture and heritage but also with disrupting traditional national society in the name of modernization without providing the promised benefits in compensation. Basic values have been destroyed. The city has corrupted the soul. But poverty is more pervasive than it ever was in traditional times.

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<sup>239</sup> Tozy, Mohammed, "Islam and the State in the North Africa," in *Polity and Society in Contemporary North Africa*, ed., Zartman, I. William, and Habeeb, W. Mark, CO: Westview Press, 1992.

The wealth of the few is more ostentatiously flaunted. And yet the developed world surges ahead: mocking the house of Islam. This is the language of the new antithesis, turned against the former national synthesis of modernity and authenticity and carrying the banner of resurgent political Islam.

These moments of confrontation and challenge to a former synthesis do not arrive by chance, and it is no accident that Islamism is on the rise since the end of the twentieth century. Such times occur when the current order is in difficulty and no longer a source of stability and satisfaction. When order, identity, and resources collapse, believers flock back to their religion and seek in it not just a means of salvation in the after life, in its normal personal role, but also an answer to unsatisfactory conditions in the earthly life. Previous instances in the collapse of regional orders were associated with the coming of colonialism at the turn of the century and then with its destruction in the aftermath of the two world wars, both of them important influences in the disruption of the twentieth-century world order. Steps in the colonisation and decolonisation of the Muslim world were disruptions in the sense of identity in the region; people literally no longer knew who they were in the clash between authenticity and modernity.<sup>240</sup>

But these moments of confrontation are not merely philosophical matters; as well, and perhaps above all, they concern material conditions. When the economy is no longer able to fill the needs of its inhabitants, the disruptions of modernization dismantle the peasant and traditional urban commercial economies, and the state falls short in assuming the colonial promise of social services as well as general responsibility for welfare, believers tend to see the cause in divine retribution for the adoption of alien models and for the corrupt deviance of the rulers. The correction is a return to the straight path revealed in God's word.

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<sup>240</sup> Memmi, Albert, *The Colonizer and the colonized*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1967; and Fanon, Frantz, *Black Skin, White Masks*, New York: Grove Press, 1967.

The antithesis, it would seem, comes in the form of religious utopia, this promises jobs and good government here and now, because its economic program "is in the Qur'an", in the words of Islamist campaigners from Algeria and Tunisia to the Sudan and Iran. Because the response bears the stamp of religious legitimacy, it must succeed. Again, not in terms of bringing salvation in the hereafter - where it cannot be verified, but in terms of bringing successful governance in the temporal immediacy. If it does not succeed immediately, it is not because it is wrong but because it is thwarted by the incomplete eradication of the forces of impiety. In the best dialectical terms, the antithesis does not seek a compromising synthesis; it seeks to win. What is required for a new synthesis, therefore, is a vigorous confrontation between the two forces, modernist and Islamist, and, eventually, a new figure with a following that can combine the better of the two into a nationalist-modernist program for society. That synthesis cannot come too early, or it weakens the force of the debate that is needed to reveal and purge the depths of corruption and irresponsibility in the modernist thesis and the shallowness of utopia and atavism that is in the Islamic antithesis. Only then can the scientific understanding of modernism and the mobilizing inspiration of nationalism be combined to produce a program of commitment and productivity that will meet the need for order, identity, and resources in society.

### **Democratic Consummation of Nationalism**

There have been many stirring and insightful treatises on democracy, from which it is necessary to draw two apparently contradictory but defining elements into this discussion. On the one hand, democracy is a procedure. It is the ability to choose *and* the ability to repent. It is the provision of a choice of rulers, at regular intervals, from among contending candidates. It does not guarantee results at any particular time; it is not synonymous with good

government in the short run. It is the way in which both good results and mistakes are produced, and the procedure cannot be annulled merely because of a momentary mistake. In the long run, however, it is the only guarantee of accountability and responsibility by the governors, the only way of correcting mistakes, the only way both of getting the rascals out and reducing rascality while they are in.

On the other hand, democracy is not just procedure. It is government conducted by democrats, by people who live within the rules that provide for repeated choice and who believe that losing does not threaten their security, nor winning guarantee their privilege. While it does not guarantee good results at any one election, it is based on the deeper belief that only by open debate will the best alternative be brought to light and that open debate will produce the best alternatives. Perhaps the most difficult part of democracy lies in the surrounding attributes that allow for its success. These attributes that comprise social preconditions such as literacy and urbanization<sup>241</sup> but also include an adherence to such democratic ideals and values as those indicated previously. Literacy and urbanization have independent sources of development, but adherence to democratic values is hard to come by without experience in democracy, posing a chicken-and-egg dilemma.

Colonialism tried to resolve this dilemma by giving three-old training in democracy to its subjects. It taught colonial peoples about its own ideals of governance, in terms of parliamentary democracy, for example, or liberty, equality, and fraternity. It gave them something to emulate by showing how colonial governments were responsible to settler populations, a process from which the colonized peoples were excluded. But colonial training in democratization was necessarily skewed and truncated. Finally, it forced them to create democratic nationalist movements as the means to achieve national self-determination, since masses and then legitimacy were the only

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<sup>241</sup> Lipset, Seymour Martin, *Political Man*, New York: Doubledat, 1960.

instruments of power that the colonial ruler did not monopolize, unlike arms, money, organization, and international support, for example.

Nationalist movements were the embodiment of the mass democracy of Rousseau's General Will, targeted against the colonial order. They were an exercise in national self-determination, taking government into their own hands and restoring it to the people, often using institutions that the colonizer had brought and left them. But the nationalist governments were so heavy with legitimacy and unity that they were unable to carry the democratic argument to the conclusion it required. They were unable to condone division, debate, political parties, and repeated elections between competing candidates. They were therefore unable to provide for successors to the father of the new emancipated countries. The democracy of the colonial succession remained a dead letter, a truncated exercise.

Thus, nearly half a century or so after independence, there is a new wave of democracy sweeping the world, a renewed pressure for popular sovereignty that has a special meaning for political development and for the Muslim countries among them. It is the fulfillment of the logic and promise of the nationalist movement and culmination of self-determination, in which government itself is determined at regular intervals by people, and not merely the independence of the state determined by a one-time vote. The current wave of democracy, which began in the late 1980s, draws its major impetus from the collapse of the Communist system of social or totalitarian democracy<sup>242</sup> in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and from the culmination of the colonial liberation movement seen in the exhaustion of the apartheid system of hijacked democracy in South Africa. But it is in the Muslim world where it has a special impact, since it meets the historical current of Islamism, which is rising at the same time.

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<sup>242</sup> Talmon, J.L., *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985.

In addition to its importance as the culmination of the nationalist movement, the current wave of democracy gains significance from two other aspects in the operation of the post-colonial state. One is, the numerous expansions of the functions of the state, into areas of socioeconomic services and regulations that far exceed the scope of state activities in the pre-colonial or even colonial times. Typically, in the Third and especially the Muslim worlds, the state is the largest employer and the largest investor; nearly all university faculties are civil servants and all students live on state subsidies, expecting- and sometimes guaranteed- state jobs upon graduation. Basic food samples are subsidized to a low consumer price, and medical treatment, as with education, is free or low cost. The other aspect is that, it is also a source of intrusive regulations, being a legislator of labor laws, currency control, exit visas, curriculum reforms, and social norms. As a result, the state is an important prize for democratic- or any other- control and not just a resource of privilege for a ruling few.

Yet the other element in the struggle for the state is that in fact it has been viewed in the Islamic world- and elsewhere in the Third World- as the hunting preserve of the few, alienated from the people, ruling not so much by coercion as by manipulation, and without the charismatic leaders of Islamic politics in the 1950s and 1960s. The decade of the 1980s saw significant outbursts of popular disapproval in most Arab countries, protesting not only shortfalls in goods and services provided by the government but a lack of trust and faith in the leaders themselves. Riots in 1981 and 1984 in Casablanca and 1990-91 in northern Morocco, 1986 in Constantine and then 1988 throughout Algeria, in 1984 in Tunisia, in 1986 in Cairo and other cities of Egypt, in 1989 in Amman, and in 1986 at the Great Mosque in Mecca and, of course the revolution of 1979 in Iran, are all strident and bloody instances of popular protest against the dictators of the Muslim Middle East and North Africa.

Alienated rulers, controlling powerful states and confronting a sudden rise in the pressures for democracy as the consummation of nationalist self-determination have made for a most explosive combination. Unfortunately for a lasting commitment to democratic values, the situation has meant that democracy is not viewed merely as a healthy procedure but as a guarantee of the results that the previous system failed to produce. That is a tough challenge to throw in the face of a new system of government in which its practitioners had little experience, at a time of decreasing foreign aid, unfavorable terms of trade, and shrinking and redirected investment. Democracy in the Middle East and North Africa, and elsewhere in the Third World, is threatened with becoming yet another system of government that did not produce the expected results, because so much is expected of it. If the democratic resurgence threatens incumbent authoritarians in the Muslim world, the charismatic demagogues in turn threaten to deform democracy into xenophobic populism. But the most powerful form of this challenge is political Islam, which promises the restoration of morality, authenticity, and earthly success and the exclusion of corruption and error, backed by God's word as a guide and as a guarantee.

### **Democracy Vs Islam**

There is no inherent incompatibility between democracy and Islam. Like other Abrahamic Scriptures- the Torah and the Bible - the Qur'an can be interpreted to support many different types of political behavior and systems of government. It contains no direct support for democracy, the closest statement being an indication that "what is with God is better and more lasting for those... who [conduct] their affairs by mutual consultation [shura]".<sup>243</sup> As would be expected, its emphasis lies much more on the pious qualities expected of a ruler than on the way in which rulers should be chosen.

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<sup>243</sup> The Holy *Qur'an*, 42:36, 38.

As indicated at the outset, each of the two currents comes from different sources and addresses different issues.

The conflict arises when the particular form of political Islam precludes the procedural essence of democracy, e.g. the Islamic Republic of Iran, the repeated provision of debate and choice between free ranges of options. When political Islam, in the name of cleaning out the stables of corruption and alienation, promises to install a system in which only those who subscribe to the true path are allowed into the contest for power, then the incompatibility arises. When parties led by devoted leaders inspired by religious beliefs vie among others for a role in government, there is no incompatibility. But when the party arrogates for itself the mantle of the national religion, monopolizing its symbols and de-legitimizing its opponents, open democratic debate and the guarantee of future free elections are hard to ensure.

Islamic parties and regimes are usually rather straightforward about their intentions, although not always to the Western press. For example, although the leaders of the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) profess their devotion to democracy before Western journalists, they also tell local audiences that "democracy is heresy" and all parties who subscribe to the Way can compete freely, clear statements of incompatibility with democracy. It should be remembered that the position of democracy and that of political Islam on the matter of open debate are similar but different in an important way. Both maintain that truth will prevail in an open debate, but democrats are proponents of the debate whereas Islamists are proponents of the Truth.

More complex is the usual division of Islamic parties into a moderate, usually visible, leadership and a radical militant wing, often underground. This creates a situation where, as in any revolutionary movement, the moderate leadership is controlled and can eventually be replaced by the militants once its usefulness in achieving power is spent. Thus the compatibility of political Islam and democracy must be judged not only by public statements but also by an analysis of probable political dynamics.

## The Issues Before Us

While the confrontation is going on, what can be done to create conditions for a functioning synthesis, so that democracy can be preserved in the presence of political Islam rather than being destroyed by it?

One way, adopted by most Muslim countries, is through constitutional provisions declaring Islam to be the national religion but prohibiting Islamic parties, often along with ethnic and other religious parties. Many Muslim states constitutions have both provisions- including Algeria, where the FIS was authorized in 1989 despite its unconstitutionality! A similar method involves the use of a charter of agreed principles to register a national consensus of values upon which participation and competition can be based. This device has been used both in Egypt and in Tunisia, and in the latter case included an Islamist representative as a signatory but did not permit the legalization of the Islamist party.

A second measure is the development of a credible opposition. The crisis in the current confrontations between a decrepit authoritarian regime and a new Islamist opposition arises from the absence of an alternative. In Algeria, in the elections of 1990 and 1991- and the cancelled elections of 1992- it was not that the FIS won but that the discredit of the old single party, the National Liberation Front, left no party known and attractive enough to draw the votes. The crisis came from the fact that there was no party able to win majority support from the nation and, more specifically, able to encourage the majority of the population to vote. In Tunisia and Egypt, strong government parties, even if tied to the old regime, handily overcame Islamist opposition, running as independents in Tunisia in 1989 and among several parties in Egypt in 1990 and 1991. But in both countries, third parties, try as they did, were too new, inexperienced, and unknown to present serious challenge to the incumbents, while the old parties, were hampered by their ties to previous

regimes. Yet, as the experience in Iran under the Shah shows, incumbents are in a poor position to help develop credible oppositions to their own regimes.

A third measure is to use the technicalities of elections to encourage pluralism and limit the hold that an Islamist party could gain on the government apparatus. An electoral system of proportional representation gives seats to smaller parties and prevents an overemphasis of the majority. However, it often leads to coalition governments and less coherent policies. Majoritarian systems, either for single member districts or for large-constituency lists, tend to focus on prominent alternatives, to the under-representation of small and regional parties. Establishment of a minimum percentage for inclusion, usually set between 5 and 8 percent, keeps small parties from producing many splinter and overvalued coalition partners. Parties may be required to show clientele or candidates in all regions or all voting districts, in order to establish their national character. These and other aspects of election laws can be used to limit extremist parties, encourage coalitions, eliminate splinters, and strengthen credible options.

A fourth measure would be to delay political democracy until its reconditions are established or at least begun. Literacy levels and urban concentrations have been mentioned as social requisites, but other political correlates of democracy include a free and pluralistic press, an independent judiciary, autonomous associations such labor unions and public affairs discussion groups, and respect for civil liberties and human rights. The problem is that these conditions are as difficult to establish as free elections themselves and more difficult to maintain. Their existence does not guarantee their continuity, and their imperfection be used too easily as a pretext to postpone the exercise of democracy that will help perpetuate them. Yet without these conditions, it is hard to maintain the democratic values that undergrid free elections. The bundle of measures should go together, and it is important to begin wherever one can.

A fifth measure would be to practice the forms of democracy whenever scheduled. Let the most popular- including the Islamists- win, and let them learn democracy on the job. The lesson of many experiments with radical groups is that responsibility moderates, but that lesson is not absolute. Another lesson is that experiments in moderating revolutionary groups tend to take up to a generation, as the Iranian experience shows. Such experiments make for exciting stuff for social science analysts, but they are hard on the subject populations and disruptive for the world around them. The theological conflict within Islam and the confrontation of the two waves of political Islam and democracy also have their costs. Ultimately, it is the populations themselves, acting as masses or as political leaders, who will have to make the choice of which costs to bear.

## **CHAPTER 2: MODERNISM AND ISLAMISM**

The subject of this chapter is not Islamic political history and movements nor contemporary Islamic politics but Islamic modernism as advocated by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897), Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), Muhammad Iqbal (11875-1938), and Ali Shari'ati (1933-1977) and Islamism as advocated by Abu al-Al-la al-Mawdudi (1903-80), Hassan al-Banna (1906-49), Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) and Ayatollah al-Khomeini 1903-89).<sup>244</sup>

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part one, deals with the philosophical foundation of both modernism and Islamism. Part two focuses on the political principles of both.

But, first, a word on fundamentalism is in place. Fundamentalist Islamic political thought has been treated as a passing political phenomenon, dependent upon specific social and political circumstances. The movement

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<sup>244</sup> Khadduri, Majid, 'From Religious to National Law', in Thomson, J.H., and R.J. Reischauer, eds., *Modernization in the Arab World*, Princeton: D. Van Nostran Co., 1966, pp. 37-51.

has being studied by political scientists as a movement that lacks any deep-rooted principles and is often dismissed as religious fanaticism.<sup>245</sup> A typical discourse on, for instance, the Muslim Brotherhood, the most distinguished and powerful fundamentalist organization runs as follows:

The Muslim Brotherhood was a militant group, which believed in the sufficiency and supremacy of Islam and in *literal interpretation of the Quran and the Sunnah*. It worked for the revival of the principle of jihad, holy war. Unlike the Wahhabis, however, it believed in reform and in the utilization of certain Western methods. Unlike Adbuh, the Brotherhood *did not think that a restatement of Islamic doctrines was necessary*.<sup>246</sup> (Emphasis added)

The above statement does not capture accurately the character of fundamentalism or account for a variety of interpretations advanced by fundamentalist leaders such as Sayyid Qutb, Abu al-Ala al-Mawdudi, the founder of the Islamic movement in Pakistan, or Hassan al-Banna, the founder of Muslim Brethen, neither of whom advocate a literal interpretation of the Holy Qur'an or think that Islamic doctrines are in no need of restatement.

In fact Islamic fundamentalism has been part of an intellectual discourse, which has been going on for hundreds of years in the East and the West. Fundamentalism constitutes a critique of philosophy, political ideology, and science. Philosophically, it rejects both the claim that man is the possessor of truth and the claim that there is no truth. More essentially, it offers a way of life and thought, a way regulated by God's laws and by nature. Politically, it rejects the notion that authority belongs to the people and that societies are no

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<sup>245</sup> Dessouki, Ali H., *Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World*, N.Y.: Praeger Publishers, 1982.

<sup>246</sup> Armajani, Yahya, *Middle East: Past and Present*, N. J.: Prentice Hall Inco. 1970, pp. 287- 88.

more than marketplaces where desires are satisfied. Also, it strives to erect societies whose basic components are justice, virtue, and equality.

As a result of the negative image applied to them by scholars, governments, Arab and foreign media, the theoretical and practical contribution of the fundamentalists has been viewed superficially, and, consequently precluded any serious study of their assumptions and doctrines. Whereas the student of contemporary Islam finds a substantial output by Westerners on modernist reformers such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Muhammad Iqbal, there is less theoretical discussion concerning fundamentalist thinkers such as Hassan al-Banna, Abu al-Ala al-Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb.

### **Philosophical Foundations**

It is now useful to analyze in this section three main principles that make up the intellectual foundations of both Islamic fundamentalism and Islamic modernism. These principles are reason and morality, philosophy and science, and political principles. Also comparing and contrasting these principles will reveal the different conceptions between both movements; in fact, the different conceptions of these principles mark one movement from the other.

#### **Reason and Morality**

Notwithstanding its insistence on the existence of moral principles in human nature, fundamentalism emphasizes man's inability to arrive at them by reason. This necessitates the existence of revelation in order that man has an example to follow. For al-Mawdudi and Qutb, the innate human nature (or *fitrah*), the recipient of revelation, is nothing but the obedience to dominate forces that created the law, which is controlled by God for the well being of this universe.

According to Qutb, Islam is in conformity with the innate human nature and, more importantly, in conformity with the universe. And because we are part of this universe, our happiness results from the harmony between the part and the whole. Unhappiness, on the other hand, is the consequence of man going against nature, i.e., the man whose system (*nizam*) is not divine. Therefore, knowledge and happiness are based on their correspondence and harmony with *fitrah*. In his book, *The Future Belongs to this Religion*, Qutb defines happiness as the conformity to and the fulfillment of human *fitrah* in nature, i.e., by obeying God's laws.<sup>247</sup> It is, therefore, apparent that nature for Qutb as well as for other fundamentalists plays a fundamental role in laying the foundation of knowledge as well as existence. Thus, any definition, say, of social justice, or beauty, is defective if not based on an accurate and correct understanding of nature itself. Hence, he argues, in *Social Justice in Islam* that the nature of social justice in Islam cannot be realized in a comprehensive manner unless the Islamic concept of divinity, universe, life and man is attained. Social justice is nothing but a branch of the wider origin (oneness of God) from which all Islamic teachings are derived.<sup>248</sup>

For Qutb, religion replaces reason and philosophy. Whereas the ancient and medieval philosophers show that the good city, knowledge, and happiness are dependent on correct metaphysics attained and justified by reason,<sup>249</sup> Qutb considers that the good state, knowledge, and happiness are dependent on correct doctrines harmonious with nature. By linking the correctness and the ability of any political order to produce and promote happiness on that order's conformity to nature, it seems that Qutb's purpose in this argument is to show that political and social orders should be based on a correct concept and should take into account the fulfillment of the purpose of human existence; a fulfillment that requires a correct understanding of nature. Consequently, any

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<sup>247</sup> Qutb, Sayyid, *Al-Mustaqbal li-hadha al-din* (The Future Belongs to this Religion) 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Cairo, Maktaba Wahbah, 1965, p. 13, (Hereafter cited as Future).

<sup>248</sup> Qutb, Sayyid, *Social Justice in Islam*, translated by John B. Hardie, New York: Octagon Books, 1970, pp. 24, 25-29, (Hereafter cited as Social Justice).

<sup>249</sup> Qutb, *Future*, pp. 11-13 and 57-61.

social order not meeting and fulfilling human *fitrah* is unnatural, unjust, and unsuitable to the movement of man and with the movement of the universe.<sup>250</sup>

Although the function of *fitrah* is to direct man to the good, fundamentalists view man as having diverted his natural drive and forgotten the *fitrah* and replaced them with will and choice. For man has involved himself in a domain (philosophy) that, although supported by reason and argument, had led him to wrong conclusions symbolized in his worship of stars, gods, ideals, idols, abstract ideas, and world forces. Nonetheless, they assert that man looks to nature for God; and, in as much as he seeks water and shelter, he also seeks God. Put simply, moral laws, residing in the *fitrah*, are intuitive and are as natural as physical laws. For instance, al-Mawdudi contends that humans agree that a well-administered society enjoys cooperation, mutuality, advice, social justice, and equality. Humans also agree that theft; adultery, murder, spying, jealousy and so forth are evil.<sup>251</sup>

Modernism, on the other hand, maintains the existence of natural laws and moral laws in nature. These two laws are authentic and can be demonstrated by reason. Ali Shari'ati, for example, argues that, contrary to Marxism, which equates moral law with social customs and relates them to social and economic materialism, Islam attempts to attribute moral laws to the primordial nature of man.<sup>252</sup> This means that it can be demonstrated by reason. Jamal al-Din al-Afghani insists on the existence in man of an urge to rise above bestiality or lust and to improve his life. This does not take place by following *fitrah* only but primarily by the pursuit of knowledge and cultivation of those arts and skills, which have been the works of civilization. In particular, Muslims should pursue progress, which is manifest in the study

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<sup>250</sup> Ibid. pp. 17-18.

<sup>251</sup> Al-Mawdudi, Abu al-Ala, *Mafahim Islamiyah* (Islamic Understanding), Kuwait: Dar al-Qalam, 1977, pp. 10-22 and 28-29.

<sup>252</sup> Shari'ati, Ali, *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies*, trans. By Campell, R., Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1980, p. 80.

of science. For solid moral and religious grounds require not only religion but also solid knowledge.<sup>253</sup>

The difference between the modernists and the fundamentalists can be summarized in the following statement. Whereas Qutb and al-Mawdudi consider the secrets of human nature as known to God only, al-Afghani, Abdu, Iqbal, and Shari'ati consider man as capable of attaining some, if not all, of those secrets. This difference is due to their conception of reason. For the concept of fitrah, which is interwoven with the concept of reason, manifests itself in al-Mawdudi's and Qutb's argument that the Muslim should submit to God in everything.

Qutb divides systems of thought, life, and action into two basic divisions: those given by God and those that are not. Those individuals who regulate their life and behavior according to the system derive from a divine creed that is followers of the religion of God. But those individuals who derive their system from a king, a prince, tribe, or a people are followers not of the religion of God but that of the king, the prince, the tribe, or the people, respectively.<sup>254</sup>

The fundamentalists perceive religion as a system of life, which includes a metaphysical concept and is accompanied by a social order: every system of life is a religion, and the religion of a group is the system that regulates the life of that group. Put differently, religion is not, only an abstraction, a metaphysical doctrine, an emotion, or a belief but, equally, the culture or the system that disciplines the behavior. And this is the reason why Qutb regards, for instance, communism not only as "a social system but also as a metaphysical concept based on material contradiction, and ultimately, as not only a social order but also as a religion".<sup>255</sup> Those individuals who do not

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<sup>253</sup> Al-Afghani, Jamal al-Din, *al-Urwah al-Wuthqah* (The Strongest Bond), Cairo: Dar al-Arab, 1957, pp. 60-61; and see al-Afghani, *al-Amal al-kamilah* (Complete Works), Part II, Political Writings, ed. by Amarah, Muhammad, Beirut: al-al-Arabiyyah li-Dirasat wa al-Nashr, 1980, pp. 9-13 & 16-17. (Hereafter cited as Works).

<sup>254</sup> Qutb; *Future*, pp. 12-14.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 15-17.

submit but ask God for logical proofs and do not obey when dissatisfied with proofs, are infidels. This is so because Islam, for the fundamentalists, means total submission with or without logical proof and satisfaction. Belief in the Day of Judgment, for instance, should be adhered to whether a logical proof can be found or not. Although Islam is not opposed to reason, a logical proof should follow belief and not vice versa.<sup>256</sup> For Hassan al-Banna, logical proofs and syllogisms are accepted because the mind is spoken to in the Holy Qur'an, but their service is the defense of religion against myth and distortion. More importantly, God's existence is in need of proof; it is intuitive. And the question "who created God" is a misguided question - for humans are incapable of understanding themselves, let alone God. Belief is, by definition, the heart's submission and tranquility with certainty.<sup>257</sup>

The modernists agree that religion is intuitive more than volitional, but perceive that reason and religion are in harmony. According to Muhammad Abduh, Muslims in general have agreed that some issues in religion cannot be believed except through reason as in knowing, for instance, God's existence and God's ability to send messages. Also, Muslims have agreed that religion advances high principles that man cannot understand easily; but religion does not advance principles that are opposite to reason. For instance, man can prove that God exists but reason cannot understand the essence of God. This stems from man's inability to understand oneself. Islam is the religion of oneness, and reason is one of its most strong helpers.<sup>258</sup>

Religion, according to Abduh, is the strongest factor in morality and one of the greatest human forces, for it influences the majority more than reason does. More importantly, reason is the source for the knowledge of religion and for using it; but once belief is attained, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him)

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<sup>256</sup> Al-Mawdudi, Abu al-Ala, *Nahnu wa-al-hadarah al-gharbiyah* (Us and Western Modernity), Beirut: Mu'assassat al-Risalah, 1983, pp. 146-48, 150 and 174.

<sup>257</sup> Al-Banna, Hasan, *Rasa'il al-shahid Hasan al-Banna* (The Treatise of Martyr Hassan al-Banna), Cairo: Dar al-Qalam, 1987, pp. 429-31 & 471-74.

<sup>258</sup> Abduh, Muhammad, *Risalat al-Tawhid* (Treatise of Oneness), al-Mu'assassah al-Arabiyyah li-Dirasat al-Nashr, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1981, pp. 19-20, 31, 46-51, (Hereafter cited as Treatise).

should be followed.<sup>259</sup> Similarly, for Iqbal, while religion starts with feeling, it has never taken itself as a matter of feeling alone and has constantly striven after metaphysics. Religion is not a compartmental affair, mere feeling or mere action, but is an expression of the whole man. In Islam, the ideal and the real are not two separate or opposite forces but Islam attempts to bridge the gap between the ideal and the real where the ideal eventually absorbs the real.<sup>260</sup> Shari'ati defines Islam as a profound spiritual, idealistic, intelligible, and logical interpretation of the universe fully attuned to earthly reality and to divinity.

### Philosophy and Science

The major difference here is that whereas the Islamists perceive Islam as a comprehensive system that is self-proven and requiring no logical proof, the modernists accept the principle of arriving at truth by proof. Thus, Abduh allows individuals to seek proofs, but once attained the individuals need to submit to the Prophet's teachings. In other words, the fundamentalists disclaim the ability of human reason to arrive at truth without the aid of revelation, but the modernists find that reason can arrive at moral and metaphysical truth by reason and by the human being.

The explanation for this opposite understanding is related to the difference in the modernists' and fundamentalists' conception of *tawhid* and the purpose of Islam. For example, al-Mawdudi and Qutb define Islam as a program of life according to the rule of nature given by God and as the extension that aims at constructing the superstructure for the whole of humanity on the governance of God. Tawhid, the fundamental component of Islam, is not only a religious creed but, more importantly, is the elimination of systems based on human independence in earthly affairs from the governance of God. It should lead to

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<sup>259</sup> Ibid. pp. 111-113.

<sup>260</sup> Iqbal, Muhammad, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, Ashraf, 1960, pp. 2, 9 & 22 (Hereafter cited as *Reconstruction*).

complete transformation in the life of individuals. Also, it indicates that God is the Creator, the Governor and Controller of this universe and negates the government of man, class, and race.<sup>261</sup> Thus, an essential part of the fundamentalists' conception of *tawhid* is the negation of and opposition to any man-made system or order. Their perspective, moreover, denies any meaningful search for ultimate truth in this universe since they believe that everything is clear and given.

But the modernists' see *tawhid* in a more constructive way. It is a starting point that seeks fulfillment and understanding. And not everything is given but man has to exert himself. They do not view *tawhid* as an instrument of negation and opposition but; to paraphrase Iqbal, as a working force for the establishment of equality, solidarity and freedom. Iqbal even considers the state as no more than an attempt to transform these principles into a definite organization.<sup>262</sup> For Shari'ati, *tawhid* means viewing the whole universe as a single living and conscious organism that possesses intelligence, will, purpose and feeling.<sup>263</sup>

The definition of *tawhid* by Iqbal's and Shari'ati allow and, even, encourage the principle of philosophizing, but not accept every philosophy. For instance, Shari'ati argues that the method of attaining truth is to invent "a method of investigation" useful for the discovery of truth. Although, according to Shari'ati, Plato's philosophy is more sophisticated than Descartes', the latter was a more useful one.<sup>264</sup> Iqbal, for example, contends that the birth of Islam is anti-classical and that the Muslim philosophers did not understand Islam, which they read in the light of Greek thought. This is so because Islam asks its adherents to use their mind and sense of perception to understand the world, but the philosophers despised sense perception. Furthermore, Islam

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<sup>261</sup> Al-Mawdudi, *Minhaj al-inqilab al-Islami*, Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1981, pp. 28-34; see also note 12, pp. 267-70.

<sup>262</sup> Iqbal; *Reconstruction*, 1960, pp. 145-55.

<sup>263</sup> Shari'ati, Ali, *On the Sociology of Islam*, trns. by Algar, Hamid, Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1979, p. 83.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.* p. 63.

encourages empirical approaches to knowledge, but science has a sectional character and is unable to furnish complete knowledge making the concept of mechanism inadequate for the analysis of life. But Iqbal still believes that the religious and the scientific, although following different methods, aim at the real.<sup>265</sup> His rejection is directed at materialism and speculative philosophy, not at every intellectual or spiritual pursuit.

In fact modernist Muslim thinkers perceive philosophy essentially in terms of science. For instance, Abduh's argument that Islam cannot contradict reason means that it cannot contradict science. For he believes that the domain of reason is not speculation but the scientific field. Although reason and revelation are compatible, those thinkers who tried to harmonise revelation and philosophical proofs about God's existence and essence went too far. Their speculations cannot be ascertained. But science, on the other hand, can be ascertained. Therefore, when Abduh says there is harmony between reason and revelation, reason is equivalent to science.<sup>266</sup> Al-Afghani as well as Abduh made science the ultimate judge not only when the Qur'an is obscure or controversial but also when the Qur'an contradicts science. Because the Qur'an provides very general principles, it should not contradict "the stipulation of reason and the achievement of science. Interpretation (ta'wil) is the method to solve the contradiction between science and the Shariah."<sup>267</sup>

Fundamentalism views science differently. Al-Mawdudi asserts that Islam does not prohibit benefiting from human experiments, but experimental science is biased and is not panhuman. Science, which has been started in the West, is directed at nationalism, moral confusion, and atheism.<sup>268</sup> Although al-Banna and Qutb agree with some of his conclusions (such as the direction of science), they view science as panhuman and accept its benefits; for they believe that the Muslims have contributed to it.

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<sup>265</sup> Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, pp. 4, 14-15, 42, 54-57 and 196.

<sup>266</sup> Abduh, *Treatise*, pp. 18-19, 28-32, 46-47, 59, 69,-70, 108 and 112-32.

<sup>267</sup> Afghani; *Works*, pp. 440-441.

<sup>268</sup> Al-Mawdudi; *Nahnu*, pp. 13-18.

And notwithstanding some objections, the modernist thinkers accept modern Western thought based on science by subjecting the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an and religion to scientific discoveries. Their rejection of medieval thought should be viewed in this manner; for they subject medieval and ancient philosophy as well as Muslim theology and thought to science. The modernists replaced speculative philosophy, which the medieval thinkers depended on for the exposition of their ideas, with philosophy of science. Iqbal suggests the rewriting of Islamic theology on the basis of science. One of the examples he gives is the verse in the Holy Qur'an where God is likened to light. Usually, this verse has been used by some scholars to mean Omnipresence. But Iqbal thinks that, because of the discoveries in physics, it should be interpreted as Absoluteness. His argument is as follows: Modern physics teaches that the velocity of light cannot be exceeded and is the same for all observers. Since light is the nearest approach to the absolute, the metaphor of light as applied to God must be viewed as a suggestion of absoluteness of God and not of His Omnipresence.<sup>269</sup>

The modernists' emphasis on science for the validity of interpreting the revelation leads to the rejection of the traditional, theological, and philosophical understandings and to the acceptance of new philosophical and theological interpretations that are based only on science.

In one way, moral philosophy and religious precepts are weakened insofar as they have to seek the authority of science. But science, assuming its correctness, is incapable of providing morality and metaphysics. Knowing that from an Islamic viewpoint God is neither a body nor is in a body, it does not make a difference whether the metaphor of God as a light is interpreted as absoluteness or omnipresence. For the moral obligation to obey God's teachings does not change or affect the theory of light and has nothing to do with the metaphysical understanding of God. Whether the light travels in

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<sup>269</sup> Iqbal; *Reconstruction*, pp. 8, 63-64 and 70.

particles or in straight lines has no bearing on God's essence and attributes or even moral laws. In Islam, God simply does not exist in a spatio-temporal sense.

Consequently, science constitutes an essential part of the modernists' new theology that judges the correctness of Islamic teachings and principles and their thought is partly based on this premise. On the other hand, the fundamentalists disclaimed any instrumentality or validity for science as a theological or exegetical or interpretive power over scripture. They were aware of the damage that science could cause if considered as a criterion for interpreting revelation. But their alternative is denying not only science for a correct understanding of the revelation but also of philosophy, theology, and, even, history, which is important for understanding the scripture itself. Fundamentalists disregard the importance of history in understanding the Holy Qur'an since the actual writing and the transmission of the Qur'an as well as their accuracy depends on historical accuracy. Also, discrediting history leads as well to the weakening of the Prophets *Sunnah* since its validity depends as well on historical transmission. But the fundamentalists accept both the accuracy of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*; a notion that underscores their dismissal of any danger in denying the importance and validity of diverse disciplines of knowledge.<sup>270</sup>

### **Political Principles**

For the Islamists *Tawhid* has become the thread that weaves all the materials of politics, economics, ethics, theology, and all other aspects of life together. Because God, the source of knowledge and of matter, is the Creator of both, He is given the ultimate say in political life as well. Man, they contend, should submit only to God; this submission is not only theological as understood by traditional thinkers, medieval and modern, but more

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<sup>270</sup> As-Said, Labib, *The Recited Koran*, trns. by Bernard Weiss, M.A. Rauf, and Morroe Berger, New Jersey: The Darwin Press, 1975, pp. 19-60 & 121-25.

importantly, the fundamentalists endow this concept of *tawhid* with ultimate political significance. Their insistence on subjecting the political regime to religion leads them even to consider those individuals who disregard either the establishment or the maintenance of the state on the basis of God's governance as infidel and unqualified to rule. It is ironic that fundamentalists like al-Banna and Qutb who reject the teachings of medieval Islamic philosophy should seek the same kind of polity, i.e., a polity that is created for and sustained by God and that aims at a virtuous society whose ultimate goal is God.

Though the fundamentalists reject many teachings of the modernists, they are by no means traditional. On the contrary, a great portion of their attack is directed at traditional religious '*ulama*' (scholars); the '*ulama*' are, according to Qutb incapable of understanding the true principles of the Qur'an. Because they have followed imitations and looked for solutions in juristic books, which were essentially human and not revelation, their teachings have made the public complacent and have alienated the educated. On the other side, the fundamentalists level their attacks also on elites who, though administering the affairs of Muslims and controlling the government, are ignorant of Islam and are leading their nations to darkness. Because of the failure of the two, there is a need to create a new group of Muslims who truly understand their religion as well as modernity. Al-Mawdudi, for instance, acknowledges, as Qutb and other thinkers do the weakness of Muslim civilization and declares the necessity for an Islamic revival because the past is insufficient to generate an Islamic renaissance. It is of primary importance to find Muslims who can build a new science and philosophy based on pure Islam; those Muslims should take the leadership of science and politics from non-Muslims.<sup>271</sup>

This statement of al-Mawdudi is of crucial significance for understanding the fundamentalist theory of politics and its difference from the Muslim modernists. Because the modernists have not rejected the West altogether

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<sup>271</sup> Al-Mawdudi, *Nahmu*, pp. 47-51, and 23-25.

rather some particular philosophies, they have adopted and accepted many Western political theories like republicanism. Hence, the modernists have not attempted to put forward a political theory - because it existed already and what it needed is to transport it into the Islamic milieu. This is not to say that they do not have a political teachings, but their teachings do not amount to a new or a full-fledged political theory: their political thought is mostly of a fragmentary nature advanced for immediate political goals. Moreover, though the modernists have attacked traditionalism, they have not repudiated traditions as such. Perceiving, with validity, that the way for a revival can be done by bringing together two traditions: the Islamic and the Western; they have focused their efforts on the harmony of religion and science. Their respect for history is very immense and has culminated in learning and accepting many benefits of both the West and Islam.

Nonetheless, they have never claimed to have, and they have not, written a complete political theory, for instance, on social justice or *tawhid* or the principles of politics or legislation or equality. Their attempts have focused on reviving the intellectual atmosphere in the Muslim land first, and then on political matters; or, in other words, their teachings are an outgrowth of their intellectual temperament. Put differently, because they have accepted many philosophical ideas produced in the West, they have not hesitated in accepting numerous benefits of Western political systems.

But, except for the period of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) who was inspired and the first two caliphs – according to Qutb - or the first four caliphs – according to al-Mawdudi - who followed the true essence of Islam, the fundamentalists do not, by and large, sanctify history or see it as a guide. Not sanctifying history is one of the challenges to the orthodox establishment of Sunnism as well as Shia'ism. Muslim scholars in general, except some philosophers of Islam, have sanctified the past by accepting as imperative the teachings and interpretations of earlier scholars such as Abu Hanifah, al-Shafi'i, Ibn Hanbal, and Malik on jurisprudence and al-Ghazali, and al-

Baqillani on theology. With the passage of time, their teachings, which were the result of *ijtihad* (reasoning), acquired unchallenged authority as well as normative status. And because *ijtihad* has been stalled for centuries, even open-minded people such as Abduh have not challenged their arguments in general.

As an example, Abduh rejects the notion of human capability to fathom the essence of God and follows traditional theological arguments of God's essence and attributes. Thus *Risalat al-tawhid* (*Treatise on Oneness*) is nothing more than a simplified edition of medieval treatises on theology. Abduh's exposition is very traditional except in two points; his refraining from entering into disputation that characterized medieval writing (for instance, whether God's attributes are part of His essence or not) and his argument that Islam and reason are not contradictory. The first point comes from al-Ghazali who in *Tahafut al-falasifah* (*Incoherence of the Philosophers*) argues that this kind of discussion is futile since man cannot know whether God's attributes are part of the essence or not. (Al-Ghazali was chastising both philosophy and theology).

The second point is that of the philosophers such as al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd, and the theologians such as al-Ashari and al-Baqillani. What Abduh and other modernists have done is to reintroduce intellectual circles again to the legitimacy of *ijtihad* by using the past itself. There is nothing wrong in doing so, but the point is made here to show the difference between fundamentalists and the modernists concerning the past. Also, what is implied is not that Abduh's achievement is minor, but that his efforts were focused on regenerating Islam by recycling past notions on reason and modern science.<sup>272</sup> In sharp contrast to this, the fundamentalists in general perceive as outmoded, the past as well as the present in its philosophical, juristic and theological manifestations, whether produced in the East or West. Historicism is a main feature of fundamentalism, embodying its rejection of

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<sup>272</sup> Abduh, *Treatise of Oneness*, pp. 17-51.

almost all old interpretations, which are, for the fundamentalists, historically oriented. Though those interpretations and doctrines were suitable for their societies, they are, the fundamentalists contend, by no means of intrinsic value. Their value is historical in showing the Muslims that Islam allows a multitude of interpretations. In other words, they do not look at the truth of arguments in themselves but select only those interpretations suitable for modernity. Qutb and other fundamentalists transform history into a justifying vehicle for renewal, reassessment, and revolution.

### Legislation

Rejecting the past and the present necessitates that the fundamentalists provide an alternative to Islamic and Western political theories. This alternative is manifested primarily in their understanding of *tawhid* and governance of God (*al-hakimyyah*). Therefore, al-Banna, Qutb, and al-Mawdudi proclaim, that the source of legislation in the new society is God. And truly Muslim societies should be directed at obedience to God. Also, they insist that the fundamental characteristic of ethics in obedience to God is accepting and applying His teachings. According to Qutb, *tawhid* is not only the liberation of men from submitting to each other, it is also the starting point in the formation of ethics and values as well as human legislation and law. A government or a people should not legislate for their basic notions of right or wrong and lawful or unlawful, but should follow what is revealed in the Holy Qur'an. This is because legislation, Qutb reasons, is a divine matter. Society has an inherent moral order based on universal (divine) laws prescribed in the Holy Qur'an. Since these laws are not human conventions, their application is natural. Therefore Islamic government is not an imposition of human will on social life. The alternative to human legislation is, legislation based on the principles of the Islamic divine law. For Qutb, Islamic law is not a social phenomenon but an eternal manifestation of God's will defining the duties and

rights of individuals and of the state. This means that the legislation of the basic principles of authority, right or wrong, and legality or illegality is set apart from human consideration. No matter what individuals or societies think, they do not have the right to; or cannot - make what is right wrong or what is wrong right. These principles, with their flexibility and comprehensiveness meet the needs of life. And so, what is needed is to codify legal articles from these general principles in accordance with the changeable needs of everyday society.<sup>273</sup>

And because *tawhid*, for Qutb, is the criterion for right or wrong, lawful or unlawful, and legal or illegal, sovereignty only belongs to God and not to the individual. Submission to the will of another person or group of individuals or to the will of the nation is *shirk* (polytheism or infidelity). Here, the will of the individual or the nation is in contradiction to the divine message or the principles found in the Holy Qur'an. And since sovereignty belongs to God in this as well as the other life, legislation belongs to God. The reason behind this notion is that submission to God is of vital significance not only for conscience and heart but also equally for political matters. The real goal of establishing God's laws on earth is not merely to work for the next life. This and the other life are two integral parts. It is the divine law (*Shari'ah*) that plays the role of harmonizing the life of man with the general divine will, revealed in the Holy Qur'an; thus, it is the Muslim's duty to apply divine law on earth and to realize that Islamic system.<sup>274</sup>

Whereas the process of history has illuminated the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* for the traditionalist, from a fundamentalist perspective, it has become, by preventing a direct understanding of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, a process of obscurity and dilution. Therefore, history itself has to be disrupted in order to forward a more authentic and direct understanding of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* without recourse necessarily to traditions of philosophy, theology, and

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<sup>273</sup> Qutb, *Capitalism*, Cairo: Maktaba Wahbah, 1962, pp. 49 & 60, (Hereafter cited as *Capitalism*).

<sup>274</sup> Qutb; *Future*, p. 19.

jurisprudence. For the fundamentalists, these branches of knowledge, especially the political and the intellectual as opposed to the ritual, have to be re-evaluated and verified by a new direct interpretation of Islam. Not only the history of Islamic nations is not accepted as a correct interpretation of Islam, but also Western and socialist doctrines and histories cannot propose a model acceptable to the fundamentalists.

This fundamentalist claim is essential in order to justify the rejection of the past because if the fundamentalists accept the historical or scientific processes as possessing normative claims, neither a new history nor a new science, as al-Mawdudi believes, will be required only continuation and development; their insistence on disrupting the existing societies will be a meaningless claim. Hence, by tarnishing sciences and philosophies as un-Islamic, the creation of purely Islamic sciences and philosophies becomes a must. And because these two aspects of life should be subjected neither to past Islamic civilization nor to foreign civilizations, the fundamentalists find a justification for refusing reconciliation with Western thought; they even perceive that there is an essential contradiction between the conception of man in Islam and other systems. It is not reason per se or science per se, al-Mawdudi argues, that bestows honor on man. It is man's rising from obligatory instinctual worship of God to the level of human, willful worship. If man worships other than God or is detracted from worshipping God - al-Mawdudi believes that the West is in this state - he is less honored than animals because animals are still at least on the instinctual level.<sup>275</sup>

The argument so far has been that the fundamentalists want to create a new society based entirely on Islam. And because they are reluctant to accept consciously Western principles or to follow Western outlook or even Islamic political thought, they insist on "Islamic authenticity" in any theory, social and political. Even in determining, a form of government they shy away from

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<sup>275</sup> Al-Mawdudi, *Mafahim Islamiyah* (Islamic Understanding), Kuwait: Dar al- Qalam, 1977, pp. 24-25.

using, or at least are reluctant to use, terms like "republican", "democratic" or "socialist".

## Revolution

On the other hand, the modernists, though rejecting some medieval political theories of Islam, find no contradiction in imitating the West or in adhering to Western and Islamic notions of politics. Al- Afghani, Abduh, and Iqbal accept the republican form of government as an ideal.<sup>276</sup>

But "No god but God", declares Qutb, is a revolution against the worldly authority that usurps the first characteristics of divinity, and a revolution against situations based on this usurpation and against the authorities who rule by their own laws that are not given by God.<sup>277</sup>

Revolution occupies a decisive role because it is the only credible instrument of attaining social justice and of applying the Shari'ah. A revolution should be a conscious effort to transform current existing societies. Though it does not force people to adhere to Islam, it aims at creating the Muslim individual, the Muslim society, and the Islamic state. This is so because the Islamic revolution aspires as well to the transformation of man's enslavement to a man and matter. As such, this revolution is not directed at a particular society, but essentially at those societies that subordinate themselves to anyone but God.

Revolution is not a revolution if it patches up old conceptions with Islamic conceptions. Because the road to change necessitates creativity, it requires the development and not "patching up" of life. Likening a society to a building, Qutb states:

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<sup>276</sup> Iqbal; *Reconstruction*, p.157.

<sup>277</sup> Qutb, *Signposts*, Cairo: Makataba Wahbah, 1956, p. 26 (Hereafter cited as *Signposts*), & 101; *Capitalism*, p. 70; *Social Justice*, p. 250.

There is a difference between having a plan to construct gradually and patching up a construction based on another plan. In the end, this patching up does not establish a new building for you. Thus, it is necessary to destroy the old system and to build a new one.<sup>278</sup>

Because *tawhid* "is not a negatively philosophical and theoretical declaration" but "is a positively realistic and active declaration,"<sup>279</sup> it involves confronting other conceptions and ideologies. This confrontation requires that Muslims should acquire knowledge of other philosophies and ideologies. And Islamic activism should confront the material obstacles, foremost among which are the existing political authorities. This confrontation by words and deeds applies not only to Muslim societies but also, to all societies because the message of Islam is not for Muslims alone; its' subject is man. Therefore, the ultimate goal of Islamic revolution is abolishing those regimes and governments that are established on the basis of man ruling man and the enslavement of man by man, i.e., the *Jahili* society. Then, the revolution sets individuals free to choose the creed they want. As is obvious, this declaration, for Qutb, means:

The comprehensive revolution against the government of man, in all its forms, shapes, systems and situations, and the complete rebellion against every situation [that is contrary to the principles of Islam] on the whole earth.<sup>280</sup>

What has been said so far - in addition to different historical circumstances - can help one see why the modernists like Iqbal, Abduh, and al-Afghani aimed at reformation more than revolution. This can, also, help us to understand why

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<sup>278</sup> Qutb, *On History*, Cairo: Makataba Wahbah, 1949, pp. 24-25.

<sup>279</sup> Qutb, *Signposts*, p. 68.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 69-71; *Social Justice*, p. 67.

the fundamentalists view revolution as a viable alternative to reformation. Rejecting the past and even the present and viewing existing societies as corrupt and unjust at their roots, the fundamentalists see that there is nothing to reform. Rather, the radical transformation of societies is the avowed motto and principle of the fundamentalists, especially al-Banna, Qutb, and, to a lesser extent al-Mawdudi.<sup>281</sup>

The first step in this process of transformation is to disregard the past except for the period of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and the first two caliphs because the former contains legislative procedures while the second step contains a correct practical application of some Islamic principles such as in not forcing themselves on the community and being elected by the community after consultation. Though they should consider it as a good example of applying Islam to the life of community, the Muslims should, by no means, try to imitate that period and should aim at creating a materially and morally advanced society that no one has attempted before. The first society in Islam was not materially but morally advanced: therefore, the new society is not a replica of the first.

Hence, statements like "... to the Muslim mind, nothing in the present or the future could possibly ever be as good as that exquisite society erected by Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) and transfixed for ever by his death," or "the object of true Islamic reform cannot be to create a new society; rather, it must have as its ultimate end the re-establishment of the Prophet's ideal community,"<sup>282</sup> do not accurately capture the consequences of the fundamentalists' attitude towards the ideal Muslim society. Although Qutb considers the first community as the best example of an Islamic nation because its principles were *tawhid* and justice, and although he considers the first two caliphs as representing the best example of the exercise and transition of power by the

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<sup>281</sup> Qutb; *Characteristics*, pp. 15-31; *Signposts*, p. 22.

<sup>282</sup> Naff, Thomas, "Towards a Muslim Theory of History", in *Islam and Power*, ed., Desssouki, Ali H., Britain: Hellenic Mediterranean Center for Arabic and Islamic Studies, 1981, p. 28.

consent of the community, those principles of *tawhid*, justice, *shura* (consultation) and *ijma'* (consensus) are attainable again and can even be understood differently. Because the Quran was the basis of the Muslim community, the death of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) does not deter the accomplishment of an ideal Muslim society. The arguments of Qutb and the rest of the fundamentalists stipulate implicitly and explicitly that the principles of Islam are attainable and are, through continuous reinterpretations, valid for all ages. If this is not true, then the fundamentalist endeavor, i.e., the attainment of a perfect Muslim society, is a futile one. Thus, the mere attempt to establish a new - and Qutb insists on "new" - Muslim society entails, at least in theory, the notion of the attainability of a perfect Muslim society. It's perfect because its governed essentially by the Qur'an, and the perfection or idealization of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) stems from his application of the Qur'an and from following its prescriptions. Furthermore, because the concepts of *tawhid*, morality, and justice as well as electing the ruler, are by no means unattainable, the ideal new Muslim society is something to be achieved and is distinguished from the first Muslim society by its material advancement.

It has become a common practice to define fundamentalism as - and to quote Richard Stephen Humphrey's -

The affirmation is a radically changed environment of traditional modes of understanding and behavior. In contrast to conservatism or traditionalism, which assumes that things can and should go as much as they have for generations past. Fundamentalism recognizes and tries to speak to a changed milieu, and altered atmosphere of expectations. Fundamentalism is by no means a blind opponent of social change, but it insists that change must be governed by traditional values and modes of understanding.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> Humphrey's, Richard S., "Islam and Political Values in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria",

In the quotation above, Humphrey's captures only half the truth. Humphrey's is not clear in defining "traditional modes of understanding," but refers to the Holy Qur'an, "the lawyers and theologians of medieval Islam." First, what are the traditional modes of understanding and behavior? Are they the modes of the public, the theologians, the philosophers, the *Sufis*, the jurists or a combination of those? Or does he mean modes of the Holy Qur'an and the *Sunnah*? But if by traditional modes of understanding means the Holy Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, he is wrong because the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* are sources of and the material of understanding, not modes.

The questions that interest the fundamentalists are how to understand, to read, and to interpret the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. In their answers, the fundamentalists reject the traditional public understanding because they perceive that the public is ignorant about Islam. In other words, the public does not understand; ignorance is its mode, and, therefore, the public needs to be educated about Islam. Furthermore, the fundamentalists dismiss philosophy as unwarranted; here another mode of understanding is rejected. As to the theologians' mode of understanding, it has also being rejected by the fundamentalists because theology submerged itself into unfathomable questions such as the characteristics of God.

The *Sufis* are discredited as well because they encouraged laziness and helped the deterioration of Muslim societies by having nothing positive to constructive to offer to the Muslims. Hence, their mode of understanding is rejected as well. As to the jurists, the fundamentalists perceive as fulfilling the needs of their societies, and their (the jurists') teaching belongs to a specific past generation. Even though scholars like al-Ghazali or Ibn Taymiyyah are revered, their teachings belonged to a different historical epoch - and one fails to find, for instance, any reference to al-Ghazali for support in Qutb's attack on Muslim philosophers. In fact, the political teachings of individuals like al-

Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyyah are not in harmony with the political teachings of the fundamentalists especially in the matter of the ruler's qualifications, the form of government, and the like. As to contemporary scholars, they are subjected to vigorous attacks from the fundamentalists for their subservience to temporal power and for their imitation of the West.

In short, the fundamentalists, especially Qutb and al-Banna, have offered an untraditional, new comprehensive interpretation of Islam. Although they leave the interpretation of the Holy Quran to the understanding of the individual without a guide - but many people cannot even read it, let alone understand or interpret it - this only goes to show that this notion of the individual's freedom to interpret the Qur'an itself undermines all traditional modes of understanding and behavior. Not only this, but also the fundamentalists stress the notion that traditional Qur'anic exegeses is not binding on Muslims - and Qutb himself attempted to reinterpret the Qur'an.

And if by behavior is meant political behavior, fundamentalist behavior is not traditional - a notion that Humphrey's disregards. Traditional political behavior has been, on the public side, submissive and, on the government side, authoritative- both of which are rejected by the fundamentalists. But if by behavior is meant values such as prohibition of pre-marital sexual activity, theft or murder or as preserving family structure, reverence to older people or enjoining the good, it is correct. But the basis of acceptance is not the scholars' stipulation but arises from the Qur'an itself. On important issues such as theology and jurisprudence, fundamentalism as propagated by Qutb and al-Banna is especially non-traditional.

### Consensus (*Ijma'*)

Two political concepts, among many, should make clear the untraditional and revolutionary aspects of fundamentalism; one is *ijma'* (consensus) the second is revolution. *Ijma'* which has been accepted as legal and theological concept

is transformed by the fundamentalists into a political doctrine. Muslim scholars have traditionally used this doctrine as a tool to interpret revelation and the *Sunnah*; once the consensus (of the scholars) was reached in a specific matter, the outcome was obligatory on Muslims. In terms of theology, law, politics, and other fields of knowledge, the *ijma'* of a specific generation acquired a normative and legislative status. The most well-known *ijma'* was the one of the tenth century where scholars of that time agreed, for instance, that *ijtihad* (reasoning), especially in jurisprudence was not warranted any more. Note that up to that century what is meant by *ijma'* anyway is that of scholars and not necessarily of all people.<sup>284</sup>

Stripping off the doctrine of *ijma'* from its theological and juristic components, the fundamentalists, and especially Qutb, have, instead, transformed it into a main demand in matters of politics. First of all, *ijma'* should not be limited to scholars, but be open to all people. All Muslims, scholars or not, have the same rights in terms of formulating new concepts by interpretation or in terms of political behavior. In order to do this, Qutb and others have channeled this doctrine into a political vehicle. Thus, Qutb argues, that the consensus of the people is necessary for the election as well as the legitimacy of Muslim rulers, and that those rulers who ascend to power without the approval of their people, though they may apply the *Shari'ah*, are illegitimate. Whereas medieval thinkers such as al-Mawdudi accepted the seizure of power on the condition that the usurper apply the *Shari'ah*, the fundamentalists totally reject this view because of their belief that God entrusted people as a whole with authority and legitimacy. Whether scholars approve or disapprove of usurpation, the fundamentalists do not accept any justification for usurpation of power.

This attitude towards politics spills over towards Muslim scholars and thinkers who have been elitists in their approach to knowledge and politics. Scholars-whether theologian, jurists or philosophers- accepted, and have been

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<sup>284</sup> Lewis, Bernard, "Politics and War", in *A Legacy of Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 160.

traditionally, as authorities on matters of theology and jurisprudence, notwithstanding the non-existence of clergy in orthodox Islam. Contrary to this, the fundamentalists reject all kinds of intellectual and political elitism. Though they acknowledge differences in human faculties, these differences should not be institutionalized. For instance, those who traditionally and theoretically had chosen the caliphs have no more rights than the rest of the Muslims; all Muslims should enjoy the same rights in terms of electing or disposing of rulers.

In addition to this, Qutb renders *idiom'* on theological matters unnecessary and unrestricted to specific groups of people; all people should enjoy reading and understanding the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* according to their abilities. In other words, there is no one or more legitimate interpretation of Islam in so far as they do not contradict them; theology and exegesis as well as jurisprudence become wide open to interpretation and reinterpretation. The only concept to which Qutb and other fundamentalists ask unwavering adherence is *tawhid* and governance by God (*al-hakimiyyah*). Hence, the *ijma'* of the Muslims becomes the embodiment and application of *tawhid* and *hakimiyyah*; *tawhid* is manifested in the unity of Muslims under the Qur'an, and *hakimiyyah* is manifested in adhering to the *Shari'ah*. Both *tawhid* and *hakimiyyah* are the principles of regeneration. Otherwise, the regeneration is lacking its essential characteristics that distinguish it from secular or un-Islamic movement because the Muslim regeneration aims not only at eradicating injustices as many other movements do but also at the creation of Muslim society under the banner of the Holy Qur'an.<sup>285</sup>

But the fundamentalists are not aware that if a concept like *tawhid* is left to every individual, many of those individuals are going to understand it in anthropomorphic pantheistic terms, which undermines the very essence of *tawhid* in Islam. In actuality, this might also mean many Iqbals or 'Abduhs -

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<sup>285</sup> Enayat, Hamid, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, Austin: Taxes University Press, 1982, pp. 69-110.

whose understandings are rejected by Qutb - who advocate outright reinterpretation of Islam through science.

The other point, which illustrates the fundamentalists' rejection of an accepted political behavior as well as mode of understanding, is revolution. Muslims in general have accepted traditionally just or unjust rulers if they adhere, even nominally, to *Shari'ah* - in modern time, some modernist Muslim thinkers cooperated with unjust governments like 'Abduh with the Egyptian government. Many jurists and thinkers such as Ahmad b. Hanbal prohibited revolution; Muslims were asked to obey the victorious ruler. Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Ghazali, Ibn Jama'ah and others required obedience even to unjust or heretical rulers once victory was achieved. The reason for this is that the evils of revolutions were brought to outweigh their benefits. And the modernist thinkers as 'Abduh and Iqbal follow more or less the same path.<sup>286</sup>

Hassan al-Banna and other fundamentalists looked at revolution as an ethical concept and a political obligation, and Qutb's writings on revolution represent a new understanding. Revolution is not only a means to fight enemies of Islam but acquires, more importantly, theological, metaphysical, and political implications, for Islam is the religion of revolution in the fields of ethics, metaphysics, politics, and economics. The revelation of Islam was a revolution against the status quo in its all-unjust political, metaphysical, and religious manifestations. Furthermore, al-Mawdudi and other fundamentalists argued that all messengers of God were advocates of revolution, renewal, and transformation of political, social, ethical and economic structures. Moreover, for Qutb, al-Banna, al-Mawdudi, and Khomeini, revolutions are universal, favor no specific group, and do not aim at revenge, but aim at justice and happiness.<sup>287</sup>

What should be noted here is that revolution for most fundamentalists has become a part of or is itself Islamic. For them, a particular environment

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<sup>286</sup> Amarah, M., *al-Islam wa-al-thawrah* (Islam and Revolution), Beirut: al-Mu'assassah al-Arabiyyah li-Dirasat wa-al-Nashr, 1980, pp. 234-38.

<sup>287</sup> Al-Mawdudi, *al-Jihad fi-Sabilillah* (Striving unto God), 1st ed., Beirut: Muassassat al-Risalah, 1983, pp. 25-28.

“produced of a crisis situation characterized by economic difficulties, moral and ideological confusion and political instability” does not only invite the rise of fundamentalism.<sup>288</sup> On the contrary, the non-existence of revolution is a sign of crisis, of laziness and economic injustice and moral and political instability. Islamic political and moral norms are revolutionary; the absence of revolution is a sign of moral weakness and political stagnation. And this is why Qutb, for instance, insists on the necessity of activism before and after the creation of a Muslim society. Revolution is a moral responsibility because of its instrumentality in creating and maintaining a Muslim society and in education, culture, economics, governments, and politics.

The most important aspect of *tawhid* in political behavior - and this is by no means a traditional mode of understanding - is its' being the substance and the motto of Islamic revolution. *Tawhid* is a concept that revolutionizes the mind, which sooner or later will be embodied in a popular movement, and the goal of this revolution is the transformation of the outlook as well as the heart of individuals. In many ways it is also the transformation of what is secular into the religious; for instance, a visa or a passport should not be required from Muslims entering other Muslim countries: the Muslim's passport is his religion. In other words, Muslims qua Muslims have rights beyond the limits of particular citizenships because the oneness of God and unity of people is the link that should tie together all facets of life.

Put differently, what the Muslim revolution aspires to is the creation, the continuation, and attainment of a moral, strong, and happy society erected on *tawhid* and *wahdah* (unity). Thus, those societies that are not based on and do not continue to serve *tawhid* and *wahdah* are in a state of moral and political bankruptcy, notwithstanding any material gains and progress. This bankruptcy is an indication not only of bad regimes but also of the unhappiness and misery of mankind. Consequently, a rich, as opposed to a bankrupt, society entails a people whose mind is not preoccupied with lust, selfishness,

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<sup>288</sup> Dessouki, A., "Islamic Organization," in *Islam and Power*, 1981, p. 113.

infidelity, and disunity. And because Muslim societies are on the road to total bankruptcy, the only solution to their problems is a comprehensive movement, i.e., a revolution similar to that of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) that uprooted bankruptcy.<sup>289</sup>

This revolution should not be imposed by a coup or an elite but should, in the opinion of most fundamentalists including Qutb, be "natural". "Natural" means that the state should not try to undermine the activities of the advocates of Islam who should be allowed to disseminate Islamic teachings freely. But if the freedom of speech of Muslim activists is denied or hampered, there is sufficient ground to taking arms against the government. Freedom of speech is very important to the fundamentalists because it is the instrument they need to disseminate their ideas and to transform people's mental attitudes and to create a new psychology.

All these activities necessitate the existence of a group or a party whose *raison d'etre* is struggle, *jihad*. Al-Banna, al-Mawdudi, and Qutb see that this party should carry the seeds of revolutions and its principles of *tawhid* and justice and, ultimately, should assume power. Assumption of power should not be the result of employing force but of popular conviction.<sup>290</sup> In other words, this party should advocate Islam and its teachings, including the political. When people are shown the advantages of Islamic teachings and are convinced of its viability, Muslims, the fundamentalists contend, will opt naturally for an Islamic government. Hence, societies should be able to decide what kind of society they want and, Islam should be allowed to preach its message. Armed resistance is allowed when Islam is suppressed.

But insisting on adherence to Islamic principles does not necessarily lead to theocracy. The Islamic system is not realized; Qutb and al-Banna argued, if men of religion rule because, in Islam, there are no men of religion or clergy.

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<sup>289</sup> Al-Afghani, Jamal al-Din, "al-Khatirat", in *Complete Works*, ed., Amarah, Muhammad, 1980, pp. 9-11 & 13. See also Assad, Muhammad, *Islam at the Crossroads*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Lahore: Arafat Publications, 1963, p. 3.

<sup>290</sup> Al-Mawdudi, *Minhaj al-inqilab al-Islami*, Beirut: Mu'assassat al-Risalah, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1981, pp. 5-6.

And the Islamic system is not realized where Islamic law is implemented, where the idea of Islam rules, and where its principles and regulations define the kind of government and the form of society. Because Islam has created a society that is based on law, Sayyid Qutb's repudiation of theocracy stems from his opposition to the notion of the inherent authority of the clergy. Qutb is very emphatic in distinguishing between religion and "men of religion" or clergy. Because the clergy does not represent "the idea of God", to call an Islamic government a theocracy is misleading. The rule of clergy should not be taken as the ideal for an Islamic government. This is so because neither theory nor practice supports this ideal.<sup>291</sup>

Furthermore, Qutb would have rejected the idea of government by jurists like the one advocated by Ayatollah Khomeini. Ayatollah Khomeini, in his book, *The Islamic Government*, argues that only government by jurists is the legitimate government. Since the Islamic government is based on jurisprudence, the most qualified men for government are the jurists.<sup>292</sup>

But, for Qutb, if religious government means that a specific group rules or assumes authority, Islamic government has not been established. Islamic government is a government that is built on the notion that authority belongs to God alone and on the execution of the *Shari'ah*. For Khomeini and Qutb the *Shari'ah* is the basis of government. But Qutb perceives that the right to rule, which is dependent on *Shari'ah* is a matter of delegation by the people. But for Khomeini, the right to rule comes ultimately from the *Imam*. And because Qutb does not believe in the power of delegation from Imam, judges and sheikhs become no more than scholars. Thus a Muslim judge is a Muslim, skilful in the field of law, but without the right to enjoy more authority and legitimacy in terms of election than other Muslims since both notions resides in Muslims in general.<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Qutb; *Characteristics*, pp. 58, 63-69 and 72.

<sup>292</sup> Enayat; 1982, pp. 18-51.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.* Pp. 207-9, and 230-32.

Notwithstanding the fundamentalists' agreement on many issues there are still some differences. Al-Mawdudi believes that the majority does not enjoy a calm, reasoning mind. Therefore, the few should plan the path for the whole. The elites enjoy wealth, reason, pride, and governmental positions. In fact, the real power of a nation is in its elite whose goodness makes the nation good and whose corruption makes the nation corrupt. Therefore, the corruption of Muslims is due to the deterioration of their elite.<sup>294</sup> For Al-Mawdudi, reform and change should come from above. But for Qutb and al-Banna the direction of change should come from below and move upwards; to al-Mawdudi the direction is from above downwards. The upward movement leads to the destruction of wealth and privileges and transforms the whole fabric of society. Conversely, the downward movement tries to maintain existing structures but infiltrates the branches of government since it does not aim at complete break with power structures and tries to use them to redress substantively social evils.

## Conclusion

The two tendencies, modernism and Islamism, aim to motivate the Muslims to work towards progress and development. Both see Islam as necessary for the reformulation of history and reformation of civilization. Islam should provide the metaphysical foundations as well as motivating force for regeneration. However, Islam as has been understood for centuries should be re-examined and re-interpreted in the light of modernity.

To the modernists, though Islam should be the essence of progress and development, its understanding should develop along Western lines. On yet another level, religion's most important function is the calculation of morality. *Tawhid* is not only a metaphysical concept but is also a concept that relates to

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<sup>294</sup> Al-Mawdudi, Abu al-Ala, *Nizam al-Hayat fi al-Islam* (The Islamic System of Life), 1<sup>st</sup> ed., Beirut: Mu'assassat al-Risalah, 1980, pp. 54, also pp. 50-3.

all facets of life. It should be seen as a process of unity at all practical and theoretical levels and a process of liberation from the past.

On the other hand, Islamism perceives *tawhid* as a process of total domination. *Tawhid* should dominate all aspects of life and negate any other form. Authority, sovereignty, and knowledge as well as related doctrines belong only to God, and no man can legitimately put forward any claim to any of the doctrines. In practice the *ummah* in general is charged with executing these doctrines.

However, both tendencies believe that man has an essential role in the making of his destiny and that he demands a spiritual, intellectual, political and economic regeneration. Whereas this generation starts in purification and moves to unification from the Islamist perspective, it starts in unification and moves to integration from the modernists' perspective. This difference is not only methodological but also relates to the normative differences mentioned above.

To the modernists, knowledge is sought in order to believe whereas, to the Islamists, belief is sought in order to know. However, both view knowledge and belief as necessary tools for a proper regeneration of the Muslim nation. Renewal and authenticity are also two dominant concerns of the two tendencies. Whereas, to the modernists, authenticity should be viewed and evaluated in the light of the new (i.e., science), to the Islamists, the new should be viewed and evaluated in the light of the authentic (i.e., revelation). Thus, the authentic serves the Islamists as the measure of correctness of the new; to the modernists, the process is the other way; the new confirms the authentic.

Re-interpretation to the modernists constitutes a new statement, but a new statement to the Islamists, constitutes re-interpretation without affecting the text itself. Thus, if something does not work, it is not due to the text itself but to a wrong reading or interpretation.

Finally, the two tendencies are proponents of change leading to productivity

and independence in thought and in behavior, though they differ conceptually and practically, on the means of their achievement.

## **PART FOUR: CASE STUDIES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The severe blow dealt to Arab unity by Egypt's signing of a peace treaty with Israel in 1978 dealt an equally severe blow to pan-Arabism, which has been in decline ever since.

In its place has risen Islamism. Like pan-Arabism, the spread of Islamism has sprung in part from hostility to the spread of Western influence and culture. Unlike pan-Arabism, however, Islamism seeks not a single unified Arab state but rather the establishment of Islamic theocracies in Muslim countries. Another difference between the two is that whereas pan-Arabism was embraced by a number of Arab regimes as well as by substantial sections of their public, Islamism enjoys significantly less endorsement from the political elites and has instead become the most potent ideology of popular dissent. In fact, while Islamism has enjoyed increasing support among the Islamic masses, many of their elites have turned from pan-Arabism to territorial nationalism.

The recent history of the Arab world has been marked by a recurrence of military defeats, economic disasters, and bloody internecine conflicts. The gap between the rich and the poor within each country has widened, with ever-increasing numbers of people living at subsistence levels while others have acquired unprecedented wealth.<sup>295</sup> Conflicts between Arab states have been the norm and cooperation the exception. Political repression

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<sup>295</sup> Fisher, Sydney N. and William Oschsenwald, *The Middle East: A History*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1990, p. 736.

predominates, while national heritage and traditional values, particularly those concerning religion and community, are being increasingly displaced by modern, Western practices.

Nevertheless, Islam remains a basic component of both personal and national identity, and Islamic fundamentalism<sup>296</sup> has found widespread support among the unemployed, the alienated, the frustrated, and the repressed. Since the 1970s and 1980s, Islam has been used as a political weapon in various struggles against perceived sources of social injustice, inequality, atheism, or political repression, most notably in Iran and in Egypt, where fundamentalist elements considered Sadat to be “the Pharaoh”.

This Part examines the surge of Islamism, paying particular attention to the recent political activity of Islamists in Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, and Iran, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Israel.

Islamism (also referred to as political Islam) has as its goal the establishment of an Islamic state on the basis of the Qur’an and the Sunnah. Like pan-Arabism, Islamism first appeared in response to the introduction of Western influence into the Arab world. However, unlike the pan-Arabists, most pan-Islamic leaders reject the notion of a single unified state, seeking instead to establish Islamic theocracies in countries where Muslims constitute the majority of the population.

The first major Islamic party was the Muslim Brotherhood. Founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, it became a tightly organized political movement, striving to establish a theocratic state.<sup>297</sup> The Brethren were not hesitant to engage in acts of violence. Egyptian governments in the 1940s, and those under Nasser in the 1950s, cracked down on the Brotherhood, greatly weakening its influence. Upon his accession to power, President Mohammad Anwar Sadat released members of the Brethren from prison,

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<sup>296</sup> Fundamentalism is defined here as the strict adherence to the letter of the *Shari’a*, its rigid and constrictive interpretation.

<sup>297</sup> Faksh, M. A., *The Future of Islam in the Middle East: Fundamentalism in Egypt, Algeria and Saudi Arabia*, Westport, PT: Praeger, 1997, p. 43.

allowing them to reorganize and participate in the political process. Although not granted legal status, the Brethren were allowed to run for office under the auspices of any of the legal parties. As a result, support, especially among the young, for the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic movements increased not only in Egypt but also in other Arab countries.

The response of the Islamic movements themselves, however, was neither uniform nor consistent, particularly at the beginning of the independence crises. The nature of Islamic movements varies, depending on the social and political context in which they operate. For example, significant differences exist between the political strategies, goals, and even doctrinal tenets of Shi'a Islam, which prevails in Iran and parts of Lebanon, and those of Sunni Islam, which predominates among Arabs. The Muslim Brotherhood of Syria differs in its political means and goals from its counterparts in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon<sup>298</sup> and also from such militant Islamic groups as Islamic Jihad and Muhammad's Army. Given this diversity, as well as the lack of reliable information concerning the organization and activities of underground movements such as the Shi'ite Islamic groups in Iraq,<sup>299</sup> it is unhelpful to generalize across the Arab world. A wiser approach is to examine the present status of Islamism in selected Arab states, thereby conveying the diversity of Islamism while also indicating certain characteristics common to all of the movements and pointing to possible future developments in other parts of the Arab world. Of the five Arab countries that form the focus of Part Four, three- Egypt, Jordan, and Algeria- possess visible and influential Islamic movements.

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<sup>298</sup> Hourani, Albert, *A History of the Arab Peoples*; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991, pp. 457-58.

<sup>299</sup> In the case of Saudi Arabia, the regime itself is fundamentalist Islamic but is challenged by more puritanical groups whose popular influence and organizational strength is yet to be determined for want of accurate information.

## Egypt

Egyptian society is overwhelmingly Muslim, with Islamic values constituting a major component of all populist ideologies, including Nasserism, which, despite its secular orientation, was never antagonistic toward Islam. Nasser's long-standing dispute with the Muslim Brotherhood concerned not Islam, but rather the use of violence to topple an Egyptian regime headed by a "devout" Muslim. During his first years in power, Sadat encouraged the rise of political Islam, cracking down only when it began to constitute a serious threat to his regime. In the wake of Sadat's assassination by the militant Islamic group, Jihad Organization, President Hosni Mubarak adopted a two-pronged strategy: to be conciliatory towards mainstream Islamic groups such as the Brethren while being firm against small, armed groups that advocate violent means for the achievement of their political goals.

The demise of socialist pan-Arabism has further strengthened Islamism, and ever-increasing numbers of Egyptians are responding to the calls for the Islamisation of society or the implementation of the *shari'a*. Well aware of the popular appeal of such demands, the government has adopted some measures designed to please devout Muslims. The sale of alcohol has been prohibited in 14 out of the 26 governorates<sup>300</sup> and there has been an increase in the number of television programmes featuring such outspoken fundamentalist speakers as Sheikh Muhammad Mutawalli al-Sha'rawi, who appears regularly on state-run Egyptian television responding to queries about the position of Islam toward many social and political issues.

The Islamisation of Egyptian society also has a darker side. The Jihad, founded by the blind cleric Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman,<sup>301</sup> was accused of

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<sup>300</sup> Murphy, Caryle; "Islam: Politics and Piety, Part I", *The Washington Post*, April 26, 1992, p. A28.

<sup>301</sup> Sheikh Abdul Rahman convicted in the United States for involvement, either directly or indirectly, in the bombing of the World Trade center in New York City in February

gunning down Rifa'at al-Mahgoub, the speaker of the National Assembly, during the 1990 Gulf crisis. Other smaller groups, employing violence against both the state and the Copts are also beginning to emerge. Having accused Abdul Rahman of collaborating with the authorities, one of these, the Shawqiyeen (followers of Sheikh Shawqi from Fayyoun in Upper Egypt), has launched attacks on the Egyptian police. Armed bands have also targeted churches, Copt-owned businesses, foreign tourists, and Muslims who refuse to submit to them,<sup>302</sup> or those who have publicly condemned their actions such as the writer Farag Foda.<sup>303</sup>

The religious resurgence has not been limited to Islam. Influenced by the current international trend toward revival of ethnic and religious identities, as well as the sectarian dimension of the civil war in Lebanon, which some local and Western media have depicted as a war against Christian Arabs, Copts have also begun to display their religious identity and loyalty more visibly. Many observe religious rituals more regularly, celebrate religious holidays with more fanfare, and wear large crosses around their necks. Thus it appears that religious fundamentalism- and its inherent tendency toward intolerance and away from compromise- is becoming a powerful force in both communities. This situation is unlikely to change, even if economic conditions were to improve substantially.

Thus far, Mubarak has sought to contain this potentially explosive situation by making concessions to moderate Islamists and conservative traditionalists, whose views probably reflect the beliefs of most Egyptians, in the hope of driving a wedge between them and militant extremists. For example, the Muslim Brethren are allowed freedom of expression through their daily paper and other publications.<sup>304</sup> They are also permitted to engage in social

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<sup>302</sup> *Mideast Mirror*, May 27, 1992, p. 21.

<sup>303</sup> Farag Foda, a secularist writer and a staunch opponent of Islamic fundamentalism, was assassinated by Islamic militants in Cairo in June 1992.

<sup>304</sup> Faksh, M. A. *The Future of Islam in the Middle East*, 1997, p. 47.

activities, such as running health centers, social welfare institutions, and schools, and to preach and lead prayers in mosques and cultural centers.<sup>305</sup>

Nevertheless, their organization remains officially illegal because Egyptian law prohibits the establishment of political parties on the basis of religion.<sup>306</sup>

At the same time, however, there is evidence that government concessions to traditional elements have begun to impinge on the free expression of more liberal points of view. For example, the 1991 publication of a work of fiction considered “blasphemous”<sup>307</sup> by an Islamic research agency connected with the Azhar<sup>308</sup> resulted in a sentence of several years imprisonment for its author Ala’ Hamed and his publisher. In January 1992, five books written by a noted Islamic liberal, Muhammad Sa’id Ashmawy, chief judge of the Higher State Security Court, and a book on the Jihad organization by the journalist Adel Hammouda, were confiscated from the Cairo International Book Exhibit by the same research agency. President Mubarak himself was forced to intervene and ordered the books returned to the exhibition.

Since the autumn of 1992, militants have sought to turn up the heat on the government by attacking tourism, which had been the country’s chief foreign currency earner and employer of more than one million people. In that same year, President Hosni Mubarak resorted to military courts to secure swift persecution and harsher verdicts for extremists hoping to topple his government and create an Islamic state through a violent campaign. The radical extremists were convicted of forming an illegal group that aimed to topple the government by use of force, possessing arms and ammunition without license, and plotting acts of violence and terrorism.

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<sup>305</sup> Ibid. p. 46.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid. p. 47.

<sup>307</sup> *Civil Society* newsletter, Cairo, Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies, No. 1, 20, January 1992.

<sup>308</sup> The Al-Azhar is the most distinguished academy of higher learning in Sunni Islam. It is a traditional, conservative body that has continuously played a legitimating role for the Egyptian regime and its policies. Successive rulers of Egypt maintained a distinct Policy toward the Asher. They have patronized this institution and made it part of their bureaucracy.

While attempting to accommodate the more moderate traditional elements, the government has cracked down on militant Islamists, arresting and jailing many of them. In March 1992, the holy month of Ramadan, Mubarak publicly denounced “negative trends” in the Islamic world that deviate from “the essence of the Koran and the teachings of Islam”. He described this phenomenon as a “sickness” that needed to be “decisively cured and boldly confronted” by combating “sectarian discord, doctrinal extremism, intellectual terrorism, and the exploitation of religion”.<sup>309</sup>

Although Mubarak noted that Islam calls for tolerance and freedom of belief,<sup>310</sup> his speech followed a number of publicized and unpublicized clashes between Islamist youth, on the one hand, and Copts, government security forces, and other Islamic groups, on the other. The authorities blamed the Jihad group led by Abdul Rahman for these incidents. A particularly significant Muslim-Christian encounter occurred in September 1991 in the Cairo district of Imbada when hundreds of militant Islamists took to the streets, defacing portions of the Virgin Mary and burning Christian-owned shops.<sup>311</sup> These clashes marked the extension of religious conflict from southern Egypt to Cairo, a city that has rarely witnessed such incidents in its modern history. The social composition of Imbada makes it a likely site for further religious conflicts. It is an impoverished, congested slum whose residents firmly adhere to religion in its most constrictive, rigid form.

In May 1992 a second, more violent sectarian battle took place at Minshiyat Nasser in the governorate of Assyut in Upper Egypt, an area where village and clan feuds are common. This battle resulted in the death of a dozen Christians and one of the Islamist assailants,<sup>312</sup> prompting Mubarak to travel to the troubled area in an effort to soothe the aggrieved and reconcile Islamic-

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<sup>309</sup> *Mideast Mirror*, April, 1992, p. 16.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>311</sup> Hedges, Chris; “A Religious War Rends a Cairo Slum”, *The New York Times*, October 22, 1991, p. A12; and *Mideast Mirror*, September 24, 1991, p. 15.

<sup>312</sup> *Mideast Mirror*, May 6, 1992, p. 13.

Christian differences. The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights attributed the armed assault to a dispute over payments demanded by the Islamic group, which has imposed its own laws, exacted taxes from businesses,<sup>313</sup> and barred Christians from expressing their religious beliefs in public.<sup>314</sup>

These clashes, based on misconceptions and unfounded information, reflect the growing distrust between Copts and a large segment of Muslims. One Islamist leader in Imbada has publicly asserted the belief that, having succeeded in gaining control of vital areas of business such as gold shops, the Christians are conspiring to take over all of Egypt<sup>315</sup> Even many non-Islamist Muslims criticize the Copts for blocking the adoption of the *shari'a* in Egypt, describing their act as “the tyranny of the minority”.<sup>316</sup> For their part, Christian elites blamed the government for failing to respond to the grievances of more than 6 million Copts<sup>317</sup> by “selling more Islam” rather than advocating secularism and democracy.<sup>318</sup> Coptic associations in the West accused the Egyptian government of condoning an anti-Christian campaign, calling on the international community to step in and “help save the Copts from further destruction”.<sup>319</sup>

The Assyut incident cannot be dismissed as a clan or village feud, nor can it be attributed solely to “unemployment among youth”,<sup>320</sup> as some analysts have argued in the case of Imbaba clashes. Neither a pure rebellion of the dispossessed and repressed, nor a religious war, nor a “conspiracy” by the regime and the Islamists to destroy the Copts, the Assyut incident is part of a

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<sup>313</sup> *Mideast Mirror*, May 27, 1992, p. 22; *New York Times*, June 25, 1992, p. A12.

<sup>314</sup> *Mideast Mirror*, May 27, 1992, p. 22.

<sup>315</sup> Hedges, *A Religious War*.

<sup>316</sup> Shukri, Ghali, as cited in *Mideast Mirror*, May 27, 1992, p. 23.

<sup>317</sup> According to the Egyptian government estimates, Copts make up 10 percent of the population, or 6 million, while Coptic associations in the West put the number of Copts at 11 million, or 20 percent of the total population.

<sup>318</sup> Murphy, “Islam: Politics and Piety”, p. A29.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.* See note 313 above.

<sup>320</sup> The phrase was stated by Sa’adeddin Ibrahim, in Murphy, *Islam: Politics and Piety*, A28.

multifaceted conflict with religious, class, and anti-establishment dimensions. Its participants are poor, politically repressed, religious Islamists determined to Islamise their society by force, beginning in their immediate community. Having failed to overthrow the central government, they have subsequently directed their frustration against more accessible targets: first the Christians, then Western tourists who, in their view, are protected by the “un-Islamic” regime and share religious beliefs with another enemy, the West.<sup>321</sup> Another objective of attacking tourists is to weaken the country’s economy by pushing domestic investment away from tourism. It appears that the tradition of religious toleration that flourished in Egypt for centuries is now being challenged by strong Islamist forces and by Christian assertions of a distinct identity. As intolerance and mutual distrust between Muslims and Christians in mixed neighborhoods grow, the extremists in both communities can easily incite violence, which is likely to become even more bloody and atrocious.

Yet there are three factors that strongly militate against the possibility that Egypt will reach the extent of strife that prevailed in Algeria in the 1990s.<sup>322</sup> First, the Egyptian tradition of religious toleration is centuries old and deeply rooted, serving as a guiding principle for both traditional, conservative Muslim groups and institutions, notably the Al-Azhar, and mainstream Islamic movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, which has adopted peaceful means of achieving its political goals. Second, the Egyptian state is composed of long-standing, stable institutions that are highly resistant to radical, extremist politics. The stability of these institutions is further reinforced by state domination of social and economic activities, which renders a large segment of the population directly dependent upon them. Third, the regular army and security forces have so far proven to be united, nonsectarian, and effective, moving swiftly to end sectarian clashes and to

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<sup>321</sup> Brekowitz, Lawrence; “Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis”, *Psychological Bulletin* 106, 1989, pp. 59-73.

<sup>322</sup> Faksh, M. A. *The Future of Islam in the Middle East*, 1997, pp. 52-57.

combat armed bands of extremists. Only in the unlikely event of a large-scale infiltration of the army by Islamist militants would there be a real threat to the stability of the regime.

Nevertheless, given the power of Islamic values and the popular appeal of the call for the implementation of the *shari'a*, Egypt will probably become a more Islamised, national territorial state. While striving to maintain tolerance of other beliefs, the regime may be confronted with irresistible popular pressure to widen the application of measures that are considered consistent with the *shari'a* and to restrict or abandon others that are inconsistent with it. Although such steps could undermine the power of Islamist extremists by depriving them of their ideological base, they may also further alienate the Christian minority.

### Financing Islamist Groups

The Egyptian political intelligence police, *Mabaheth Amn al-Dawla*, apparently has reason to believe that a Kuwait businessman Abdurahman al-Mujaibil, who was in charge of foreign relations for a Kuwaiti religious organization called *Jamiat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami* (Brotherhood for the Resurrection of The Islamic Heritage), was one of the major financiers of Egyptian Islamists. There are about two-dozen religious and humanitarian organizations currently active in Kuwait and often in competition with the official organization sponsored by the government, *Beit al-Zakat*. The Egyptian intelligence services believe that four of these organizations secretly finance and organize the activities of violent Islamists and their movements throughout the world. This accusation applies specifically to *Jamiat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami*, and also to the organization called *Al-Islah al-Ijtima'* (Social Reform) which apparently included the Kuwaiti Muslim Brotherhood and, surprisingly enough, the group *Al Hilal al-Ahmar al-Kuwaiti* (The Kuwaiti

Red Crescent) and its sister association, the *Jamiat al-Hayat al-Khayriya al-Islamiya al-Alamiya* (Brotherhood of the International Islamic Humanitarian Society).

According to Egyptian intelligence, these associations all have a double structure: an official religious and social front, and a clandestine structure for financing and organizing Islamist movements fighting “infidel” regimes. These clandestine structures communicate through the use of encrypted messages and are financed through a series of accounts in a network of Islamic banks mainly in Sudan but also in Saudi Arabia where Islamist circles maintain close relations with radical religious groups in Kuwait.

In Kuwait certain Islamist movements seem to operate in a climate of official neutrality.<sup>323</sup> The situation is not the same in Oman and Saudi Arabia where several waves of arrests have taken place over the past few years. Since early 1994, the authorities in Muscat dismantled an Islamist network belonging to the Egyptian organization called *Tabligh wa Dawaa* (Transmission and Preaching), which apparently managed to infiltrate the armed forces and administrative services. Some 400 members of this organization have been arrested.<sup>(20)</sup><sup>324</sup> It seems to be particularly well established in the Zufar and Salala provinces along the border with Yemen, where the “brothers” of Hadramaut, sheikh Abdulrahman Bakir and sheikh Abubakar Haddad, are quite active. During their investigation, Omani intelligence services uncovered the trail of an Omani businessman, member of the Al-Ghozali, who is supposedly a major financier of the Yemenite Islamist militia of sheikh Abdulmajid Al-Zandani.

In Saudi Arabia, hundreds of arrests have taken place among Islamists over the past few years, particularly in the north. A well-known imam, Salman Aludeh, was arrested in Buraidah in 1994. His jailing led to a press release from London by a hitherto unknown organization called *Kataeb al-Iman*

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<sup>323</sup> *Intelligence Newsletter No. 248*, Paris, France, September 22, 1994.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*

(Battalions of the Faith), which threatened to kidnap members of the Saudi royal family and also to attack American and Europeans in the Gulf countries if the imam was not released. Among those arrested figure many lawyers, professors and civil servants.

Sisk asserts that there are three broad categories to which Egyptian Islamists can be ascribed.<sup>325</sup> Firstly, a non-violent faction that expounds fundamentalist religiosity. Secondly, the activists who seek change through moderate political action. Thirdly, the radical category who base themselves on the writing of Sayed Qutb, the Muslim Brotherhood ideologue in the 1960s, and his ideas on jihad (holy war) and rule by God.<sup>326</sup> The goal of this latter group is to destroy the existing regime, and violence is the method that is used to achieve it.

In the 1970s, the Muslim Brotherhood had opted for a policy of moderation and gradualism. Hence, it was advantageous for them to co-operate with the Sadat regime up to a certain point. They functioned openly and spread their message through publishing and established educational and financial institutions. As a moderate reformist group, the Muslim Brotherhood took on a role as a critic and pressure group and began to reject violence and terrorism.<sup>327</sup>

In the 1980s, Islamic revivalism was becoming an important part of Egyptian society. Many groups had become institutionalized and religious consciousness increased dramatically. As a response, the government began to make Islam a more visible entity through television programs and publishing books on Islam. President Sadat went so far as to label himself *Al-ra'is Al-mu'min* (the Believer-President).<sup>328</sup> By the 1990s, religion was a pervasive language and behavior in Egypt and Tahsin Bashir, a former spokesman for

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<sup>325</sup> Sisk, T. D.; *Islam and Democracy: Religion, Politics, and Power in the Middle East*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1992.

<sup>326</sup> Faksh, M. A.; *The Future of Islam in the Middle East: Fundamentalism in Egypt, Algeria and Saudi Arabia*, Westport, PT: Praegar, 1997, p. 47.

<sup>327</sup> Mansfield, P.; *A History of the Middle East*, London: Penguin Books, 1992.

<sup>328</sup> Faksh, M. A. 1997, p. 46.

Sadat, noted “Political Islam has been checked in its bid for power, but the Islamisation of society had gained ground”.<sup>329</sup> Even so, the last three decades of the twentieth century have been a turbulent and destabilizing time for Egypt and using Islamic rhetoric and symbols was just one of the ways that the government handled the Islamist threat.

Militant extremist groups have sanctioned violence in order to overthrow the Egyptian state and have targeted government officials, journalists, and members of the security forces, Coptic Christians and writers over the past three decades. Similarly, the *ulema* (religious leaders) were not safe from the extremists as they tended to be viewed as puppets of the state. For the Islamists *Jihad* was the only way to redeem Egypt and denounce the West. Events such as the failed coup attempt in 1974 by the Islamic Liberation Party and the assassination of President Sadat in 1981 by the Jihad Organization cell called *Al-Hijra wal Takfir* were a major threat to the Egyptian regime. Since then successive governments responded to the violence, of such Islamist movements, with repression by imprisoning, torturing and executing the perpetrators.

In the 1990s, tourists were, on many occasions, the targets of different militant groups. The Islamists’ desired effect was to damage the tourist industry in order to undermine the effectiveness of the government in the continuing economic crisis. Since 1991, tourism was Egypt’s highest foreign currency earner.<sup>330</sup> Therefore attacks on the tourist industry were effective targets for destabilizing the regime. Destabilization was achieved by undermining the government’s support through intimidation, emphasizing its lack of societal control and its inability to provide support in terms of social service and economic growth.

However, this type of tactic has played a part in jeopardizing the support of the Islamists too. In 1995, an assassination attempt on President Mubarak

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<sup>329</sup> Ajami, F.; “The Sorrows of Egypt” cited in Alterman, J. B.; Egypt: Stable, but for How Long? *Washington Quarterly* 23:4, 1995, pp. 107-119.

<sup>330</sup> Agence Europe, Egypt. <http://www.medea.be/en/index054.htm>. 1996.

rallied support for the government as people began to question the future of Egyptian politics. Similarly, in 1997 the horrific attack on tourists at the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut firmly swung support away from the Islamists as the loss of the tourist dollar would greatly affect society with tourism being a major source of employment.<sup>331</sup> Thus, it appears that Islamist groups in Egypt may have in fact eroded their own power base through impacting on an important economic base for ordinary Egyptians. For example, Osama Bin Ladin's deputy Ayman Al-Jawahiri is the leader of Islamic Jihad of Egypt who was condemned to death in Egypt.

The Operations Man: Dr. Ayman Muhammad Rabi' al-Zawahiri

Osama Bin Ladin has always sought publicity for his activities; not surprisingly, therefore, most attention paid to his networks concentrates on the man himself. But, he is primarily the organizer and banker of his operations, not the operational planner.

The man Western investigators tend to characterize as Osama Bin Ladin's operations chief is Ayman al-Zawahiri.<sup>332</sup> Many insiders think that Zawahiri is actually the planner of the more dramatic attacks of recent years, and the probable successor to Bin Ladin. An Egyptian and founder of Egypt's Jihad Organization, which was involved in the assassination of Anwar Sadat in 1981, Zawahiri has been closely allied with Bin Ladin since some time prior to 1998, and has been often identified as being one of the key operational chiefs, along with another radical of Egyptian origin, Muhammad 'Atef. A physician by training, Zawahiri is also Bin Ladin's personal doctor; Bin Ladin is said to suffer from a number of serious ailments.

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<sup>331</sup> Alterman, J. B.; "Egypt: Stable, but for How Long?" in *Washington Quarterly* 23:4, pp. 107-119.

<sup>332</sup> Gunaratna, Rohan, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, Scribe Publications, Melbourne, 2002, p. 26.

Al-Zawahiri was born in Egypt (apparently in Giza) on June 9, 1951.<sup>333</sup> Trained as a physician, he became involved in radical Islamist politics and was a founder of the Jihad Organization, which in addition to its role in the assassination of Sadat; also staged an uprising at Asyut in Upper Egypt at the same time in October 1981.

In the wake of the crackdown on Jihad, Zawahiri served three years in prison, but as he had not been directly linked to the Sadat assassination itself, eventually went free in 1984. He is said to have briefly resumed medical practice in the Cairo area. But by 1987 he was in Afghanistan and neighbouring parts of Pakistan, founding a local office for Jihad in Peshawar. That is probably the point he first established links to Bin Ladin's operations; though thus an "Afghan" Arab, it is not known if he took part in military operations against the Soviets. Zawahiri's whereabouts in subsequent years are not always known and he may have spent some time in Europe or back in Egypt. He has been reported by Egyptian security forces to have had traveled on French, Swiss and Dutch passports at various times. Zawahiri speaks French as well as Arabic.

Jihad's operations within Egypt gradually faded away, with the similar but separate Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya accounting for most of the attacks in the 1990s. Jihad may not have carried out an operation in Egypt proper since 1993. Zawahiri is under indictment in Egypt for plotting an attack against former Interior Minister Zaki Badr, and in more recent years has been charged with other crimes.

Jihad's operations meanwhile became more international, and many Egyptian Jihad members reportedly operated out of Albania into Bosnia and Kosovo. In February 1998, Zawahiri's name came second on the famous "fatwa" in which Bin Ladin declared the responsibility of Muslims to kill Americans,

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<sup>333</sup> Barakat. Muhammad, 'Egyptian Terrorism', *Al-Watan Al-Arabi*, Paris, 22 Jan. 1999, p. 4.

including civilians, anywhere.<sup>334</sup> (Bin Ladin is an engineer and Zawahiri a physician; neither has the religious authority to issue a fatwa.) By that time, he had apparently merged the Peshawar operations of the Jihad Organization into Bin Ladin's al-Qa'ida organization, though the fatwa was issued in the name of a new "World Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews and Crusaders".

Later in 1998 came the trial in Egypt of several Jihad members known as "Albanian returnees", and reports that Zawahiri's brother, Muhammad, had been turned over to Egyptian authorities by the United Arab Emirates. Those events preceded the attacks on the US Embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi. Zawahiri, along with Bin Ladin, Muhammad 'Atef, and others, was indicted in the US for those attacks. There is a \$5 million reward for his apprehension. In early 2000, Arab press reports indicated that the Jihad Organization in Egypt had removed Zawahiri as its Amir, being disaffected with his alliance with Bin Ladin. Others suggest, however, that he had long since ceased to have real influence in the internal Egyptian organization.

## Conclusion

Islamic revivalism in Egypt has been strong, as the ordinary Egyptian on the street has turned towards religion as a response to modernization and the rapidly changing mode of society. Islamism, in the political sense, has been resolute in its protest against the state whether it is within the political system or illegally through terrorist attacks or assassination attempts. Violence has impacted on the Egyptian regime by establishing it through attacks on the vital tourist industry and assassinations of civil leaders and officials. However, the government has taken a hardline response to violence and terrorism, and imprisoned and repressed in order to retain control of society. Islam underpins Egyptian society, as it does in the whole of the Middle East and North Africa, hence it can be a powerful force for, firstly, reformists and

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<sup>334</sup> Gunaratna, Rohan, *Inside Al Qaeda*, p. 1.

terrorists in their attempts to destabilize the state; and secondly, the elites in their attempts to influence society and retain power.

## Jordan

The Jordanian regime was taken by surprise by the 1989 elections,<sup>335</sup> in which Islamists won 34 out of 80 parliamentary seats. Twenty-two of these seats were won by the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood, an organization that was relatively unaffected by the ban on political parties because its official status was that of a charitable organization. Alarmed by the prospect of a division of the country along religious lines, the late King Hussein initially resisted the Brotherhood's attempts to be represented in the cabinet. However, as the Islamists garnered even more popular support because of their antiwar stance during the Gulf crisis, cooperation between the Islamists and the regime increased and members of the Brotherhood were appointed to cabinet positions in January 1991.<sup>336</sup>

Despite its control of important cabinet portfolios, the Brotherhood encountered stiff opposition from the secular community when its ministers and members of parliament (MPs) tried to outlaw the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcohol, segregate the sexes in the workforce, and ban fathers from observing their daughters' participation in school sports. With the tacit support of the king, secular MPs and ministers resisted these demands, forcing the Islamists to back down on most of them. The secular counter-offensive was further strengthened by the king's approval of a National Charter signed by the Muslim Brotherhood and other political parties. The Brotherhood, it should be explained, had to sign the charter to maintain its legality as a political party.... While declaring the *shari'a* to be the source of

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<sup>335</sup> Abu Owdeh, Adnan; Jordan's Ambassador to the U.N. and former longtime advisor to King Hussein, in his talk at the symposium on "*Islam and Democracy*", which was sponsored by the United States Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C., May 15, 1992.

<sup>336</sup> Milton-Edwards, Beverley; "A Temporary Alliance with the Crown: the Islamic Response in Jordan," in James Piscatori, ed., *Islamic Fundamentalism and the Gulf Crisis*, Chicago: Academy of Arts and Science, 1992, pp. 92-94.

law in the country,<sup>337</sup> the charter, which provides for personal freedom, freedom of expression and organization, and a multi-party system, clearly circumscribes the power of the Islamic movement. The Islamists suffered another major setback in June 1991, when the late king, preparing to join the Middle East peace process, dismissed the cabinet and appointed as prime minister Taher al-Masri, a Palestinian who supports a negotiated settlement with Israel.

Opposition to the Madrid peace talks ended the Brotherhood's alliance with the crown. To gather support for its position, the Brotherhood called for a public rally on October 11, 1991. This effort was blocked when the cabinet banned the rally and the Brotherhood was forced to back away from a head-on confrontation with the regime. Later in the month, the Brotherhood joined other pan-Arab parties at an indoor rally that attracted approximately 1,000 people: It was disbanded by police after clashes between pro- and anti-Madrid groups.<sup>338</sup> In a subsequent gathering of some 4,000 fundamentalists at Amman's principal mosque, a Brotherhood speaker denounced the Madrid conference, calling for a *jihad* to liberate all of Palestine. At the same time, however, he clearly stated that his party would express its opposition to the Jordanian position without resorting to violence,<sup>339</sup> thereby revealing that although the Islamists were ideologically opposed to a peace settlement with Israel under the terms of UN Resolution 242, they did not want a showdown with the government over the issue.

In October 1991, members of the pro-establishment Constitutional Bloc joined Brotherhood opponents of the policies of the Masri government: following that party's exclusion from a reshuffled cabinet. With preparations for the Madrid peace conference at a crucial stage, these two groups together mustered a majority (49) of MPs who signed a petition calling for Masri's

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<sup>337</sup> Ibid. pp. 105-6.

<sup>338</sup> *Mideast Mirror*, October 29, 1991, pp. 13-14.

<sup>339</sup> *Mideast Mirror*, November 1, 1991, p. 20.

resignation. Reacting to the disorder of his house, King Hussein sought to mobilize popular support for the decision to join the peace talks by convening a national congress on 2 October 1991. Some 2,500 influential Jordanians, including MPs, senators, former premiers and ministers, heads of professional associations, mayors, and other elected officials attended; the Muslim Brotherhood, however, chose to boycott the congress. In an effort to convince Jordanians for the soundness of his decision, the monarch responded to various concerns and questions raised by the opposition by explaining that “we must be involved in the drive for peace because it concerns our present and future and has an impact on our community”.<sup>340</sup>

The following month, King Hussein replaced Masri, appointing a Hashemite Sharif of the royal family, Zayd Bin Shaker, prime minister. Bin Shaker was a capable, veteran politician of good reputation who could not be attacked by MPs with impunity. One MP aptly described him as “a man who is always powerful, whether or not he is in office. Deputies who know better will not forget that”.<sup>341</sup> As expected, Bin Shaker initially adopted a tougher stance against the anti-peace parties, while maintaining the general political and economic policies of his predecessor by retaining the ministers of foreign affairs, finance, and interior. Reports claim that he threatened the Islamists with dissolution of parliament and early elections in which they would not be assured of victory. Opinion polls were revealing a dramatic decline in popular support for the Brotherhood.<sup>342</sup> Ultimately, however, the new premier struck a deal with the Islamists, allowing them to retain the speakership of parliament in exchange for a vote of confidence in the cabinet.

The policy of the new government was guided by statements the King made in his letter of appointment to Bin Shaker and in a speech to the senate and the lower house. In his letter, the King implied that Masri’s MP critics had

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<sup>340</sup> *Mideast Mirror*, October 4, 1991, p. 15.

<sup>341</sup> *Mideast Mirror*, November 22, 1991, p. 12.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*

overstepped their authority, and he denounced the so-called “intellectual terrorism” that violated “democracy and the principles of the National Charter”.<sup>343</sup> His speech emphasized the role of parliamentarians in “preserving the authority of the state and its various institutions.” In a clear reference to the Islamists’ rigid views and attempt to dictate government policy, the King said:

Democracy does not confer on any single group a claim of monopoly over wisdom or truth. Nor does it provide a license to justify encroachment on the rights and liberties of the vast majority of the people...Preaching and guidance are closely associated with maintaining national unity, enhancing the forces of amity and solidarity and promoting the general good in a climate that does not allow for bigotry, intolerance, or introversion. This being the case, we would emphasize that the principal role of mosques and other places of worship are to educate people in matters of religion, urge them towards virtue, integrity, respect for public order and a firm rejection of division and disarray among the citizens.<sup>344</sup>

Meanwhile, the authorities clamped down on members of a clandestine, militant Islamic group known as Prophet Muhammad’s Army, accusing them of planning bombs, setting fire to liquor stores, attacking a foreign bank, and plotting to overthrow the government. Of the 18 arrested and tried, 8 were sentenced to death. These sentences have created uproar among Islamists in Jordan and Egypt, resulting in appeals to the monarch for commutations. They were also criticized by Amnesty International, which cited evidence that testimony was obtained from some of the defendants under torture. The late

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<sup>343</sup> Ibid. p. 13.

<sup>344</sup> *Mideast Mirror*, December 2, 1991, pp. 3-4.

king then commuted the sentences of the six to life imprisonment, but retained those of the two who were tried in absentia.<sup>345</sup>

In May 1992, Islamists suffered a serious electoral reversal in Irbid, Jordan's second largest city, where the "reformist bloc" won 11 of the 12 seats on Irbid city council, a body that had been dominated by the Islamists since the early 1980's. Reflecting on the outcome, a senior government official noted that, despite its organizational strength and elaborate network of social relationships,<sup>346</sup> the Muslim Brotherhood was unable to convince the electorate of the worth of its "Islamic alternative". In late May, the Association of Workers in Land Transport and Mechanics, the largest labor union in Jordan with a membership of 107,000 workers elected a new 77-member administrative committee. The new leadership was described as mostly "liberal with centrist political views". Only in the city of Zarqa did Muslim Brotherhood candidates won.<sup>347</sup>

The Islamists further experienced setbacks when two of their elected MPs, Ya'qub al-Qarsh and Laith Shbeilat were arrested on charges of stockpiling unlicensed weapons, sponsoring secret, terrorist groups, and conspiring against the state. The charges and subsequent conviction in court raised doubts about the Islamists' present and future loyalty to the throne. After demonstrating the power and vigilance of his regime and its firm policy toward any subversive activity, King Hussein pardoned the sentenced MPs, who had pledged their support to him and who had claimed that the arms they stored were to be used against Israel rather than the kingdom.

To date, King Abdallah is carefully following his late father's (King Hussein) footsteps with some of the democratic measures that he has introduced, while preventing any group from claiming a monopoly over Islamic interpretation. In stark contrast to Egypt, the Jordanian law on political parties does not ban

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<sup>345</sup> *Mideast Mirror*, December 5, 1991, p. 9.

<sup>346</sup> *Mideast Mirror*, Mat 18, 1992, p. 18.

<sup>347</sup> *Mideast Mirror*, May 26, 1992, p. 26.

parties based on religion; however, it does require them to formulate a specific platform<sup>348</sup> beyond the implementation of the *shari'a*. Jordanian politics encompass a vast array of factions and groups, most of which are not political parties in the Western sense. These groups tend to coalesce into two major, rival blocs, Islamic and secular.<sup>349</sup> In the future, it seems the emerging Islamist coalition will be formed around the Muslim Brotherhood, while the secular coalition will be heavily influenced by the King and may lack a single leading party. Neither will be openly anti-establishment.

Nevertheless, the outcome of the struggle for power between the Islamists and the heterogeneous array of secular nationalists, both territorial and pan-Arab, is not yet certain; two factors- the fate of the Middle East peace process and the state of the economy- are likely to have a significant impact. The necessity of conducting a peace agreement with Israel was reinforced by the influx of some 300,000 Palestinians from the Gulf States. If the peace process fails to produce tangible results within the next couple of years, the Islamist movement will have a good opportunity to impose its vision on the government. At the same time, signs of further deterioration in the economy and large-scale corruption and mismanagement in state institutions are likely to fuel frustration and dissent, particularly among the youth.

## Conclusion

Because Islamist symbolism remains appealing to many Jordanian Muslims, the fact that King Abdallah, a Hashemite, is a descendent of the Prophet Muhammad endows him with an exceptional legitimacy that is coveted by all other Arab leaders, notably the Saudi monarchs. Like his father, he has capitalized on this hereditary asset in the past and he will undoubtedly use it

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<sup>348</sup> Murphy, Caryle, "Islam: Politics and Piety, Part II", *The Washington Post*, April 27, 1992, p. A16.

<sup>349</sup> *Mieast Mirror*, May 7, 1992, p. 23.

in the future to gain leverage over the Islamists. Nevertheless, he may be forced to make concessions, as President Mubarak has done, in order to stem the tide of Islamism. Thus far, King Abdallah has proven to be a shrewd and open-minded Arab leader. For the foreseeable future, his rule guarantees the country's stability, and ability to be flexible and realistic in peace talks with Israel. In the event of King Abdallah's sudden death or assassination, his successor is unlikely to deviate significantly from the regime's present policies.

### **Algeria**

The Islamist movement in Algeria began to emerge following the introduction of democratic measures in February 1989. Prior to the January 1992 crackdown, four Islamist parties played major roles: The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), the Movement for an Islamic Society (HAMAS), the Movement of the Islamic Renaissance (MNI), and the Movement for Democracy in Algeria (MDA). The FIS, whose ultimate goal is the Islamisation of society through control of political power by any available means, was the largest and most popular party at the time. HAMAS, founded in 1990 by Sheikh Nahnah, supports the principle of political pluralism. The MNI of Sheikh Djaballah shares the views of the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and Jordan in all aspects except economic liberalisation, to which it is opposed.<sup>350</sup> The MDA, led by former President Ben Bella, advocates a reformist version of Islam.

In contrast to the situation prevailing in the Arab East (Mashriq), Islamism in Algeria and the Maghreb has generally not been a rival ideology to pan-Arabism. Given the virtual absence of local Christians within an overwhelmingly Sunni population and the presence of large numbers of non-

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<sup>350</sup> Robert, Hugh, "A Trial of Strength: Algerian Islamism", in Piscatori, ed., *Islamic Fundamentalism*, 1992, pp. 133-38.

Arab Berbers, Islam has played a unifying role,<sup>351</sup> and Arabic has become a “sacred” language. The secular line of demarcation between pan-Arabism and Islamism has little significance for Maghrebi pan-Arabs. Algerian Islamism, unlike that of Saudi Arabia, has been radical and populist, despite having been financed for a number of years by Saudi largesse.

Since the early days of Algerian independence in 1962, the National Liberation Front (FLN) had enjoyed a monopoly on power.<sup>352</sup> ‘The social state-run economy promoted a new class of modernists, French-educated technocrats with special privileges and status that set them apart’.<sup>353</sup> The Algerians in the street were becoming resentful of the widening gaps in society and this began to be expressed in Islamic terms.

By the 1980s, Algeria’s economic and social life was worsening and the government was criticized by Islamist groups for its failure to provide for its people adequately.<sup>354</sup> Corruption, unemployment, economic mismanagement, and over-population were just some of the factors that caused dissent amongst the population. For Islamists, such as the FIS, recruitment accelerated as people looked for ways out of their personal quagmire.

“Its (FIS) proclamation of Islam’s message of social justice, in particular its condemnation of societal failures in education, housing, and employment as well as of government corruption, proved especially popular among Algeria’s unemployed youth and rural-urban migrants. With more than 60 percent of the population under twenty-five years of age and a high percentage of them unemployed, young people proved ready recruits, exchanging idleness and boredom for a sense of direction and hope as they swelled the crowds at mosques and engaged in political action”.<sup>355</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> Ibid. pp. 138-39.

<sup>352</sup> Faksh, M. A. *The Future of Islam in the Middle East*, 1997, pp. 66-67.

<sup>353</sup> Faksh, M. A., *The Future of Islam in the Middle East: Fundamentalism in Egypt, Algeria and Saudi Arabia*, Westport, CT: Preagar, 1997, pp. 67-68.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid. pp. 68-69.

<sup>355</sup> Esposito, J. L.; *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 1995, p. 168.

The FIS itself became a populist movement as it began to become involved in providing for society through establishing financial and educational institutions.<sup>356</sup> The FIS was also very quick to provide for those affected by the earthquake that occurred in Algeria in 1989. In doing this, they were able to undermine the government by emphasizing its inadequacy and failure to support society in times of great need.

The regional and municipal elections of 1990 were the first multiparty elections Algeria had had in its almost 30 year history. Unlike countries such as Egypt and Tunisia, these were elections in which the Islamist parties were allowed to participate. The popularity of the FIS was greatly underestimated by both the government of Algeria and the West.

Over those decades, the incompetence and corruption of its leadership had brought Algeria, a country rich in oil, gas, and gold, to the brink of economic ruin.<sup>357</sup> In June 1990, the Islamists won a landslide victory in municipal and provincial elections, thereby discrediting the FLN, and hailing their victory at the ballot as Islam winning the battle over Westernization. The FLN fought its defeat by attempting to gerrymander electoral districts in order to minimize Islamist representation in the new assembly. However, this failed to halt the tide of Islamic reform that was sweeping the country and the FIS was eventually victorious through election by the people.<sup>358</sup> The FLN responded by holding street protests that forced the president to remove Prime Minister Mouloud Hamroche. His successor, Sid Ahmad Ghazali, came to office with a promise to revise the electoral law and to hold fair elections.

Having grown intolerant of the rising Islamist challenge to the ruling party, in June 1991 top army commanders set out to reassert state authority. They began by attempting to replace Islamist slogans in town halls with the FLN

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<sup>356</sup> Faksh, M. A. *The Future of Islam in the Middle East*, 1997, pp. 69-72.

<sup>357</sup> Gastil, Raymond D., *Freedom in World: Political Rights and Civil Liberties, 1990-1991*, New York: freedom House, 1991, pp. 61-64.

<sup>358</sup> Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, 1995.

motto, but these efforts were firmly resisted by FIS militants. The army then arrested two of the principal FIS leaders, Abbasi Madani and Ali Belhaj, charging them with conspiracy against the state. During the same month, some 2,500 FIS members and supports were also arrested.<sup>359</sup> The FLN leadership hoped that bans on political speeches and meetings in mosques, combined with mass arrests intended to deprive the FIS of its leadership and active cadres, would liquidate the opposition. Many Arab journalists and politicians believed this was possible as, in their view, the Islamist “phenomenon” was on the wane because it had supported Saddam during the Gulf War. An Egyptian journalist, writing one month before the Algerian national elections, predicted that the Islamist movement in all Arab countries “could soon be finished as a major force on the political street”.<sup>360</sup> This crackdown drove the FIS to evolve from a reforming movement within the existing system to a militant opposition fighting against the repression of the regime.

To the surprise of many analysts, the FIS won the first round of elections in November 1991, garnering 81 percent of the seats, an outcome that stunned not only the Algerian leadership but also that of the rest of the Arab world. Immediately following the elections, over 100,000 people took to the streets of Algiers, demonstrating in support of democracy. While Anis Mansour, an Egyptian journalist known to be a confidant of President Mubarak, expressed exaggerated alarm, predicting that Islamist control might ultimately extend from Tunisia to Syria,<sup>361</sup> other analysts urged President Benjedid to stand up and refuse to deliver his country to a new totalitarianism, and offered advice on how to “clip the claws” of the FIS.<sup>362</sup>

On January 12, 1992, a few days before the second ballot, the Algerian army took control, forcing President Benjedid to resign. The High Committee of

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<sup>359</sup> Roberts, *A Trial of Strength*, p. 149.

<sup>360</sup> *Mideast Mirror*, October 23, 1991, p. 22.

<sup>361</sup> *Al-Ahram*, January 3, 1992.

<sup>362</sup> *Mideast Mirror*, January 3, 1992, pp. 21-22.

State (HCS), a new five-man governing body headed by the revolutionary leader Muhammad Boudiaf, was created. Reaction in the Arab world was mixed. While some observers felt army intervention was justified, others were outraged at the abrogation of democracy. Western and Arab regimes, with the exception of that of Sudan, were generally relieved, and the government of neighboring Tunisia openly rejoiced as it prepared for the trials of its outlawed Islamists.

Meanwhile, the Algerian leadership attempted to eliminate the FIS through the enactment of laws and decrees. Affirming its commitment to democracy and promising to hold parliamentary and presidential elections within two years, the new government headed by former Prime Minister Ghazali, declared a state of emergency and banned religious and linguistic-based parties.<sup>363</sup> In response, the FIS went underground, appointing a new secret leadership made up of unknowns.<sup>364</sup> Most opposition parties, including the other Islamist parties, rejected the cancellation of elections and the dissolution of the FIS. Sheikh Nahnah of the Algerian HAMAS warned of more violence if the authorities continued to reject negotiations with the Islamists.

The government oppression spawned the fractionalization of the FIS and groups such as the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) began a reign of terror using jihad and terrorism as their weapons. Not only was the government attacked but also civilians who symbolized Western values were targeted such as journalists, entertainers, intellectuals and 'unveiled' women and schoolgirls.<sup>365</sup>

The FIS, or radical groups within its ranks, have employed a variety of tactics in their battle with security forces, ranging from armed resistance to the implementation of government decisions, to bombings and assassinations of police officers. One clash took place as a result of the rejection of the appointment of a pro-establishment imam to one of the mosques. Another,

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<sup>363</sup> *Mideast Mirror*, March 4, 1992, p. 18.

<sup>364</sup> *Al-Hayat*, March 6, 1992.

<sup>365</sup> Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, 1995, p. 180.

more serious, confrontation between armed Islamists and the army occurred in the mountains near Algiers in late May 1992, resulting in 150 arrests. By the end of May 1992, an estimated 8,000 FIS members and supporters<sup>366</sup> were held without charge in prison camps in the desert where the temperature in the summer exceeds 45 degrees Celsius. The FIS maintained that the number was higher, and accused the government of torturing the detainees and deliberately overcrowding the desert prisons. In an attempt to reduce the tension with the FIS, Boudiaf released about half of the prisoners a few days before his assassination on June 29, 1992.<sup>367</sup>

Reports just prior to Boudiaf's death indicated that Algerian leaders had begun to believe that support for the FIS would decline as a result of the jailing of thousands of militants.<sup>368</sup> Many citizens and analysts, however, did not share this belief, citing the fact that, despite the merciless government crackdown, the FIS continued to produce a newsletter and official communiqués and to launch limited attacks on the government.<sup>369</sup> In addition, the FIS won a larger electoral victory in 1991 than in 1990, an indication that popular support was undiminished by the jailing of the principal leaders and approximately 2,500 party cadres.

This support is based on factors other than the FIS's uncertain role in killing Boudiaf.<sup>370</sup> One of the principal factors is the economic crisis, which was largely created by the incompetent and corrupt bureaucracy of the ruling party. High levels of unemployment, particularly among the young, combined with widespread political repression, are not conducive to stability of public support for the regime. In addition, as a result of its suppression, the FIS may have gained increased legitimacy, both domestically and among international pro-democracy forces. By contrast, the HCS, which was imposed by the army, lacked legitimacy among most Algerians and Algerian parties.

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<sup>366</sup> According to *B.B.C. World News Service*, May 1992.

<sup>367</sup> *The Washington Post*, July 1, 1992, p. A26.

<sup>368</sup> *The Washington Post*, May 10, 1992, p. A30.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>370</sup> *Mideast Mirror*, March 23, 1992, p. 24; *The Washington Post*, July 1, 1992, p. A25.

## Conclusion

Over the last 10 years, the conflict spiraled into full civil war as society polarized and Algeria's democratic experiment had failed. The secular state and its apparent encouragement of democracy was now questioned as it is obvious that a move towards democracy is only possible if the opposition is weak and presents no real threat to power, or "risk-free" democracy.<sup>371</sup> Democracy was spurned by the incumbent regime of President Abdul-Aziz Boutoufliqa in order to retain power and stop the Islamisation of Algeria. This was a reaction to the uncertainty of the establishment of an Islamic state with regards to inclusiveness, participation and civil rights for the majority of the people.

The economic frailty of the 1980s was extreme for many Algerians as unemployment increased and disparity became more apparent. Wide appeal for Islamic principles became widespread as Islamist groups presented a solution that was firmly placed in the Arab identity, Islam. It is possible that Islam is viewed as the only alternative solution however, it can be argued that repression and lack of freedom would most certainly follow the establishment of an Islamic state. Since the prevention of the installation of an Islamic rule in Algeria, retaliation has been violent and merciless, taking the lives of about 150,000,<sup>372</sup> and impacting on the lives of Algerians who have since lived in fear of retribution.

Thus, the young Islamist movement in Algeria may continue to be a powerful political force in the coming years. However, given the failure of the FIS to gain power through peaceful means, it is likely that the party will be dominated by radical, militant elements, thereby increasing the probability of protracted conflict between Islamists and other groups led by the army and secular politicians.

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<sup>371</sup> Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, 1995.

<sup>372</sup> *The B.B.C. World Service News*, 29 May 2002, 08:00 a.m. NZ Time.

## Iran

During the 1960s the leader of Iran, the Shah of the Pahlavi dynasty, embarked upon many reforms including rapid modernization, land reforms, female suffrage and literacy corps.<sup>373</sup> The Shah aspired to transform Iran into a dominant regional power and although the increase in oil revenue of 1973 and 1974 had bolstered Iran's economy and enabled rapid modernization, gross overspending had spiraled the economy into recession.<sup>374</sup> The economic problems and its effects on the Iranian population, along with the Shah's co-operation with the West, had led the majority to view Westernization and modernization as evil. The Shah's reforms came to be known as the white revolution and were denounced as unconstitutional and 'un-Islamic' by the religious leader, the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

During the 1960s Khomeini symbolized the voice that opposed the Shah's policies and as the Ayatollah rallied for support, the Shah became more repressive against opposition and "abandoned his past policy of balancing coercion with co-option, repression with reform. (He) would no longer tolerate internal dissent or political opposition.... His new policy resulted in a reign of terror."<sup>375</sup> It is argued that the Shah's politics of repression went hand in hand with his lack of interest in the internal politics of Iran. He was out of touch with the day-to-day reality of everyday life and also saw religion as a threat to his regime. Consequently, he sought to undermine the Shi'ite *ulama* (religious leaders), which ultimately secured his downfall.<sup>376</sup>

It's argued that the Iranian revolution in 1979 was a catalyst for the belief by many Muslims that revival of Islamic ideals in politics could be possible.

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<sup>373</sup> The *NZ Listener*, June 14, 1980, pp. 16-18.

<sup>374</sup> Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, 1995.

<sup>375</sup> Bill, J. A., *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations*, 1988 cited in Esposito, J.L. and Voll, J.O., *Islam and democracy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 55.

<sup>376</sup> Bill, J.A., "Power and Religion in Revolutionary Iran", in *The Middle East Journal* 36:1, 1982, pp. 22-47.

Islamic principles have, for a long time, been present in Middle Eastern politics. But a government totally immersed in Islam, rejecting modernization and the West shocked the world and many Middle Eastern intellectuals. The Islamisation of Iran alerted its neighbors to the possible assertion of Islamist quests for power and throughout the rest of the world the idea of an Islamic revolution had become a reality.

The religious establishment of Iran was at the center of the opposition to the Shah. Through the mosques and educational institutions the *ulama* was able to mobilize the population and shape the revolution using Shi'ite Islam as the principal organizational tool. Demonstrations in 1963 led to the arrest of the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1964. He then lived in exile in Southern Iraq where he taught, wrote and spoke out against the Iranian government. He regarded Islam as a complete way of life and the absolute solution to social problems.<sup>377</sup> Khomeini's shi'ite Islam and political ideology were spread through smuggled tapes of his speeches and pamphlets and he became a figurehead of hope for the oppressed under the Shah's regime.

The revolution started and shi'ite Islam leaders began to take on the lead under Khomeini. He rallied the people towards rule by Islam- is rule by God. Islam would pervade all aspects of social life as well as personal life. This ideology was described by Nahas<sup>378</sup> as supranational, or pan-Islam. Khomeini used rhetoric and Islamic symbols to encourage Muslims in other countries to rise up against their regimes and install Islamic rule. However, other Middle Eastern regimes recognized this threat and although the revolution did impact on other Muslim groups, Khomeini's push for a region wide Islamic revolution was never fully realized.

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<sup>377</sup> Esposito, and Voll, *Islam and Democracy*, 1996.

<sup>378</sup> Nahas, M., "State Systems and revolutionary Challenge: Nasser, Khomeini, and the Middle East", in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17:4, 1985, p. 509.

The exportability of the revolution proved difficult because of the ethnic difference between the Shi'ite Iranians and the predominantly Sunni populations of the rest of the Middle East and North Africa. Shi'ite populations in other countries, such as Lebanon, were influenced by the turn of events. However, they did not constitute a majority and therefore did not mobilize to the same extent. In contrast, the Shi'ites of Iraq remained loyal to their nationality rather than religious brethren.<sup>379</sup> The exception to the rule of the inability to spread the revolutionary fervor was Sudan. A military coup led to the installation of an Islamic government rather than a popular uprising.<sup>380</sup> The regimes of Iran's neighbors were quick to perceive the threat of Islamists to their power bases and took steps to counter Islamic movements.

Nevertheless, Iran is regarded by U.S. as the world's principal sponsor of international terrorism, and the patron of the most deadly terrorist organization one have seen in the last century- Hizbollah. Since 1982, Tehran has provided Hizbollah with hundreds of millions of dollars and tons of weapons. It has trained thousands of its cadres and protected its leaders. Since the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1988, the Iranian regime has actually stepped up its own direct involvement with terror by a campaign of renewed assassination of its opponents around the world. And Iran supports the most violent and extremist elements in Algeria and elsewhere with money, arms and training.

Iran is not the cause of unrest in these places, but it adds to the intensity by promoting violence and extremism. In the analysts' view, the track record of the last few years makes clear that these policies are approved and directed by the highest levels of the Iranian government. There is no credible evidence to suggest these actions are the work of rogue factions. Rather, it is believed that they are the policies of the state, using the framework of a complex

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<sup>379</sup> Mansfield, O., *A History of the Middle East*, London: Penguin Books, 1992.

<sup>380</sup> Karawan, I.A., *The Islamist Impasse*, Oxford: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1997.

bureaucracy to wage war on the Arab-Israeli peace process, on its domestic foes, and on its cultural adversaries. Iranian authorities believe that the peace process is a flawed and sterile exercise because it is launched on terms that are extremely favourable to Israel and the United States. Iran also believes that the outcome of the process will be more Israeli and U.S. domination of the region. From aiding Hizbollah, to repressing its Kurds and Baha'i populations, to targeting Salman Rushdie- these are the acts of Iran's leaders and not some radical fringes.

Left unchecked, Iran, by the end of this decade, could be a nation perilously close to having a nuclear device, and with a sophisticated arsenal of weapons, long range strike aircraft, missiles and submarines, capable of threatening its neighbors.

In Iran, disillusionment with the rule of the Shah prompted a religious revolution that would see Islam used as an organizational tool and an answer to social problems. However, the leaders of the *ulama* had no clear economic agenda other than righting the rapid Westernization, consumerism and widening gaps of social classes they perceived to be the fault of the Pahlavi regime. It was believed that Shi'ite Islam was the appropriate model for establishing a healthy economy and reducing dependence on the outside world.<sup>381</sup> However, the religious regime has had to become more pragmatic in both its domestic and foreign policies as it has discovered the necessity to be a part of the international community, and to maintain the important relations it must foster with its regional neighbors. Its continual support of Islamist factions in other countries is a sticking point that pits it against many of its neighbors, nonetheless, Iran's ideology still supports the establishment of Islamic states, and its opposition to the Arab-Israeli peace process and support for terrorism are factors which account for anti-Iranian feeling in much of the Middle East and the West.

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<sup>381</sup> Amuzegar, J., "The Iranian Economy Before and After the Revolution", in *The Middle East Journal*, 46:3, 1992, p. 415.

## Conclusion

The impact of Islamism in Iran was substantial as it was a successful tool to mobilize the masses against what they saw as a repressive, corrupt and un-Islamic government. Ayatollah Khomeini and his followers viewed Shi'ite Islam, as the consummate model for rule of Iran. It was seen as the basis of Iranian identity and the foundation for Iranian everyday life. However, severe repression has continued under the religious leaders' rule and many Iranians find themselves suffocated by strict Islamic law. Although the revolution influenced many Islamist groups in other parts of the Middle East and North Africa, it was not successful in mobilizing a pan-Islamic revolution and so has failed to impact on the region to the level of Khomeini's aspiration.

## Lebanon

“The fall of the Shah in 1979 provided an example for the dissatisfied, of what pious, well-organized Muslims can accomplish in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. Even those many Islamic groups that do not seek to emulate the form of the revolution in Iran derive inspiration from the success of their Muslim colleagues there. The revolution was an object lesson that deprivation or second-class citizenship did not have to be passively accepted”.<sup>382</sup>

There was a proliferation of many political activist groups during the 1970s and 1980s, using Iran as their example. The Shi'ite population in Lebanon was greatly influenced by the Iranian revolution as it demonstrated Islamic mobilization and organization against a regime that was believed to be corrupt and inept. As a population, the Shi'ite Muslims of Lebanon were politically disorganized and economically disadvantaged in comparison with the

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<sup>382</sup> Norton, A.R., *Musa al-Sadr* in Rahnama, A: ed., Pioneers of Islamic Revival, London: Zed Books, 1994. p. 205.

Maronite Christians, Sunni Muslims and Druzes. Although all groups were represented in some way in Lebanese leadership, the relative deprivation and lack of proportional political participation gave rise to restlessness and resentment. This found its outlet through the guidance of a religious leader, Musa al-Sadr.

Sadr rose as a charismatic and insightful leader in Lebanon giving the Shi'ite community a sense of identity and the ability to see that their deprivation in society was not a given.

In 1975 Sadr founded AMAL (Afwaj al-Muqawimah al-Lubnaniyah), an acronym for the Lebanese Resistance Battalions, also meaning "hope", to protect Shi'ite rights and interests. Its growth can be attributed to four main factors: The Lebanese civil war of 1975 and 1976, the 1987 disappearance of Musa al-Sadr, and the Iranian revolution in 1979, the Israeli invasions of 1978 and 1982.<sup>383</sup> AMAL followed the path of reformism, although it did revert to violence in some cases, but concentrated mainly on reform within the existing regime.

In 1982, two members from AMAL, Abbas Mussavi and Sheikh Subhi Tufayl established the militant group Hizbollah, which operates out of Southern Lebanon.<sup>384</sup> Hizbollah is an Islamic struggle movement that came into being as a reaction to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the subsequent occupation of Beirut. Violence and terrorism are used in order to achieve their goals of defeating the 'Zionist enemy', improving social conditions and overthrowing the Lebanese government, and establishing an Islamic state. Furthermore, Hizbollah is greatly influenced by Iran and points out the historic links between the Lebanese and Iranian Shi'ite.<sup>385</sup>

We, the sons of Hizbollah's nation, whose vanguard God has given victory in Iran and which has established the nucleus of the worlds'

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<sup>383</sup> Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, 1995, p. 144.

<sup>384</sup> Hoveyda, F., *The Broken Crescent The Threat of Militant Islamic Fundamentalism*, Westport CT: Praegar, 1998, p. 95.

<sup>385</sup> Hizbollah. 2001 <http://www.hizballah.org/English/info.htm>

central Islamic state, abide by the orders of a single wise and just command currently embodied in the supreme Ayatollah Khomeini... We have opted for religion, freedom and dignity over humiliation and constant submission to America and its allies and Zionism and their [Christian] Phalangist allies. We have risen to liberate our country, to drive the imperialists and the invaders out of it and to take our fate in our hands.<sup>386</sup>

Iran played a major role in training and financing Hizbollah in its military operations and its commitment to social services. Esposito states that financial backing from Iran may well have reached levels of ten million dollars per month by 1987.<sup>387</sup> In undertaking the responsibility for providing schools, housing, hospitals and finance for the war torn Shi'ite population, Hizbollah retained loyalty and support.

Hizbollah employed the Shi'ite doctrines of sacrifice and martyrdom in its war against its enemies. In the early 1980s, suicide and car bomb attacks were perpetrated against both Israeli and American targets. The group asserts that the suicide attacks are its own special type of resistance against Israel. "These attacks dealt great losses to the enemy on all thinkable levels such as militarily and mentally. The attacks also raised the morale across the whole Islamic nation".<sup>388</sup> In October 1983, over 250 U.S. Marines were killed in their barracks outside Beirut, and in April of the same year the United States embassy was bombed killing over 60 people. As a result of such attacks, the Multinational forces withdrew from Beirut in 1984, and Israel retreated to their security zone<sup>389</sup> from which Prime Minister Ehud Barak subsequently withdrew unilaterally in June 2001 to achieve a peace treaty with Lebanon. As a consequence, Hizbollah's reputation and image was greatly advanced as

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<sup>386</sup> Wright, R., Lebanon in Hunter, S.T. ed., *The Politics of Islamic Revivalism*, 1988 cited in Esposito, J.L. *The Islamic Threat*, 1995, p. 66.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid. p. 147.

<sup>388</sup> Hizbollah. 2001 <http://www.hizballah.org/English/info.htm>

<sup>389</sup> Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, 1995, p. 150.

the great protector of the Shi'ite rights, and takes credit for evicting Israel out of Southern Lebanon.

Hizbollah is a relatively small group, numbering approximately 1000, and it is thought it represents only a minority of Lebanese Shi'ites.<sup>390</sup> However, its' support of the Shi'ite population through welfare and its fight to protect Shi'ite rights has sustained its existence. The activities of Hizbollah and its affiliated groups such as Islamic Jihad, and the presence of PLO in Southern Lebanon, has had a destabilizing effect on the population in that area as it has led to Israeli occupation and retaliation. It is arguable that Islamic groups such as Hizbollah and Islamic Jihad achieve their main impact through attacks on Israel and their constant call for Israel's destruction.

## Conclusion

The state of Lebanon has experienced upheaval, economic collapse, invasion, Syrian hegemony, and civil war since the 1970s. Economic deprivation and lack of political participation of the Lebanese Shi'ites, along with internal political strife have led to the growth in Islamist groups in Lebanon during that time. Using Iran as their example, Lebanese Islamists seek to gain power by overthrowing the government and establishing an Islamic state. Islamism is perceived to be a tool with which society can be corrected as much as it is a vehicle to gain power. Along with the aim of gaining a foothold in the political realm, Lebanese Islamists aim to achieve their objective to destroy Israel. In more recent years, Lebanon has managed to make inroads into boosting its' lagging economy, yet Southern Lebanon remains unstable due to Islamist activity against Israel in that area. Although Lebanon itself has experienced relative peace over the last decade, it remains trapped under Syrian hegemony, Israeli retaliation, and is polarized by the heterogeneity of the Lebanese population.

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<sup>390</sup> Hoveyda, F., *The Broken Crescent*, 1998, p. 97.

## Israel

As in other parts of the Middle East and North Africa, the growth of Islamist tendencies in Israel was a reaction to the failure of Arabs in the 1967 war and the humiliation felt by many as a result of the loss. “Those who became disillusioned after the 1967 with western influences, secular Arab nationalism, and socialism turned to Islam”.<sup>391</sup> However, the real turning point came with the Iranian revolution as it showed that a secular regime could be overthrown and replaced by an Islamic rule. Similarly, the assassination of Anwar Sadat in 1981 and the attacks of Lebanese Shi’a Islamists on Israeli troops in 1983 also showed the Palestinian Islamists that political change could be achieved. The images of success achieved by these events were pertinent in attracting new recruits to the Palestinian Islamist order such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

Both the state of Israel and the Palestinian Authority are at times threatened by the activities of Islamists. The heads of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), in its attempt to create a Palestinian state, has tried to remain secular, as there is a threat that polarization amongst Palestinians could disintegrate the whole movement,<sup>392</sup> through religious and ideological difference.

As a more militant force emerged on the West Bank, the Israeli government tried to utilize them to attempt to drive a wedge between the nationalist Palestinian factions and the Islamist factions in order to disintegrate the whole Palestinian movement. Violent clashes broke out as the Islamists targeted other Palestinians who did not conform to Islamic codes.<sup>393</sup> This provoked tensions between the two camps and violent encounters became commonplace.

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<sup>391</sup> Sisk, T.D. *Islam and Democracy*, 1992, p. 52.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.* p. 51.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.* p. 52.

In 1987, Sheikh Ahmed Yaseen was able to bring together Islamist factions organized as the militant group HAMAS (Zeal).<sup>394</sup> HAMAS was born out of an association with the Muslim Brotherhood and the two groups still remain close ties. Like many other fundamentalist groups, HAMAS provides social benefits to the people through hospitals, schools and mosques. However, its militant wing has become known for its suicide bombers and attacks frequented upon Israelis as well as non-conforming Palestinians. HAMAS, of all the organizations eager to kill the rapprochement between Israel and the Arabs, is probably the greatest threat. An acronym for Islamic Resistance Movement that literally means “zeal”, HAMAS wants nothing less than the destruction of the Jewish state, followed by the establishment of an Islamic Palestine as a precursor to a greater pan-Arab union.

In December 1987, the *Intifada* (uprising) was declared and HAMAS and the PLO combined to create the United Intifada Command. However, in 1988 HAMAS withdrew and pursued its own struggle.<sup>395</sup> The HAMAS manifesto states that it is not prepared to accept any agreement with Israel. They fight for the liberation of historical Palestine (which includes Israel), and the establishment of an Islamic state. HAMAS denies that a peaceful solution can be found, because to renounce Palestine is to renounce Islam.<sup>396</sup>

The organization was born in the misery and despair of the teeming refugee camps of the Gaza Strip more than a decade ago, two months after the beginning of the *Intifada*. Within three years, the Islamists that the Israelis had once allowed to exist as a counterbalance to the PLO were outlawed as the most serious security problem in the occupied territories. HAMAS’ appeal is both social and political. With money from Iran and private Arab benefactors in the Gulf, the organization runs clinics, kindergartens while supporting candidates for chamber of commerce elections. Preaching radical

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<sup>394</sup> Ibid.

<sup>395</sup> Agence Europe. 1996. *HAMAS*. <http://www.medea.be/en/index074.htm>

<sup>396</sup> Yisraeli, R. The 1988-1989 Annual on Terrorism cited in the *Charter of the HAMAS*. <http://www.womeningreen.org/hamas.htm>

solutions from the mosques, HAMAS has rapidly won converts disenchanted with foibles and failures of the PLO.

The group's aggressive violence has made Israel's occupation of the Gaza Strip more dangerous than ever. Israeli soldiers are constantly stoned and frequently shot at, while civilians in Israel are often targets of suicide bombers. The Israeli Defense Force sees the militant group as a double security threat since the territories were granted autonomy. They fear HAMAS will go after Israeli settlers and the Palestinian authorities in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, provoking reprisals that could easily turn into a bloodbath. They are also worried about how much easier it will be to stage large-scale terrorist operations into Israel.

Similarly, Islamic Jihad turns to violence and terrorism in order to defeat Israel and, like HAMAS, rejects the leadership of the PLO and attributes its lack of success to its lack of faith.<sup>397</sup> As a result of the growth in Islamist tendencies the Palestinians have become divided in their quest for a Palestinian nation.

Islamist groups such as HAMAS and Islamic Jihad continue their struggle to destroy Israel and establish an Islamic state through violence. HAMAS retains close links with Iran, the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizbollah and other Islamist groups. However, it is a decentralized organization and poses problems of control for both Israel and the Palestinian Authority. It retains support through social welfare and any success it can gain in its fight against Israel. This support is apparent in its ability to recruit members for militant activity and its use of suicide bombers. The Islamic concept of martyrdom, or those who die for Islam go straight to heaven, is utilized and it is reported that HAMAS' charitable system supports families of martyrs and thus nurtures their support.<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> Deeb, M., "Militant Islam and the Politics of redemption" in Butterworth, C.E. and Zartman, I.W. eds., *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992, p. 63.

<sup>398</sup> Reeves, P., "Perefect to be a Suicide Bomber", in *The New Zealand Weekend Herald*, 5-6 May 2001, Section B10.

## Conclusion

HAMAS and other militant Islamists in Israel continue to fuel fear both for Israelis and Palestinians. However, the groups also become tools when the Palestinian Authority requires the escalation of conflict with Israel in order to achieve its objectives against Israel. This has become a major problem for Israel as it is unable to fully protect its citizens from the daily threats of terrorist attacks by groups such as HAMAS, Islamic Jihad and al-Aqsa Brigade, which are both volatile and unpredictable.

## Saudi Arabia

“The response of most Saudis to this bonanza has been to maintain that wealth and Islam, technology and traditional values, economic modernization and old social customs can be made to coexist in their society”.<sup>399</sup>

Western colonial influence or liberal secularism never extended to Saudi Arabia and the territory only ever came under foreign influence during the Ottoman-Turkish suzerainty.<sup>400</sup> Saudi Arabia is the only Middle Eastern state that has tried to mesh religion and politics since 1744 when the Saud and Wahhab alliance occurred and the Kingdom began to be ruled in conjunction with the *ulema*.<sup>401</sup> However, tension between religion and politics surfaced in this publicly pious country in the late 1970s, and in the 1990s it re-ignited as new fundamentalism.

The event that raised the issue of Islamic revival in Saudi Arabia was the storming of the Grand Mosque of Mecca in 1979. The Islamists who seized

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<sup>399</sup> Faksh, M.A., *The Future of Islam in the Middle East*, 1997, p. 89.

<sup>400</sup> Kechichian, J.A., “The Role of the Ulama in the Politics of an Islamic State: The Case of Saudi Arabia”, in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 18:1, 1986, p. 53.

<sup>401</sup> Oschsenwald, W., “Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Revival”, in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 13:3, 1981, p. 276.

the mosque demanded recognition of one of their leaders as *mahdi* (deliverer) along with moral cleansing of Saudi Arabia. They denounced corruption and bribery within the regime, were against the presence of alcohol, and called for strict control on radio, television and the employment of women.<sup>402</sup> This neo-Wahhabi movement arose as a religious-militant response to modernism but the Wahhabi basis of the state was of sufficient strength to counter the movement. The rebellion was only short lived, as the Saudi military was able to seal off the mosque and overcome the rebellion in a short time.

A religious uprising in the devout Saudi Arabia meant that there could be a genuine threat for the governments of other Middle Eastern states that were more secular in orientation than Saudi Arabia. Therefore, most Muslim countries supported the Saudi regime in their efforts to take back the mosque, and the rebellion was labeled as sacrilege by many of the other regimes.<sup>403</sup>

However, the underlying discontent in this wealthy, seemingly stable state, was then brought to the surface.

The oil revenues of the 1970s had bolstered the economy and changed the face of Saudi Arabia. Modernization and materialism profoundly affected society but the historical religious base has enabled, to some extent, the merger of the conflicting values and aspirations.

Nevertheless, the conflation of these values did not occur at all levels and although the Mosque takeover seemed to be an isolated incident, friction did exist beneath the surface. The Saudi regime has always been able to counter this friction with the use of its Wahhabi Islam to legitimize itself. As the guardians of the two holiest shrines in the Muslim world, “State-sponsored fundamentalism is thus a tradition in Saudi Arabia. Armed with Wahhabi Islam as its official ideology, the state has always posed as the Islamic state *par excellence*.”<sup>404</sup> Opposition to the state has, therefore, always been on the

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<sup>402</sup> Ibid. p. 277.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid. p. 272.

<sup>404</sup> Faksh, 1997, p. 91.

back foot as the basis of the state, which is religion, is used as a neutralizing force.

However, the Gulf War of 1990 and 1991 catapulted the divisions of society to the fore as sections of the community questioned the wisdom of Western support and the condemnation of a fellow Arab State. In particular, as more than 50 per cent of the population was under the age of 20 and had been brought up in an era of wealth and education, their expectations of what life and society should offer them were radically different from the generation before. They desired participation in the decision-making process, equality, human rights, representative government and legality but within the realm of strict Islamic rule.<sup>405</sup> These new fundamentalists chose to use the technologies of their age to spread their message and attempt to bring about change through reform within the system rather than by the use of violence.<sup>406</sup>

A round up of Saudi dissidents in recent years does not bode well for a regime whose legitimacy has been eroding since the Gulf War. Nor is an erosion of legitimacy the only weakness exposed by these developments. The country's financial institutions are suffering because the bureaucracy is corrupt.

The arrest of some dissident clerics and Islamist movement leaders is an indication that the royal family is losing the support not only of its conservative religious constituency, but also of important tribal leaders.<sup>407</sup>

Most of the dissident clerics are from Qasim, not the eastern province inhabited by the traditional Shi'ite opponents of the regime, or the Hijaz, an area more liberal than the rest of the country. Qasim is where the traditional supporters of the regime live, conservative Najdis from the Saudi heartland. Adding to the dissident movement's clout, some of those arrested, such as Dr. Safar al-Hawali and Shiekh Salman al-Aouda are well known in the rest of the Muslim world.

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<sup>405</sup> Ibid. p. 95.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid. pp. 98-99.

Saudi Arabian Minister of Interior Prince Naif first dismissed reports of the roundup as false part of a Zionist-inspired propaganda campaign. Then, switching tactics, he admitted to the arrests, but claimed the militants were backed by Iran.<sup>408</sup> This claim is a suspect, too, since the clerics are Sunni, not Shi'ite Muslims; nor would they need Iranian funds.

Nevertheless, discontent is rising among the Saudi oil generation. The discontent can be traced to the rise of a new middle class of Saudis who gained access to higher education during the 1970s, an era when the Saudi government spent lavishly on its citizens. Many dissidents are young men in their 20s and 30s- the "oil generation". They want to contribute to the shaping of heir nation's future, but the system is closed to them because they are not part of the Saud clan. Instead of family and tribal connections, the critics advocate education and Islam as an alternative form of advancement.

The choice of education and Islam is not arbitrary. These are shortcomings of the existing regime. The country's resources have been mismanaged, in part because some of those who acquired their positions through family connections lack education and financial skills. Islam offers an indirect way to criticize the regime's lack of ethical constraints, principally the corrupt princes who skim money from their country's oil and commercial deals.

Islamists point to the moral and economic laxiness of the Royal family as being due to corruption and mismanagement. Some dissidents say the royal family could easily cover the deficit from their personal accounts, estimated at US\$20 billion.<sup>409</sup> Many ordinary Saudis believe the royal princes are only interested in their own personal gains, not the welfare of the citizens. This strong belief that the royal family is corrupt attracts young Saudi men and women to Islamist leaders.

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<sup>408</sup> Ibid. p. 99.

<sup>409</sup> *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 13, 1994.

The threat of an Islamist challenge in Saudi Arabia is of special concern. Saudi Islamists do not need the outside financial backing that other Islamist movements in the region, such as those in Egypt and Algeria, are dependent on. Unlike Egyptian Islamists, some of whom have broken into jewelry shops to get money for weapons, the Saudi Islamists had funds to buy missiles to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan. Both Egypt and Algeria consider Saudi Islamists the main financiers of their opposition. Saudi Islamists have the finances necessary to destabilize the regime. In addition, Saudi Islamists have infiltrated the state bureaucracy and the army, and represent a majority in the Saudi National Guard. They have also succeeded in forging alliances with other social forces in Saudi Arabia, namely rich businessmen from Najd.

Given the extent of the Islamists' network and the general dissatisfaction of the Saudi public with the "despotic rule" of the royal family, the question of change in Saudi Arabia is not one of how, but when. The disparity between a rapidly changing society and a static state is bound to lead to friction and perhaps revolt. Since the oil boom in the 1970s, the society has had a taste of modernity. Students went to college in Britain and America; members of the Islamist movements have stopped communicating through cassette tapes in favor of the Internet and computer bulletin boards. Meanwhile, the country is governed by a family whose sole means of maintaining power is its military, yet the Gulf war has exposed the hollowness of the Royal family's claims of building a modern state with a strong army. Saudi Arabia required American defence from Saddam Hussein's Iraq with which it should have been equally matched. One Saudi joked that the only thing the royal family can organize is a good soccer team.

### The New Islamists

The U.S. and its allies have in recent years worked hard to isolate Iraq and Iran in order to stave off any external threat to the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) States. What the West's arms and diplomatic muscle cannot do,

however, is to protect the GCC rulers from their domestic opposition- the new Islamists. It is this internal threat, which is of growing concern.<sup>410</sup>

Recent instances of opposition- the high public profile of Saudi dissidents and the violent protests in Bahrain- have highlighted this concern. In the short-term, criticism of Saudi practices or exposure of official wrong-doings can be costly for the country concerned as the Saudis withdraw their financial favors. This explains the reluctance of Western governments to talk to the Saudi opposition. Britain's Foreign Office, for instance, has held informal talks with Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) and their Tunisian counterparts. No such line has been opened to the Saudi Islamists. Rather, the then Foreign Secretary had apologized to Riyadh for the presence of opposition figures in London. On 17 May 1995, Prime Minister John Major told Arab ambassadors in London that radical Muslim dissidents who abused British hospitality were 'extremely unwelcome',<sup>411</sup> but there was little the U.K could do unless British law was broken. The growing attraction to London for such radicals is based partly on the fact that asylum seekers do not have to renounce all political activity, and partly on the presence of a large and lively Arab press.

The refusal to make contact is understandable if it is based on an informed judgment that the opposition poses a threat to the status quo. Nonetheless, analysts must be careful not to fall into a state of complacency. To avoid this mind-set, it is useful to look in more detail at the Islamist threat to the Kingdom, while recognizing that its significance should not be exaggerated.

The contemporary Islamist movement in the Kingdom emerged in the 1980s but went public in the wake of the Gulf War which exposed the Royal family to charges of being in league with the secular and 'imperial' West. The adherents of this loosely organized movement label themselves as *al-salafiyyun* (followers of the pious ancestors) rather than *al-usuliyyun* (fundamentalists). Their leaders are intellectuals, predominantly from the Najd- the conservative heartland of the Kingdom. Over half of them are

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<sup>410</sup> *Jane's Intelligence Review* (JIR), Vol. 7, No. 4, 1995, pp. 180-183.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.* p. 309.

employed at one of four conservative universities- Muhammad bin Saud; King Saud, Umm al-Qura and the Islamic University.

The Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights (CDLR), or *Lajna al Difa' al-Huquuq al-Sharia*, has emerged as the most visible symbol of Islamist opposition to the House of Saud in May 1993. It has a network of informants in the Kingdom and has made use of modern technology to get its message across internally and externally.<sup>412</sup> The Committee has presented itself to Western audiences as an advocate of human rights and a critic of corruption, economic mismanagement and financial profligacy. It has enthusiastically co-operated with Western investigative journalists to expose financial and moral improprieties relating to business deals between Western politicians and the Royal Family. The CDLR's propaganda emphasizes the alleged fiscal and moral laxness of the Royal princes and exaggerates the Kingdom's admittedly difficult fiscal situation. Western critics of the CDLR, however, paint its leaders as obscurantist fundamentalists while Arabian critics argue that its leaders are unimportant self-publicists.

The CDLR's true aims and beliefs remain uncertain, in part because its leaders have not formulated an agreed set of goals. Rather, they are casting their net wide, trying to act as a lightning rod for dissidents of any color. Hence, the committee's general secretary, Dr Muhammad al-Masari was quick to claim a connection with two Saudi diplomats who defected from their posts in the U.S.A. in 1994, even though the individuals clearly did not share the CDLR's Islamic agenda. It is more difficult to assess the movement's aims by the fact that its leaders do not speak with one voice and that they vary their pitch depending on the audience. For instance, Dr Masari has appeared on platforms with individuals ranging from radical socialist British politicians to the virulently sectarian and obscurantist Islamist group *Hizb al-Tahrir*, Freedom Party. Masari's leading colleague in London, Dr

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<sup>412</sup> Faksh, M. A. *The Future of Islam in the Middle East*, 1997, p. 97.

Saad al-Faqih, takes a softer line and appears sometimes to restrain Masari's more fiery tendencies.

All these fundamentalist voices denounced the House of Saud and predicts its overthrow either in the form of a military coup as a result of escalating clashes between the government and the opposition or as a result of a direct Islamist take-over of power. He admits that an alternative scenario is that power could be transferred to one of the younger Saudi princes who would institute major reforms to accommodate opposition demands. He is adamant, however, that he would not negotiate any such compromise. Dr Faqih is more ambivalent and argues that the CDLR is not committed to the overthrow of the Royal Family but that it could countenance some form of compromise. The imprisoned *shuyukh*, sheikhs, al-Alawi and al-Hawdah, which have a greater following inside the country than does Masari, also stop short of calling for the overthrow of the Al-Saud.

In his attitude to the outside world, Masari does not sound a reassuring tone to Western governments. He blasts Western establishments and 'capitalists' for exploiting Arab oil, plying the Arab rulers with unneeded weapons and for keeping in power the un-Islamic 'tyrannies' that hold sway across the middle East and North Africa. He suggests that his movement could work with the West if it ceased its support for 'repression' but this olive branch is lost in a flood of rhetoric. Like radical Islamist leaders world, Masari rejects an international political economic order dominated by the USA, the UN, the IMF and the World Bank. These bodies, he argues, are subjugating Muslim peoples in their pursuit of profit and are subverting the Muslim world with the 'cultural imperialism' of the pop-culture.<sup>413</sup>

In a speech delivered in the British House of Commons, Masari called on the British people to stand up to their capitalist 'rulers' and urged the Western powers to 'get off the backs' of the Arabs.<sup>414</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> Ibid.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid.

The gap between rhetoric and action is notoriously wide in the Arab world. During the celebration in May 1995 of the Islamic Id al-Adha, Saudi TV broadcast a sermon delivered at the Holy Mosque in Mecca which attacked “the Jews” who “have ... trampled on mosques” and warned that “the enemy is now threatening openly”.<sup>415</sup> Despite this officially sanctioned diatribe, there is no prospect of Riyadh disagreeing to Washington’s terms for an Arab-Israeli peace settlement. The same cannot be said of the CDLR. More reassuringly, while the rhetoric of Saudi Islamists may not be much different from that of their counterparts in the Maghreb, they have displayed no tendency towards violence with the exception of Osama Bin Ladin.

### Who is Osama Bin Laden? Profile

Osama bin Laden, is an International terrorist and an Islamic extremist.

He is both one of the CIA’s most wanted men and a hero to many young people in the Arab world.<sup>416</sup> A Saudi born leader of Al Qaeda, in Arabic, the Base, is a terrorist organization devoted to uniting all Muslims and establishing a transnational, strict-fundamentalist Islamic state. The youngest son of a wealthy Yemeni-born businessman, he is believed to be in his 40’s, and to have at least three wives. Bin Laden was trained as a civil engineer. He graduated in 1979 from King Abdul Aziz University, Jiddah.

Born in Riyadh Saudi Arabia on 30 July 1957<sup>417</sup> to a Yemeni family. Bin Laden left Saudi Arabia in 1979 to fight against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.<sup>418</sup> But following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan he went to Pakistan where he helped to finance the *mujahidi*. His power is founded on a personal fortune earned by his family’s construction business in Saudi Arabia. The Afghan jihad was packed with American dollars and had the blessing of

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<sup>415</sup> Ibid.

<sup>416</sup> Gunaratna, Rohan, Inside Al Qaeda, p. 47.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

the governments of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. He received security training from the CIA itself, according to Middle Eastern analyst Hazhir Teimourian.

While in Afghanistan, he founded the *Maktab al-Khidimat* [Services Office] (MAK), which recruited and trained non-Afghan Muslim fighters from around the world and imported equipment to aid the Afghan resistance to fight in the war against the Soviet army. Egyptians, Lebanese, Turks and others - numbering thousands - joined their Afghan Muslim brothers in the struggle against an ideology that spurned religion.

In 1987 he split with MAK to begin a jihad [holy war] against Israel and Western influence in Islamic countries. He founded Al Qaeda the next year. Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, he returned to his family's construction business in Saudi Arabia.

### Turned against the US

After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in February 1989, the "Arab Afghans", as Bin Laden's faction came to be called, turned their fire against the US and its allies in the Middle East. When U.S. troops were stationed on Saudi soil in 1990, he became violently opposed to the Saudi monarchy and the United States.<sup>419</sup> After he was caught smuggling arms in 1991, he was expelled from the country because of his anti-government activities there. Then he went to Sudan, where he began financing terrorist training camps while investing in businesses and increasing his fortune. His Saudi citizenship was revoked in February 1994.<sup>420</sup>

He spent the next five years in Sudan until US pressure prompted the Sudanese Government to expel him.

After the attempted assassination of Egyptian president Mubarak in 1995, to which Bin Laden was linked, he was expelled from Sudan in 1996 and

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<sup>419</sup> Ibid. pp. 27-28.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid. p. 34.

reestablished himself in Afghanistan, where the extreme Islamic fundamentalist Taleban had come to power. Bin Laden, an immensely wealthy and private man, has been granted a safe haven by Afghanistan's ruling Taleban movement. That same year he issued a "declaration of war" against the United States. In its camps in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda trained a decentralized network of international terrorists that have been linked to the 1998 car bombing of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the 2000 attack on the USS *Cole* in Yemen, and the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Bin Laden also is reported to have financed or trained Islamic guerrillas operating in Kosovo, Kashmir, the Philippines, and Somalia.

He has been indicted in the United States for the embassy bombings, and the United States launched retaliatory cruise missile attacks against his Afghanistan camps in 1998. Following the 2001 attacks the United States demanded the Taleban hand over Bin Laden. When the Afghans refused, U.S. forces began military action against Afghanistan, and in conjunction with opposition forces there largely defeated Taleban and Al Qaeda forces by Jan. 2002. Bin Laden, however, was not captured, and Al Qaeda continued to function and launch terror attacks on limited scale.

Terrorism experts say Bin Laden has been using his millions to fund attacks against the US. The US State Department calls him "one of the most significant sponsors of Islamic extremist activities in the world today".

BBC correspondent James Robbins says Bin Laden had "all but admitted involvement" in the Saudi Arabia killings.<sup>421</sup>

Some experts say he is part of an international Islamic front, bringing together Saudi, Egyptian and other groups.

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<sup>421</sup> *B.B.C. World Service News*, Tuesday, 18 September 2001, 16:31 GMT 17:31 U.K.

Analysts say Bin Laden's organisation is very different from the groups that carried out bombings and hijackings in the past in that it is not a tightly knit group with a clear command structure but a loose coalition of groups operating across continents.<sup>422</sup>

American officials believe Bin Laden's associates may operate in over forty countries - in Europe and North America, as well as in the Middle East, East Africa and Asia.

The few outsiders who have met Bin Laden describe him as modest, almost shy. He rarely gives interviews.<sup>423</sup>

### Activities

Bin Laden masterminded and financed several of the past decade's most barbaric acts of terrorism.<sup>424</sup> His worldwide terrorist network, Al-Qaeda, played a central role in the Sept. 11, 2001 multiple plane hijackings and coordinated attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The Saudi exile has been directly linked to the Aug. 7, 1998 bombing of the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, killing 224 people, and the October 2000 bombing attack of the U.S.S. Cole in Yemen.

### The Al-Qaeda Organization

Osama Bin Laden is a about 44 years old "businessman" and son of one of Saudi Arabia's wealthiest families, and the coordinator of an international terrorist network believed to be responsible for numerous deadly attacks against American and Western targets.

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<sup>422</sup> Gunaratna, Rohan, *Inside Al Qaeda*, 2002, p. 53.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid. p. 30.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid. pp. 52-53.

Bin Laden formed the terrorist Al-Qaeda ("The Base") organization in 1988, and it is believed to have operatives in as many as twenty countries.<sup>425</sup> In February 23, 1998 Bin Laden announced the establishment of "The International Islamic Front for Holy War Against Jews and Crusaders,"<sup>426</sup> an umbrella organization linking Islamic extremists in scores of countries around the world, including Egypt, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The group issued a religious edict upon its establishment: the ruling to kill the Americans and their allies, civilians, and the military, is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Holy Mosque from their grip and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated, and unable to threaten any Muslim.

His militancy is traced back to the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Bin Laden's avowed goal from that time is to remove Western "infidels" from Muslim countries - the Russians from Afghanistan, the American military from Saudi Arabia and other points in the Gulf, the downfall of many government of Muslim states, and for the destruction of the United States and its allies.

Bin Laden is the son of the Yemeni-born owner of a leading Saudi construction company. Born into great wealth, he is believed to have inherited as much as \$300 million when his father died in the 1960's.<sup>427</sup> From 1979, Bin Laden began raising money for the Mujahideen forces fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan, and gradually became more and more affiliated with Egyptian Islamic extremist groups, such as Egyptian Islamic Jihad. From the mid-1980's Bin Laden began to establish training camps in Afghanistan, initially for the war in Afghanistan, but later to fight against other targets worldwide.

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<sup>425</sup> Ibid. pp. 21-22.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid. p. 1.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid. p. 19.

He has attracted thousands of recruits from Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Egypt, Yemen, Pakistan and Sudan.

Reportedly, Bin Laden's anti-Americanism intensified during the Gulf War, when U.S. troops were stationed in Saudi Arabia.<sup>428</sup> The presence of American soldiers in Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad and the home of the two holiest Muslim shrines, enraged Mr. Bin Laden and other Arab militants. He and his associates also blamed the U.S. support for Israel as anti-Islam.

In 1994 Saudi Arabia stripped Bin Laden's citizenship, citing his opposition to the Saudi King and leadership and expelled him from the country. He then went to Khartoum, Sudan, where he owns numerous businesses. But under U.S. pressure was expelled in 1996 and relocated to Afghanistan. Bin Laden is on the FBI's list of 10 most-wanted criminals, and the State Department offered a \$5 million reward for his arrest following the August 1998 embassy bombings. The United Nations imposed economic sanctions on the Taleban regime in Afghanistan in 1999 for harboring Bin Laden, and many nations, including the U.S. have frozen assets owned by Bin Laden and his senior associates.

Bin Laden has been thought to finance, inspire or directly organize various terrorist attacks.<sup>429</sup> His name has been linked to the killings of Western tourists by militant Islamic groups in Egypt, bombings in France by Islamic extremist Algerians, the maintenance of a safe-house in Pakistan for Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, the convicted mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, and sheltering Sheikh Omar Abd Al-Rahman (the Blind Sheikh), who was also convicted in the World Trade Center bombing. He has also been linked to the 1992 bombings of a hotel in Yemen, which killed two

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<sup>428</sup> Ibid. p. 28.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid. p. 16.

Australians, but was supposedly targeted against American soldiers stationed there; the 1995 detonation of a car bomb in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; the 1995 truck bomb in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia that killed 19 U.S. servicemen; and the 1995 assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Bin Laden has been directly connected to the August 7, 1998 bombing of the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, killing 224 people, and the October 2000 attack of the U.S. destroyer ship Cole in Yemen.

### Beliefs and Goals

In 1998, Bin Laden issued a religious edict to his followers, to kill the Americans and their allies, civilians and the military.

Bin Laden has made no secret of his anti-American, anti-Western and anti-Israeli sentiments. In fact, he has been outspoken on these topics, issuing theological rulings calling for Muslims to attack Americans and threatening terrorism against related targets. Pointing to the defeat of the Soviet forces in Afghanistan, Bin Laden has consistently declared that the United States is vulnerable to defeat by a jihad of Islamic forces.<sup>430</sup>

Their rallying cry is the liberation of Islam's three holiest places - Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem.

### Status

Bin Laden tops the FBI's most wanted terrorist list. Until recently, he has been living in exile under the protection of Afghanistan's Taleban regime. Since the collapse of the Taleban regime, he has been in hiding.

During his time in hiding, he has called for a holy war against the US, and for the killing of Americans and Jews. He is reported to be able to rally around him up to 70,000 fighters.<sup>431</sup>

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<sup>430</sup> Ibid. p. 51.

<sup>431</sup> *The New Zealand Herald*, 15 July 2003, Section B1.

He is also suspected of helping to set up Islamic training centres to prepare soldiers to fight in Chechnya and other parts of the former Soviet Union.

### Current location

Though his current whereabouts are unknown, most reports indicate that, if alive, Bin Laden is probably in Afghanistan.

The best choice for preserving order in Saudi Arabia is a system-wide overhaul that begins to establish power sharing and responsibility sharing between all groups. This must be a central or driving principle.

Thus far the Saudi government does not seem to have considered this position. It has chosen repression instead. Worse, the Saudi policy of silencing dissent goes beyond national boundaries. In 1994, they successfully demanded the firing of Hafiz Mirazi, the then host of a Washington-based Arabic talk show after he interviewed Mohammed Masari, a leading Saudi dissident. Mustapha Bakry, editor of an Egyptian opposition newspaper, said that the Egyptian police at the request of the Saudi government kidnapped him because he reported on Saudi dissent.(16)<sup>432</sup>

Contrary to the assertions of the Saudi regime, the problems of Saudi Arabia are not the result of a Zionist media campaign in the U.S. nor they caused by liberal journalists in the Arab world. Saudi dissent is home grown; unless its root causes are addressed, the discontent may grow violent.

### Conclusion

As in the other case studies, Saudi Arabia has been affected by rapid change to its society. However, its wealth and the link between religion and politics have sustained its power base. The Wahhabi basis of Saudi society and politics enables the regime to use religious discourse in order to demonstrate

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<sup>432</sup> *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 13, 1994.

its legitimacy. Opposition to the state also uses Islamic rhetoric to counter the state but has failed to make any inroads because as the Saudi regime retains control through its Wahhabi based legitimacy and forceful repression.

## **PART FIVE: ANALYSIS**

### **CHAPTER 1: PROLIFERATION OF ISLAMIST GROUPS**

#### **Introduction**

The prominence of the Islamists in the early stages of political relaxation in the Middle East and North Africa comes from their being the most organized theo-political groups. In the 1970s, and early 1980s, when opposition parties were banned and public political discussion was not allowed, the Islamists were able to meet, talk and form what amounted to political networks through their charitable societies. They were able to make political points through sympathizers preaching at the mosques on Fridays. It was very difficult for the governments either to control the societies of the preachers. If a preacher chose his words well the authorities could hardly criticize him for saying that the government was imperfect, as is everything except God himself, and that it should be run more on lines laid down by God in the Qur'an. In effect the societies became the only practicable and permitted form of opposition of the day. This gave them a political head start on all secular opposition groups when Arab governments began to relax control in the later 1980s. There have been changes in this direction in Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco and, in rather different circumstances, in Yemen. The problem in most cases has been that the people who have moved most vigorously to seize the new political opportunities have been the militant Islamist groups, who are not interested in continuing either the economic or political reform. The Islamist movements had the enormous additional advantage of standing for an idea,

which the people understood. Everyone knew what the Shari'a law was and roughly what an Islamic state was supposed to be, but nobody knew much about the leaders and policies of the multitude of new secular parties. Inevitably, since the period of political change began it had been the Islamist groups that have dominated Arab political instability. Hence, a rising tide of Islamic radicalism is sweeping over the Middle East and North Africa, and threatening Western security interests.

### **A Rising Tide of Islamists**

From North Africa to the Persian Gulf, impoverished and disaffected Muslims have embraced the fiery appeal of Islamists. Their leaders blame all of society's problems on "heretics" and the corrupting influence of Western culture, and seek to replace secular government with an Islamic state based on their own rigid interpretation of Qur'anic law. They condemn intellectuals and artists, Muslims who disagree with them and members of other minority religions, demanding a jihad, or holy war, against all who oppose them.

Although the vast majority of the world's 1 billion Muslims reject such fanaticism,<sup>433</sup> Islamists have scored ominous victories in the last three decades. Iran fell to them in 1979, followed by Sudan, the largest country in Africa, a decade later. Until recently Algeria was teetering on the brink, while in Egypt, Islamist gunmen have virtually taken over whole areas of the Upper Nile.

Other fundamentalists are making inroads without violence. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood party runs key professional organizations. Even in secular Turkey, an Islamic party captured control of the two largest cities throughout 1990s.

This upheaval poses a serious challenge to the security interests of Western nations. Islamists oppose any western presence in the Middle East, and the

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<sup>433</sup> *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 23-29, 1993, p. 11.

very existence of the state of Israel. Indeed, when Iraq's Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, Islamist leaders lined up against the U.N. coalition in the Gulf War. And HAMAS, the militant Palestinian group that continues carrying out suicide attacks in Israeli civic amenities, considers the territory of Israel as Islamic land assigned to Muslims to the end of time.

In the years since Islamists came to power in Iran and seized the American embassy, taking 52 hostages, their regime has slaughtered thousands of political opponents, fought a costly war with Iraq and wrecked the economy. Nevertheless, the late Iranian leader, Ayatollah Khomeini; is admired by Islamist revolutionaries everywhere.

When a group of army officers seized control of Sudan, they asked Tehran for assistance. Iran responded with tens of millions of dollars worth of Chinese weapons and hundreds of Revolutionary Guards, sent to train the Sudanese military. Tehran also dispatched Majid Kamal as its ambassador to Sudan; he had helped in the takeover of the US embassy and assisted in developing Lebanon's Hizbullah terrorist group. Officials in neighboring countries of Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria complained that Sudan supports antigovernment terrorists in their countries with weapons, passports, funds, training and a safe haven.

How could a faith famed for the brightness of its culture and the depth of its learning have been turned into a force for intolerance and violence? Islamists say, "Its [Islam] approach is all embracing.... It seeks to mould every aspect of life". Considered from that respect, it seems, the Islamic state bears a kind of resemblance to fascist and communist states. And although Islamists claim the Islamic state would not suppress individual liberty, their description of it appears to leave little room for individual expression or dissent.

In their drive for power, Islamist militants adopt violent means. Although, in Algeria, the FIS distances itself from violence, other groups, aided by terrorists trained in Sudan, have ordered Westerners out of Algeria and killed those who haven't obeyed.

Algerians have borne the brunt of the slaughter: at least 150,000 have been killed in the past ten years.<sup>434</sup> Militants have burned down establishments that served alcohol, ransacked beauty salons and destroyed satellite dishes that brought in foreign television. Women have been attacked for wearing Western clothes. Teenage girls have been killed for not wearing a veil. The Armed Islamic Group (GIA) recently declared that education hinders the holy war and warned students and teachers to stay away from schools. To reinforce the warning, a university professor was shot dead just before classes were to begin.

Once separated by geography and linguistic differences, militant Islamists are increasingly linked in what is "IslamNet" - a network where ideas and aid flow back and forth. Many Islamists believe that the liberation of Afghanistan and Kuwait was only an excuse to establish Western hegemony by dissolving the Arab and Islamic regimes and putting Israel in control of the region. If asked how Islamist governments should treat those of different faiths, they reply, "No-one should be punished for his religion", "but if he degrades other people's beliefs, he should be punished".<sup>435</sup>

In practice, militants (like the Taleban and the Saudi religious police) routinely target those who deviate from fundamentalist orthodoxy. The majority of Muslim intellectuals maintain that the Islamists' doctrine is not a faith; it is a political ideology. They say "jihad is a religious duty to impose Islam in other people".<sup>436</sup> In fact, it really means 'to purify yourself'. The Qur'an teaches us to look upon all human beings as equals, regardless of sex, religion, language or other difference.

Radical Islamism flourishes where democracy does not exist. Authoritarian politics breed economic stagnation that makes attractive the simplest answers of the Islamists. Democracy will provide an outlet for people to feel they have influence on the government. Many Muslim moderates look to the West for

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<sup>434</sup> *B.B.C. World Service News*, 8:00 am NZ Time, 29 May 2002.

<sup>435</sup> *Reader's Digest*, January 1995, p. 39.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

encouragement. Instead, some in the West have recently suggested that moderate fundamentalism represents no real challenge. The Afghan War offers a cautionary lesson for those who downplay the ruthlessness of the Taleban and Al-Qaeda agenda. Years of U.S. support won Americans no friendship among the Islamist volunteers who fought against the Soviets. Many "Arab Afghans" who returned to their home countries after the conflict simply resumed the jihad against their own governments and the West. One of the supporters in the Afghan War against the Soviets, Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden, wound up charged as a chief conspirator in the plot that blew up the twin towers in New York and the Pentagon on the 11th of September 2001. Fifteen of the other 19 suicide bombers who hijacked the planes were Saudi nationals.

The Islamists want the United States and the West to put pressure on their governments to legalize their parties. But once they are legalized, there will only be two parties in their minds: God's party and the Devil's party. Rather than supporting repressive regimes or courting the Islamists, Western governments should support Muslim moderates. If they fail to do so, they may contribute to bringing Islamists to power.

### **Reasons of Islamist Discontent**

Many authors cite political factors, economic reasons, and alienation, urbanization and moral degradation brought about by rapid social change among the main reasons for the rise of Islamism.

Politically they note, for example, that the intellectual leaders of Islamic movements have made Islam a political movement with a political vocabulary. In Egypt and North Africa, governments deliberately fostered Islamic groups to counteract Marxist influence among students. It is typical of outsiders to dismiss Muslim fundamentalists as politically rather than

religiously motivated.<sup>437</sup> Fred Halliday described both Iran's and Tunisia's Islamic movements as "a revolt against the intrusive secular state,"<sup>438</sup> Leonard Binder has described the Islamic movements as "in a sense ... an ideological dimension of the movement to restrict the power of the state".<sup>439</sup> Francois Burgat describes Islamic fundamentalism as "more language than doctrine ... political ideology capable of resisting the great Western ideologies".<sup>440</sup> Some scholars have even gone so far as to describe the fundamentalists as "secular" in their basic orientation and goals, using elements of Islamic tradition like the veil of women as mere political symbols.<sup>441</sup>

The description of Islamic fundamentalism as political certainly has its justification. After all, the goal of many fundamentalists is the Islamisation of society by seizure of government by "righteous" (i.e. fundamentalist) Muslims whether by coup or by democratic processes.

It is perhaps not surprising that some have accused the Jamaat-i-Islami of being more interested in power than in religion.<sup>442</sup>

Economic reasons are also commonly cited as incentives to join Islamic movements. In Egypt, Sadat's "open door policy", which liberalized the economy by allowing foreign imports, is blamed for widening the gap between the rich and the poor and causing the lower middle classes to slip in the economic scale even as, through education, they seek to attain a higher social status.<sup>443</sup> Many observers speak of the professional frustrations of the

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<sup>437</sup> Chartrad, Sabra, "The Veiled Look: It's Enforced with a Vengeance", *New York Times*, 22 August 1991, p. A4.

<sup>438</sup> Halliday, Fred, Tunisia's Uncertain Future, reprinted in *The Renaissance Party in Tunisia: The Quest for Freedom and Democracy*, a compilation of articles and documents put together by the Renaissance Party, Washington, D.C. 26 July 1991, pp. 91-93.

<sup>439</sup> Binder, Leonard, *Islamic Liberation: A Critique of Development Ideologies*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, pp. 16-17.

<sup>440</sup> Burgat, Francois, *L'islamisme au Maghreb: La voix du sud*, Paris: Karthala, 1988, p. 70.

<sup>441</sup> Arkoun, Mohamed, "Algeria", in Shireen T. Hunter, ed., *The Politics of Islamic Revivalism*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988, p. 184.

<sup>442</sup> Duncan, Emma, *Breaking the Curfew: A Political Journey Through Pakistan*, London: Michael Joseph, 1989, p. 225.

<sup>443</sup> Ibrahim, Saad Eddin, "Contemporary Islamic Fundamentalism: A Quest for

educated members of the lower middle class, who often were educated at considerable cost to their families in the hope of upward social mobility. James Rupert describes Islamist students in Tunisia as “would-be professionals- engineers, lawyers, doctors” who “are alarmed at the bleak futures they face in Tunisia, where economic development has stagnated and prospects for climbing into the country’s elite classes seem slight”.<sup>444</sup> Norma Salem comments, “These are the young upwardly mobile professionals (‘yuppies’) of Islamic Third World, caught in a bottleneck”.<sup>445</sup>

In all cases, there are problems of uneven development. In every single-country study, major problems that seem to issue in Islamist movements stem from the fact that the development of education, made available at the highest level to all who are qualified, has far outpaced developments on the economic and political levels. The Arabisation of the educational system, for nationalistic reasons, was not reflected in a corresponding Arabisation of public administration and the state sector of the economy, with the result that large numbers of university graduates could not find employment. Similar problems may be found in all of the countries under study. All of these countries have a proliferation of higher degrees and insufficient job opportunities for those who have earned them. In Pakistan, the government tries to solve the problem of unemployment by establishing more colleges and liberalizing admissions criterion, thereby generating yet more people with advanced degrees and perpetuating the problem.<sup>446</sup> Actual class affiliation is not as important for the rise of Islamism as “an incongruity between high aspirations and the decrease in economic and political opportunities”.<sup>447</sup>

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Understanding”, unpublished paper, quoted in Nemat Guenena, *The “Jihad”: An Islamic Alternative” in Egypt*, Cairo Papers in Social Science, vol 9, monograph 2, Cairo: American University in Cairo, 1986, pp. 77-78

<sup>444</sup> Rupert, James, “Tunisia: Testing America’s Third World Diplomacy”, *World Policy Journal* 4, Winter 1986-87: 24.

<sup>445</sup> Salem, Norma, “Tunisia”, in Hunter, *The Politics of Islamic Revivalism*, 1988, p. 160.

<sup>446</sup> Ahmad, Mumtaz, “Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia: The Jammata-I-Islamic and the Tablighi Jamaat of South Asia”, in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds. *Fundamentalisms Observed*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 70.

<sup>447</sup> Salem, Norma, “Tunisia”, in Hunter, *The Politics of Islamic Revivalism*, 1988. p. 160.

Others reject these explanations. To reduce Islamism to economic desperation is simplistic, and does not take into account the subjective factor. People don't come to Islam as an alternative to their social ills. People come to Islam in response to a call, which goes very deep into the human spirit. Some scholars also find the reduction of Islamic fundamentalism to political and economic causes unsatisfying. Chris Eccel believes this rationale reduces the Islamists to "near automata, angry blisters on the body politic reacting to socio-economic irritants".<sup>448</sup>

Indeed, one must ask, why should the economic bottleneck and lack of legitimate political expression result in the appeal of Islamism rather than some other form of protest? And why does it appeal particularly to students and graduates in the sciences? Why does it appeal to so many women?

In a perspective article on the Islamic movement in Tunisia, Susan Waltz analyses the economic and political argument for the appeal of Islamic fundamentalism, and finds both these theses unconvincing. Likewise, it is unconvincing to argue that women are involved in the movement because of economic and political frustrations, when the movement itself advocates restricting women from the public sphere, in contrast to the major strides that late President Bourghuiba made on behalf of women in that country. Instead, Waltz feels that "an explanation that puts primary emphasis on psycho-social alienation is more compelling".<sup>449</sup>

What is the nature of this psychological alienation? One fact stands out in all of the countries under study: Islamism is primarily a revolt of young people who are caught between a traditional past and a higher secular education with all its implications of Western intellectual impact and contact with the materialistically oriented culture of the modern urban environment. The contradiction from the values learned from the past and the realities of the present confront young people with bewildering contradictions and often a

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<sup>448</sup> Eccel, A. Chris, "Alim and Mujahid in Egypt: Orthodox versus Subculture, or Division of Labour?" *Muslim World* 78, 1988: 203.

<sup>449</sup> Walz, Susan, "Islamist Appeal in Tunisia", *Middle East Journal* 40, 1986, pp. 662-65.

multitude of moral choices that create a sense of anxiety, loneliness, and disorientation.

Rapid urbanization has been a pervasive phenomenon in all countries under discussion for at least the last thirty years. Urbanization has contributed to the rise of Islamism in a number of ways: (a) it is partly an expression of disappointment of the hopes engendered by the move to the city; (b) it is partly a result of the increased facility of communications made possible in an urban environment; and it is a result of the perception of moral corruption in the urban environment compared with the more traditional and socially cohesive village environment. The abrupt, uncontrolled migration into the cities created sprawling shantytowns. These, in turn, produced a vast array of new social problems- prostitution, alcoholism, drug addiction, delinquency, suicides, and crime. The Islamists saw these social problems not as the result of rapid urbanization, industrialization and uneven development, but as caused by simple moral laxity. The solution, they say, is the strict enforcement of the Shari'a. Unplanned and rapid urbanization in early industrial England inspired John Wesley and his Methodist movement. "In contemporary Iran, the same pressures helped create the Khomeini phenomenon and the Islamic Revolution".<sup>450</sup>

Whether the discussion concerns politics, economics, or the social disruption brought about by rapid urbanization, the problems are perceived by the Islamists to be ultimately moral in nature.

The proliferation of luxury goods is commonly interpreted as moral degradation.<sup>451</sup> The acquisition of luxury items, particularly in a context of surrounding poverty, is regarded as immoral; it has also being seen how rapid

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<sup>450</sup> Abrahamian, Ebrard, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982, pp. 473-74.

<sup>451</sup> Yaldin, Rivka, "Militant Islam in Egypt: Some Socio-cultural Aspects", in Gabriel R. Warburg and Uri M. Kupferschmidt, eds., *Islam, Nationalism, and Radicalism in Egypt and the Sudan*, New York: Praeger, 1983, p. 171.

urbanization and sudden introduction into this urban environment contribute to perceptions of moral degradation. The transformation of the family in this way was traumatizing for the women, who felt confused as to their own personal identity. Joining an Islamic movement and donning Islamic dress was seen as a solution to an inner struggle.

The foregoing discussion leads naturally to the question of the attraction of the Islamic movement for women. Why would women join a movement that often explicitly seeks to limit their economic and political opportunities and general freedom of movement? Islamist mobilization touches perhaps as many women as men, without seriously or systematically restricting their freedom of action. This indeed appears to be the case with many of the mainline university-based movements like al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya and the MTI (Islamic Movement Tendency) of Tunisia. Many of their women, like their men, are single young professionals or students aiming toward a career in medicine or the sciences. The MTI boasts in its literature of the large numbers of women in its ranks, who are Islamic activists in their own right.

Women themselves, both within the Islamic movement and outside, are divided over whether Islam permits women to work outside the home.<sup>452</sup>

Arlene MacLeod's own interviews with single young fundamentalist women in Cairo revealed that, although they were studying for some of the most prestigious careers of their society, they intended to cease working once they married or had children.

However, the experience of most women in the middle and lower classes of contemporary urban Egypt and, most likely, the other countries under study as well, is that they are unable to give up their employment once they marry or have children. The economic problems discussed earlier force women in this social class in particular to work in order to help provide for their families, especially their children. The double burden of working outside the home and

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<sup>452</sup> Macleod, Arlene Elowe, *Accommodating Protest: Working Women, the New Veiling and Change in Cairo*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, p. 93.

continuing to assume sole responsibility for care of the house and children leaves most women exhausted and resentful, particularly because their jobs are not rewarding or fulfilling.

Women often stress that in Islam the man should provide financially for the household and the woman has no such responsibility, a point often emphasized by the fundamentalists as a major benefit Islam gives to women, and women are resentful that the circumstances of their lives do not allow them to avail themselves of this right. In light of these social realities, it is surprising that many women are far from dismayed when Islamists insist that woman's place is in the home? MacLeod says that the resort to veiling, which since the course of the 1980s came to be embraced by some three-quarters of the women of this class in Cairo, is a way of reconciling the incompatibility of cultural gender norms with the realities of workingwomen. The veil defuses the conflict working women feel by asserting the primacy of traditional roles. Women, too, feel a loss of dignity and identity in the modern urban world, and "the veil is a symbolic remembering which seeks to recover this lost dignity and place". As one woman said, "It says that I am a good woman, and if they are a good man, they will see that it is right that they treat me with dignity".<sup>453</sup>

Single women also wear Islamic dress in search of dignity, especially because in the cities of the contemporary Muslim world women who walk in the streets or ride public transportation in Western dress are subjected to verbal and physical harassment. In Muslim societies, for women in particular, personal morality is judged mainly by the manner of dress. The woman who wears Islamic dress has freedom of movement that other women do not have. Most of the women in Egypt wearing Islamic dress today are not actually members of an Islamic group, particularly since Islamic dress has become fashionable since the 1980s. MacLeod reports that Islamist groups are

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<sup>453</sup> Ibid. pp. 121, 133, 136.

typically regarded as political organizations rather than genuinely religious, and are best avoided.<sup>454</sup>

Yet with some Tunisian fundamentalist women, it is the group itself that is the attraction, offering a network of friends and a common cause. At weekly meetings at the mosque, those with needs are prayed for, and money is collected to help out those among them who are in need.

The Islamic movement often sends a mixed message to women about the roles they should play in society. Although many of their male leaders say that a woman's place is in the home, others emphasize the dynamic nature of Islamic female activism. This contradiction may be observed in Iran, where during the revolution women were encouraged to be inspired by the revolutionary example of the Prophet's granddaughter Zaynab and even of a reinterpreted Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, as an untiring fighter for social justice, but after the revolution the more submissive and domesticated aspects of Fatima's character have been emphasized as a model for women.<sup>455</sup> Zaynab al-Ghazali, the leading woman of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, embodies these contradictions in her own life and writings. In her capacity as editor of the women's section of *Al-Da'wa* magazine in 1981, she wrote that it is contrary to a woman's nature to work outside the home, and that a woman's first duty is to be a wife and a mother. "The family comes first. If an urgent need arises, then work, in education until you marry; and then work stops, except in absolute necessity.... Learn, and earn the highest degrees of learning. That is not too precious to be spent in raising a Qur'anic generation of which we are in the greatest need. Return, my dear, to the house. Stay in your home and obey your husband. You will be rewarded for your obedience to your Prophet and to him".<sup>456</sup>

The Islamist woman is a militant for a cause, and she leaves the usual role of women in society. They see their devotion to the Islamic cause as

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<sup>454</sup> Ibid. pp. 40-41.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid. p. 78.

<sup>456</sup> Al-Ghazali, Zaynab, "Al-mara' 'l-muslima" (The Muslim Woman), *Al-Da'wa*, January 1981, p. 34.

transcending the boundaries of traditional gender-role definitions. Many of the more devoted propagandists felt that they needed to continue to work outside the home in order to devote them to spreading the message of Islam rather than being removed and isolated from life.

These pressures have already led to the adoption of a stronger, defensive stance by women in societies in which Islamic movements have been strong. In Algeria, for example, women's associations have regularly protested against the lack of an official defence of their rights. Large numbers of women have nevertheless also been joining Islamic movements, in reflection of the continuing ambivalence about women's roles in Maghrebi society. Like many of their male contemporaries, the absence of alternatives enhanced the appeal of Islamic movements that, if limiting in some respects, have offered a sense of dignity and purpose with which to face an uncertain future.

### **Who Is Attracted to Islamist Message?**

In his book *Islam in Revolution*, R. H. Dekmejian devotes a few pages to a psychological profile of the *muta'assib*, the Arabic Muslim "fanatic" or religious extremist. He lists a number of features: alienation, dogmatism, an inferiority complex that resolves itself in an assertion of superiority, activism/aggressiveness, authoritarianism, intolerance, paranoia, idealism, austerity, obedience, conformity, and conspiratorial tendencies.<sup>457</sup>

"It is sometimes assumed in social science that joiners of 'radical movements' must be somewhat alienated, marginal, anomic, or possess some other abnormal condition", writes Saad Eddin Ibrahim. "Most of the ones we investigated would be normally considered as ideal or model young Egyptians".<sup>458</sup> His study of incarcerated members of two Egyptian groups, the

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<sup>457</sup> Dekmejian, R. Hrair, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World*; Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985, pp. 32-36.

<sup>458</sup> Ibrahim, Saad Eddin, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Groups", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 12, 1980, p. 440.

*Shabab Muhammad*, (Military Academy Group) and the *Takfir wa'l Hijra* group, challenged descriptions of Islamists as “acutely alienated”.<sup>459</sup>

However, it would be incorrect to assume that these young men, who in some sense had succeeded according to society’s standards, especially in its educational system, were not alienated. How much more acute an alienation from society is there than to declare it all so irretrievably corrupt as to necessitate complete withdrawal from it?

Let us therefore examine the social characteristics of the thirty-four men interviewed in Ibrahim’s study. Both groups recruited followers mainly from among students or recent university graduates, employing kinship, friendship, and mosque attendance as mechanisms.

Ibrahim concludes that the class affiliation of most members of these militant Islamic groups is middle and lower middle class. The militants were much better educated than their parents; all but five were university graduates or enrolled in the university at the time of their arrest, and the rest had a secondary school education. A preponderance of the students and graduates were in the academically most competitive fields of science, medicine and engineering. They were, therefore, “decidedly high on both motivation and achievement.” Most militants came from normal, cohesive families that had not experience any major trauma such as death of a parent or divorce.<sup>460</sup>

The Renaissance Party of Tunisia (formerly the Movement de Tendence Islamique [MTI]) revealed a profile in many ways remarkably similar, although the MTI, a student-based movement modeled on the Muslim Brotherhood, is less extremist in its methods than either of the groups studied by Ibrahim. The membership included a large number of women. Although the members lived in urban centers at the time of the study, a large percentage was of rural origin. Other studies corroborate the observation made by Ibrahim in Egypt, that the majority of the students in the movement are in the

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<sup>459</sup> Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution*, 1985, p. 33.

<sup>460</sup> Ibrahim, Saad Eddin, “Islamic Militancy as a Social Movement: The Case of Two Groups in Egypt”, in Ali E. Millal Dessouki, ed., *Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World*, New York: Praeger, 1982, pp. 128-31.

most prestigious and competitive faculties of medicine, science and engineering.<sup>461</sup>

In Algeria, the Islamic movement is strongly based in the large towns and cities, where the FIS garnered its share of the vote in the June 1990 elections, which enabled it to take control of municipal government in many parts of Algeria. The FIS drew its recruits from students and university graduates originating mainly from the south and mountainous regions of the country, as well as the urban poor.<sup>462</sup>

The Jamaat-i-Islami of Pakistan has, much more than the MTI, consciously aimed at recruiting its members from the intelligentsia, in the belief that the “good-natured elements” of society would be attracted to them, ultimately bringing about a “revolutionary change” in the “mental makeup” of the people at large. Given this goal of elitist recruitment, it is ironic that the Jamaat-i-Islami is a broader-based movement than either of Ibrahim’s groups or the MTI of Tunisia. Its backbone is the lower sections of the new middle class and the traditional petite bourgeoisie. While students have not been the majority of members, the student wing of the Jamaat-i-Islami has been critical in penetrating the mosques and madrasas and mobilizing people for street demonstrations. Although the Jamaat-i-Islami has not been successful in national elections, the student wing has successfully captured the student unions of all major universities. In fact, during the period from 1977 to 1982, they “enjoyed almost complete veto power in most of Pakistan’s twenty universities in matters of student’s admissions and faculty appointments and promotions’.<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Walz, Susan; Islamic Appeal in Tunisia, *Middle East Journal* 40, 1986, pp. 651-70.

<sup>462</sup> Entelis, John, *Islamism and the State in the Maghreb: From Conciliation (Algeria) to Containment (Morocco) to Crackdown (Tunisia)*., paper presented at Workshop on Muslim Fundamentalism in the Maghreb, Council on Foreign Relations, New York City, 5 June 1991.

<sup>463</sup> Ahmad, Mumtaz, “Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia: The Jammata-I-Islami and the Tablighi Jamaat of South Asia”, in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds. *Fundamentalisms Observed*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 483.

Like the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Jama'at al-Islamiyya of Egypt, the Jamaat-I-Islami of Pakistan has succeeded in reorienting much of Islamic thought toward making Islam a political ideology. Unlike the Takfir wa'l Hijra group, the Pakistani Islamic movement does not exist on the fringe- it is very much in the mainstream of Islamic religious thought.<sup>464</sup> In fact, the Takfir wa'l Hijra group is an exception to the larger process of the mainstreaming of the Islamic movement in Egypt.<sup>465</sup> By the late 1980s, much of the vocabulary and thinking of the Muslim Brotherhood had become accepted on a large scale throughout Egyptian society.

In Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini ultimately garnered the support of all classes of society in a mass popular revolution against the Shah.<sup>466</sup> However, looking at the original supporters and backbone of the movement, one can discern two distinct groups; one the traditional classes of small landowners and merchants led by the clerics, particularly Khomeini, and the other [a mass] professionals and university graduates who were primarily inspired by Shari'ati. Shari'ati's political formation was through involvement in the liberation movement, a religious and political group founded in the early 1960s by Mehdi Bazargan, a civil engineer who was later to head the provisional government established after the revolution, and Hojjatalislam (later Ayatollah) Mahmud Taleqani, a cleric who studied at the famous Fayzieh madrasa in Qum. The other leaders of the movement were all well educated professionals, mainly in the sciences, medicine, and engineering. Abrahamian attributes the success of the movement partly to the close links it established with Khomeini, and partly to Bazargan's and Taleqani's ability to attract young professionals and radical technocrats, who sought to synthesize Islam and Western science.<sup>467</sup>

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<sup>464</sup> Ibid. p. 501

<sup>465</sup> Voll, John O., "Fundamentalism in the Sunni Arab World: Egypt and the Sudan", in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms Observed*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991, pp. 376-90.

<sup>466</sup> The *NZ Listener*, 14 June 1980. p. 17.

<sup>467</sup> Abrahamian, Evrand, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982, p. 459.

The Islamic guerrilla movement, the Mujahedin-e Khalq, drew its members mainly from students in the physical sciences, whereas the Marxist Feda'i guerrillas were drawn from students in the humanities and social sciences. Many Mujahedin came from the traditional (and traditionally religious) middle class, whereas the Feda'is came from the new middle class of secular minded teachers, civil servants, and professionals. Among the dead guerrillas on whom social data were available, there were three times as many women among the Feda'is as among the Mujahedin.<sup>468</sup>

A consistent pattern emerges, across all these different countries, of Islamists drawing heavily from students and university graduates in the physical sciences, usually student with rural or traditionally religious backgrounds. These movements seem to attract the recent beneficiaries of the expanded university systems [in all] of these countries, people who have, therefore, likely made recent adjustments to a modern urban intellectual and cultural environment after being raised in a fairly traditional milieu.

The smaller, clandestine and violent groups tend to be heavily male, while the more mainstream groups with large student recruitments often draw considerable members of women. The exception is the Takfir wa'l Hijra group, which, despite its extremist nature and its very conservative perspective on the need for women to remain in the home, recruited large numbers of women to serve as the wives of their men.

In none of these countries, with the exception of Iran at the end of its revolution, did the Islamists succeed in drawing the mainstream of traditional society. It is significant that despite the claims of the Renaissance Party of Tunisia (the former MTI) to champion the rights of the oppressed, the infamous bread riots of 1984 took place largely without the participation or instigation of the Islamists. The Renaissance Party and the Jamaat-I-Islami have both recognized these deficiencies in their recruitment and have made efforts to actively support the more bread-and butter interests of the poor, but

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<sup>468</sup> Ibid. p 491.

in fact the backbone of the Islamist movements in all countries has been largely the intelligentsia of middle - or lower-middle class backgrounds.

### **Are Islamists Monolithic?**

It is unwise to generalize about the various Islamic fundamentalisms spanning an arc from Morocco to the Gulf Emirates. The diverse Muslim responses to the 1991 Gulf crisis dispelled any lingering notions of a monolithic “political Islam”. Nonetheless, one may expect that in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century ‘the Islamic current’ will gain prominence in shaping the social and political order in the Middle East and North Africa.

But, American University political scientist Amos Perlmutter, writing in the *Washington Post*, sounded the alarm bell loudest. For Perlmutter, no distinctions need be made among Islamic movements around the world. “Islamic fundamentalism of the Sunni or Shia variety in Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza, the Maghreb and also Algeria is not merely resistant to democracy but wholly contemptuous and hostile to the entire democratic political culture”. It is “an aggressive revolutionary movement as militant and violent as the Bolshevik, Fascist, and Nazi movements of the past”. He tipped his hand by asserting in the same editorial that the world’s more than a billion Muslims should be viewed as one monolithic force. “The issue is not democracy but the true nature of Islam,” he wrote. “Is Islam, fundamentalist or otherwise, compatible with liberal human-rights oriented Western-style representative democracy? The answer is an emphatic ‘no’”.<sup>469</sup>

However, Perlmutter’s diatribe against Islamic politics obscures rather than clarifies matters. It is possible and even likely that the Algerian supporters of the FIS are motivated more by a passion for Islam than for democracy, and are not preoccupied with working out a long-term alliance between the two.

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<sup>469</sup> *The Washington Post*, Editorial, February 19, 1992.

But such an alliance is not out of the question. The Quran and the Shari'a provide a socio-moral framework rather than a detailed blueprint for the political order, and they allow a measure of adaptation and flexibility in state building, as Islam's history demonstrates. Islamists have made great demands on their governments without yet developing coherent and sophisticated alternative economic and social policies. Up to this point they stressed cultural and political authenticity and self-reliance. But the quest for sovereignty and self-reliance does not rule out a gradual process of incorporation and "Islamisation" of Western structures and mechanisms, including mass participation in democratic procedures. Indeed, this pattern marks the Islamists' appropriation of Western science and technology. The incorporation of these tools into Islamic culture is described as an act of 'repossession' of a mode of discourse and production that originated, the Islamists claim, in the golden age of Islamic civilization.

Precisely because Islamism is not monolithic, one may hope that its every manifestation will not repeat the experiences of revolutionary Iran and the Sudan. Certainly the Algerian case, which is linked to an inchoate process of democratization, offers the possibility that the Islamists will in this instance retrieve and even develop Islam's traditional practice of respecting the rights of non-Muslims in an Islamic society.

Islamists of various stripes do seek to establish the Shari'a as the explicit, comprehensive and exclusive legal basis for society- a goal not shared by the vast majority of Muslims. But their common commitment to the political and social implementation of Islamic law does not lead all Islamists down the same path. Like any complex legal code developed over time, the Shari'a admits of many interpretations and diverse applications, each of which is unavoidably selective. Even "progressives" have styled themselves as fundamentalists dedicated to the proper interpretation and application of the Shari'a.

Of course, the possibility of a “progressive” fundamentalism does not ensure the existence of one. If the Islamists do win in Algeria, despite the repression, they may or may not behave in accord with the best interests either of the West or the Algerian people. But there is more than one way to implement the Islamic law. The situation may allow or necessitate the kind of shrewd compromise with secular governments and economies that has characterized the “conservative fundamentalist” monarchy in Saudi Arabia - now increasingly opposed by home-grown radical Islamists such as Osama Bin Ladin, incited by the presence of Christian and especially Jewish soldiers in the Muslim holy land during the gulf crisis. Or the situation in Algeria may eventually approximate that of Egypt, in which lip service; public ceremony, co-opted senior *ulama* (men of religion), and occasional deferential rulings of secular courts serve as a panacea in lieu of the actual implementation of Islamic law. Because either of these options stands a better chance of preventing large-scale North African emigration to Europe, either seems preferable to the importation of Iranian-style theocracy, backed by Iranian-style patronage, to Algeria or to neighboring and now very nervous Tunisia and Morocco.

Egypt allows many levels and varieties of Islamic fundamentalism within its borders. However, in the 50 years since the Free Officers Revolution brought Nasser to power, the secularized military state has perfected the art of constraining and containing Islamic militancy. It has done this in the Mubarak years by a sophisticated policy combining partial appeasement, co-optation, ruthless repression, constant surveillance and infiltration of radical cells, and a crushing monopoly over the media.

In what seems to some observers like more than a last-ditch effort to retain control of civil society, and also a response to pressure from the West and from internal opponents, the ruling elites in Egypt and Algeria embarked cautiously on a perilous road of reform touted as “liberalization” or “democratization”. As the developments in Algeria suggest, that road has

many detours and dead ends. One possibility is that fundamentalists will prove adaptive enough to succeed in democratic politics.

Every major war in the Middle East has occasioned an inward turning, a time for repentance and soul-searching on the part of the vanquished.<sup>470</sup> But shared ethnicity and language could not transcend national self-interest; neither could the now exhausted utopian secular political philosophies. This is, of course, what the Islamists have been predicting all along. Naturally, they feel that prophecy is fulfilled and the moment come for the rebirth of the one indigenous glory of their homeland, Islam. For the Islamists, Islam is the only force capable of transcending ethnic, linguistic and cultural barriers to unify the disparate peoples of the worldwide Islamic community (*umma*). In Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and Kuwait, Islamists press demands with a renewed vigor and sense of purpose.

Yet the Islamists are learning that a divine mandate to rule does not make the social and economic problems to the *umma* less intractable. The mantle of political power has not seemed to fit comfortably over the mantle of the Prophet in Iran, where the Shi'ite (and Persian) militancy was and is more purely consolidated than in Sunni Islam; or in the Sudan, where a makeshift Islam is a thin and unconvincing embellishment of despotic rule. If "Islam is the solution" in Algeria, it must be prepared to tackle billions of dollars of foreign debt, a high rate of unemployment, and severe shortages of health services and housing. And it must do so while avoiding charging *riba* (interest) and dealing with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank- Western institutions that do not honor the economic prescription and proscriptions of Islamic law. To study comparatively, the 'Islamic economics' in the four nations in which Islamists have striven to implement the Shari'a- Iran, Pakistan, the Sudan and Saudi Arabia- demonstrates a wide and often inconsistent variety of practices in fulfillment of the religiously mandated

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<sup>470</sup> Sisk, T. D., *Islam and Democracy*, 1992, p. 52.

*zakat* (voluntary tax system) and the religiously proscribed charging of interest.

Should they come to power in Egypt and Northern Africa, a region with a rapidly growing population and a food shortage, the Islamists may find it impossible to resist the temptation to make accommodation with the industrialized West. For example, after the IMF recognized Egypt's achievement of the short-term reforms it had demanded, including the painful accelerated privatization of the public sector, accompanied by rising interest rates and consumer prices, the IMF signed an agreement with Egypt in May 1991 awarding Cairo millions in aid.

## **Conclusion**

It might well be that the very elasticity of Islamic fundamentalism will keep Algeria, Egypt, Jordan and other Arab nations within its orbit for some time to come. The dramatically different outcomes of the Islamisation programs in countries as ethnically and linguistically diverse as Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Sudan suggest that the history, social outlook and cultural patterns of the peoples who follow the Shari'a contribute at least as much as the law itself to the character and direction of an Islamic society. If this is so, then "the Arab problem" may eventually admit of several "Islamic solutions".

## **Palestinian Islamists**

As the first assessments of Islamic activities in the 1980s, and 1990s appear, it becomes necessary to organize and analyze information regarding the Palestinian case in order to illustrate its specificity. By the end of the 1970s, Western observers of Islam had learned, finally, to talk about "*the* Muslims" in the plural. But, some continue today to fall into the trap of speaking of "Islamic fundamentalism" or "Islamism" in the singular, as if it too were

monolithic and easily categorized. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are forced to acknowledge that “Islamic fundamentalism” must be rendered in the plural, not only between given countries, but in most cases, within the same national and regional context.

In terms of general trends there is a difference, for example, between the phenomenon of “Islamisation from above” (to use Gilles Kepel’s term) or “revolutionary Islamism”(to use Olivier Roy’s term) on the one hand, and the phenomenon of “Islamisation from below”, or “neo-fundamentalism”, on the other.<sup>471</sup> In the first configuration, the priority is to overthrow the state through violent action (e.g. the Iranian model). In this program of action Islamisation requires and is conditioned by the fall of tyrants. In the second configuration, Islamists set out to establish and organize “Islamised spaces” in society. They do so with the intent of obtaining from the state the acknowledgement of these spaces and their extension to the whole of society.

In the Palestinian case, the two Islamisms are easily identifiable. The movements of Islamic Jihad correspond to revolutionary Islamism and seek to overthrow Israeli occupation to bring about a Palestinian state. For this trend, the successful struggle for liberation constitutes the condition of a real re-Islamisation of Palestine. By contrast, the different movements of the Muslim Brotherhood type reflect the model of re-Islamisation from below. These groups have been interested in taking advantage of their quasi-immunity, a fruit of their abstention from the liberation fight, in order to pursue an authoritarian religious re-socialization within the occupied territories.

The present study identifies the ideology, the behavior, the organizational structures, and the actors of each of these waves of Palestinian political Islam by comparing them before and after the onset of the Intifada in December 1987.

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<sup>471</sup> Kepel, Gilles, *The revenge of God*, Paris: Le Seuil, 1990; and Roy, Olivier, *Failure of Political Islam*, Paris: Le Seuil, 1992.

## The Evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood

### The pre-1948 period

The first Muslim Brotherhood group formed in Palestine was established in Jerusalem in 1946<sup>472</sup> and was endorsed by the Palestinian nationalist leader, Musa al-Husseini. Later in that year other groups were established in Jaffa, Lydda, Haifa, Nablus, and Tulkarem.<sup>473</sup> The movement was welcomed by the Nationalists as an ally in the liberation struggle against the Zionist and British mandate forces. The Muslim Brotherhood participated in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war despite some initial opposition from Arab governments. Muslim Brotherhood volunteers found themselves fighting alongside the regular forces of the Arab armies. Hassan el-Banna, leader and founder of the movement, dispatched three brigades of volunteers from Egypt into Palestine to help the Palestinians in their struggle.<sup>474</sup> These forces were further strengthened by local Palestinian volunteers. The brotherhoods in Jordan and Syria also dispatched small groups of volunteers to fight in Palestine.

### The 1949-67 period

The performance of the Brotherhood-led volunteers in the 1948 war drew many Palestinian Muslims into their ranks in the aftermath of *al-nakbah* (the 'catastrophe'). Palestinians who joined the brotherhood and lived in or sought refuge in the territories of Palestine administered by Jordan and Egypt experienced quite different conditions under the two administering authorities. This was to have a quite significant impact on the development of both Arab national political organizations and the Muslim brotherhood in the two territories.

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<sup>472</sup> Cohen, Ammon, *Political Parties in the West Bank Under the Jordanian Regime, 1949-1967*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1982, p. 144.

<sup>473</sup> Ibid.

<sup>474</sup> Abu 'Amr, Zayid, *Origins of Political Movements in the Gaza Strip 1948-67*, Acre: Dar El-Aswar, 1987, pp. 63-68 (in Arabic).

The Egyptian authorities in Gaza pursued a policy towards the Muslim Brotherhood that essentially reflected the Egyptian government's attitude towards its own Muslim Brotherhood. During the first three years of Egyptian rule in Gaza (1949-52), when the brotherhood was banned outright, they operated clandestinely. Then from 1952-54, the first two years of the Egyptian revolution, the Brotherhood was to enjoy a fairly close relationship with the authorities. In the open atmosphere immediately following the revolution, their activities and membership grew substantially.

In 1954 when the movement was banned again after the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt attempted to assassinate President Gamal Abd al-Nasser, its activities in Gaza were forced underground for a second time. During the 1956 Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip subsequent to its invasion at Suez, the Muslim Brotherhood was to advocate armed struggle against the occupation. This was to bring it into direct conflict with the Communist Party, which advocated more passive forms of resistance. From 1954 onwards, the Muslim Brotherhood formed a series of clandestine groups to carry out armed actions against Israel. Members of these heavily armed groups joined FATAH years later and are currently senior PLO leaders.

Unlike their colleagues in Gaza and in other countries, the Muslim Brotherhood movement in the West bank did not use violence across the border against Israel. Its activities were confined to the teaching of the movement's principles, the distribution of the movement's literature and social activity such as scouting and sport for the movement's youth. However, despite the Movement's fairly cordial relations with the authorities, it did criticize Jordan's close links with the West and occasionally came into conflict with the authorities over such aspects of its domestic policy as the use of alcohol and the state's liberal interpretation of Islam, particularly where this involved major deviations from the *Sharia* (Islamic law). The Jordanian regime in turn kept tight control over the Movement's activities and occasionally arrested leaders when it felt they were getting out of hand.

During the first ten years of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (1967-76), Islam rarely constituted the primary principle of legitimization of the Palestinian struggle for liberation; rather, the fight was carried on almost exclusively in the name of pan-Arab or Palestinian nationalisms. The “official” Islam of the West Bank existed under the auspices of Jordan. In the Gaza Strip, the official administration of Islam proceeded under the auspices of autonomous associations, usually headed by graduates of the Egyptian al-Azhar University. In both cases, this Islamic leadership was content to restrict its activities to religious matters.

#### The 1967-87 period

Shortly after the Israeli occupation of the West bank and Gaza in 1967, armed resistance to Israeli occupation escalated significantly, reflecting the growing strength of the PLO in Jordan. However, with the expulsion of PLO forces from Jordan in 1970 and 1971, coupled with Israel’s expulsion of the West bank leadership, armed resistance began to decline. By the mid-1970s attacks from inside the occupied territories against Israel were very infrequent. Subsequently, there was a shift to a highly visible programme of political action in the occupied territories, sparked off by the participation of PLO supporters in the 1967 municipal elections of the West Bank. Throughout this phase the nationalist movement placed great emphasis on mass mobilization and on building educational and social institutions.

The Muslim Brotherhood movement in the West bank and Gaza Strip did not participate with the nationalist movement in armed resistance against Israeli occupation. During the first ten years of the occupation the Muslim Brotherhood maintained a low profile; they prudently chose not to challenge the nationalist movement, which enjoyed massive popular support. It was only after 1976 that the Brotherhood began to re-emerge as was evident in its recruitment activity and increased membership. This development was

substantially aided by the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East region as a whole, particularly after the success of the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979. Islamic fundamentalism- a response to imposed rule and political repression- then extended to both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

A survey conducted in 1984 in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip on political, social and religious change confirmed the existence of an Islamic revivalist trend in the West Bank and the Gaza strip, a trend, which increasingly manifested itself in the politicization of Islam and support for the Brotherhood and other Islamic organizations.<sup>475</sup> The variables used to measure change of religious behavior to Islamic revivalism since 1978 were: the number of prayers performed each day, reading of the Holy Qur'an, Fasting during Ramadan, and the reading of religious literature. A significance feature of the analysis was that the survey data revealed that the Islamist trend was most evident among the youth and the college-educated.

At the end of the 1970s a movement claiming to uphold the tradition of the Muslim Brotherhood, connected to its Egyptian and Jordanian branches, and financially supported by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, began to pursue the authoritarian re-Islamisation of the society. In Gaza especially, but also sporadically on the West Bank, the presence of these Muslim Brothers was felt when they conducted violent raids on "places of perdition" (bars, cinemas) and against a number of unveiled women, whom they considered a scandalous cause of public debauchery.<sup>476</sup> Despite the radical nature of their discourse on the "Jewish entity", however, the Muslim Brotherhood did not openly confront the Israeli occupying forces during the decade that preceded the Intifada.<sup>477</sup> Rather, it limited its political activities to the struggle against the Palestinian Communist party in the name of fighting atheism. Fatah, the

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<sup>475</sup> Shadid, Mohammed, Rick Seltzer, *Islamic Fundamentalism Trends in the West Bank and Gaza*, Nablus: Najah University, 1988.

<sup>476</sup> Abu 'Amr, Zayid, *Al-Haraka al Islamiyya fi 'l-Diffa al-Gharbiyya wa Qita' Ghazza* (The Islamic Movement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip), Acre: Dar al-Aswar, 1989.

<sup>477</sup> Legrain, Jean-Francois, "The Islamic Movement and the Intifada", in Jamal Nassar and Roger Heacock, eds. *Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads*, New York: Praeger, 1990, pp.175-90.

main wing of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and Jordan were happy to encourage this Islamist attack on the “Left”, and Israel too had interest in encouraging divisions among the Palestinians. Exceptions to this general pattern occurred in 1984, Shaykh Ahmad Yassin, founder of the most important network of Islamic associations in the Gaza Strip, and several of his associates were arrested and convicted for having founded an armed cell aimed at the destruction of Israel.

## Structure of the Brotherhood Movement:

### Organization

The Muslim Brotherhood movements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are independent of each other and have separate organizational structures. Although they share a similar ideological commitment to the movement as a whole, there has been no fusion of the two branches at any point during their histories. Before 1967 the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza was organized on lines somewhat parallel to those of the Brotherhood in Egypt, and both groups operated underground. The basic organizational unit was called *usra* (family) and a group of this unit formed *shuba* (branch), which is a gathering or meeting place. The highest structure of the movement, the General Administrative Center was composed of a committee, whose head was referred to as head of the center and was elected or chosen by *shura* (consultation). Since the movement was based in Gaza, the branch and the Center were for the most part nominal designations rather than actual structures performing specific functions within the movement.<sup>478</sup> Since 1967, the Muslim Brotherhood movements in both the West Bank and Gaza have been operating underground and there is little if any reliable data on their current organizational position. However, their activities and the nature of their interaction with other groups indicate that there is no single leader for

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<sup>478</sup> Abu ‘Amr, *Origins of Political Movements*, op. cit. 1987, pp. 72-73.

the movement. Muslim Brotherhood authority is decentralized into districts, with major decisions taken collectively by the local leadership. This is an advantageous mode of operation in the light of the security risks involved under occupation. This *modus operandi* does not hamper the close coordination between the various districts in major functions and activities.

The informal aspects of their organizational activities are at least as important as their formal activities. They maintain a network of close relations with important individuals in the community; these include prominent independent religious personalities, traditional leaders outside the nationalist movement and wealthy business personalities. The importance of their links lies in the fact that religious contacts help convey the impression that the Brotherhood's activities are motivated by community interests based on Islamic ethical values, and the movement's political and business contacts help them gain wider acceptability and credibility in the community. In return for support, the Brotherhood will immediately come to the defense of its network allies whenever nationalist groups for their anti-nationalist political positions and behavior criticize them. The Brotherhood coordinates closely with this network on various community issues, this leads occasionally to the formation of a list to challenge the nationalists at the elections of local institutions such as charitable societies, public committees, unions, etc.

### Recruitment and Mass Mobilization

Membership in the movement is divided into three levels. Full or active members are the highly committed cores who make the pledge to constantly promote the call (*dawa*) of the Muslim Brotherhood, to undertake jihad (holy struggle) in the name, to heed, obey and have full faith in the leadership. A second level, participating members, express their desire to join the movement and seek to show through their involvement that they are worthy of full membership (participating members consist primarily of college and

high school students). Finally, supporting members (*muazzar*) are not required to make any formal commitment or to state their intentions of joining. They are merely supporters of the movement through their activity and financial support.

The Brotherhood is keen to convey the impression that it is a strong, credible advocate of Islam and has mass support. The threat of violence is often used to secure the permission required to hold public functions on university campuses in the late morning hours when most students are on campus, thus allowing it to receive maximum exposure from a largely captive student audience. These are effective organizational tools, particularly in a society that tends to be religiously orientated. Its cultural educational and social programmes are carried out primarily for the purpose of mass mobilization.

## Funding

The activities and programmes of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in the West Bank and Gaza seem to be well financed although there is little information on its funding sources or on the amounts received.

Membership dues or donations and local fund-raising functions can generate only a limited volume of funds, and since the movement does not own or control financial or large commercial institutions in the West Bank and Gaza, it is therefore dependent on external sources of finance to generate the necessary funds for its programmes. One can reasonably ascertain that its funds are obtained from the following sources:

*The local zakat (tithes) committees:* These collect tithes and charity donations from the community and use the funds for local charity or social services. The Brotherhood maintains close relations with these committees, and brotherhood members usually serve on them. The Muslim Brotherhood receives contributions for some of its projects from this source, for

expenditure on student scholarships, etc. Furthermore, some of its projects are implemented through the *zakat* committees.

*Wealthy zakat committees in the Gulf States:* These committees, particularly in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, are favorably disposed to Islamic-oriented projects in the occupied territories. In periodic fund-raising trips to the Gulf, the Brotherhood secure from committees funding for specific projects, such as the building of a mosque.

*The Government of Saudi Arabia:* The Muslim Brotherhood movement has always maintained good relations with the Saudi monarchy, which has provided financial support for the movement in the past.<sup>479</sup> Reliable data on the extent of the present financial support to the movement in the West bank and Gaza is not available. However, the fact that the Saudi government permits it to raise funds in Saudi Arabia is an indication of its support for the movement.

Reports in the West Bank indicate that the movement also receives financial backing from the Jordanian government. Although these reports cannot be substantiated, the Jordanian government does facilitate fund-raising activities.

### **Political Strategy**

The Brotherhood's political strategy in the West Bank and Gaza is clear as far as it relates to the solution of the Palestinian question. The Brotherhood considers all of Palestine (the area occupied by Israel in 1948 and in 1967) as Islamic lands; the creation of a Jewish state in the area occupied in 1948 with 3.5 million Jewish residents does not alter this view. The Brotherhood stresses that no one has any right to negotiate away a single inch of Palestine.<sup>480</sup>

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<sup>479</sup> Ibid. p. 70

<sup>480</sup> Palestine National Council, *Al-Muntalak*, Committee of Najah National University

The idea of negotiating the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip or on parts larger than these areas is described as a betrayal of the cause; and the suggestion that the Palestinians should seek a compromise solution on the lines set out by the 1982 Arab summit conference in the form of the Fez peace plan is considered to be defeatism. While the Palestinian National Movement argues that time and objective conditions militate against the rejection of the peace plan, the Brotherhood stresses that such justifications are largely irrelevant given that Muslims succeeded in liberating Palestine after ninety-two years of occupation by the Crusaders in the twelfth century.<sup>481</sup> It proposes an Islamic solution as an alternative. This proposal is premised on the following:

Since efforts to resolve the Palestine issue have failed, the only viable alternative is to return to true Islam, which is the only effective tool in the war with Israel. The conflict is with an enemy that has utilized the weapon of a religious faith in its wars with the Palestinians; therefore the only effective response is to use Islam as a weapon in that conflict.

Islam proved to be a successful weapon during the early period of Islam and later by the Ottomans in their conquests of parts of Europe and, therefore, there is nothing to be feared if Islam is resorted to as a weapon.

If the Palestinians resort to Islam, there is sufficient evidence in the *hadith* (Prophet Muhammed's sayings) of the promise of victory.<sup>482</sup> The practical steps that should be taken to achieve the Islamic solution include:

The formation of a truly faithful and committed Muslim group within the Palestinian people; this group should have an understanding and awareness of the Palestine issue and of all the conspiracies against the Palestinian cause.

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Mosque: Nablus, January 1983, pp. 2-3 (in Arabic).

<sup>481</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>482</sup> Misha'l, Khalil, "The Islamic Solution and a Critique of the Proposed Solutions in the Palestinian Arena" in *Muslim Palestine*, Islamic Association of Palestinian Youth, n.p., n. d., pp. 56-67 (in Arabic).

This faithful group will expose the traitors, agents and proponents of nationalism and will bring about Palestinian awareness of the true nature of its battle with Zionism.

The third step would be to carry to out an educational programme where the Palestinian masses will have full faith in God, and learn the full extent of the nature of this 'religious conflict with the Jews'.<sup>483</sup>

The Brotherhood emphasizes that once the process of Islamic religious transformation in Palestine occurs and is accompanied by Islamic revivalism in the entire region, the battle for the liberation of Palestine begins, for the Palestinians alone will be unable to liberate Palestine, but they will be the spearhead in the battle.<sup>484</sup>

Undoubtedly the Muslim Brotherhood movements in the West Bank and Gaza perceive themselves as this select group of the faithful that will implement this strategy. They also justify the use of physical violence against their opponents, whether the enemy or fellow Palestinians. It can be easily observed that they identify the nationalist forces in the occupied territories as obstacles to their strategy; furthermore, their strategy does not call for confrontation or struggle against the occupation authorities and contains no transitional strategy for a prolonged occupation, given that it will take time for the movement to transform the Palestinian population into a true and fully observant Islamic society.

### **Relations with other actors**

The Israeli occupation authorities

The relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Israeli occupation authorities in the West Bank and Gaza is a pragmatic one. Each behaves

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<sup>483</sup> Ibid. p. 59.

<sup>484</sup> Ibid.

towards the other rationally and within the dictates of its own interest. The Muslim Brotherhood abhors the Israeli presence in the West Bank and Gaza as well as within the green line. They reject any contact with any Israeli elements, be it of the peace camp or otherwise. They criticize bitterly Palestinians who maintain contacts with Israeli peace groups. Their long-term strategy is to dismantle Israel as a Zionist or a Jewish state and to establish an Islamic state in all of Palestine. Their short-term strategy is to transform Palestinian society into an Islamic one and, during this process to avoid confrontation with the Israeli authority and [to] challenge the Palestinian nationalists strategy, and demonstrate its failure to Palestinian masses, by presenting themselves as the only viable alternative. The Israeli authorities are aware of this strategy and perceive positively the Brotherhood's decision not to confront them at this phase, as well as the Brotherhood's challenge to the nationalists. It can also be deduced that the Israelis will find that any success by the Brotherhood will be at the expense of the nationalists; consequently the latter will be weakened. Furthermore, directing the activities of the population to religious and spiritual matters veers them away from confrontation with the occupying power. Therefore this serves Israel's immediate interests both directly and indirectly. This explains the restraint of the authorities vis-à-vis the Muslim Brotherhood. The policy of the occupational authority towards the Brotherhood has three main characteristics. First, the authorities rarely obstruct the functions of the Muslim Brotherhood. A discriminatory policy thus exists: The Brotherhood is treated less harshly than the nationalists. Secondly, the authorities rarely restrict the movement of the Brotherhood, although tens of nationalists, particularly students, have been placed under town arrest. Finally, close surveillance of the movement is maintained, and members whom the authorities perceive as getting out of line are punished.

## Jordan

Since 1967, the relations of the Muslim Brotherhood with the Jordanian monarchy have improved considerably, compared with the previous period. There is now a convergence of interests between the two parties. The brotherhood refrains from criticizing the King and cooperates in implementing Jordanian policy and directives in the West Bank; in return Jordan facilitates their movement and affairs.

The Jordanian government's current strategy is to forge an alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood in the West Bank in order to undermine the PLO support, an objective that serves the interests of both parties. Although Jordan does not oppose occasional uprisings by the nationalists, it feels that prolonged escalation would not dislodge the occupation, and it fears that this could lead to the deterioration of economic and social conditions and consequently further migration; particularly of the young. In this sense the Brotherhood by acting to undermine PLO support, reduces the risk of prolonged escalation and its related economic risks for the Jordanians.

## Palestinians in Israel

During the last few years the Palestinian community inside the green line has witnessed an upsurge in activities and support for Islamic revival.<sup>485</sup> This development began in 1978 when the Muslim Brotherhood first began to expand its activities over the green line. This may explain the dominance of the Brotherhood in the Islamic movement in this part of the Palestinian community. However, the acceleration in the growth of the movement has been more significant in the last few years.

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<sup>485</sup> Jaffa Center for Media and Documentation, 'New Islamic movements among Palestinians in the 1948 areas', *Al-Biader al-Siyasi*, 261, 18 July 1987, pp. 29-31; and Elaine Ruth Fletcher, 'The New Moslems', *Jerusalem Post Magazine*, 16 October 1987, pp. 4-6.

The Muslim Brotherhood in the West Bank played a pivotal role in the emergence of the Islamic associations in Israel; close co-ordinations between the two groups continues, and many believe that a great deal of financial support to the Islamist associations comes from or is channelled through the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>486</sup>

### Other Islamic Groups

There are a number of other Islamic fundamentalist tendencies in the West Bank and Gaza. These include the Sufis, Salafiyyun, al—Takfir Wal-Hijra, Jamat al-Tabligh, Hizb al-Tahreer al-Islami (Islamic Liberation Party) and al-Jihad Al-Islami (Islamic Jihad). The main challenge to the Muslim Brotherhood among the other Islamic groups comes from the Islamic Liberation Party and Islamic Jihad.

The rivalry between Islamic Liberation party and the Muslim Brotherhood, dates back to the early 1950s shortly after its birth in Jerusalem. The leadership of the party decided in 1967 to freeze its activities inside the newly occupied territories. This decision, which was reversed in the late 1970s, weakened the party and caused significant loss of mass support. Its members frequently express their displeasure with the Muslim Brotherhood's activities in the West Bank and Gaza, deploring the use of violence. There are also significant ideological and strategic differences with the Muslim Brotherhood, however it grudgingly acquiesced to the Brotherhood's leadership of the Islamic student bloc on university campuses.

*Al-Jihad al-Islami* (Islamic Jihad), originally a splinter from the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in the mid-1960s, emerged in the occupied territories in 1979. It is an independent movement although some believe that it maintains links with Islamic Jihad in Egypt and the mainstream in the PLO.<sup>487</sup> It

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<sup>486</sup> Husain, Wa'el, et al, 'The Muslim Brotherhood', Nablus: Najah University, 1984, pp. 75- 6 (unpublished paper).

<sup>487</sup> Rekhess, Elie, 'The Rise of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, *Jerusalem Post*, 21 October 1987, p. 5.

believes in immediate confrontation with the Israeli occupation. Not much is known about its organizational structure. It has been involved in armed operations against Israel in the 1948 areas, the West Bank and Gaza Strip<sup>488</sup> and recently it was responsible for several armed attacks and suicide bombers against Israelis in Israel proper. It is very critical of the Arab regimes and expresses strong support for Iran.

Unlike the Muslim Brotherhood movement Islamic Jihad supports the PLO despite its reservations about the PLO's policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the Arab regimes. Many of its members believe the PLO is the most important liberation movement in the region. They also have political and ideological differences with the PLO, arguing for the need for strong PLO relations with Iran.<sup>489</sup>

The Islamic Jihad is very critical of the Muslim Brotherhood and its strategy in the occupied territories. It denounces the Brotherhood's use of force against the nationalists and stresses that dialogue is the only sound basis for a relationship between the various Palestinian groups.<sup>490</sup> As the Islamic Jihad movement grows, its bid for the leadership of the Islamist current in the occupied territories becomes more likely. Such a development would result in the radicalization of fundamentalists in the West Bank and Gaza and consequently the substantial escalation of violent confrontation with Israeli occupation.

### The Nationalist Movement

The nationalist movement in the West Bank; is led primarily by several PLO groups, Fateh being the largest faction. The PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine), DFLP (Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine), the Palestinian Communist Party, and smaller PLO factions all

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<sup>488</sup> Ibid.

<sup>489</sup> Abdel-Aziz Odeh, interview conducted by Said al-Ghazali, 11 August 1987, Gaza.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid.

play a role in the functions of the nationalist movement in the West Bank and Gaza. The nationalist movement enjoys strong mass support; a public opinion survey reported that over 90 per cent of the population fully supported the PLO.<sup>491</sup>

The Muslim Brotherhood movement in the occupied territories rejects the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It denounces the Palestine National Charter and the PLO's political programme as secular.<sup>492</sup>

The Muslim Brotherhood has attempted to challenge the nationalist dominance in almost all the institutions in the occupied territories including the unions, the charitable societies and the universities. Their success in controlling or gaining significant support has been non-existent or marginal in the vast majority of institutions, with the exception of universities. Their primary objective of these events was first to demonstrate publicly the Brotherhood's strength; second, to polarize the community into religious and non-religious camps; third, to gain sympathy and broaden its support base in depicting its actions as being in defense of Islam against anti-Islamic secular elements, and lastly and perhaps most importantly, to weaken the nationalists and undermine their mass support.

## **Conclusion**

The emergence of Islamic revivalist groups in the West Bank and Gaza receives special attention because of its potential impact in the occupied territories. The emergence and action of similar groups elsewhere in the Middle East has already exposed the vulnerabilities of the regimes in the region and challenged the interests of several major external powers.

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<sup>491</sup> Shadid and Selzer, *op. cit.* in note 475 above.

<sup>492</sup> Ibrahim al-Yazoury, interview conducted by Said al-Ghazali, 2 August 1987, Gaza..

With the rise of Islamic revivalist groups in the occupied territories during the last thirty years, the Muslim Brotherhood had emerged not only as the most dominant force among the Islamic groups but also as a power to be reckoned with on the national level. The Palestinian nationalist resistance did not welcome this development, particularly after the Brotherhood unfolded its strategy and programme for the occupied territories. Even the Israeli occupation authorities' initial apprehensions concerning the movement soon dissolved and they have been able to exploit it to their advantage.

The Muslim Brotherhood strategy is divided into two phases. The first phase would be to transform the society in the West Bank and Gaza into an Islamic society. The second would be to call for *jihad* (holy war) against Israel. During the first phase the primary contradiction is not with the forces of occupation, but with the forces of modernization and secularization that would delay or hinder the process of returning society to Islam. In essence secularization and the nationalist struggle are posited as the primary contradictions rather than the occupation. The Brotherhood's strategy has therefore evolved to eliminate these threats through the use of literature, sermons from mosque pulpits and even physical violence is justified as a tool in the conflict with the nationalists

Perhaps the strongest features of the Brotherhood is that it is well organized, has disciplined and committed members, moves in the religious environment of the community, and dispenses well-financed programmes. The movement in Gaza appears to wield more power than the one in the West Bank because of the more traditional nature of the Gazan society and through the Brotherhood's ability to control some of the Gaza's key institutions.<sup>493</sup> Gaza also suffers a more oppressive socio-economic situation and its population is generally more religious than that of the West Bank.<sup>494</sup>

The most serious threat to the increasing power of the Muslim Brotherhood is likely to come from Islamic Jihad and not from the nationalists. The

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<sup>493</sup> Rekhess, Elaine, op. cit. in note 485 above.

<sup>494</sup> Shadid and Seltzer, op. cit in note 475.

nationalists feel burdened with the situation and more divided over the issue of developing an appropriate form of response at every point of friction. Some nationalists have advocated the use of physical violence to fight the violence of the Brotherhood, but the majority insists on withdrawing and avoiding violence. So far this strategy has prevailed. Nationalists feel that the strategy of the Brotherhood is to derail their nationalist struggle, and to alienate the Islamic religious sectors in the population that sympathies or support the nationalist struggle. Their approach is to accommodate the Brotherhood and keep the conflict with the Brotherhood as a secondary contradiction.

The Muslim Brotherhood's political programme is its most vulnerable feature, particularly since it concerns a population under occupation; this is why it evades articulating publicly its political views. Its success has largely lain in its ability to be able to choose to confront the nationalists over social and religious issues. It is therefore significant that data collated from surveys conducted in 1984 and 1986 indicate that less than 10 per cent of the population would support the Brotherhood's political position.<sup>495</sup>

There are many Palestinians who are critical of the Muslim Brotherhood strategy and behavior in the occupied territories; some even label them as anti-Islamic. There are major contradictions within the Muslim Brotherhood's strategy in the West bank and Gaza Strip, as compared with the strategies adopted by the Brotherhoods outside Palestine. In Syria, Egypt and Tunisia, the Brotherhoods confront the regimes; in the occupied territories fighting the occupying authority is considered to be a secondary activity to fighting the nationalist movement. When the Muslim Brotherhood first came to Palestine it entered under the banner of *jihad* and allied itself with the nationalist forces. More than fifty years later, priorities have changed and a transitional concept of *jihad*, a sacrifice of one's self and an effort to overcome personal desires was introduced.<sup>496</sup>

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<sup>495</sup> Ibid.

<sup>496</sup> Zuhair el-Deb'I, interview, Nablus, 28 July 1987.

The implication of the Muslim Brotherhood's current strategy are very serious: it could precipitate continuous strife in the community, further wasting valuable energy, demoralizing the population and entrenching the occupation still further. The options for the nationalist movement are limited, although the nationalist movement could wage a more effective and sustained resistance against the occupation, which would *inter alia* expose the Muslim Brotherhood. Another option might be to forge an alliance with one of the smaller revivalist Islamic groups such as Islamic Jihad, which is challenging the occupation and the Muslim Brotherhood hegemony over the Islamic movement. Unless the increasing power of the Muslim Brotherhood is checked or its strategy altered, the Palestinian community would indeed be crippled in its ability to resist various occupation schemes of dispossession and uprooting.

### **The Islamic Jihad Movement**

It was only with the appearance of a second movement, rivaling the Muslim Brotherhood in the field of Islamic activism but fundamentally different in political behavior, that Islam became integral to the politics of the occupied territories. In the process, the Muslim Brotherhood itself was radically transformed. This second Islamist movement made jihad against Israel, in all its forms including armed struggle, the central individual and immediate religious duty. The Islamic Jihad appeared publicly on the political arena in 1981, when students entered elections at the Islamic University of Gaza as *mustaqillun* (independent, but partisans of the jihad), standing against candidates from both the Muslim Brotherhood and the nationalist camp. The Jihad entered the military arena when an Israeli settler was stabbed and killed at Hebron by a commando unit led by Ibrahim Sirbil. The generic name "Islamic Jihad" was applied to the various groups embracing this principle, even though each had a different structure and "guide" at the helm. The

movement was also diverse geographically, and its members and their activities ranged from the intellectual elite on the one hand to the military on the other.<sup>497</sup>

## General

The Islamic Jihad movement emerged as an ideological stream within Sunni Islam, primarily from within the Muslim Brotherhood, as a reaction to the weakening of the latter's militant fervor. It continues to espouse militancy and violence as the major tool in the struggle to establish an 'Islamic alternative'. This struggle is directed not only against non-Muslims but also primarily against the Arab regimes which have deviated from Islam and which persecuted the Muslim Brotherhood.

Groups belong to the Islamic Jihad have appeared in almost all the Arab states and in some parts of non-Arab Islamic world under various names. They were influenced by the success of the revolution in Iran, and even more so by the growth of Islamic militancy in Lebanon and in Egypt.

## Background

The Palestinian factions of the Islamic Jihad are the Palestinian counter-part of the Islamic Jihad movements, which appeared in the Sunni part of the Arab world in the 1970s. These movements, which were an outgrowth of the fundamentalism of the Muslim Brotherhood, were characterized by their rejection of the Brotherhood's 'truce' with most of the existing regimes in the Arab world. Thus, the major difference between them and the Muslim Brotherhood was and remains their advocacy of violence as the major tool in changing the face of societies and regimes.

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<sup>497</sup> Legrain, Jean-Francois, 'The Islamist Palestinians tested by the Uprising', *Maghreb – Machrek*, no. 121, July 1988, pp. 5-42.

Unlike the Islamic Jihad movements in Arab countries, the Palestinian factions of the Islamic Jihad view the 'Zionist Jewish entity' embodied in the State of Israel as the foremost enemy and the first target for destruction. This is because of the special situation prevailing in 'Palestine', which they view as an integral and fundamental part of the Arab and Muslim world, where Muslims are 'subjected' to foreign rule. Since the regime is foreign and non-Muslim, the methods of resistance to be used are different from those adopted by similar groups operating against Muslim and Arab regimes. The ideology of the Palestinian Jihad factions calls for armed struggle against Israel through guerrilla groups composed of the revolutionary vanguard, which carry out terrorist attacks aimed at weakening Israel and 'its desire to continue its occupation'. They are thus to lay the groundwork for the day when a great Islamic army will be able to destroy Israel in a military confrontation.

#### The Shekaki Faction

The Shekaki faction of the Islamic Jihad movement has emerged in recent years, particularly since the signing of the Declaration of Principles (DOP) between Israel and the PLO, as the dominant faction within this movement, both in terrorist attacks and in the public-political sphere. The faction is headed by Dr. Fathi Shekaki, who has succeeded in pushing aside the co-founder of the organization, Abed el-Azia Ouda, considered its spiritual leader (the faction was originally called 'Shekaki/Ouda').

The founders of this faction, which operates primarily in the Gaza district, were influenced by the emergence of similar political groups in Egyptian universities, where some of its leaders studied in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Upon their return to Gaza they founded similar groups whose aim was to promote the idea of armed struggle against Israel.

With the deportation of its two leaders from Gaza to Lebanon in 1988, the faction underwent reorganization, resulting in the establishment of a military unit to carry out attacks against Israeli targets, alongside the existing political

unit (Sheikh Abdulla al-Shami is today considered the senior operative in the Gaza Strip). The movement's ideology is disseminated openly through the distribution of propaganda material and tapes, with the mosques serving as an influential tool. In addition, a newspaper called 'Al-Istaqlal' edited by Ala Siftawi, which conforms to the political views of the Islamic Jihad, has begun to appear in the area under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian authority.

Dr. Shekaki, who resides in Damascus, enjoys freedom of expression. His organization is one of the ten Palestinian opposition factions based in Syria. Shekaki boasts of his close ties with Iran, which according to him were strengthened following his first visit to Tehran in December 1988 (his next visit to Iran was apparently in October 1993 following the signing of the D.O.P.), and with its Lebanese extension, the Hizbullah. He recently cited his ideological-political ties with Iran "our ties with the Islamic Republic, and its political and spiritual support of the Palestinian people's efforts to continue the jihad and to achieve independence". According to him, the organization does not receive Iranian military aid and does not have a base in Iran, but notes that Iranian support for his organization and HAMAS amounts to 20 million dollars.<sup>498</sup>

The Shekaki faction opposes the agreement between the Palestinians and Israel and has intensified the tone of its anti-Israeli statements, especially after the murder of Islamic Jihad activist Hani Abed in Gaza on 2 November 1994. Shekaki said: "The continuation of the jihad against the Zionist occupation is our primary concern and the center of our lives";<sup>499</sup> and: "We shall raise arms against the criminal Israelis wherever they may be in the autonomous territory and outside it. We have a new reason which justifies the continuation of our struggle".<sup>500</sup> In another statement, he announced the establishment of a group of 70 people prepared to commit suicide 'in order to carry out attacks against the occupation forces in the self-governing areas. Such attacks in the Gaza

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<sup>498</sup> *Al-Hayat*, 17 December 1994; *Al-Wassat*, 12 December 1994.

<sup>499</sup> *Radio Nur*, Lebanon, 12 November 1994.

<sup>500</sup> *Iranian TV*, 3 November 1994.

Strip will cease only when the Israeli settlements in the area will be disbanded... If this will occur, the suicide attacks will be transferred to other areas, because our fight against the occupation will continue'.<sup>501</sup>

The Palestinian Jihad movement located its ideological roots in the Egyptian Jihad Organization, whose members had assassinated Egyptian president Anwar Sadat; in Sayyid Qutb, the Muslim Brotherhood intellectual who was executed by the Egyptian regime in 1966; and, although the Palestinian Jihad is Sunni and resolutely Palestinian, in 'Ali Shari'ati and the Islamic Revolution of Iran. The annihilation of Israel is, for Jihad, an obligatory condition of a profound and successful Islamisation of society. Anti-Israeli radicalism is the theme of its discourse: The liberation of Palestine is fundamentally a religious question which concerns the entire Islamic community; the protection of Islam from the West's repeated attacks is the main challenge of this century; and finally, since Israel constitutes the spearhead of this aggression, it is imperative to annihilate the Western menace by destroying the "Jewish entity".

Jihad developed in reaction to what they saw as the inefficient missionary efforts undertaken by the Muslim Brothers. Averting the attention of the believer from political and militant action and the priority of liberating Palestine, the Muslim Brothers' main programme was judged ultimately damaging to Islam itself.

Unlike the Muslim Brothers, Jihad is not a mass movement but a nebulous circle of small groups organized loosely around and by "guides" and united by a common ideology. At Gaza, it arose primarily as a result of the activity of two men: Dr. Fathi Shaqai, a physician in Rafah, who became the organizational leader, and Abd al-Aziz Uda, a lecturer at the Islamic University, who became the spiritual guide. Both were in touch with Jihad

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<sup>501</sup> *Associated Press*, (AP), 18 November 1994.

study circles in Egypt and both supported the Islamic revolution in Iran.<sup>502</sup> On the West Bank Jihad cells were organized by Ibrahim Sirbil, under the religious auspices of Shaykh As'ad Bayyud al-Tamim (a resident of Amman); these cells were regrouped in the surroundings of Jerusalem and the region of Hebron.<sup>503</sup>

Palestinian Jihad activists were recruited from the ranks of the Muslim brotherhood, from the religious wing of Fatah, as well as from the defunct National Liberation Forces, dismantled at the beginning of the 1970s. Many of these erstwhile NLF members rediscovered Islam while in jail. They were released in May 1985 as part of a prisoner exchange between Israel and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine under the General Command of Ahmed Jibril. As with the Muslim Brotherhood, the candidates of Jihad were almost exclusively men, with an over-representation of non-refugees. The Jihad candidates, then, accentuated the tendencies already observed in the Muslim Brotherhood.

The activism of the Jihad was an important stimulant to the Intifada, which occurred following the clashes of early October 1987 in Gaza between Jihad commandos and Israeli army forces. Some days before, a Jihad activist had stabbed the chief of Israeli military police in the Gaza Strip. A series of Israeli counter-measures, including banning Shaykh Uda from Palestine, built such sympathy in the Palestinian population for the Jihad cause that it only required a relatively trivial incident- a collision between an Israeli truck and two Palestinian taxis carrying workers from Tel Aviv to Gaza- to lead finally

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<sup>502</sup> See the introduction to *Min Manshurat Harakat al-Jihad al-Islami fi Filastin, Masirat al-Jihad al-Islami fi Filastin* (Conduct of Islamic Jihad in Palestine as seen by the communiqués of the Movement of Islamic Jihad in Palestine), Beirut, 1989; *Al-Mujahid*, published at Beirut, since the beginning of 1990. Some of the leaflets in this collection had been already published in *Islam wa Filastin* (Islam and Palestine), a periodical of the Jihad Movement; edited in France and published in the United States.

<sup>503</sup> Al-Tamimi, Shaykh As'ad, *Zawal Israel, hatmiyya Qur'aniyya* (The Disappearance of Israel, Quranic ineluctability), Amman, 1990; Ibrahim Sirbil, *Harakat al-Jihad al-Islami wal-intifada* (The Movement of Islamic Jihad & the Uprising), Amman: Dar al-Nisr, 1990.

to the radical questioning of the three-decades old occupation, a process that ignited the fateful popular Palestinian resistance known as the Intifada.

### The Intifada

Virtually spontaneous when it began, the Intifada quickly organized itself through local and regional committees. In the case of PLO partisans, these committees reported to the United National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU). In the case of the Muslim Brotherhood, the committees reported to the Movement of Islamic Resistance, commonly known by its Arabic name and acronym HAMAS. The different movements of Islamic Jihad remained outside of these command structures.<sup>504</sup>

Established at the beginning of January 1988 by bringing together the four largest nationalist organizations (the Fatah of Yassir Arafat, the PFLP of George Habache, the DFLP of Nayef Hawatmeh, and the Palestinian Communist Party), the UNLU immediately took charge of decisions concerning the appropriateness and timing of general strikes, demonstrations, and other forms of civil disobedience. This was done by the regular publication of numbered communiqués.<sup>505</sup> Its political programme reaffirmed the principle that the PLO is the sole representative of the Palestinian people and demanded an international conference under United Nations auspices for creation of an independent state.

Islamic Jihad then became the first organized victim of massive Israeli repression. Virtually destroyed two or three months after the start of the uprising in early 1988, it re-emerged at the end of 1988 in the form of periodic communiqués, symbolic monthly strikes, and the organization of a

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<sup>504</sup> Schiff, Zeev, Ehud Yaari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising-Israel's Third Front*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990.

<sup>505</sup> These communiqués have been published in English, in their PFLP version, in *No Voice Is Louder Than Voice of the Uprising*, Iqbal Publishing, 1989. Also see Jean-Francois Legrain, 'The Voices of the Palestinian Uprising: Scientific edition of the Communiqués of the United National Leadership and of the Movement of Islamic Resistance', trans. in collaboration with Pierre Chenard, Cairo: CEDEJ, 1991.

number of commando operations launched from outside the West Bank and Gaza. It also claimed responsibility for numerous knife attacks against Israelis.

Having incited the uprising in the first place, the relatively small and fragile Jihad organization quickly found itself overwhelmed by the massive involvement of the entire population. The population included non-organized elements as well as forces structured in the different organizations of the PLO or engaged in the Muslim Brotherhood, which also decided to become involved in the Intifada after much hesitation.

The uprising challenged the Muslim Brotherhood by injecting a new dynamism in Palestinian society in the daily fight against the occupation. As a movement they responded in several stages, all the while maintaining a remarkable continuity of ideology.<sup>506</sup>

The first period stretches from December 1987 to February 1988, during which time the Muslim Brothers, as an organization, maintained their customary avoidance of direct engagement in the fight against Israel. Although Shaykh Yassin of the Muslim Brothers was the primary founder of HAMAS, the movement published its three first communiqués (between 16 December 1987 and 11 February 1988) without mentioning its organizational links with the Muslim Brotherhood. These leaflets just called for reinforcement of the mobilization against the occupation and for the largest possible popular participation in the uprising. This delay in mentioning the Brotherhood was likely a calculated choice by the cautious Yassin. Eager to direct the unfolding of the events of the Intifada, he was nonetheless unsure that the uprising would last and take root in the deepest strata of the Palestinian population. Thus at first he refused to reveal the structure and resources of the Brotherhood for fear of exposing it for Israeli repression. Yassin's delay may also have been influenced by internal tensions in the

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<sup>506</sup> Kepel, Gilles, Yann Richard, eds., *Intellectuals et militants de l'islam Contemporain* (Intellectuals and Militants of Contemporary Islam), Paris: Le Seuil, 1990.

Muslim Brotherhood between the partisans of a rapid and active engagement and the “old guard” defenders of traditional quietism.

### **HAMAS: The Islamic Resistance Movement**

The publication of the fourth communiqué, on 11 February 1988, inaugurated a new stage with the public adoption of the Movement of Islamic Resistance by the Muslim brothers as the “strong arm” of their association. The initial HMS (Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya) also appeared at the time, transformed in the next leaflet into the acronym HAMAS (“zeal”), and was thereafter used to designate the group. From the moment the connection with the Muslim Brotherhood was officially acknowledged, HAMAS functioned as a solidly structured organization. In the years since then, HAMAS has utilized and coordinated the very networks that were independently established several years earlier by Muslim Brotherhood.

#### General Background and History

The HAMAS (in Arabic, an acronym for “Harakat Al-Muqawama Al-Islamia”- Islamic Resistance Movement- and a word meaning courage and bravery) is a radical Islamic fundamentalist organization, which became active in the early stages of the Intifada, operating primarily in the Gaza Strip but also in the West Bank. The HAMAS has played a major role in violent fundamentalist subversion and radical terrorist operations against both Israel and Arabs, and deploys its own “shock troops” (“Al-Suad Al-Ramaya”- the “throwing arm”) for these purposes. The HAMAS makes frequent use of radical Islamic motifs, both in order to broaden its ranks and as a weapon against those whom it defines as its enemies. In its initial period, the movement was headed by people; primarily, identified with the Muslim Brotherhood in the territories.

In the period prior to the Intifada, the religious-social “Al-Majama Al-Islami” association in the Gaza Strip was an important source for the recruitment of radical Islamic elements for the covert terrorist activity of the HAMAS. Many senior members of “Al-Majama” emerged with the outbreak of the Intifada as central figures in the HAMAS leadership. They used the existing infrastructure of the association as a basis for semi-covert activity, including the preaching of inflammatory sermons in mosques and the distribution of religious and political leaflets. The HAMAS movement also goes by several other names, which are used primarily to denote the semi-covert activity carried out by its supporters in the territories. Most of these names include the word “Islam”, for example: the Islamic Stream (“Al-Tiar Al-Islami”), or the Islamic Trend (“Al-Athja Al-Islami”).

In the course of Intifada HAMAS gained momentum, expanding its activity also in the West Bank to become the dominant Islamic Fundamentalist organization in the territories. It defined its highest priority as actual jihad (holy war) for the liberation of Palestine and the establishment of an Islamic Palestine “from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River”. By its participation in street violence and murder, it boosted its appeal in the eyes of the Palestinians, further enhancing its growth potential and enabling it to play a central role in the Intifada. As a result of its subversive and terrorist activity, HAMAS was outlawed in September 1989.

Today, HAMAS is the second most powerful group in the territories, after FATAH. Its influence is felt in all aspects of daily life, and it serves as a lodestone for extremist elements. It is currently the strongest opposition group to the peace process, and is sometimes viewed as threatening the hegemony of the secular nationalists.

In the course of the past years, HAMAS has become the leading perpetrator of terrorist activity, second only to FATAH. HAMAS engages in terrorist

activity throughout the territories as well as the Green Line. It also engages in violent clashes with Palestinian rivals, such as the confrontation with FATAH members in the Gaza Strip in July 1992. Throughout the Intifada, there have been many such encounters, in which HAMAS rallied hundreds of people into the streets, some of them armed with guns.

### Ideology and Goals

The basic ideology of HAMAS is founded primarily on the mainstream of the Muslim Brotherhood. In the Islamic Covenant published by HAMAS in August 1988, it defined itself as the “Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood”.

However, there is a clear distinction in the order of priorities set forth by HAMAS, as opposed to those of the Muslim Brotherhood in the territories prior to the Intifada, particularly as regards the question of Jihad. The Muslim Brotherhood in the territories viewed Jihad as a general duty and principle. It maintained that Islam would be established first throughout the Muslim world, only later to be followed by violent Jihad against Israel, in which Palestine, too, would be liberated. HAMAS, on the other hand, stresses Jihad as the sole and immediate means to solve the problem of Palestine.

HAMAS defines the transition to the stage of Jihad “for the liberation of all Palestine” as a personal religious duty incumbent upon every Muslim. At the same time, it utterly rejects any political arrangement that would entail the relinquishment of any part of Palestine, which for it is tantamount to a surrender of part of Islam. These positions are reflected in the HAMAS Covenant, which was written in the territories, and of course in its activities.

The central goal of HAMAS is the establishment of an Islamic state in all of Palestine, and ultimately an all-out Jihad, with the participation of not only Palestinian Muslims but also, the entire Islamic world. What then, is the ideal Islamic state?

## Qur'anic View of an Ideal State

The Quranic view of an ideal state cannot easily be fitted among numerous political theories of Western political philosophers. The Qur'an recognizes a commonwealth of believers bound together by ties of a common creed, and traditions and voluntary obedience to the common law of Islam on a universal scale.

There is no deification of state in Islam in the garb of 'general will' as viewed by Hegel, or a "totalitarian model of Karl Marx or Stalin's thinking. Though akin to democracy in themes such as consultation, representation, and regard for the popular will, the Qur'an proclaims in unmistakable terms the sovereignty of Allah, and not of men. Most of the so-called modern theories of constitutional government, such as government as a form of trust, the rule of law, and equality before law, have formed part of the political philosophy of Islam since the time of the Holy Prophet PBUH (Peace Be Upon Him).

The Qur'an visualizes a universe of which God alone is the sole Master and Ruler.<sup>507</sup> Being the Creator and the Supreme Ruler of the universe, His Law and authority alone can be most just and righteous. In fact, righteousness is the key to the vicegerency of God on earth, as distinct from kingship, oligarchy, or theocracy. The Qur'an promises political domination to those who believe, and do good works.<sup>508</sup> It contains law potentially, though many rules of political nature are actually and explicitly in it.

As the Qur'an visualizes a political order for all times, there can be no restriction on the form of government as observed by Islamists. A state in Islam is an endeavour to translate the principles of equality, solidarity and freedom in a definite human organization. The modern concept of state as a territorially organized power is wholly alien to Islam.

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<sup>507</sup> *The Holy Qur'an* 7:54; 20:8; 30:26.

<sup>508</sup> *The Holy Qur'an* 24:55.

Five hundred years of monarchy and a century of communism have left democracy as an irresistible choice to the modern world, but even to an optimist, Islamists would say, it has to yet to win credibility as a self-cleansing and self-rectifying political process. It is not a harp within a million strings, nor its notes are rule, and others have dubbed it as a cult of incompetence. Even totalitarian states, and Communist Russia, had claimed to be democratic in their own way.

Even the citadel of democracy and liberty in the West is apparently engaged in what Nietzsche had observed cynically “murdering mankind with good conscience” by its commitment to the production of the deadliest weapons of mass destruction. Bertrand Russell had said, “It is difficult today to persuade mankind to acquiesce in its own survival”.<sup>509</sup>

As a religion of peace, sanity and tolerance, Islam cannot be an aggressive ideology. The holy Prophet (PBUH) had viewed the world as a mosque, signifying its sacredness. The Qur’an views the whole mankind as one “Ummat-el-wahida”.<sup>510</sup>

Instead of the warring nations and tribes of today, the Qur’an uses the term “Ummat”<sup>511</sup>, which in its literal sense is the Community of Believers. It is moreover the middle nation (Ummat-el-Wusta), which avoids the extremes in its spiritual and worldly convictions and beliefs.

The reason why some Western orientalist have dubbed Islam as a political religion is because it makes no distinction between the spiritual and the mundane, which are merely “two sides of the same coin” as Professor Cantwell Smith has rightly observed. On the other hand, the world of Islam had faced half a dozen Crusades from the champions of the Cross, between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century. Mohammad Asad, the Jewish-born Muslim and author of *Islam at the Cross-roads*,<sup>512</sup> says that with their crusading zeal, the

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<sup>509</sup> Hussain, S. Muzaffar, ‘Qur’anic View of Ideal State’, *Times of Oman*, May 2, 1994.

<sup>510</sup> *The Holy Qur’an* 2:213; 5:48.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid.* 2:143

<sup>512</sup> Asad, Muhammad, *Islam at the Crossroads*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Lahore: Arafat Publications, 1963..

champions of the Cross acting as a judge, jury, and executioners had sought to condemn Islam. Even in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, the same drama is being re-enacted in the Middle East with the active support of Christian superpowers.

The Qur’anic term ‘Jihad’, so grievously distorted in the West and termed as religious militancy and fundamentalism, is in fact a religious obligation in the social solidarity of Islam. According the Qur’an, tumult and oppression is worse than slaughter. It is to suppress “Fasad” or disorder, and to put down mischief, rebellion, and transgression that Jihad is allowed.<sup>513</sup> Despite the peaceful intentions of Islam, it can’t however tolerate its faith being held in contempt, or abused.

Collectivity and dynamism are the two cardinal features of the dialectic of Islam’s evolution and extension as observed by Shah Wali Ullah, the 18<sup>th</sup> century political and spiritual reformer of the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent. Islam’s collectivity, a by-product of “Tawheed”, is sustained by its cosmopolitan outlook, as well as by the principle of fraternity and egalitarianism cementing the world-wide ‘Ummah’ which is enshrined in what Iqbal calls the “Principles of Movement”- to adapt, change, to synthesize and to progress.

Islamists would say Islam did not die in 1258 AD, when Halaku destroyed Baghdad. It was in fact in the dark period of decline that Islam’s masterpieces such as Ibn-Khaldun’s ‘Muqadamah’, Ghazzalis’ ‘Ihaya’, and Rumi’s ‘Masnavi’ had been written. The world saw the rise of the Seljuqs, the Ottomans, the Safvids, and the Mughuls after Halaku had extinguished the Abbasides.<sup>514</sup>

Professor Cantwell Smith in his analysis of Islamic history has observed: “strictly speaking there is no such thing as Christian history,” he says. “Certainly there is no Hindu history. There is a history of Hindus, and of Christianity, and then there is even the history of the Christian church. History can’t be redeemed according to Christian faith. Even for an optimist, a

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<sup>513</sup> *The Holy Qur’an* 37:2; 38:3; 2:191, 193.

<sup>514</sup> *Times of Oman*, op. cit. in note 509.

Christian history has not yet begun". He goes on to say that in the case of Islam, which constantly strives to make the transcendental actual, even *ashaheed* or martyr is capable of shaping history after his death.

The never-ending refrain of Western political thought of separating the spiritual from the temporal as a guarantee for political peace and stability has exhausted itself in the modern age. Hence the short history of secularism in the West's political and social system. On the other hand, Islam never saw any conflict between state and Church. Similarly there has been no conflict between science and state as markedly true in the case of Christianity. In fact according to Professor Briffault "Science owes a great deal more to Islamic culture: It owes its very existence".<sup>515</sup> Islam can be rightly proud of its claim to have heralded the advent of science and Renaissance in Europe. With such achievements, it cannot be regarded as a narrow, intolerant or a static, unprogressive faith.

Though mankind is not enslaved by race, colour the course of rivers, or the direction of mountain ranges, the West is never tired of eulogizing the nation state and "nationality" almost as spiritual principle (as Renan said in the 19<sup>th</sup> century). It was Machiavelli (1469-1527), the archpriest of political deception (whom Iqbal calls the "worshipper of falsehood"), who in his Prince had originally founded the deity of nation state. Ever since then, the West has unceasingly worshipped this deity and in this process engulfed mankind in endless nationalist wars, which continue to this day.

According to the Qur'an the world is more an abode of peace than a theatre of wars of aggrandizement. The Western failure in political and social spheres is mankind. The United Nations, supposed to be the biggest step to bring about international harmony in the 20th century and held up as a "beacon of hope" for mankind has become "a shield for the strong, and a mockery for the

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<sup>515</sup> Ibid.

poor”,<sup>516</sup> suffering as it does from the political malaise, which it has failed to remedy so far though committed by its charter which it proclaimed more than half a century ago.

The two cardinal purposes of political activity, according to the Qur’an, are attainment of justice and equity on a universal basis,<sup>517</sup> and the promotion of good and eradication of evil.<sup>518</sup> Both these things are sadly lacking today in national and international politics.

In the words of Mohammad Iqbal, humanity needs to avoid destruction: it needs spiritual interpretation of the universe, spiritual emancipation of the individual, and basic principles of universal import to direct the evolution of society on spiritual basis.<sup>519</sup> In other words what the world needs today is an ethical and moral basis of politics, for which Islam provides the spiritual support of the Qur’an. But this is also the very thing, which Western political thought has been trying to divorce, segregating ethics from politics.

Though the Qur’an does not rule out the use of power, it should be used to advance the boundaries of righteousness rather than the domain of “nations”. It abolishes for ever: political, social and economic slavery in any shape or form, intolerance, racism, and national bigotry as in material greed for land, and the parochial will to dominate over others. These evils are symptoms of political bankruptcy and moral blindness. They show that the lust for naked and brute power is on the increase despite their affluence. Bosnia, Chechnya, Kashmir, and Palestine are, Islamist say, examples today to illustrate why the political thinking, and diplomacy of the West has apparently failed to bring about peace.

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<sup>516</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>517</sup> *The Qur’an* 42:15; 55:8.

<sup>518</sup> *The Qur’an* 59:25; 22:41.

<sup>519</sup> Iqbal, Muhammad, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, Ashraf, 1960, p. 179.

## Structure

The structure of HAMAS in Gaza and the West Bank is based on a combination of regional and functional organization. In this framework, several identical, parallel frameworks operate in each region:

- a. Infrastructure (“Dawa”, literally “sermonizing”), which engages in recruitment, distribution of funds, and appointments.
- b. Popular violence in the framework of the Intifada.
- c. Security (“Aman”)- the gathering of information on suspected collaborators with the authorities. This information is passed on to the “shock committee”, who interrogates and then kills the suspects.
- d. Publication (“A-‘Alam”)- leaflets, propaganda, press offices.

HAMAS tries to maintain a clear distinction between the covert activity of its various sections and its overt activity, which serves primarily to broaden the ranks of the movement. The major reason for this is HAMAS’ desire to increase departmentalization and secrecy, by not identifying itself directly with its public activity. The term generally used by HAMAS to define its overt activity is ‘Dawa’- meaning literally, ‘sermonizing’. This term is also the name given to the HAMAS section whose function is to broaden the movement’s infrastructure, to distribute funds and make appointments. In fact, there is a large degree of overlapping between the two.

Mahmud Rumhi, a senior HAMAS operative from Ramallah who was arrested and questioned by Israel in 1993, defined the Dawa as an apparatus separate from HAMAS. Its function is to create an organizational basis in the mosques and other institutions. According to him, it is a multifaceted organization, which maintains direct contact with Ibrahim Usha in Jordan, a spokesman of HAMAS. He also said that there is no direct link between HAMAS and the charity associations. Here it should be noted that, alongside

his senior position in HAMAS, Rumhi, a doctor by profession, also manages the medical center of the charity association in Ramallah and serves as a representative of the London-based Aid Fund for Lebanon and Palestine, which transfers funds to charity associations in the territories affiliated to HAMAS.<sup>520</sup>

The internal HAMAS publication explains the three spheres of Islamic activity, while encouraging greater activity in two: Jihad and public activity. Specifically, it enjoins its followers to become members of existing trade unions and philanthropic associations and to found new ones in order to serve the goals of the movement.

Thus, HAMAS is an organization composed of several interdependent levels. The popular-social base is maintained materially by the charity committees and ideologically through instruction, propaganda and incitement delivered in the mosques and other institutions, and through leaflets. This base is the source for the recruitment of members into the units, which engage in riots and popular violence. Those who distinguish themselves in these units sooner or later find their way into the military apparatus, which carries out brutal and violent attacks against Israeli and Palestinians alike. The latter (and their families and relatives, if they are arrested or killed) enjoy the moral and economic backing of the preachers in the mosques, the directors of HAMAS-affiliated institutions, and the charity committees.

### Intifada Activity

HAMAS began to operate in the territories at the beginning of the Intifada, at first primarily in the Gaza Strip and later increasingly also in the West Bank. It claims credit for the outbreak of the Intifada and played a major part in its escalation. The organization of HAMAS and its rapid integration into

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<sup>520</sup> [ask@israel-info.gov.il](mailto:ask@israel-info.gov.il) IDF Spokesman 'HAMAS: The Islamic Resistance Movement, January 1993.

subversive Intifada activity was facilitated by the role played by central figures of the “Al-Majama Al-Islami” and by its broad and well-organized base of supporters.

HAMAS activity in the course of the Intifada can be characterized mainly as follows:

The concentration of a major part of its activity around the mosques, as spiritual centers, which enjoyed relative immunity from the Israeli authorities, these served as convenient locations. Moreover, many HAMAS operatives serve as religious functionaries in the mosques. HAMAS uses the mosques as recruitment centers to broaden its ranks, a focus for extremist incitement, disturbances and demonstrations, a center for the distribution of leaflets, and as a venue for organizing terrorist attacks.

The publication and distribution of leaflets, which serve as a tool for incitement to riot, defining strategy, and instructing the general public as well as setting days for memorials and general strikes. The HAMAS leaflets are radical in content and virulent in their wording. Most include verses from the Quran and play on extremist Islamic religious feeling. The major themes are:

1. Preaching Jihad as a means to establish an Islamic state in all of Palestine, while rejecting the right State of Israel (“Zionist entity”) to exist.
2. A call to continue and escalate the violent struggle. The use of “shock troops” (“Al-Suad Al-Ramaya”- the “throwing arm”) for the violent enforcement of HAMAS directives, such as the boycott of Israeli goods, preventing workers from the territories in going to work in Israel, and enforcing strikes.

During the period prior to the Intifada, HAMAS members (in its earlier form of the “Al-Majama Al-Islami”) operated primarily against local Palestinians, such as moral offenders and criminal elements, in order to purge Muslim

society and to prepare it for Jihad against Israel. After the outbreak of the Intifada, the same people and new recruits began to assassinate Palestinians. In the course of the Intifada, HAMAS operatives had admitted numerous such attacks in which Palestinians were killed. On the basis of Israeli intelligence information, many more murders of Palestinians can be attributed to HAMAS members.<sup>(87)</sup><sup>521</sup>

In the course of the Intifada, HAMAS operatives also began to carry out terrorist attacks against Israeli targets, escalating in nature. At first they resorted primarily to explosive charges and other 'popular' means (firebombs, arson and property damage). In the course of 1989, they kidnapped and murdered two soldiers (Avi Sasportas and Ilan Sa'adon). In December 1990, three Israelis employed in a Jaffa factory were murdered. In 1992, HAMAS operatives displayed even greater daring, especially members of the Iz Al-Din Al-Kassam squad, who fired on security personnel at short range and stabbed two Jews to death in a packing plant in the Gaza Strip. These HAMAS 'successes' naturally encouraged members of other organizations to try and emulate and even surpass them.<sup>522</sup>

During the past two years, the number of attacks carried out by HAMAS members has risen dramatically, making it the second most important terrorist organization, after FATAH, and the leading organization in the murder of Israelis by gunfire. From the beginning of the Intifada (December 1987) to this day, hundreds of Israelis, and Jewish tourists were killed in HAMAS attacks. During this period, they also assassinated hundreds of Palestinian residents of the territories.

### Leadership

Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, head of HAMAS until his arrest in 1989, was responsible for most of the movement's activities: the writing of leaflets,

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<sup>521</sup> Ibid.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid.

financial affairs, liaison with radical Islamic elements abroad, and supervision of violent and terrorist activity. Under him, a broad organizational network was set up, comprising various functions and local leaders, which directed the political and intifada-related work of the movement: distributing leaflets, organizing riots, enforcing strikes etc.

Following the arrest of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and other leading operatives from the Gaza Strip, the centralized HAMAS leadership in the territories was weakened. It was replaced by a backbone of senior leaders/operatives identified with the movement who direct its activity in the different regions. They focused primarily on politics, propaganda, infrastructure, and inter-organizational liaison, while competing with Palestinian nationalists for election to positions of power in various bodies (such as trade unions). Among the leading figures are Mahmoud Alzhar, Abdel Aziz Rantisi and Hamed Bitawi. Prominent religious leaders identified with HAMAS have recently formed the Association of Religious Sages of Palestine (“Rabthah ‘Alma Falestin”), which is to serve as a kind of supreme religious framework and to accord the movement ‘legitimacy’ through religious rulings that conform to the movement’s ideology.

HAMAS leaders residing abroad- in Arab countries (primarily Jordan) and in the West (the U.S., Britain, and others)- have also recently gained prominence. In this context, we should also note the movement’s growing ties with Iran.

The leaflets written and prepared by the HAMAS leadership as well as the sermons preached by its operatives in the mosques have played an important role in the attacks. Thus, periodical HAMAS leaflets calling for a “revolution of knives” have been found on the persons of HAMAS members who stabbed Israelis. Recent HAMAS leaflets call for the use of guns against both security personnel and civilians.

The monthly HAMAS leaflets serve as a major tool for clarifying its positions, handing down directives, and incitement- including riots and

attacks against Jews- with the ultimate goal being the destruction of Israel through holy war. The leaflets of the movement make extensive use of Islamic motifs, interlaced with virulent accusations against the Jews, “the offspring of apes and pigs”.<sup>523</sup> Almost all of them end with a call for “Jihad until victory, or martyrdom for the sake of Allah”. There has recently been increasing cooperation by the movement with other organizations opposed to the peace process, and they have published joint leaflets against the peace process.

### Anti-Semitic

Consistent with Hannah Arendt’s observation about totalitarian movements necessarily being anti-Semitic, Islamist Muslims bristle with hostility toward Jews. They accept virtually every Christian myth about Jews seeking control of the world, and then add their own twist about Jews destroying Islam. The HAMAS charter sees Jews as the ultimate enemy:

[They] have used their wealth to gain control of the world media, news agencies, press and broadcasting stations, etcetera.... They were behind the French revolution and the Communist revolution.... They instigated World War I.... They caused World War II.... It was they who gave the instructions to establish the United Nations and the Security Council to replace the League of Nations, in order to rule over the world through them.<sup>524</sup>

Islamists discuss Jews with the most violent and crude metaphors. Khalil Kuka, a founder of HAMAS, says that, “God brought the Jews together in Palestine not to benefit from a homeland but to dig their grave there and save the world from their pollution”.<sup>525</sup> Tehran’s ambassador once said: that “the

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<sup>523</sup> Ibid.

<sup>524</sup> Article 22, quoted in *Contemporary Mideast Background*, October 1988, pp. 8-9.

<sup>525</sup> Quoted in Ze’ev Schiff and Ehud Ya’ar, *Intifada: The Inside Story of the Palestinian Uprising that Changed the Middle East Equation*, trans. By Ina Friedman, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989, p. 235.

Zionists are like the germs of cholera that will affect every person in contact with them”.<sup>526</sup> Such venom is common coin in Islamist discourse.

Nor is violence confined to words. Especially since the September 1993 White House signing of the Israeli-PLO Declaration of Principles, HAMAS and Islamic Jihad have repeatedly targeted Israelis and other Jews, killing many of them.

### Financing

HAMAS enjoys strong financial backing. In fact, its rivals claim that this is a major reason for its strength. HAMAS receives financial support from unofficial bodies in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, and recently also from Iran. The amount of money, which reaches HAMAS operatives in the West Bank and Gaza, is estimated at one million dollars U.S. annually. These funds are distributed among the various groups and associations identified with the movement, and from them filter down to the operatives in the field.

A broad network of charity associations (“Jama’at Al-Kheyriyah”) and committees (“Lejnat Zakat”) operate in the territories, on the basis of two Jordanian statutes: the Charity Association and Social Institutions Law, and the Charity Fund-Raising Regulations. HAMAS makes extensive use of these charity associations and committees, which (together with the mosques, unions, etc.) also serve as the overt façade of the organization’s activity, operating parallel to and serving its covert operations. The movement’s ideology (like that of its mother organization, the Muslim Brotherhood) attributes great importance to the giving of charity (“Zekat”, which is also one of the five basic principles of Islam).

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<sup>526</sup> *Islamic Revolution News Agency*, August 9, 1993.

## **Conclusion**

By 2002, the fifteenth year of the Intifada, profound changes had occurred in the Palestinian political arena. The new bipolarization between PLO partisans, on the one hand, and the Muslim Brothers, on the other, constituted one of the major signs of this new balance of forces.

As elsewhere in the Islamic world, the two main trends in Islamism could still be observed at work in Palestine: revolutionary Islamism of “Islamisation from above”, advocated by the movements of Islamic Jihad, and the “Islamisation from below”, preferred by the Muslim Brothers.

In the Palestinian case, revolutionary Islamism has not been discredited, even if its objective- liberation of the whole of Palestine- has remained beyond reach. The Islamic Jihad’s contribution to the early days of the Intifada in general gained for Islamic movements a measure of glory and legitimacy, thus affording them an opportunity to share a part of their ideals with the entire society. In spite of repression the movements of Islamic Jihad have not disappeared. They have maintained a significant mobilization capacity although this is limited by internal and personal quarrels between groups and leaders, by their factional mode of functioning, and by their image as agents for foreign states such as Iran and Syria.

The Muslim Brothers, then, had to adopt as a tactic the order of priorities followed by the Islamic Jihad (no real Islamisation without liberation) and, in the same way, had to compete with patriotism, the foundation of the PLO’s legitimacy. In order to secure their “Islamisation from below” for the long term the Muslim Brothers, through HAMAS, adopted the traits of “revolutionary Islamism” as the foundation for the national struggle, patriotism.

That the model of Islamic Jihad has functioned well in the field of politics is proven by the legitimacy acquired by HAMAS. Despite the 1993 “breakthrough” in which Israel and the PLO reached an agreement for limited

Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and Jericho, the Israeli has not ended. HAMAS, for the sake of Palestinian Islamism, has decided to combine the two models of Islamic revolution. Aware of the necessity to maintain the model of “Islamisation from above”, it continues its’ struggle against Israel. At the same time, it uses the national legitimacy acquired through this struggle to contest the PLO on the political level and to pursue and strengthen its traditional work of “Islamisation from below”. These efforts have only increased since Arafat’s “treachery” of 13 September 1993 on the White House lawn.

## **Palestinian Islamists Compared with Militant Lebanese Shi’ites**

### **Introduction**

In the 1970s and 1980s, members of the two communities increasingly articulated their political and socio-economic demands in religious terms and explained politics by drawing upon religious historical analogies. In the 1990s and beyond, they continued in this fashion, professing to preserve the true belief system, uphold traditional ways of life and religious practices, and observe strict rules of personal and social conduct. This brand of religiosity is popular among the rural poor, the urban underprivileged, and intellectuals and professionals. Each movement aspires to improve the living conditions of its followers through the formation of a community of believers. For this reason, they have developed authoritarian organizations and established clear boundaries between them and their enemies.

In addition to being a counter-response to the forces of modernization and secularism, Islamism derived from these two scenarios as the result of crises in national identity, the failure of the local political economy, and class cleavages. Religion, culture, and nationalism also furnished the basis for radicalism. A number of external factors accelerated the rise of the Islamist phenomenon.

Despite their differences, the two Islamist movements share a number of features. This study compares the two religious movements in terms of the variables that account for their emergence and compares their structures, ideologies, and relationships with the existing power holders. To achieve these objectives the study uses an explanatory framework consisting of crisis theory and resource mobilization models. This conceptual framework helps to point out the common causes and the properties of Islamism in the two communities.

### Reaction to Perceived Crises

The Islamic resistance movement (HAMAS) in the Israeli occupied territories formed in reaction to the increasing secularization of the Muslim Palestinians and their drifting away from their religious beliefs and practices. HAMAS's leadership was dismayed by the "erosion of Palestinian morality", which was partly caused by Israel's occupation of Palestine and exposing the Palestinians to an alien culture and values. In a similar fashion, the Shi'ite Lebanese Islamists were reacting to the growing secularization of their community in post-independence Lebanon.

Much of the criticism of the two Islamist movements was directed against symbols of secularization and against those co-religionists who drifted away from religious tradition. Certain aspects of modernity were singled out for attack, including television, cinema, secular voluntary associations, ideologies, and political parties. These have been seen as threats by corrupting the young and estranging them from their religious beliefs. For instance, HAMAS launched a campaign against owners of liquor stores and movie theatres, and those Palestinians who are morally corrupt. In the same vein, Shi'ite activists, troubled by the increasing secularization of their community, attacked Shi'ites perceived as disloyal to their own tradition, including those who shaved or trimmed their beards, or women who failed to wear the veil.

Islamism in these cases also displayed a strong nationalist overtone. Defining the nation in exclusive religious terms was a common response to externally generated threats to ethnic identity and political integrity. These threats included rival religious groups, and secular elite and political movements. The two communities share a common belief that their cultural, religious, and ethnic identities are endangered by the culture of an alien majority. Such threats compelled them to invoke past traditions so as to preserve their national existence and their cultural purity, and to put forward demands for political independence. The subjugation of the Palestinians and the Lebanese Shi'ites to Israel's military occupation induced both groups to employ religion as a distinctive marker of group identity in order to counter their exposure to Western lifestyles and value systems.

Intensification of religious sentiments also occurred among the Palestinians as a result of Jewish extremist attacks on the Islamic holy places in Jerusalem and Hebron. With regard to the Lebanese Shi'ites, throughout the second half of the 1970s and the 1980s, the Shi'ite villages and holy places in southern Lebanon were often subjected to Israeli military attacks. This situation forced the already impoverished Shi'ites to leave their towns and villages in southern Lebanon.

### Islamists and Political Economy

The two Islamist movements were also affected by the state of the economy, the level of economic development, and unemployment in both Lebanon, and the occupied territories. Mounting unemployment and scarcity of social, educational, and health services were linked to the uneven distribution of the benefits of modernization. The resulting religious Islamist discourse in each of these cases accentuated purity (free from corruption), equality, and development as the gifts of a return to religious politics.

The deteriorating economic conditions were manifested in the decline of the percentage of peasants working in agriculture. After its occupation of the West bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, Israel expropriated 52 percent of the West Bank land and 40 percent of the Gaza Strip, thus reducing the available land for cultivation.<sup>527</sup> By the mid-1980s, the percentage of those Palestinians working in agriculture dropped to 28 percentage and 17 percent in the West Bank and Gaza, respectively.<sup>528</sup> Many of these peasants sought employment inside the Jewish state. During the second half of the 1980s and the early 1990s, the economic conditions inside the occupied territories deteriorated further. The massive emigration of Jews from the former Soviet Union and the economic recession in Jordan and the gulf region caused conditional unemployment among the Palestinians. It was under the gloomy economic conditions that on 12 December 1988 HAMAS joined the political scene of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The Lebanese Shi'ite economy experienced a similar trend in the decline of the agricultural labor force. Unemployment among the Shi'ites increased in the 1980s as a result of the movement toward cash crops and farm mechanization. The Shi'ite farmers who continued to use traditional farming techniques were unable to compete in this modern environment. Despite the fact that 68 percent of the agricultural land is controlled by Shi'ite peasants, only 5.1 percent of the national budget was allocated for economic development of these areas.<sup>529</sup>

### Islamists and Political Parties

Islamism amongst the two groups was preceded by the rise of inconclusive secular political parties. Like the Palestinians, Lebanese Shi'ite Islamists were

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<sup>527</sup> Rubenberg, Cheryl A., "Twenty Years of Israeli Economic Policies in the West Bank and Gaza: Prologue to the Antiradar", *Journal of Arab Affairs* 8, Spring 1989: 35.

<sup>528</sup> Benvenisti, Meron, *West Bank Data Report*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1987, p. 19.

<sup>529</sup> Schbley, Ayla, "Religious Resurgence and Religious Terrorism: A Study of the Actions of the Shi'a Sectarian Movement in Lebanon"; Ph.D. dissertation: University of North Texas, Denton, Texas, 1988, pp. 103-9.

subjected to modernizing secular movements. Post-independence advancements in Lebanese communications and transportation eliminated the Shi'ite sense of geographic and social seclusion and exposed the Shi'ites to outside ideologies.<sup>530</sup> During the 1960s, they began to participate in a wide range of secular political parties: the Ba'ath, the Arab nationalists, the Syrian nationalists, and the Lebanese Communist Party. The failure of these parties to ameliorate the living conditions of the Shi'ites prompted Imam Musa al-Sadr (the religious and political leader of the Shi'ites) in the mid-1970s to form AMAL.

### **The Shi'a Movements in Lebanon**

The emergence of militant Shi'a Islamic movements in Lebanon, in the form of the AMAL Movement (an acronym for Alwaj al-Muqawama al-Lubnaniyya, Groups of the Lebanese Resistance) and Hizbullah (Party of God) is of fairly recent origin.

### **AMAL**

One can argue that the formation of Amal by Imam Musa al-Sadr in 1974 marked the beginnings of the rise of militant Shi'a Islam in Lebanon. But Imam Musa al-Sadr was not a militant leader, nor was it his intention to create a militant type of organization as such. His main concern was to weaken the all-powerful traditional leadership of feudal-style landowners such as Kamil al-Asad who dominated the Shi'a community of the Jabal Amil area of southern Lebanon. AMAL itself was to be al-Sadr's instrument for extending and consolidating the position of the clerical hierarchy in Jabal Amil at the expense of the traditional ruling families.

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<sup>530</sup> Norton, Augustus Richard, "Religious Resurgence and Political Mobilization of the Shi'a in Lebanon", in Emile Sahliyah, ed., *Religious Resurgence and Politic in The Contemporary World*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990, p. 230.

The programme of reform which Imam Musa al-Sadr enunciated after two months of deliberations by the members of the religious and executive bodies of the Higher Shi'ite Islamic Council, and the Rally of Shi'ite personalities (presided over by Musa al-Sadr himself) reinforced the image of AMAL as being far from radical or militant in character. The Shi'ite working paper issued on 11 May 1977, which arose from these proceedings saw only a limited secular role for the Shi'ite community in Lebanon.<sup>531</sup> The primary aim of this new organization was to promote the political and economic interests of the Shi'ite community and to reform the Lebanese political and economic system.<sup>532</sup> AMAL supported Lebanon's territorial integrity, national sovereignty, and cultural and religious diversity.

### Ideology

The ideological bent of AMAL is reformist in nature, with an emphasis on the religious foundations of the movement reflecting the continuing influence of its founder Imam Musa al-Sadr.

The first principle as expounded in the Charter of AMAL pertains to matters such as the existence of God, some of His attributes, the abstract notion of believing in God, and the real meaning of believing in God and Man as the measure of divine legislation.<sup>533</sup> The second principle, which consists of "being committed to [our] legacy and to [gaining] benefit from the experiences of other countries of the world",<sup>534</sup> shows a clear willingness to open with respect to various fields of science and humanities in contrast to the inward-looking ideology of Hizbullah.

The third principle embraces the belief in the complete freedom of the citizen (*al-muwatin*) who is a member of the Lebanese polity. This comprises the

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<sup>531</sup> *Al-Nahar*, 12 May 1977.

<sup>532</sup> Norton, Augustus Richard, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987.

<sup>533</sup> *Mithaq Harakat Amal*, Beirut: Amal Central Information Committee, n. d., pp. 14-23.

<sup>534</sup> *Ibid.* p. 27.

standard freedoms in a democratic system, namely the freedom of thought, religious freedom, the freedom to form associations, and unions. On the other hand the AMAL Charter calls for a ‘conditional economic freedom’ that is restricting the economic freedom of the individual in order to safeguard the rights of the community. AMAL almost borders on calling for revolutionary change in regard to this matter by stating that “the free man does not endeavor to accept and justify the world as it is, but rather revolts against its corruption, and rejects the tyrants on Earth to realize the real freedom in the worship of God. He is the [embodiment of] revolution in his faith, in his philosophy, in his political leadership”.<sup>535</sup>

The economic component of the AMAL Charter reiterates a theme that the Lebanese parties on the left had expressed in the early 1970s, namely, that the Lebanese economy was an economy dominated by services. AMAL singled out monopoly (*al-ihlikar*) and usury (*al-riba*) as evil practices in the Charter, with a quotation from Imam Ali against the former. It also proposed a banking system as a substitute for usury, described as a partnership for profit and loss system (*al-mudaraba*). The Charter in effect invokes ‘the divine message’ as its foundation for economic policy.<sup>536</sup>

The fifth and sixth principles deal with the patriotic or national character of AMAL, and world Zionism respectively. In the case of the former, AMAL expresses its strong attachment to “national sovereignty of the homeland”. It also rejects any kind of external ‘worship’ over Lebanon.<sup>537</sup> Although the AMAL Charter is strongly anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist, calling for the ending of ‘the imperialist presence in the Arab region (the Zionist entity)’ it refuses to ‘isolate’ any person or party, but believes, on the contrary, that national unity should include all peoples in the ‘melting pot’ of national

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<sup>535</sup> Ibid. p. 41-2.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid. p. 49-50.

<sup>537</sup> Ibid. p. 53.

common interest. AMAL denies that it is either sectarian or partisan, and shuns sectarian fanaticism.<sup>538</sup>

Similarly, the secular political parties were unable to moderate the rapid urbanization of the Shi'ites or to provide them with equality. Like the secular movements, AMAL failed to reform Lebanon's political system. This situation increased the exasperation of the Shi'ites and created a power vacuum that was eventually filled by Hizbullah.

The Palestinian Islamists share a comparable experience. Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were exposed to secular and traditional politicians in the 1950s and 1960s. These included the Arab nationalists, the Communists, the Ba'ath, and the Jordanian government.<sup>539</sup> In the 1970s, they were attracted to Palestinian nationalism and the PLO and its factions. The secular and traditional political parties' elite, however, were unable to bring about solutions to pending problems, because of their political division and rivalries. The insensitivity of the PLO to the political and economic grievances of its followers inside the occupied territories diminished its legitimacy and increased the appeal of Islamism among the discontented. The alliance between the PLO mainstream politicians, the middle-class intellectuals and professionals, and some older politicians left some salient problems un-addressed, including the questions of economic development and the place of religion and women in society.<sup>540</sup> The negligence of such developmental issues led to the creation of a psychological gulf between the urban elite and the residents of the rural areas and refugee camps.

This situation contributed to the rise of Islamism. To many disillusioned Palestinians, the stance of the Islamic movement became more attractive. To fill the power vacuum created by the PLO's diplomatic immobilism, the Muslim Brotherhood founded HAMAS. The creation of HAMAS was

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<sup>538</sup> Ibid. pp. 56, 68.

<sup>539</sup> Sahliyeh, Emile, *In Search of Leadership: West Bank Politics Since 1967*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1988, chapter 2.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid.

intended to give new image to the conservative nature of the Brotherhood and to underline its commitment to the Palestinian cause.

## **Hizbullah**

The formation of Hizbullah in Lebanon was clearly tied to the triumph of the Islamic revolution of Iran and to Israel's invasion of southern Lebanon. In fact until the arrival of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards, who numbered around 1,000 in June 1982, ostensibly to fight Israel, and who made their headquarters the city of Ba'albek, Hizbullah had previously existed simply as an idea in the writings of Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah. In the closing paragraphs of his major political work, *Al-Islam wa Mantiq al-Quwwa* (Islam and the Logic of Force), Fadlallah had expressed the hope that his book would establish the basis for the formation of an organization like Hizbullah. Otherwise he had hoped 'to furnished the ground for new studies and new ideas'.<sup>541</sup> Little did he know that within three years the Iranian revolution would establish a Shi'a Islamic state in Iran, which, in turn, would eventually lead to the formation of a Hizbullah in Lebanon in the summer of 1982.

The Hizbullah is an umbrella organization of various radical Shi'ite groups and organizations, which adhere to a Khomeinistic ideology. The organization was established following the 1982 Peace for Galilee War in Lebanon (and an increased Iranian presence and influence in Lebanon). The Hizbullah organization was established as a body for Shi'ite Islamists, led by religious clerics, who see in the adoption of Iranian doctrine a solution to the Lebanese political malaise. This includes the use of terror as a means of attaining political objectives.

Toward the end of 1982 Iran sent fighters from its 'Iranian Revolutionary Guards' to Lebanon in order to assist in the establishment of a revolutionary

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<sup>541</sup> Fadlallah, Muhammad Husain, *Al-Islam wa Mantiq al-Quwwa*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Beirut: al-Muassat al-Alami-I-yah lil-Dirasat Wal-Tawzi, 1981, p. 298.

Islamic movement whose members would participate in the 'Jihad', Holy War, against Israel. These forces, which were located in the area of Ba'albek in the northern Beqa'a Valley, bestowed on the area an Iranian-Islamic character and constituted the core of the Hizbullah organization in Lebanon.

The organization maintains a training apparatus in Lebanon throughout the villages and their surroundings, as well as outside of Lebanon. Training is aimed at building a reliable manpower source for its military forces as well as for its terror arm.

The spiritual founder of the movement in Lebanon was Sheikh Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah who acted as chief Mujtahid- arbiter of Islamic law- of the Shi'ite community in Lebanon. With the passage of time, Hizbullah has turned into an organization of secondary level groups working on the local level led by regional functionaries.

### Ideology

In contrast to AMAL, the ideological basis and outlook of Hizbullah approximates most closely that of Khomeinism and its principle goal of the establishment of a pan-Islamic republic headed by religious clerics. If in AMAL's ideology one can barely detect the Shi'a character of the movement (with only the not infrequent quotations from Imam Ali revealing its Shi'a character in a cryptic manner), in the case of Hizbullah, the influence of Iranian Shi'a thought is obvious. The first ideological tenet of Hizbullah, following 'the Imam [Khomeini] line (*Khat al-Imam*)' is the imperative struggling against 'imperialism in all its forms', followed by the stand of 'no-East and no-West, only Islam'.<sup>542</sup> Hizbullah follows Khomeini's thought in believing that all disasters that have befallen Muslim countries can be traced to foreign imperialists and in particular to the U.S.A. Quoting Khomeini, Hizbullah maintains the view that "the original objective of the imperialist

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<sup>542</sup> *Al-Ahd*, 57, 25 July 1985, p. 8; *Al-Ahd* is the most prominent Newspaper Publication of Hizbullah.

countries is to destroy the Holy Qur'an and to obliterate it, and to destroy Islam and the Muslim *ulema* (leadership)... and their plan is to keep [Islamic countries] backward, and in the name of encouraging education... they have suppressed religious schools".<sup>543</sup> Not unrelated to the first tenet, the complete political, economic and legislative unity of all Muslims has been the central goal in Khomeini's thought, and this is only possible when an Islamic state is established.

The organization's worldview was first published in its political platform in February 1985 as follows:

- \* The solution to Lebanon's problems is the establishment of an Islamic republic, as only this type of regime can secure justice and equality for all Lebanese citizens.
- \* The Hizbullah organization views as an important goal the fight against 'western imperialism' and its eradication from Lebanon. The group strives for complete Western withdrawal from Lebanon, including all of their institutions.
- \* The conflict with Israel is viewed as a central concern. This is not only limited to the IDF (Israeli Defense Force) presence in Lebanon. Rather, the complete destruction of the state of Israel and the establishment of Islamic rule over Jerusalem is an expressed goal.<sup>544</sup>

Part of this radical ideology is the group's militant approach using terror as a means of attaining its goals. Hizbullah decries the existence of Israel ('the little Satan'), viewed as foreign to the region and which constitutes a threat to Islam and Muslims. The destruction of Israel and the liberation of Jerusalem are deemed a religious obligation. The Hizbullah organization justifies the use of terror against these enemies as a weapon in the hands of the weak and

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<sup>543</sup> Ibid.

<sup>544</sup> [ask@israel-info.gov.il](mailto:ask@israel-info.gov.il) IDF Spokesman 'Hizbullah', June 6, 1994.

oppressed against the strong aggressor. In an effort to act upon and realize the predetermined ideological lines the group's leaders actively plan and perpetrate terror attacks against Israel and disseminate Iranian ideology. The Hizbullah extends its struggle to areas in Lebanon.

With the signing of the 'Taif Agreement' in 1989 and the beginning of the 'Syrian arrangement' in Lebanon, the Hizbullah has been forced to conform to Syrian dictates. The Syrian interest in the continuation of terrorist attack in Southern Lebanon has enabled the Hizbullah to maintain its unique status in the Lebanese arena as the only major military force yet to be disarmed. The Syrians have prevented the Lebanese government from harming the military capability of the Hizbullah, under the pretext of opposing the Israeli occupation, while at the same time enforcing their dictates upon the organization during periods when they are interested in calming the situation in southern Lebanon (as was the case following 'Operation Accountability in July 1993 or the period coinciding with the Asad-Clinton meeting in January 1994').

### The Spread of Hizbullah into Southern Lebanon

As the organizational infrastructure developed, Hizbullah, with Iranian and Syrian assistance, began to establish an extensive military network in the Ba'albek area. Its militias have since spread into the Shi'ite neighborhoods in southern and western Beirut as well as into southern Lebanon.<sup>545</sup>

This network is the principal base of Hizbullah activities as well as for those of other radical Shi'ite groups. Thousands of Hizbullah activists and members are located in the Beqa'a Valley, Beirut and southern Lebanon. These areas also offer a base for the recruitment of additional activists and fighters among the local Shi'ite populations.

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<sup>545</sup> *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 10, no. 2, April 1988, p.p. 697-8.

Following the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon in 1985, the Hizbullah organization consolidated itself. This consolidation included the establishment of strong depots for weapons, recruitment of activists and fighters, and widespread aid to residents in Southern Lebanon, with the donation of money, equipment, medical supplies, etc. The purpose of the aid was to gain support of the local population in favour of the organisation's activities in the South.

### Attacks and Terrorism

Using cover names such as 'Islamic Jihad', 'The Revolutionary Justice Organization' and 'The Islamic Resistance', with the blessings of its religious leaders, Hizbullah has carried out a series of high profile attacks against American and Multinational Forces targets in Lebanon and Israeli targets in the south of the country. Only later did their attacks become more intensive as well as demonstrating better planning, especially immediately prior to the opening of the peace process.

In 1991, Hizbullah was responsible for 52 attacks, as compared to 19 attacks the organization carried out in 1990. In 1992, Hizbullah launched 63 attacks and in 1993, 158 attacks, when during the course of 'Operation Accountability' they fired hundreds of Katyusha rockets into the Security Zone and Israeli territory.<sup>546</sup>

### Triumphant Hizbullah

The party that became notorious in the 1980s for bombing embassies and kidnapping foreigners is now preaching against violence. Calling itself "The Party of God" and incorporating a gun in its emblem may not be the best way

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<sup>546</sup> [ask@israel-info.gov.il](mailto:ask@israel-info.gov.il) IDF Spokesman 'Hizbullah', June 6, 1994.

to win friends, but these days Hizbullah wants to be loved, by Christians and Sunni Muslims as well as its fellow Shi'ites.

The Israeli retreat from southern Lebanon has certainly brought Hizbullah respect and admiration, if not love. Almost every one in Lebanon believes that its long guerrilla war, in which hundreds of "martyrs" died, has brought them liberation. In the Arab world generally, it is difficult to underestimate the psychological power of its achievement.

Since the establishment of Israel in 1948 and through two full-scale wars in 1967 and 1973, the Arabs have known nothing but defeat. Not only has this colored political discourse for the last two generations, it has become deeply embedded in the culture: a constant theme of films, books and poetry. All that changed in early June 2000 when Israel withdrew its forces from southern Lebanon. "This was the first Arab victory", the Hizbullah spokesman Hussein Naboulsi said. "The first time the Israelis have left an Arab land in defeat".<sup>547</sup> The conclusion he would like the world to draw is that Hizbullah's methods work and should be copied elsewhere.

There is, however, still unfinished business with Israel: issues regarding hostages, prisoners and, above all, the return of the Shebaa farms, a border area claimed by Lebanon which Israel says, and also according to the U.N., belongs to Syria. "If the Israelis do not leave that part of Lebanon the resistance will continue", Mr. Naboulsi said. But he adds: We're not in a hurry. We will wait and see".<sup>548</sup> After years of conflict, the Lebanese people clearly want peace, and Hizbullah has a lot to lose by resuming the armed struggle.

What began in 1982 as an underground movement during the civil war, and quickly earned a reputation as the most daring of Lebanon's armed groups, is today very much above ground: it has a television station, a radio station, a newspaper, and a website ([www.hizbollah.org](http://www.hizbollah.org)). One key to its success is that it combines guns with good works. When effective government was lacking

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<sup>547</sup> *B.B.C. World Service News*, June 2000.

<sup>548</sup> *Ibid.*

in much of Lebanon it set up its own social security networks, providing jobs, health care and education. A European aid worker in southern Lebanon said: “During the Israeli occupation, if someone’s house was hit by a rocket Hizbullah would be round within two or three days to rebuild it”.<sup>549</sup>

This has undoubtedly helped it win favor, though critics accuse it of cynically ingratiating itself with certain groups. It has also created expectations that may be difficult to fulfill. Particularly as central government reasserts itself in the south and tries to take over some of Hizbullah’s functions. Its welfare, cultural and sporting organizations are its main recruiting grounds. Anyone can join. They don’t have to be committed to all the rules, but they must support Hizbullah politically. Once they are in these peripheral organizations, volunteers are assessed for loyalty, ideological orientation and discipline, and, if they pass the test, may be invited to join the party. A particular personality type is said to be favoured: those with good listening skills who will implement party decision without question.

The party claims tens of thousands of members, but key decisions are made by a close-knit group of no more than 10 people, headed by Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, who took over in 1992 after the Israeli army killed Sheikh Abbas Mussawi.

At the outset Hizbullah was funded mainly by Iran, to the value of US\$500 million a year in the mid-1980s, plus unspecified amounts, probably running to hundreds of millions of dollars, for weaponry. That has fallen dramatically over the years, and today the Iranian government support is thought to be no more than US\$20 million annually.<sup>550</sup>

Because of Lebanon’s unique cultural and religious mix, Hizbullah has become more tolerant of opposing views than Islamist groups elsewhere. It does not seek to impose its own code of behaviour on other Lebanese, although this was not always the case: it used to run “morality patrols” on the beach but met with so much opposition that it abandoned them. Today

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<sup>549</sup> *B.B.C. World Service News*, 2 June 2002.

<sup>550</sup> *Guardian Weekly*, June 8-14, 2000, p. 3.

Lebanon is probably the only Arab country where women walk in the street not only with their heads uncovered, but some with their shoulders and legs uncovered as well. Mr. Naboulsi said: “We don’t impose our views on others; we let people make their own choice. If you have kids and force them to do things, they will hate you. If you are a friend to them they will love you. Islam is not a force, its discussion and dialogue”.<sup>551</sup> Some are suspicious, but Nizar Hamzeh, an expert on Hizbullah at the American University in Beirut, believes that, up to a point, it is sincere.<sup>552</sup>

It accepts freedom and democracy, not for their own sakes but because of local conditions, he said. Hizbullah is pragmatic and has decided to form a contract with the wicked, but the achievement of the ideal Islamic state will always be there as a goal.

The challenge for Hizbullah is how to recruit non-Shi’as. It has succeeded with some Christians and other sects, but those remain few, Hamzeh said.

It is not just a matter of persuading them to support the party but, ultimately, converting them to an ideology that is rooted in the political theories of the late Ayatollah Khomeini. To Hizbullah activists, those theories are so obviously correct that dialogue, tolerance and avoiding violence will surely be enough to win others over. The question is what Hizbullah will do if others fail to see the light.

## Conclusion

As noted earlier: the present leadership of AMAL and Hizbullah have well-established links with external parties- Syria in the case of AMAL, and Iran and Syria in the case of Hizbullah. AMAL, in particular, is inextricably tied to the late Asad regime which has utilized AMAL in fighting against the Lebanese authorities during the years of 1983-84. This culminated in the takeover of West Beirut on 6 February 1984, and the unleashing AMAL

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<sup>551</sup> *B.B.C. World Service News*, 7 June 2000.

<sup>552</sup> *Ibid.*

against the Palestinian refugee camps during May-June 1985, April-July 1986, and October 1986- February 1987. In all these conflicts the interests of AMAL were secondary to those of the late Asad regime in Syria. In fact AMAL has become Asad's most important proxy and has enabled Syria to achieve a range of policy objectives in Lebanon. Hizbullah's ties to Iran are glaringly obvious in so far as Iran provides both the ideological arsenal, and the financial support for its followers in Lebanon. The role of Hizbullah has converged with the interests of both Iran and Syria. Islamic Jihad (which by the admission of Hizbullah's leaders<sup>553</sup> is Hizbullah's most important operational covert organization) has served Syrian and Iranian interests through the capture and release of hostages, thus benefiting both countries in their foreign policy objectives. The notion that Syria is on a collision course with Hizbullah is itself part and parcel of the Asad regime's campaign of disinformation. It has allowed Asad to expand the deployment of his troops in Lebanon with Western approval under the pretext of curbing Hizbullah. Yet the arrival of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards in Lebanon via Syria in June 1982 was largely at Syria's behest and was in accordance with a military agreement signed between Iran and Syria.<sup>554</sup> In the case of Syria, a distinction should be made between Sunni Muslim movements which have constituted a threat to the regime, and Shi'a Islamic movements (including Hizbullah) which have become a positive asset to the Alawi-minority based Asad regime, in Lebanon and the Middle East region as a whole.

The Shi'a of Lebanon is dominated at present by the AMAL movement and Hizbullah in its various forms. This domination is destined to continue as long as the Asad regime in Syria and Khomeini's Iran remain the two most important external powers in Lebanon. Most probably the majority of the Shi'a in Lebanon are not enamored of the leadership AMAL nor by

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<sup>553</sup> 'Hizbullah: Harakat Askariya am Siyasiya am Diniya (Hizbullah: An Army or Political or Religious Movement)? *Al-Shira*, 17 March 1987, pp. 19-20.

<sup>554</sup> Deeb, Marius, *Militant Islamic Movements in Lebanon: Origins, Social Basis and Ideology*, Occasional Papers Series, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, Washington DC, 1986, p. 19.

Hizbullah, but they have no choice when the barrel of the gun is the order of the day. Shi'a traditional leaders and Shi'a local notables have not disappeared. It is highly unlikely that they would ever regain their ascendancy as long as the conflict in Lebanon becomes more politically active than ever before. Their dominant leaders become increasingly subordinate to the wishes of Syria and Iran.

### **Organization, Structure, and Resources**

The nature of the political system, governmental legitimacy, and the level of popular participation in Islamist movements are factors that affect their chances of success. In both cases, Islamism arose in a political climate characterized by a relative degree of democratization. In Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza, trade unions, voluntary associations, and political parties and movements have been part of the local political landscape. This situation enabled the Islamists to operate openly, for the most part.

Islamism surfaced also in an environment of religious or sectarian conflict. Each of the two movements was and is engaged in a power struggle with a rival religious enemy. Hizbullah wishes to establish an Islamic society in Lebanon, a goal that placed the party in direct conflict with the Lebanese Christians; the followers of HAMAS insist on the formation of an Islamic state in all of Palestine. The cultures of the Lebanese Shi'ites, and the Palestinians do not distinguish between religion and politics. In Lebanon, religion shapes the cultural milieu and delineates the social and political identity of the individual.<sup>555</sup> To a large extent the Palestinians function in a similar cultural setting.

In addition to these contextual factors, the two cases were triggered by major political developments. Hizbullah's emergence was precipitated by the outbreak of the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 and by Israel's invasion of

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<sup>555</sup> Hudson, Michael C., *The Precarious Republic: Political Modernization in Lebanon*, New York: Random House, 1968.

Lebanon in 1982. In turn, HAMAS was triggered by the outbreak of the Intifada in 1987 and the leading role that the Islamic Jihad played in the outbreak of the uprising.

Despite the impact of these various forces, however, religious radicalism among the Shi'ites, and the Palestinians could not emerge unless these groups possessed certain distinctive assets and resources to meet the needs of adaptation. Charismatic leadership, organizational structures, communication networks, manpower, economic assets, political opportunities, and ideology were the primary resources that facilitated religious militancy.<sup>556</sup>

Aside from the resemblance between the two movements in the areas of explanatory variables and structures and resources, other parallels can be found at the ideological and political levels. Such similarities include the nationalist overtone of the religious movement, the propensity toward violence, the admissibility of modern science and technology, the hostility towards Westernization, the presence of a millenarian vision, and the call for equality.

## Conclusion

The preceding analysis yields a number of significant observations that tie the two Islamist movements together. Firstly, the causes of religious resurgence are multifarious. The renewed interest in religion has occurred in respect to the far-reaching social and economic changes that interrupted the traditional way of life of the Palestinians and the Shi'ites. The economic deprivation of these communities; their social exclusion, and political under-representation have afforded a suitable environment for the emergence of the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism.

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<sup>556</sup> Aya, Rod, "Theories of Revolution Reconsidered: Contrasting Models of Collective Violence", *Theory and Society* 8, July 1979:39-99.

Secondly, these religious groups have opted to deal with major social, economic, and personal problems by invoking their prophetic tradition. Religious leaders mediate issues involving marriage, inheritance, work, and property-related disputes. Many of these functions have traditionally been performed by the state. In addition, Islamism addresses a variety of political questions that are salient to the individual and the society alike. Such concerns have included personal freedoms versus regulated social behavior, ethno-nationalism, class cleavages, political autonomy, the place of religion and women in the society, secularism, modernism, and economic development and equality. In a relatively short time, these groups developed ideas concerning these core issues.

Thirdly, Islamism gives the individual Shi'ite, and Palestinian Muslim a sense of cultural continuity and national existence and furnishes them with a vision for the future. The organizational advantages of the Islamists and their access to a sophisticated communication network enable them to include newly emerging classes and social groups in the political process. Indeed, these new groups find religious symbolism including charismatic leaders and clerics, martyrdom in defence of one's cause, egalitarianism, and divine doctrines to be valuable assets to buttress their demands for the redistribution of economic resources. Religion also avails these groups of a unifying ideology and an institution to extend social welfare-related services.

Fourthly, while providing its followers with numerous benefits, Islamism presents a formidable challenge to the forces of secular nationalism. Whether it is in Lebanon, the occupied territories, or in the wider Muslim world, the Islamists seek to redress the status quo. Their long-term objective is to dismantle the existing political and social order and to establish in its place a puritan-like society where religion would guide public and private life.

Finally, although the Islamists aspire to establish their exclusivist state, the dictates of political realism would compel them to accept less than their ideals. Undoubtedly, the presence of definable enemies will continue to

sustain their movements. But the political reality of the existence of Israel and the diverse ideology and religious composition of both Lebanon and Palestine will compel the Islamists to acknowledge such facts. The absorption of such lessons can already be observed. HAMAS has occasionally articulated accommodating positions toward Israel, while the Lebanese Shi'ites recognize that Lebanon's cultural and religious diversity limit their goal to establish an Islamic republic.

Islam has been a part of Middle Eastern and North African life since the seventh century. However, since the 1970s there has been a proliferation of Islamic groups who envision rule by Islamic precepts and practices as a solution to social, political and economic inadequacies in the region. The generation of Islamic ideals was a product of rapid change to Muslim society. This occurred as a result of modernization, due to the increase in oil revenue in 1973 and 1974, and later the economic crisis that was experienced in countries such as Egypt and Algeria in the 1970s and 1980s. Hence, economic disparity, poverty, lack of political participation and corruption, which resulted from class formation and the creation of elite members of society. On a regional scale, hierarchies of wealth have emerged due to the oil revenues in parts of the Middle East, particularly, the Gulf States.

As a result of these changes in society, people have become disillusioned with regimes that have instituted autocratic rule in order to maintain their power base. They are blamed for ineptitude and corruption and the inability to find solutions for society's ills. This disillusionment is reflected in each of the case studies above. Leaving Israel aside, the six other cases are all led by autocratic regimes. Labelled corrupt and ineffective, the failure of the governments to generate economic development in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Iran and Lebanon has given rise to dissent amongst the populations.

Conversely, the Saudi rulers have been accused of elitism, nepotism, and moral and economic laxness.

The Western influence that modernization was perceived to entail, affected Muslim societies as this was seen to be a threat to Islamic identity and values. The alleviation of this threat was embodied in the return to Islamic principles, through rule by Allah. The catalyst for the rejection of the West is apparent in the influence that the Iranian popular revolt had when its people abandoned the political reforms and policies of the Shah in favour of traditional Islamic principles. Although the Iranian revolution was unable to transcend ethnicity and national boundaries, its influence was discernable throughout the Islamic world. For many, the revolution signalled the opportunity to reject western ideologies and mould suitable social, political and economic ideals based on Islamic values, which is the primary feature that binds the identity of the region. Similarly, Israeli defeats of the Arab world, particularly the 1967, have also influenced the proliferation of Islamism as the defeats have been blamed on the failure of Arab states that are viewed as un-Islamic.

The proliferation of Islamic groups in the Middle East and North Africa throughout the last three decades was a result of several factors. Firstly, rapid change in the organization and development of Middle Eastern society has occurred as a result of increased revenue. However, recession has also led to socio-economic malaise as class disparity, unemployment and the inability of governments to provide financial, educational and employment opportunity has impacted on rising population growth. Secondly, there has been increasing perception of the autocratic regimes as un-Islamic, corrupt and inept, as well as very little political participation for the masses. Finally, the incursion of Western influence has been viewed as a threat to Islamic values and identity.

## CHAPTER 2: ISLAM AS THE SOLUTION

### Introduction

The political program of the Islamists, who are often inaccurately called "Islamic fundamentalists", seeks to restore a heavily idealized old order of things. It is driven, in part, by an alienation from the present world system in which they consider the Muslim world's position as unjustly marginal in light of Islam's past glories. For them, Islam is the solution. Islamists perceive Islam to be the answer to social ills. The Qur'an is prescriptive and emphasizes social justice and redistribution of wealth. However, like other religious doctrines, interpretations are varied. Vandembroucke notes a common theme apparent in the Islamist trend, which is the idea that redemption is possible through society's strict compliance to the word of God.<sup>557</sup> Living by the Qur'an and the Shar'ia (Islamic Law), Islamists believe Muslims will be spared from sin and the common ills of society such as corruption and economic deprivation.

Their chief criticism of the nationalist powers that have ruled the Muslim countries since independence is that nationalism, though designed to repel western military and political domination, did not dare to challenge Western concepts and modes of government and reinstate the Islamic tradition (al-turath). Islamists would like to be viewed as the true anti-imperialist force, pushing the struggle a step further by resisting not only the West's political hegemony but also its intrusive ideas like liberalism, secularism, and globalism.

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<sup>557</sup> L. S. Vandembroucke, Why Allah's Zealots? A Study of the Causes of Islamic Fundamentalism in Egypt and Saudi Arabia in *The Middle East Review*, 16:1, p. 30-31, 1983.

## **Regimes Under Siege**

Opposed to the Islamist program, governments of the Muslim world face a triple embarrassment. First, the regimes have been unable to convince their people of any outstanding successes in the tasks they proclaimed for themselves: the "liberation of Palestine", pan-Arab or pan-Islamic reunification, political participation, and social and economic prosperity. Second, because they rarely challenged the western worldview, they have failed to develop alternative legitimating factors other than an obsession with political independence and cultural authenticity. Third, they are relying, more and more, on foreign support to stay in power and to fend off their domestic opposition or their neighbours' aggressions. That dependence on the West was demonstrated most spectacularly in the American-led campaign to retrieve Kuwait from Iraqi annexation. It was also confirmed by the West's relief, too openly expressed, at the military's interruption of the electoral process in Algeria, which threatened to bring pro-Islamist forces to power.

Hence, most current regimes suffer intrinsic weakness against the emerging Islamist challenge. The Islamists gain popular appeal by endeavouring to accomplish the very program nationalist regimes had devised but were unable to achieve- be it because of the regime's widespread corruption, their squandering of oil revenues, their reliance on the West, their more recent submission to International Monetary Fund strictures, or their persistent lack of interest in tradition.

In essence Islamists espouse the nationalist's program, translate it into religious terms, and promise to achieve it the moment they gain power. Islamists thus embody an ambiguous mixture of continuity in policy and radical shift in elite identity. Algerian Islamist leader Abassi Madani, himself a former militant of the National Liberation Front (FLN in French) which has ruled the country since independence, insists that the Islamic Salvation Front

(FIS) program is a return to the FLN's "authentic" foundations during the war of liberation that ended 40 years ago. Elsewhere, Islamist groups attract thousands of militants who had political experience in nationalist, Ba'athist, Nasserist, or Mossadeghist parties and who have been disappointed by those parties' inability to keep their promises. One Lebanese thinker, Munah l-Solh, noted 30 years ago that Arab elites were basically nationalist while Arab masses were religious. The formula may be simplistic, but it is fairly accurate. In some sense, the Islamic revival is a kind of elite adjustment to the popular preference.

Because "the FIS is the son of the FLN", it would be a grave error to believe that today's Islamist groups originated in those traditional sectors of Muslim societies that opposed post-independence modernization policies. Sociological surveys in countries like Algeria, Egypt, and Lebanon indicate that Islamist activists tend to come from university campuses rather than from among illiterates. One striking finding is the Islamists' strength in university science departments as compared to literary or legal studies. Science students feel that their rejection of Western-style modernity stems from a basic understanding of where modernity can lead them. They are very critical of the traditional religious establishment, which they deem too passive or too subservient to the government. Religious intellectuals (*ulema*), in fact, are on the government payroll in most countries.

Not surprising, Islamist militants generally received lukewarm reception from the traditional religious establishment of their countries. In Egypt, ulema at Al-Azhar (a religious university that recently celebrated a millennium of existence) are generally on the government's side. In Saudi Arabia, most of them support Saud family rule and operate as the regime's spokesmen and advocates. And in Algeria, most of the religious establishment did not participate in the FIS attempt to take power.

Today's Islamists actually represent the third generation of militants inspired by religion. The first was part and parcel of the national liberation movement

against foreign domination, and in places like the Maghreb and Iran, sometimes represented the largest trend within the movement. When Hassan al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, it was conceived as part of the Egyptian national struggle against the British colonialists and came to represent some 3 million militants in the wake of the 1952 Free Officers coup. In Iraq, religious and nationalist supporters of the "1920 revolution" against the imposition of British rule were indistinguishable. The Algerian FLN was as Islamic as it was nationalistic in its struggle against French colonization.

After independence, nationalists achieved a monopoly over the state. In most Middle Eastern countries, nationalist and secularist military officers took over the state apparatus and ostracized the religious elements of the anti-Western struggle. Muslim Brothers were killed in Egypt, Iraq, and Syria; Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser had the leader of the Brotherhood executed in Cairo, and the Ba'ath party was extremely tough on religious movements in Iraq and Syria. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk of Turkey, the Shah of Iran, and Habib Bourghuiba of Tunisia embarked on clearly Western-inspired policies, notably in matters of women's rights, public observance of the Ramadan fast, and even personal dress. The second generation of Islamic militants was thus composed of "martyrs"- those killed, jailed, or exiled by their one-time comrades.

Governments now face a third generation of militants, fostered by the spread of mass education and disenchantment with the current regimes. The new wave is drawn mostly from well-educated cadres who had some access to a Western-style education but who did not find a job easily. They have seen that Islamism now has a chance to repeal the nationalist monopoly on power, as was demonstrated in Iran and Sudan. It was also nearly won in Algeria. Generally speaking, they are more patient than their predecessors about attaining political power; they intend to pressure governments to gradually implement the Islamic program before directly challenging a regime's rule. For example, Islamists in 1980 forced an amendment to the Egyptian

constitution introducing Shar'ia, Islamic law, as the main source of legislation, and engineered the Shar'ia's actual imposition in Mauritania in 1983 and in Pakistan in 1985. They pressured Algeria's FLN to amend the family code in 1984 and forced changes in Sudan's penal code while General Ga'afar al-Nimeiry was still in power. Governments have tended to offer concessions to reduce the Islamist thirst for power. However, the concessions do not prevent Islamist groups from attempting to control professional unions (such as those of engineers, lawyers, physicians, and professors) or from creating "Islamist areas" where government control is phased out and replaced by direct management of public order and provision of social services by the Islamist militants themselves. Those areas include certain neighborhoods in Cairo, some governorates in Upper Egypt, the city of Hama in Syria before its destruction by the army, the southern outskirts of Beirut, most of the Gaza Strip, and then some of southern Iraq's marshlands.

It is thus shortsighted to concentrate exclusively on the most spectacular Islamist-inspired events, such as the 11th of September 2001, the revolution in Iran, the assassination of Anwar el-Sadat, the coup d'etat in Sudan, and the results of the Algerian elections. It is just as important to note the points Islamists are scoring almost everywhere in pushing governments to adopt Islamist measures and to tolerate their hold over professional unions, university campuses, and inner-city neighborhoods. Whatever the outcome of Islamist attempts to dominate governments, the re-Islamisation of societies is proceeding in earnest. That fact is becoming an obsessive worry for non-Muslim minorities and of secular members of the intelligentsia, though not necessarily for the man on the street. Most governments seem unable to stop the movement, when they inadvertently accelerate it through indiscriminate punishments.

The movement has gained in particular when natural disasters have struck, such as the earthquakes in Tipasa, Algeria, in 1989 and in Egypt in 1992 and the 1990 floods in southern Tunisia. Islamists then have been quick to show

their efficiency in bringing relief and compassion to the victims, while ineffective governments show the overall waning of state authority in the Muslim world, with or without an Islamist challenge. Aside from those crises, Islamists are offering help to many: distributing photocopies of expensive textbooks on campuses, making available free medical treatment, defending and serving squatters on the outskirts of cities, cleaning streets, extending protection to smugglers and terrorists, and providing all kinds of social services. Meanwhile, governments- stuck with impotent and corrupt bureaucrats, financial austerity programs, and heavy demographic challenges- can hardly respond.

Even while growing, the third wave of Islamism is being diversified. It would be a serious mistake to lump Islamist groups together as a monolith. Some Islamist groups backed Iraq during the Gulf war; others supported the coalition or issued contradictory statements. Some seek the kind of honourable behaviour and large appeal they know are necessary to attain power, while others operate in small, secretive, violence-prone groups known as *gama'at*.

In Egypt, for example, most analysts (and the government in normal times) make a clear distinction between the well-established Muslim brotherhood, which has won most of the recent professional union elections, and the *gama'at* that attack or kill government officials (as in the October 1990 assassination of the speaker of parliament), secularist thinkers, and, more recently Western tourists. The distinction between those groups, though justified, does not necessarily mean that they are nuisance to each other. The extremists' methods, paradoxically, enhance the moderate Islamists' respectability. In the professional union elections, extremist Islamists do not hesitate to help moderate Islamists win a majority of seats. Their combined pressure pushes the government to Islamise some policies, in order to accommodate the moderates and hit at the extremists. Recent arrests of members of the mainstream Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood suggest that the

distinction between the two groups is becoming less clear. Governments face a Catch-22 dilemma: if they lump Islamists together, they tend to help the most extremist; if they distinguish between them, they have to placate the moderates with new concessions.

Islamic groups tend to have ideological values and espouse the implementation of the Shar'ia, and a society based on Islam, but they do not usually formulate a thorough political agenda.<sup>558</sup> Thus, governments, intellectuals and the populations are left wondering just how participatory and inclusive an Islamic regime would be. It is apparent from the case studies that to some Muslims Islam is perceived to be an alternative, and perhaps the only alternative, to political ideologies and autocratic rulers that have existed in the Middle East and North Africa. As an identity issue Islam is the common thread, which binds the people of the region, and it is to Islam they turn when solutions to society's problems are not found in other ways.

### **Islamist World View**

The Islamists have a deep interest in international politics. From the Gulf war, Islamists have concluded that the West is now more willing to engage in military operations in the Muslim world than it was during the Cold War. They also draw a lesson about the West from the contrast between the handling of the Somali and Bosnian crises: The West is ready to intervene militarily when Muslims are killing other Muslims but remains passive and hypocritical when (Muslim) Bosnians are killed by (Christian) Serbs.

To them, Afghanistan (1979-1989) is a success story: Islamists of many countries rushed to support their brothers against an atheistic "Western" power, the Soviet Union. Indeed, Afghanistan is viewed as a spectacular example of Islamists' ability to win a war against an alien expansionist power.

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<sup>558</sup> T. D. Sisk, *Islam and Democracy: Religion, Politics, and Power in the Middle East*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1992.

Many returnees from the Afghan war of the 1980s play leading roles in the most extremist of the groups in Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, and the Gulf countries. They are the infamous "Afghans", the current worst headache of those regimes.

Islamists draw another kind of lesson from the Algerian episode: Do not trust local regimes or Western governments when they call for democratic elections; when the population shows its preference for Islamist candidates, the electoral process is brutally interrupted. As for the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Islamists are gratified to see the collapse of an atheist power that was supporting their leftist rivals in the Muslim world, but Islamists also worry about the new opportunities and increased power available to the West following the dismemberment of the Soviet empire.

At home, Islamist groups have succeeded in extracting funds from Islamist-oriented governments. Iran keeps providing financial and logistical support to many groups, and Sudan is certainly sheltering and possibly training thousands of militants from around the Muslim world. Yet other governments are paying their dues, either out of genuine identification with some Islamist group or in reaction to pure intimidation. That dual approach has characterized the policy of the Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, which has bankrolled many Islamist organizations in order to use them against more secular regimes in the region. More recently, they have continued generous funding to prevent those groups from turning exclusively to Iran for support and becoming tools of expanding Iranian influence.

The Gulf war led to widespread suspicion and sometimes open feuding between the Islamist groups that supported Iraq and their Gulf benefactors, but not to point of clear-cut repudiation: Gulf governments are still supporting some of them out of fear, and wealthy Gulf individuals (including some members of the ruling families) are helping fund groups ostracized by Gulf governments because they identify with Islamist goals. Islamist groups also receive support from Arab expatriates who have amassed wealth in the Gulf.

More generally, the Gulf war has created side effects that are not usually acknowledged in the West. By defeating and maintaining sanctions against a secularist regime in Baghdad, the West has indirectly strengthened regional powers with avowed religious orientation, be it of the ritualistic, status-quo Saudi type or of the Iranian revolutionary model. Iraq's defeat may have fed the appetite of Iranian leaders for asserting their influence in the Middle East and North Africa. Hence, the Arab governments were reluctant to condone, let alone support, new Western military attacks on Iraq in January 1993, as well as the current political landscape in Middle Eastern.

Iraq's defeat (like the Egyptian/Syrian defeat by Israel in 1967) has also given Islamist group's strong arguments that nationalist, secular-oriented regimes are no match for the West. By contrast, the fear that Islamist groups trigger in the West, like the 11th of September terrorist attacks and the Bali bombing massacre, offers reason to believe that their attachment to the Islamist discourse is efficient. Otherwise why would Western governments be so concerned? The idea that the Christian West is panicked by Islam's revival therefore plays into the Islamists' hands. Indeed, Islamists surmise that Israel's existence as a Jewish- that is, a religious- state explains Israel's success in its wars against the Arabs. Islamists often state that Israel wins because it is faithful to its religion, and Arabs are defeated because they are insufficiently devoted to Islam. That has been an Iranian cliché over the past 20 years, and it is now the main argument used by the Islamist group HAMAS against Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) "secular" politics.

Islamists argue that the rich men of the rich societies are to rule the world, competing among themselves for a greater share of wealth and power and mercilessly suppressing those who stand in their way, assisted by the rich men of the hungry nations who do their bidding. The other serve! And suffer.

## **Back to Traditional Values**

As with other religions, some Muslims believe in a strict enforcement of their faith. At times, this has led to conflict. In recent years, Western fears of Islam have resurfaced with the rise of so-called Islamic fundamentalism. This refers to Muslims who believe in a return to traditional values based on the Qur'an, but a small minority has come to be associated with violent extremists. Many who do not believe in using violence to bring about their aims now prefer to use the term Islamist. The term fundamentalism can also be applied to religions other than Islam, such as Christian hardliners in the United States and Jewish militants in Israel. Additionally, the 15th-century Reformation in the Christian church called for a return to the values of the Bible. Reformation leaders such as Martin Luther and John Calvin set up their own 'protestant' church.

In recent decades, the Muslim world has seen a revival of Islamism. In Iran and Sudan there are Islamist governments. In Egypt, Algeria, Tajikistan and Chechnya, militant Islamic groups are involved in an armed struggle against the state; while in Somalia and Afghanistan, rival groups are vying for power. On the West Bank in Israel, Islamists are challenging the PLO as the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people; in Pakistan, they form an influential part of the opposition and in Turkey, Islamist's have taken control of local government in Istanbul and other major cities.

At various times throughout the history of Islam, its religious leaders have called for renewal of the faith and a return to traditional values. As early as the seventh century, the founder of the Shi'ah branch of the religion, Ali, believed that the ruling caliphs, Umar and Uthman, had drifted too far from the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBH).

At the end of the 19th century, there were similar calls from within the Ottoman Empire. The industrial revolution had made Christian Europe

economically stronger than the Muslim world. Turkish religious leaders believed this was because Ottoman rulers had strayed from their faith.

Instead of returning to stricter form of Islam, the Turkish leader Kemal Ataturka (1881-1938) decided to set up a non-religious state based on the western model of democracy. The Turkish Islamists, the Welfare Party, now considers Ataturk as a traitor to the faith.

The first modern Islamist group, the Muslim Brotherhood, grew up in Egypt in the 1930s as a reaction to compromises with the British that had been made by the Nationalist Wafd Party. They were also opposed to Soviet Communism and the state of Israel. Most modern Islamist groups have followed the anti-Western, anti-Israeli, anti-communist model of the Brotherhood.

But the most significant event in the rise of militant Islam was the Iranian revolution of 1979. There, the Islamic Republican Party of Ayatollah Khomeini successfully overthrew the pro-Western regime of the Shah and established a regime based on his interpretation of the Islamic 'Shar'ia' law.

The war in Afghanistan (1979-1989) between the then government of the late President Najibullah, supported by the Soviet Union, and Islamist holy warrior or 'mujahiddin' provided inspiration for a whole generation of Islamists. Young men from Sudan, Egypt, Algeria and other parts of the Islamic world fought in the war. They later returned to their home countries with stories of how Islam had defeated a modern superpower.

In addition, many groups such as the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria or Gama'a al-Islamiyah in Egypt also serve an important social function. The mosques act as center for the local community and give lessons in Arabic and the Qur'an. In some places where there is no state health care, there are Islamic medical centers.

Islamism has a powerful appeal because it offers followers a simple solution of social and economic hardship based on a return to a strict observance of the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBH). According to Professor Dawud

Noibi, Islamic consultant for the Iqra Trust: ‘The religious zeal of the Islamists, in the past as in the present, may well have been fired and sustained by the directive in the Qur’an, And (know) that this is the way leading straight to Me: follow it, then, and follow not other ways, lest they cause you to deviate from His way...’.<sup>559</sup>

## Conclusion

The message of Islamism is capable of attracting a broad spectrum of society because it links the core beliefs of Islam, shared by the vast majority of the population, with the solution of such basic problems as identity, morality, and economics in a rapidly changing society. In an age when secular solutions have been discredited by the failures and repressions of earlier governments and rapid modernization has meant the introduction of new social problems perceived as moral, the promise of a comprehensive "Islamic" solution is appealing, even if doubts; concerning details are expressed by many. Many Muslims see religion as the major moral force in society, without which human beings become animals. The perception of Islam as a comprehensive code for all aspects of life, and its intimate connection with both personal and national identity, grant the Islamic solution an authenticity no other ideology could have.

Given the acuteness of the anxiety evoked by the problems of modern urban society and as long as Muslim fundamentalists are not allowed to test their solutions by actual application, it is unlikely these movements will die out. Government repression has not succeeded in eliminating Islamic fundamentalism, partly because of its ideological legitimacy, and partly because religious gatherings cannot be outlawed (though they may be strictly controlled), and mosques offer a ready forum for the expression of religiously legitimate views that may prove politically volatile. Algeria's decision not to

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<sup>559</sup> Bright, Martin, ‘Islam: Back to Traditional Values’, *The Guardian*, 28 February 1995, p. 11.

allow a fundamentalist victory at the polls and the incarceration and execution of the leaders of the FIS has not extinguished fundamentalism from that country.<sup>560</sup> Like Egypt's crackdowns on Islamists since the 1950s, which in 1992 escalated into daily battles in Upper Egypt and the cordoning of an entire section of Cairo, suppression appears to lead only to the further radicalization of those advocating an Islamic form of government, and leads to widespread sympathy among those who would not otherwise be drawn to fundamentalism.

Although the dilemmas regarding identity and alienation are more keenly felt by the young, and as fundamentalists move into middle age they may abandon some of their earlier dogmatism, there is a ready pool of new recruits to take their place. Implementing economic policies that reduce the gap between the rich and the poor may help defuse a potentially volatile situation, but they will not, by themselves, remove the incentives for seeking societal solutions in Islam. The fundamentalist movements have had varied political success, but their success at reorienting Islamic discourse toward political and social issues has been considerable. The impact of the movements is evident in the broader resurgence of Islamism that can be witnessed all over the Muslim world today. Although the violent fringes are often discounted as "lunatic", the words of the fundamentalists often make a good sense to many people. It is unlikely that for some time to come people will easily dismiss Islam as irrelevant to social and political life.

## **CHAPTER 3: IMPLICATIONS FOR MODERNISATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **Introduction**

As a consequence of Islamist belief that society can be ruled by God, it is often argued that Islamists look to the past or the 'golden age' as a way to transform their communities. They are not mistaken in seeing Western

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<sup>560</sup> Chris Hedges, "Denied Election, Algeria's Muslims Counterattack", *New York Times*, 12 May 1993, p. A3.

civilization as the greatest challenge to the way of life that they wish to retain or restore for their people. The question is then asked: What implication does this have for the acceptance of modernization and development? And is it compatible with Western democracy?

Political and social explanations for the contemporary Islamist resurgence abound. Most of these, however, are reductionist in that they do not pay attention to the religious component of a clearly religious phenomenon. Without rejecting its social and political locations, one may believe the Islamist resurgence represents a paradigm shift involving a major reinterpretation of Islamic sources in the modern world.

### **Modernization and Development**

As has been illustrated in Chapter 2 of Part V, modernization has caused massive change to Middle Eastern society. This has resulted in creating class difference and social inequalities. Nonetheless, there remain great differences in the way Islamists view modernization. Some believe only what is written in the sources of Islamic doctrine is acceptable, while others accept change and adaptation as long as it is not contradict what is in the sources. Therefore, the effect Islamists have on innovation and continued modernization can only be ascertained by examining the interpretations of different Islamist groups, as discussed above in Chapter 1 of Part V. Islamic principles do not necessitate a return to the past or the complete rejection of modernisation or the West.

University of Khartoum Professor Ahmed An Na'im, a leader of Islamic reform movement in the Sudan, called the Republican Brothers, has argued that a "fundamentalist" retrieval of Islamic law may be reconcilable with Western notions of human rights in civil society. Imprisoned without charge in 1984 by then Sudanese President Gaafar Numiery, a self-proclaimed fundamentalist, An Na'im protested that Numiery's brand of Islamic fundamentalism, shared by other Islamist radicals in the Middle East and North Africa, was a mistaken attempt to impose the Shar'ia as an antidote to

Western neo-colonialism and cultural domination. He argued that the elements of Shar'ia invoked by Numiery (and Khomeini)- the prescriptions revealed to Prophet Muhammad in Medina dealing with penal law, civil liberties and the treatment of minorities and women- promoted a “historical dated Islamic self-identity that needs to be reformed”. Islamic economic and social justice and the exercise of legitimate political power depend upon retrieving the Prophet’s teaching delivered in Mecca. In An Na’im’s judgment these provide “the moral and ethical foundation” of the tradition. “The Medina message is not the fundamental, universal, eternal message of Islam. That founding message is from Mecca”, he writes. “This counter-abrogation [of the Medina code] will result in the total conciliation between Islamic law and the modern development of human rights and civil liberties”.<sup>561</sup>

Rare is the disputant in such a conflict who does not claim to be upholding “the fundamentals”. Rather, the battle is over what the fundamentals are, where they are to be found, and how and by whom they are to be interpreted. In demanding the retrieval of the Mecca prophecy, An Na’im concludes, “we [Republican Brothers] are the super-fundamentalists”.<sup>562</sup>

However, it is possible that Islamist activities have hindered the development of Middle Eastern countries because regimes have had to counter-balance between foreign policy, Western support, aid and influence with the demands from Islamist groups for a more Islamic society. Islamists often use rhetoric that emphasizes the negative impact of Western values on Muslim life in order to gain support. Thus, regimes must try to balance this reaction against the need to keep satisfactory relations with Western powers for aid and security assistance. For example, the Royal family in Saudi Arabia experienced dissent within its population as a result of requiring assistance from the Americans in preventing Iraq from Kuwaiti annexation. Similarly, the modernist secularist regime in Egypt has been subjected to Islamist

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<sup>561</sup> Appleby, R. Scott, ‘The Arab Problem and the Islamic Solution’, in *The Christian Century*, Vol. 109, no. 6, February 19, 1992, p. 190.

<sup>562</sup> Ibid.

violence throughout the last three decades directed against its relations with the West and its attempts to modernize and develop society. In particular, Egypt's Peace Treaty with Israel signed in 1978 cost President Sadat his life, dented Egypt's standing in the Arab world and fuelled dissent from internal Islamist factions.

Conversely, the West has an interest in retaining the status quo in the Middle East in order to retain political stability in the area.<sup>563</sup> This appears contradictory to the West's espousal of democracy in other regions. However, the introduction of democratic reforms could bring about the installation of Islamist states, thereby causing the breaking up of ties with West, which in turn threatens the Western interests in the Persian Gulf. Similarly, migration issues come to the fore for ex-colonial powers when civil war is a possible outcome of democratic elections, as in the case of Algeria.

There are also two more fundamental problems: the need for real economic development in the region and the need to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Economic despair breeds extremism throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Algeria's crisis illustrates this best. Massive unemployment and under employment breeds encourage violence, especially among the approximately 40 percent of Algerians under the age of 15.<sup>564</sup> More than forty years of gross economic mismanagement of a potentially rich nation is to blame for this disaster. A nation that once fed itself now imports most of its food. Algeria will need to produce, by some estimates, more than two million new jobs in the next few years just to stabilize the existing high unemployment rate.

More broadly, for decades, and especially since 1967, the region has collectively diverted enormous investment to purchasing foreign-made weaponry. For example, Iraq in the 1980s imported well over US\$100 billion

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<sup>563</sup> Karawan, I. A., *The Islamist Impasse*, Oxford: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1997, p. 63.

<sup>564</sup> *The Economist*, Pocket World in Figures, Profile Books Ltd., London, 1997, p. 88.

worth of armaments.<sup>565</sup> According to some estimates, as much as 20 percent of gross national product is spent annually on military spending, in a region with many of the highest population growth rates in the world. Iran, for example, has grown from 40 million people at the dawn of the Islamic republic; to an estimated 70 million by the end of the 1990s.<sup>566</sup> This is a region with an acute shortage of the most basic of human needs- water.

The enormous regional outlays for arms are particularly worrisome because of the growing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them in the region. The Gulf War highlighted that proliferation threat for Americans, but they actually escaped relatively unscathed. It could have been much worse. Had Saddam chosen, he could have used chemical weapons in his SCUD missiles against Tel Aviv and Riyadh. Had he waited to invade Kuwait until 1993 or 1994, one might well have confronted a nuclear-armed Iraq. One cannot be complacent that in future conflicts the world will be so fortunate.

Both the issues of economic development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are very much in the minds of the people of the Middle East. They are being discussed in the multilateral talks of the peace process and, more importantly, they are being discussed in the debates within Middle Eastern society. There is growing debate and interest in economic and political reform throughout the region. Democracy is a word that vanished from Middle Eastern vocabularies for a long time, but it is now back. It is a healthy sign, and should be welcomed. This debate, together with other factors analyzed herein, may explain the failure of Arab states to develop democracy.

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<sup>565</sup> *Federal New Service*, September 23, 1994.

<sup>566</sup> *Ibid.*

## Islamic compatibility with Western Democracy

The compatibility of Islam with Western democracy has been the subject of heated debates for decades, with no resolution in sight. Many Western thinkers believe that the Muslim Arab culture, which dominates Arab societies, is anti-democratic or “not hospitable to democracy”.<sup>567</sup> Samuel Huntington has noted that democracy is highly correlated with Protestantism and well tolerated by the oriental cultures of Hindu and Shinto. However, he considers Islam to be hostile to democracy, in part because it does not distinguish between religion and politics. Islam has also been portrayed as intolerant of alien ideas and diversity of beliefs and values.

One problem with such generalizations is the confusion between Islam as a universal religion and civilization and the non-democratic practices of Muslim political leaders in so-called Islamic states. Certainly, Muslim despots, many Muslim clerics (*ulema*), and some radical Islamist movements accept the widespread Western contention that Islam and democracy are antithetical, but many others have different points of view.

Islamic law (*Shari'a*) is comprised of two basic sources: the Qur'an (a revealed text) and the *Sunnah* (the sayings- *hadith*- and the exemplary behavior of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)). The Qur'an and the Sunna advocate the practice of consultation (*shura*) among Muslims and order the Prophet to consult with his companions,<sup>568</sup> thus providing the Islamic concept closest to that of modern democracy. Given the nature of *shura* and the diversity of views concerning other philosophical and political matters that are closely related to the concept of democracy, Islamists are bound to differ about the compatibility of Islam and Western democracy. These differences are reflected in *fatwa* (judgmental opinions), which allows a wide range of political systems to invoke Islam in legitimation of their authority.

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<sup>567</sup> Huntington, Samuel P., “Will More Countries Become Democratic”? in S. Huntington and Joseph Nye, Jr., eds. *Global Dilemmas*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985.

<sup>568</sup> *The Holy Qur'an*, particularly Suras 3 and 42 (3:159 and 42:38).

Opinion is divided among three broad categories. The first, which views Islam and democracy as either totally or largely incompatible, is referred to here as Islamist or “fundamentalist”. Although the term fundamentalism is alien to Islamic civilization and can be misleading, it is nevertheless used here for want of a better alternative. It implies a rigid, constrictive interpretation and strict adherence to the letter of the *Shari’a*. The second category finds Islam and democracy highly compatible, and will thus be called “liberal”. The third is an eclectic, intermediate position. It includes diverse interpretations of Islam in which only a few democratic ideals and institutions are accepted.

By its very nature, a fundamentalist interpretation of religion renders its proponents, be they Muslims, Christians, or Jews, largely intolerant of different beliefs and outlooks, a point of view that is incompatible with democracy. By contrast, proponents of Islamic liberalism believe that the *Shari’a* introduced general principles of governance: consultation, justice, freedom of faith, and equality among nations and races,<sup>569</sup> leaving Islamic civilization and religion free to embrace any political system. This liberal school was influenced by decades of interaction between the Arab world and Western culture, which led to the Westernization of many members of the elite in Arab countries.

The majority of Islamic groups, jurists, and thinkers are ambivalent toward Western democracy, neither rejecting it entirely nor fully endorsing it. Although they all believe in the unity of religion and state in Islam, and that the *Shari’a* should be a main source of legislation in Muslim societies, they adopt those democratic principles viewed as consistent with Islamic tenets. This heterogeneous group holds a wide array of viewpoints on democracy, ranging from that of the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood to that of traditional, religious Muslim laymen who practice rituals with little understanding of the broader issues of religion, philosophy, and politics. A

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<sup>569</sup> Jadaane, Fahmi, “Notions of the State in Contemporary Arab-Islamic writings”, in Ghassan Salame, ed., *The Foundations of the Arab State*, London: Groom Helm, 1987, pp. 141-42.

large segment of sheikhs, *ulema*, and imams (notably in the Azhar of Egypt, the distinguished academy of higher learning in Sunni Islam) are also tolerant of democracy. In short, although the fundamentalist position is gaining ground among the Muslim masses of several countries as an avenue for dissent, the belief that Islam and Western democracy are antithetical is by no means common to all Muslim thinkers. Advocates for each of the multitudinous viewpoints invoke *fatwa* in support of their position, and political culture is dominated by a moderate, middle-ground attitude toward democracy.<sup>570</sup> However, due to its basic conservatism and resistance to innovative ideas and practices, this political culture is not yet hospitable to a polyarchic order. Democracy is, after all, a very radical departure from centuries old Arab political traditions of authoritarianism and political apathy. Although not characteristic of Islam per se, these qualities do create a very real, although by no means insurmountable, obstacle to democratization in Muslim Arab societies, and it will take them some time to appreciate the benefits of democracy over traditional authoritarianism.

### External Forces

External factors can have a significant impact on the process of social transformation. For example, democratic parties and governments in Europe contribute to the emergence of democratic institutions in non-democratic parts of the continent.<sup>571</sup> Some analysts maintain that one such factor, colonialism, was instrumental in the worldwide expansion of democracy.<sup>572</sup> The linkage of Western economic aid to the implementation of some democratic measures in non-democratic states also helped reduce the arbitrariness of autocratic rule. However, proponents of this point of view are opposed by “dependency”

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<sup>570</sup> In Egypt, for instance, the religious views of al-Azhar and the Muslim Brotherhood prevail over the fundamentalist views of the militant Islamist movements.

<sup>571</sup> Huntington, S., and Joseph Nye, Jr., 1985, op. cited in note 567 above.

<sup>572</sup> Ibid. for details.

theorists who regard external forces as obstacles to, rather than promoters of, democracy in the Third World.

In Arab countries, the record of external intervention for the purpose of promoting or supporting pro-democracy groups is far from consistent. During the last three decades, the most powerful polyarchy in the world, the United States, either did not try or else failed to foster polyarchy in any Arab country. Dahl put the matter plainly: “The policies of the dominant country are likely to be influenced more strongly by strategic, economic, and geographic considerations than by any special preference for democracy”.<sup>573</sup> Thus, when the United States intervened militarily in Kuwait and economically and politically in other Arab countries, it served to strengthen oligarchies and dictatorships at the expense of pro-democracy groups and a potentially autonomous national bourgeoisie.

## Conclusion

Given the overwhelming power of the centralized Arab state over various aspects of people’s lives, the authoritarian nature of political leadership, the strength of kinship and sectarian ties, the absence of a civil society, the ambivalence of the majority of Muslim Arabs toward Western democracy, and the lack of continuous, strong external support for democracy, there seems little chance for Western democracy to develop and prosper in the Arab world, at least in the short run. It is true that in four countries - Jordan, Egypt, and, to a lesser extent, Kuwait and Yemen- there are signs of movement in the direction of democratization. But, even there the movement is slow and unsure. Arab polyarchy appears unlikely to evolve until human rights are respected; state forces of repression are neutralized or dispersed, and pro-

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<sup>573</sup> Dahl, Robert A., *Democracy and Its Critics*, New Haven, Conn., and London: YaleUniversity Press, 1989, p. 264.

democratic interpretations of Islam (what Leonard Binder calls “Islamic liberalism”)<sup>574</sup> enjoy widespread support.

### **A Clash of Cultures**

Islam was never prepared, either in theory or in practice, to accord full equality to those who held other beliefs and practiced other forms of worship. It did, however, accord to the holders of partial truth a degree of practical as well as theoretical tolerance rarely paralleled in the Christian world until the West adopted a measure of secularism in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

At first the Muslim response to Western civilization was one of admiration and emulation- an immense respect for the achievements of the West, and a desire to imitate and adopt them. This desire arose from a keen and growing awareness of the weakness, poverty, and backwardness of the Islamic world as compared with the advancing West. The disparity first became apparent on the battlefield but soon spread to other areas of human activity. Early Muslim writers observed and described the wealth and power of the West, its science and technology, its manufacturing, and its’ forms of government. For a time the secret of Western success was seen to lie with two achievements: economic advancement and especially industry, political institutions and especially freedom. Several generations of reformers and modernizers tried to adapt these and introduce them to their own countries, in the hope that they would thereby be able to achieve equality with the West and perhaps restore their lost superiority.

In our own time, this mood of admiration and emulation has, among many Muslims, given way to one of hostility and rejection. In part this mood is surely due to a feeling of humiliation: a growing awareness among the heirs

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<sup>574</sup> Binder, Leonard, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989.

of an old, proud, and long dominant civilization of having been overtaken, and overwhelmed by those whom they regarded as their inferiors.

For vast numbers of Middle Easterners, western-style economic methods brought poverty and western-style political institutions brought tyranny, even western-style warfare brought defeats. It is hardly surprising that so many were willing to listen to voices telling them that the old Islamic ways were best and that their only salvation was to throw aside the pagan innovations of the reformers and return to the True Path that God had prescribed for his people.

The struggle of the Islamists is ultimately against two enemies: secularism and modernism. The war against secularism is conscious and explicit, and there is a whole literature denouncing secularism as an evil neo-pagan force in the modern world and attributing it to the Jews, the West, and the United States. The war against modernity is for the most part neither conscious nor explicit, and is directed against the whole process of change that has taken place in the Islamic world in the past century or more. It has transformed the political, economic, social, and even cultural structures of Muslim countries.

Islamism has given an aim and a form to the otherwise aimless and formless resentment and anger of the Muslim masses at the forces that have devalued their traditional values and loyalties and, in the final analysis, robbing them of their beliefs, their aspirations, their dignity, and to increasing extent even their livelihood.

There is something in the religious culture of Islam, which inspired in even the humblest peasant, a dignity and a courtesy toward others never exceeded and rarely equalled in other civilizations. And yet, in moments of upheaval and disruption, when the deeper passions are stirred, this dignity and courtesy toward others can give way to an explosive mixture of rage and hatred which impels even the government of an ancient and civilized country or the spokesman of a great spiritual and ethical religion, to espouse kidnapping and

assassination, and try to find, in the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), approval and, indeed, precedent for such actions.

Therefore, the instinct of the masses is not false in locating the ultimate source of these cataclysmic changes in the West and in attributing the disruption of their old ways of life to the impact of Western domination, influence, precept and example. And since the United States is the legitimate heir of European civilization and the recognized and unchallenged leader of the West, the Americans have inherited the resulting grievances and become the focus for the pent-up hate and anger.

Nevertheless, the movement nowadays called Islamism is not the only Islamic tradition. There are others, more tolerant, more open, that helped to inspire the great achievements of Islamic civilization in the past, and we may hope that these other traditions in time will prevail. But before this issue is decided there will be a hard struggle, in which the West can do little or nothing. Even the attempt might do harm, for these are issues that Muslims must decide among themselves. And in the meantime one must take great care on all sides to avoid the danger of a new era of religious wars, arising from the exacerbation of differences and the revival of ancient prejudices.

In conclusion, the region is poised on the edge of both rising hopes and deeply entrenched extremism. Hope needs careful nurturing, while extremism needs containment. As we look to the future, progress in the Arab-Israeli arena is balanced by emerging crises in North Africa and the Gulf, and some worrisome long-term economic and military trends.

### **The Islamic Paradigm of Knowledge**

In the modern world, Islamists draw on a treasure of significant insights into the dilemmas and options facing them. The sources of these insights, from Shariati to Bennabi to Khomeini, may vary in many respects and often differ

in fundamental formulations. In Islamic organizations and movements, however, Muslims draw on this diversity to construct meaning in uniquely modern ways. At the level of practice, in contrast to that of the thinkers, a measure of affinity is clearly noticeable in terms of modern Islamic thought and practice. It is believable that the idea of a paradigm, proposed by Kuh<sup>575</sup>, is a useful and challenging way of coming to understand this common meaning-making exercise.

### Knowledge, Power, and Paradigm

In his analysis of modern medical, human, and social sciences, Michel Foucault has unmasked the power relations inherent in the formation of these disciplines. According to him, the attempt of these sciences to understand the history, logic, and essence of all phenomena is intrinsically a quest for power. The “recovery” of the world by the method of the modern sciences contributes to the discovery of a universal, objective, and rational truth. However, pitted against earlier versions of truth, this new scientific truth commands acquiescence:

Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse, which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanism and instances, which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged as saying what counts as true.<sup>576</sup>

According to Foucault the superiority of objective knowledge over irrational, magical, or esoteric insights does not reside in a universal truth witnessed and

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<sup>575</sup> Kuhn, Thomas, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2<sup>nd</sup> enlarged ed., “Post-script”, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1970.

<sup>576</sup> Foucault, Michel, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-77*, translated and ed., by Colin Gordon, New York: Pantheon Books, 1980, p. 131.

attested to by all. Rather, this new discipline of knowing conquered by consent, instead of consensus, and subjugated or rejected any alternative claims on truth.<sup>577</sup> The new order took control through its universal aspiration to uncover, dissect, and perceive. Moreover, its imperialistic designs were embedded in the very tools exercised. The universal “gaze” of panoptic representation, for example, embodied the attempt to redefine the world from a supposedly more objective vantage point. In contrast, all other perspectives were rendered subjective, parochial, and powerless.<sup>578</sup>

While Foucault emphasized the power relations in the formation of authoritative knowledge, Thomas Kuhn identified the basic framework of the modern scientific disciplines in his discussion of a “paradigm”. According to Kuhn, a paradigm was elaborated in a specific community that embraces certain laws and definitions, exchanges standard examples, and shares common values. For initiates in that group, standard and well-known examples reinforced its paradigm. Differences of opinion and perspective might coexist within a paradigm, even on crucial issues, as long as they are based on the acceptance of shared ground rules within a given community.<sup>579</sup>

The regime of scientific truths; have been felt by communities that experienced one form of colonialism or another. Science, civilized values, and the “white man’s burden” belittled, dismantled, and destroyed all local forms of knowledge regimes in favour of modernity and its colonial “interpretive community”.

While recognizing this destructive role of scientific truth in the past two to three hundred years in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, this thesis explores the regimes of truths within local communities. In particular, religions and

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<sup>577</sup> Ibid. pp. 109-33.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid. pp. 146-50.

<sup>579</sup> Kuhn, Thomas, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 1970, pp. 182-92.

their complex materials provide useful materials in which paradigmatic changes may be investigated. They appear to exhibit the same traits as other knowledge paradigms.

Patterns of religious knowledge, whether theology, metaphysical wisdom, or esoteric illuminations, can be analyzed as paradigms that exhibit the power to determine, authorize, admit, and exclude. Revolutionary developments in religious ideas within any historical context may accordingly be seen as new paradigms in place of the old. Christian theology, in the wake of nineteenth-century historical criticism, underwent precisely such a shift in its paradigm of religious knowledge. Paradigm shifts, moreover, always imply a power differential between the new and the old. Within communities of knowledge that try to embrace simultaneously the old and the new, power relations will necessarily be marked by both creativity and conflict.

Scripture-based religious traditions, such as Christianity and Islam, possess tangible textual origins for the derivation of religious knowledge.<sup>580</sup> Access to these origins provides individuals and social groups with the power to work out authoritative religious knowledge. The historical development of doctrine and practice within these religious traditions may be viewed as a continuous cycle of reflection between the origins and present situations and circumstances. The present needs to be justified in relation to an ideal past, and the past must be made alive in the present. This cyclical relation between past and present constitutes both knowledge and power. For Muslims, the Qur'an as revelation (*wahy*) and the normative biography of the Prophet (*sirah*) determine the originating past that must be related to the present. As Richard Martin has observed, these features of Islamic tradition provide the fundamental terms in which people "get things done in the social and political contexts of Muslims".<sup>581</sup> By careful selection from these sources, religious

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<sup>580</sup> Turner, Byran S., "Origins and Traditions in Islam and Christianity", *Religion* 6, no. 1, Spring 1976, pp. 13-30.

<sup>581</sup> Martin, Richard C., "Islamic Textuality in Light of Post-Structuralist Criticism", in *A Way Prepared: Essays on Islamic Culture in Honour of Richard Bayly Winder*, ed. by Farhad Kazemi and R. D. McChesney, New York: New York University Press, 1980, p.

actors can formulate a pattern of doctrinal beliefs and ritual practices that serves as a paradigm of religious knowledge. Drawn from a wide and divergent corpus, particular paradigms become empowered as authoritative definitions by religious figures; who have access to, and control over those sources and their interpretations. A paradigm of religious knowledge, therefore, is not merely knowledge; it is powerful knowledge in Foucault's opinion, because it arises out of a "politics of truth".

The impact of modernisation has endangered both creativity and conflict in the formation of religious knowledge. The political power of European colonialism and the hegemony of European science created a crisis in the Muslim world. Traditional elites in Muslim society, who had access to and control over the means of producing religious knowledge, were challenged by the emergence of new elites who derived their power from a direct or indirect involvement with the West. In this conflict between tradition and modernity, however, even members of the new elite turned to the original textual sources of the tradition in their quest for legitimation. By reappropriating and reinterpreting those sources, they sought a religious authenticity that was based upon a new understanding of Islam in the modern world. They developed what one prefers to call a modern Islamic paradigm, which is now outlined.

### The Modern Islamic Paradigm

This paradigm has drawn on three centuries of encounter between the Islamic and the Western worlds. In the eighteenth century, Sufi orders launched social and political resistance movements to colonial powers. In religious terms, they emphasized the importance of *hadith*, Islamic political mobilization, and

a spirituality rooted in the personality of the Prophet.<sup>582</sup> When this resistance collapsed, it was followed by an Islamic reformism that sought to re-educate Muslim intellectuals and demanded political representation from Muslim monarchs. Many reformists later joined the nationalists who inherited the reigns of power in the new nation-states. As these new nation-states could not realize the people's aspirations, an Islamic ideology formulated mainly by Egypt's Muslim Brothers and Pakistan's Jamaat-i Islami became the Islamic answer to modern worldviews.

The themes and structures of the modern Islamic paradigm constitute the shared meanings of a discursive universe. Although its images and forms have distinctive patterns in regional contexts, the commonalities are unmistakable. Indeed, Gellner likened standard Muslim beliefs and practices to a deck of cards dealt out differently in various Muslim societies.<sup>583</sup> In the modern period, one believes, a corresponding deck makes up the modern Islamic paradigm.

As John Esposito has observed, Islamic discourse has moved from the periphery to the mainstream of the Muslim world.<sup>584</sup> Numerous Muslim regimes have adopted the Islamic idiom as a social and political discourse. In spite of the failure of the specific political programmes advocated by such organizations as the Muslim Brothers and the Jaaat-I Islami, the ideology of Islamic resurgence, with its promise of an Islamic society and an Islamic state, has captured the imagination of a wide range of social groups in the Muslim world.

The writings of the Muslim Brothers' Sayyid Qutb and the Jaamt-I Islami's Abu al Ala al Mawdudi captured the basic elements of the Islamic paradigm

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<sup>582</sup> Voll, John Obert, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World*, Boulder: Westview, Press, 1982, pp. 44-49, 87-147.

<sup>583</sup> Gellner, Ernest, *Muslim Society: Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 100.

<sup>584</sup> Esposito, John L., "Trailblazers of the Islamic Resurgence", in *The Contemporary Islamic Revival*, ed., by Haddad, Val, and Esposito, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991, p. 44.

in the twentieth century. Their teachings were reflected and nuanced by others, among them Algeria's Malik Bennabi (d. 1976) and Iran's Ali Shariati (d. 1977). The modern Islamic paradigm is elastic and malleable enough to embrace both the conservatism of Mawdudi and the radicalism of Egyptian extremist groups. In other words, divergent and individual groups use the ideas to construct their discourses.

All major ideologues of the new paradigm have had some kind of direct exposure to the West. The images of Shariati at the Sorbonne studying for a doctorate in sociology and of Qutb as literary critic are linked inextricably with the production of the modern Islamic paradigm. Prominent western converts to Islam have added ingenious dimensions to the paradigm by bringing their own understanding of the West and its possibilities and limitations.<sup>585</sup>

The paradigm has been appropriated by an increasing number of modern and educated Muslims. In Iran, for example, Khomeini's popularity among the mullahs and the masses was matched by Shariati's appeal among educated youth.<sup>586</sup> The paradigm, however, enjoys its widest appeal among the educated youth, especially those in the science faculties. Since the new Islamic paradigm is constructed at the intersection of the modern West and traditional Islam, it is most appealing to students who straddle these two worlds. Such support, especially in the science and technology faculties, is not surprising, for the most potent symbol of the West is technological

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<sup>585</sup> Marty, Martin E., and Scott R. Appleby, "Conclusion: An Interim Report on a Hypothetical Family", in *Fundamentalism Observed*, ed., by Martin E. Marty and Scott R. Appleby, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991, p. 825; Gerholm Tomas, "Three European Intellectuals as Converts to Islam: Cultural Mediators or Social Critics", in *The New Islamic Presence in Western Europe*, ed., by Tomas Gerholm and Yvge Lithman, London: Mansell, 1990, pp. 275-77.

<sup>586</sup> Ahmad, Mumtaz, "Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia: The Jamaat-Il Islami and the Tablighi Jamaat", *Fundamentalism Observed*, ed. by Martin E. Marty and Scott R. Appleby, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991, p. 461; Arjomand, Said Amire, "Social change and Movements of Revitalization in Contemporary Iran", in *New Religious Movements and Rapid Social Change*, ed. by James A. Beckford, Paris: UNESCO, 1986, p. 87.

advancement, with which science students come into direct contact. As a reaction to this challenge, the paradigm is born.

The paradigm; is not appropriated by illiterate workers and peasants, for it rests on the twin legacies of Islam and modernity, both of which are logocentric discourses. The resultant discourse is also logocentric and thereby marginalizes such people. At the same time, the Islamic paradigm is not built on Western philosophical foundations or the rational disciplines of Islam. For many students of science, contact with the Islamic legacy is tenuous. They had only the most random selection from both sources, which ensures that the resources of the new paradigm appeared to be almost inexhaustible.

A key feature of the modern Islamic paradigm is its exclusive focus on the Prophet's life. This may sound like a standard feature of basic belief. The paradigm, however, focuses on the central importance of the socio-political dimensions of the Prophetic ideal. In this image, the political and social transformations brought about by the Prophet (PBUH) in seventh-century Arabia should be emulated in our own era and the political and social ideals of Islam ought to precede the purely religious dimensions emphasized by the Muslim legal and mystical scholars. Before the Prophet (PBUH) could be a source of ritual guidance or a model for the spiritual quest, he first ought to be an example of statesmanship and revolutionary leadership.

The need to search for ideals in the past was justified by the perception that the Muslim world had lost its place in world history. The modern paradigm contrasts the ideal with this present malaise in a growing and elaborate map of crises facing Muslims. Bennabi posited a view of history moving from the spiritual (prophetic) to the rational (Abbasid) and the instinctive (post-Abbasid), and saw the last element as a negative and irrational abyss from which Muslim society ought to be rescued. Shariati asserted that the malaise of Muslims was due to their existence in the grip of political oppression, economic exploitation, and religious hypocrisy. Mawdudi, on the other hand,

attributed the Islamic world's decline to the accession to power of the tribalistic Umayyad dynasty. In general, ideologues emphasized the need to diagnose the problems facing Muslims.<sup>587</sup> The perception of successive crises facing Muslims is illustrated clearly by contemporary history. Islamist resurgent ideologues, however, claimed a diagnosis for this decline and thereby gained a vantage point in understanding the root problems of Muslim society.

Most of the problems facing Muslims are attributed to an external enemy. The modern understanding of Islamic history projects a historical and cosmic confrontation between Islam and *jahiliyah*, the Islamic term for pre-Islamic Arabia's ignorance of divine revelation. In contemporary times, the West is the chief manifestation of *jahiliyah*. The term refers to disbelief in general and the rejection of Islamic ideology in particular. Even Muslims who serve the national and socialist goals of the nation-state are considered to be part of *jahiliyah*. The demonization of the West does not pardon entirely those Muslims who are responsible for the Muslim world's decline. In some trends of Islamic thought, the West is still the arch-villain. In addition, however, Muslims are "colonizeable", "lax", or devoid of true Islamic consciousness. In this manner, the West and its Muslim admirers are regarded as obstacles to the realization of Islamic ideals.<sup>588</sup>

The modern Islamic paradigm is rooted in the modern world. From the point of view of modernity, it may often seem like holding tenaciously to the past.

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<sup>587</sup> Abrahamian, Evrand, "Ali Shariati: Ideologue of the Iranian Revolution", in *Islam Politics and Social Movements*, eds. Edmund Burke and Ira. M. Lapidus, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, pp. 289-97; Barium, Fawzia, "Malik Bennabi and the Intellectual Problems of the Muslim Ummah", *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 9, no. 3, Fall 1992, pp. 325-27; Sachedina, A. A., "Ali Shariati: Ideologue of the Iranian Revolution," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. by John L. Esposito, New York: Oxford University Press, 1983, pp. 191-214.

<sup>588</sup> Haddad, Yvonne Y., "The Revivalist Literature and the Literature on Revival: An Introduction", in *The Contemporary Islamic Revival*, eds., Haddad, Voll, and Esposito, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991, pp. 6-7; Binder, Leonard, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, p. 188; Metcalf, Barbara Daly, "Islamic Arguments in Contemporary Pakistan", in *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning: Comparative Studies of Muslim Discourse*, ed. By William M. Roff, London: Croom Helm, 1987, p. 144.

But from the point of view of traditional Islam, it is unmistakably modern. Muslim ideologues that, are not uneasy in this position, are suitably placed to appropriate the technologies and images of the west to the advantage of the new Islamic paradigm. A distinction is made between western technology and its social institutions. The former is accepted, especially for its use in education and public announcements.<sup>589</sup> Unlike the traditional domain of the oral *khutabah* and lesson, which were the prime organs of communication, the Islamic resurgence exploits newsletters, magazines, booklets, brochures, and pamphlets. While the print media has the potential for a wider audience, its effective range is limited by the rate of literacy in particular countries. The Islamic resurgence does not avoid the use of personal oral communication and eagerly adopted developments in audio and visual technology. This particular approach was exemplified in the Iranian revolution when Khomeini's tape-recorded sermons and statements provided an effective means of communication.<sup>590</sup>

The modern Islamic paradigm, however, does not only enjoy access to western technology but is prone to draw on the features of western social development. For example, the Jamaat-I Islami's argument against liberal measures favoring the emancipation of women drew on the worst scenarios of abused women and prostitution in the West.<sup>591</sup> This critique was used to bolster Islamic arguments for traditional family values. In a more sophisticated manner, the Islamisation of the social sciences uses the critique of Habermas and Foucault to undermine the hegemony of western knowledge.

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<sup>589</sup> Esposito, John L., "Trailblazers of the Islamic Resurgence", in *The Contemporary Islamic Revival*, ed., by Haddad, Voll, and Esposito, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991, p. 38; Shepard, William, "Fundamentalism, Christian and Islamic" in *Religion*, no. 17, 1987, pp. 360-67; Lazarus-Yafeh, Hava, "Contemporary Fundamentalism: Judaism, Christianity, Islam", *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 47, Summer 1988, pp. 27-39.

<sup>590</sup> Antoun, Richard T., *Muslim Preacher in the Modern World*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989, pp. 240-141; Algar, Hamid, ed., And trans., *Islam and Revolution: Writings & Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1980, p. 55.

<sup>591</sup> Metcalf, Barbara Daly, "Islamic Arguments in Contemporary Pakistan", in *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning: Comparative Studies of Muslim Discourse*, ed. by William M. Roff, London: Croom Helm, 1987, p. 140.

It deftly avoided the possibility that Islamic knowledge is also prone to legitimizing the status quo or to at least representing particular relations in Muslim society.<sup>592</sup> In short, from social institutions to knowledge formations, the Islamic paradigm freely fashions an ideal world between the selectively appraised decadence of the modern world and the carefully chosen ideals of an original Islamic society.

In principle, the modern Islamic paradigm's ontology consists of two modes of reality: the Creator (the ultimate and transcendent God) and created reality.<sup>593</sup> This kind of dualism leaves no space for either human or spirit hierarchies. The modern obliteration of angels, holy men, and miracles is a key feature of the new Islamic paradigm's egalitarianism.

The paradigm presents Islamism as the perfect system for social and individual existence. Perfection in this regard is often perceived as the rational foundation of Muslim belief and practice. Both the unity of God and the organization of the day into worship slots, for example, are manifestations of Islam's rationality. Moreover, it is believed that Islam is a *total* and *natural* system for human existence. It represents the highest ethical and moral manifestation of human civilization as regards the promotion of freedom, human dignity, and justice. The human being is inclined by its very nature to conform to the system enunciated and illustrated by the Prophet (PBUH). Islam's various components interact perfectly with each other and could not act in isolation. For example, theft was a moral, social, and criminal act that could only be addressed through the integration and simultaneous operation of the moral (Friday lecture of admonishment), social (public punishment), and criminal (amputating the right hand) systems. Even in such controversial areas as slavery and the status of women, modern writers insist that the total

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<sup>592</sup> Winkel, Eric A., "Paradigms and Post-modern Politics from an Islamic Perspective", *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 8, no. 2, 1991, pp. 235-57.

<sup>593</sup> Al Faruqi, Ismail R. and Lois Lamya' al Faruqi, *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*, London and New York: Macmillan, 1986, p. 74.

Islamic solution offered the best possible human answer.<sup>594</sup> Unlike nineteenth-century reformism, there was no overt attempt to show that the ideals of western civilization were matched by Islamic culture. Inspired by the strong sense of independence sweeping Africa and Asia, the Islamic ideology often claimed superiority over the West. The continuing predicament of black Americans as freed slaves in North America was cited as an example that could be used to incriminate the West. In contrast, it was argued that slavery in Muslim societies led to societies wherein slave scholars and dynasties flourished.

The paradigm aimed to promote a “conscientious” individual imbued with a new vision, ready to change the course of history. The goal of Islamic resurgence training was first and foremost a psychological attitude. Shariati called for new intellectuals (*roshanfikir*) who would take over the leadership of Muslim society. Qutb and Said Hawwa awaited the true and believing commando (*katibah*). Bennabi offered a new consciousness of civilization and culture (*hadarah* and *thaqafah*) to inspire new intellectuals. Like Shariati, Bennabi used western notions to identify the role of Islam and Muslims in the modern world. All of these individuals, nevertheless, were committed to developing new visionaries and new intellectuals.<sup>595</sup>

This new paradigm sought to define and reformulate the meaning and significance of institutional structures in society, including the mosque, the home, and the bazaar, all of which were subject to a policy of reform based on the ideal history projected onto the first Islamic community. In addition, new institutions (schools, welfare organizations, and clinics) were added to the traditional. Since the modern paradigm was located firmly among educated groups, its major activity was not the communal prayer or the collective *dhikr* but the study circle, discussion forum, seminar, and conference. These new meetings confirmed the salvific nature of the modern Islamic paradigm in a

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<sup>594</sup> Metcalf, “Islamic Arguments”, p. 140; Ahmad, “Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia”; p. 462.

<sup>595</sup> Sachedina, A. A., “Ali Shariati”, pp. 211-12; Hawwa, Said, *Jund Allah Thaqafah wa Akhlaq*, Beirut: Dar al Kutub al ‘Ilmiyah, 1979.

degenerate and decadent world. The traditional activities were convenient recruiting grounds for the new paradigm, or, once they had been reclaimed and redefined, symbols of its authenticity and legitimacy.

While the modern Islamic paradigm's appeal is strongest among university students, it also has the potential to become the dominant paradigm – the “orthodoxy”- in Islamic communities. Student organizations did not always popularize the new understanding of Islam, but there were broader historical conditions that facilitated its understanding, such as the global village tendency of the modern world which ensured that an increasing number of people would be affected by what Lawrence called the great western transformation. As western norms and values in everyday life affected more and more people in the Muslim world, very few Muslims remained unaffected.<sup>596</sup> Consequently, independent enclaves of traditional Islam patterns would only survive as curiosities, for continual contact between the West and Islam resulted in the spread of the modern Islamic paradigm.

Within Islamic societies, however, traditional educational institutions are finding themselves in possession of texts and interpretations that are alien to an increasingly large numbers of Muslims. From Morocco to the Philippines, Islamic institutions face an uncertain future as they lose their vitality and continue to nurture Islamic disciplines as icons of the past. Egypt's al Azhar University has had to accommodate the demands of successive Egyptian governments, while Deobandi institutions in India and Pakistan hold on dearly to an Islamic legacy in an ever-shrinking world.<sup>597</sup>

The Islamic resurgence, moreover, has come of age and has established its own educational institutions. Though earlier attempts to reform al Azhar in the nineteenth century were unsuccessful, and 'Abduh's attempts to reform it were singularly rejected, in 1962 Saudi Arabia established an Islamic

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<sup>596</sup> Lawrence, Bruce B., *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt against the Modern Age*, New York: Harper and Rowe, 1989.

<sup>597</sup> Rahman, Fazlur, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982, pp. 42, 138.

university with Mawdudi as one of its founding members.<sup>598</sup> Other Islamic universities have taken educational reform one step further by pointing out the integration of the Islamic and the modern. Newly founded international Islamic universities in Africa and Asia espouse some form of integration of modern and traditional Islamic disciplines. The International Islamic University of Malaysia, for example, proclaims that it will

Cater for students from any part of the world who wish to pursue a university education in Humanities, Science, and Technology, viewed from an Islamic perspective and fundamentally related to Islamic values and principles.

Such scholars as al Attas, Nasr,<sup>599</sup> and al Faruqi (d. 1986) have formulated this integration of Islamisation of knowledge. It was the last-mentioned who proposed a whole programme for universities from within the International Institute of Islamic Thought.<sup>600</sup> The Islamisation of knowledge is the intellectual counterpart of the political project of the Islamic resurgence and represents the clarion call to subject all modern sciences to Islamic values and principles. In the context of this thesis, Islamic educational reform, up to and including the Islamisation of knowledge, was the educational institutionalization of the new paradigm and contributed to its promotion among Muslims.

The global village of world communities, the weakness of traditional institutions, and the emergence of modern institutions favored the modern Islamic paradigm's success. Eventually traditional elites, such as Iran's Khomeini and Lebanon's Musa al Sadr, adopted the new Islamic paradigm.<sup>601</sup>

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<sup>598</sup> Smith, Charles D., *Islam and the Search for Social Order in Modern Egypt: A Biography of Muhammad Husayn Haykal*, Albany: State University of New York, 1983, p. 18.

<sup>599</sup> Nasr, Sayyed Hossein, *The Need for a Sacred Science*, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1993.

<sup>600</sup> The International Institute of Islamic Thought, *Islamiyat al Ma'rifah*, Herndon, VA: IIIT, 1986, pp. 171-76; Haddad, "Revivalist Literature", p. 12.

<sup>601</sup> Ajami Fouad, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shi'a of Lebanon*, Ithaca:

## Conclusion

The production of knowledge, according to Foucault, was simultaneously the production of power. In the Islamic case, the emergence of a new paradigm based on a reinterpretation of the sources of Islam has empowered a new elite in the modern Muslim world. Despite its protagonists' loudly proclaimed divine intervention, the paradigm cannot be extricated from its particular historical location. It began to take shape in the eighteenth century, when neo-Sufi orders emerged, and has since matured as the Islamic ideology within Muslim nation-states.

The new Islamic paradigm available to the modern intellectual consists of fundamental themes, resources, and structures. It posits a belief in an ideal history of the Prophet that focuses, first and foremost, on the socio-political transformation of society. Islam is an essentially this-worldly system whose various components interact perfectly in the right circumstances. The paradigm identifies a degenerate present, the main causes of which are the West's moral standard, Western surrogates in the Muslim world and Sufism. It seeks to redefine traditional Islamic symbols and institutions while introducing new forms of religious observance such as the study circle and conference.

Even as they differed in emphasis from one context to another, the themes of the paradigm were compelling. The spread of literacy, western domination, and its own institutionalization have promoted the paradigm. More importantly, as a knowledge claim, it challenged and acquired power over traditional patterns of understanding Islam. In local context, the paradigm became a key claim to authority among Muslims as it began to play a greater role in Muslim organizations and institutions.

By itself this would not be problematic. However, the divine origin of the modern Islamic paradigm is accompanied by a sense of self-righteousness, which mirrors that of positivism and other modern ideologies. It is now a

powerful worldview that perceives itself as locked in a profound battle with other ideologies, among both Muslims and the West. As a paradigm it has the power to legitimise, explore, and exclude. Simply by force of argument, it enables careers, projects, and political campaigns.

## **CHAPTER 4: REGIME RESPONSE**

### **Introduction**

It has become a commonplace to speak of Islamism as a threat to regional stability, if not a global threat to Western interests. In the West the term rings immediate alarms because it arouses images of violence and fanaticism, which despite their validity in particular contexts, distort a complex phenomenon. Moreover, governments under domestic pressure from Islamic opposition groups appeal to Western fears of Islamism either to emphasize their claims to Western economic aid, and/or to avoid the challenges of democratization.

From North Africa to the Persian Gulf, many Arab governments are confronting popular pressures – peaceful and violent, Islamic and secular – for reform.

The term ‘fundamentalism’ brutally homogenizes the striking diversity within the political and social world of Islam, lumping together regimes, groups and individuals with widely differing agendas. It also implies that the phenomenon of political Islam, because it conflicts with Western secular notion of the need to separate religion and politics, is new and aberrant. Yet, the prototype of contemporary Sunni movements – the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood – was founded in 1928, drawing on a long tradition of revival and reform in Muslim history. What is new is that Islamic activism, instead of being geographically localized, has developed trans-national features made possible by modern communications and information technology.

Its causes remain primarily internal. However, in countries where Islam is the inherited faith of all or most of the population and is constitutionally enshrined as the 'primary' or 'sole' source of law, Islamic political activism cannot be dismissed as a perversion. For the past 30 years Islam has been a key feature of Middle Eastern politics. Those in power used it to bolster their legitimacy. It is also used by those in opposition as a language of criticism on a wide range of issues relating to culture, the economy and society as a whole.

### **Challenging Regimes**

Rising trends of political Islam and popular participation force Muslims to grapple with the issue of identity.

Across the length and breadth of the Arab world, peoples' demands for a louder say in the affairs of the state are pushing their way to the top of the political agenda. The word *dimuqratiyya* (democracy) is increasingly on people's lips, and autocratic rulers are beginning to respond.

Meanwhile, another movement of equal importance is contending successfully for the hearts and minds of millions of Muslims: the resurgence of Islam, both as a religion to fulfill spiritual needs, and as an ideology to fill a political void. For since its inception, Islam has embodied a total approach to life, with its strictures applying equally to private and public concerns.

'Islam doesn't just stop at the door of the mosque', says a Western diplomat with long experience in the region. 'Islam runs right through life, and you can't divide it from politics'.<sup>602</sup>

It seems clear that Islamic movements hold an advantage in the emerging competition for power because Islam resonates so deeply in most of the region's countries. The question is not whether Islamic politics will transform the Arab world, but how they will do so.

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<sup>602</sup> *B.B.C. World Service News*, April 1993.

The real challenge is to mesh Western liberal democracy with the authentic bases for an Arab identity, which is the single most important thing that is happening in the region. While others see it from a slightly different angle: This is a time for questions. People in the Middle East and North Africa are tormented between their Islamic identity and the need to catch up with the modern world. Not a single Arab country is yet ruled by a government that could be called democratic in the Western sense. But both internal and external forces are exerting pressures to change this picture. Some Arab citizens look outside the region to political liberalization in Eastern Europe, Africa, and Latin America, and wonder why the Middle East should be excluded from this trend. Others look no farther than their doorsteps, and blame their rulers for the poverty, joblessness, and ill health they so often face. And some groups seeking change have gotten a significant boost from outside.

All these moves toward broader popular participation in government, while arising from different circumstances, have had one result in common: Parties, groups, or movements basing their appeal on Islam have been the quickest and ablest to fill the newly opened political space. When Islamist activists preach through mosques, or educational and social institutions, they are only responding to the pulse of the people. They believe that Islam is the glue that holds Arab society together. It is the peoples' faith. It is not an alien thing that needs bringing to them, it shapes their whole life and mentality.

That gives Islamist activists a natural advantage. At the same time, there are historical reasons why they are now encountering little competition in their battle for voters' hearts and minds. The beacon of Communism has been extinguished, and the ideological wave of secular Arab nationalism with a strong socialist tinge that swept the region 50 years ago has washed up on a beach of failure. Secular regimes have not found answers to deep economic problems, nor have they resolved the long-festered Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel is as powerful as ever, and Arab unity is an even more distant dream.

Hence, Islam is all that remains as a moral reference for the people. The fact that the fundamentalists are dominant is not because they use terrorism. It's because all the other opposition forces are decimated. Arab governments, who feared leftist parties in the post-colonial period, often used Islamic groups to counter them in order to buttress their own power. Moreover, in the Cold War atmosphere, the fundamentalist movement was used in a ferocious way as one of the most influential weapons against communism.

King Hussein of Jordan, for example, gave protection to the Muslim Brotherhood at the same time he dissolved all opposition political parties. The Jordanian government, argue opposition figures, has systematically worked to discredit all leftist ideologies. The only ideology it did not attack, because it could not, was Islam. So the only option for people was to join the religious forces.

Thus many regimes that now feel threatened by Islamists were themselves the first to legitimize Islam as a political force. To organize a communist group, you have to find safe houses. But, to organize an Islamist political group, you can meet openly five times a day, in the mosque. That organizational strength, developed over decades when secular opposition parties were for the most part banned, has proved its value. Islamists represent the core of an active movement working systematically and in a dedicated way, while all other forces are divided and disorganized.

Such organization has, of course, been fed by plentiful funds. Wealthy religious individuals in the Gulf, some with close ties to their governments, have long financed such groups as the FIS in Algeria, HAMAS in the Israeli-occupied territories, and the radical *Jamaa Islamiya* and the Islamic Jihad in Egypt. Western intelligence agencies charge that the Iranian government also has been generous. The money has been used shrewdly. The Islamists have invested infinitely more in social projects offering the poor inexpensive healthcare, subsidized food, or low cost housing than they have in guns and ammunition, and the political impact has been great.

The Islamists also have effectively espoused the most popular causes. In Saudi Arabia, conservative religious scholars have attacked government corruption and nepotism more forcefully than any secular liberal opposition group. In Egypt, the Islamists influence sectors of society that are deprived and feel insecure, and they move amongst them much more effectively than do secular groups to convince them that they can solve their problems. In Algeria, The FIS attracted many voters through its outright rejection of the FLN-dominated past, rather than through its Islamic platform alone. People were scandalized by the inequalities, by injustice, and the FIS asked the right questions.

Encouraged by all these advantages, and eager to press them to the full, Islamists across the Arab world have grown triumphalist. As Hassan al-Turabi- the prominent Islamist behind the Sudanese government, and one of today's foremost Islamist political thinkers- puts it, "If you don't allow Islam in through the front door, it will come in through the window".<sup>603</sup>

### **Islamists undermine Islam in the West**

The activities of tiny minority acting in the name of a supposed "fundamentalist" interpretation of their religion are defining and damaging the perception of Islam among non-Muslims. Every time a Muslim terrorist throws a bomb or kills a Western tourist, he adds another brick to the wall of hostility between Islam and the West.

Islamists are those pushing radical Political Islam. The term conjures images of bombing the World Trade Center, hard-eyed mullahs preaching holy war against the west, and bigoted fanatics with their minds set in the distant past. Such Muslims cannot be seen as representative of their 1.3 billion co-religionists around the world,<sup>604</sup> any more than Klu Klux Klan militants typify

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<sup>603</sup> Ibid.

<sup>604</sup> See note 3 of Part One, Introduction.

American Christians. But they are the products, albeit extremist ones, of a movement that is shaking Arab political life to its foundations: Islam as a political life.

The word derives from Christian tradition, but to Muslims it carries little meaning. The Protestant religious sense, all Muslims are “fundamentalist”, because a central pillar of their faith is that Islam’s holy book, the Qur’an, contains the literal word of God as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In the Middle East, only secularists tar all their religious political enemies, not just those who do reject as heretical the entire social, technological, and economic changes use the term since the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

The influence of such Muslims on their fellow Arabs seems minimal. But the revival of Islamic values in private life and the resurgence of Islam in politics are growing daily.

In Saudi Arabia, demonstrators calling for the overthrow of the royal family and demanding an “Islamic” government have been arrested. Elsewhere in the Gulf, North Africa, Turkey and in even beyond the Muslim world, there have been threats by Islamists acting in the name of Islam.

The backlash is predictable; the suicide tactics of political extremism that allies itself with religious fanaticism has been denounced, something almost any government is powerless to prevent without draconian restrictions of ordinary Muslims. In Egypt, police interrogate any young man with a beard who is known to attend mosques.

Moreover, Islam is driving into predominantly Christian countries in a new campaign of expansion and conquest, a bishop at a Vatican synod claimed in a warning to his European colleagues.

Giuseppe Germano Bernardini, Archbishop of Izmir in Turkey, spoke at a synod of European bishops on what he said was Islam’s growing challenge to Christianity, even on its home ground. “The domination has already started with petrodollars, used not to create jobs in poor countries in North Africa and the Middle East, but to build mosques and cultural centers in Christian

countries ... including Rome, the center of Christianity”, Bernardini declared. “Who cannot see in this a clear programme of expansion and reconquest?”<sup>605</sup> The dire tone of his warning contrasted with repeated overtures to the Islamic world by Pope John Paul, whose comments on Islam frequently stress the values it shares with Christianity. The archbishop was one of several at the synod to express frustration in dealing with the Islamic world.

Muslims across the world have reacted with outrage to what they see as a growing hostility toward their religion and its one billion adherents. They accuse the West of demonizing Islam as the new ideological challenge to the West after communism. They say that the very word “fundamentalist” is a slander against the entire religion. Hence, any good Muslim who obeys the precepts and practices of his/her religion is a fundamentalist.

On the January 11, 2002 front page of the *New York Times*, United States President George Bush is quoted as stating: “Our nation, in our fight against terrorism, will uphold the doctrine of either you’re with us or against us”.<sup>606</sup> This statement has been repeatedly presented as a threat, to the numerous independent and non-independent nations of the world, that America’s war of terror must receive absolute support.

But the Islamists or fundamentalists, however they are known, have set the agenda and they present Muslim governments with a dilemma. Few governments, in an age when concern about the suffocating blanket of western influence is producing a popular yearning for a return to Islamic roots, dare challenge the radicals on theological or political grounds.

Islam has become extremely defensive; there is little innovative inquiry in al-Azhar University among the religious elders or in intellectual circles. Few political leaders dare say that much “fundamentalist” thought is half-baked. And, on political grounds, many are hesitant to challenge a movement among

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<sup>605</sup> *The New Zealand Herald*, Friday October 15, 1999; World Section, p. B3.

<sup>606</sup> *New York Times*, January 11, 2002.

the poor, the have-nots and the less educated, and which represent a formidable political challenge to the establishment. Some governments, such as Egypt's, are determined to crush the movement by force while quietly adopting some trappings of the new Puritanism. Others, such as Jordan, have decided to enfranchise the Muslim Brotherhood, rally Islamic moderates and build a new theological college to train preachers.

But all governments run up against deeply held beliefs and attitudes: the notion of "martyrdom" has been hijacked by political extremists who can use it to sanction suicide attacks on "infidel" targets; the common equation of "the West" with decadence, crime and the disintegration of Western – especially American – values gives the hardliners a strong hand and makes any political identification with the West somehow "un-Islamic". HAMAS, for example, draws on political frustration with the peace process; Yassir Arafat is ready for a political, but not a religious confrontation. To any Muslim brought up on the idea of an "*ummah*", or international Muslim community, condemnation of a brand of Islam claiming to be purer than modern compromises with the West is emotionally almost impossible.

### **The Fruits of Repression**

In most Muslim countries, decades of repression of nationalist, liberal, and Marxist trends left a wide-open depoliticised society, a political and intellectual vacuum that is now filled mostly by Islamist militants. Khomeini saw his revolution greatly facilitated by the Shah's suppression of republican, liberal, and leftist groups. In Egypt, the Islamist *Jama'at* have been greatly helped by the regime's failure to co-opt the liberal and secular opposition with meaningful governmental roles or to organize truly competitive elections. In Algeria, the FLN ran a monolithic single-party system, operating a political desert of its own making, until the FIS mounted its challenge.

The rise of the Islamists has been aggravated by the regimes' own complacency, too. After decades of ostracism, Islamists of late have been more tolerated than the secular rivals, and have even been encouraged to attack and denounce them. Egypt's el-Sadat supported their return to counterbalance the Nasserist opposition to his rule, while al-Nimery in Sudan tolerated the Islamists and espoused some of their demands while he was fighting the Sudanese communist and democratic parties. Islamists were, for four decades or so, allies of King Hussein of Jordan against radical Palestinians and Arab nationalists. Now, amid the Islamist tide, ruling regimes are warily trying to involve secular opposition forces in their defense against the Islamist challenge. But mutual suspicion and the weakness of secular groups mitigate against a significant bolstering of the regimes' power.

In retrospect, it seems the real moment to democratize was two or three decades ago, when a secular alternative to the ruling regimes remained. Then, Islamists were still politically marginal, the political discourse was predominantly secular, most elites were Western-educated, governments were still able to control societies, the demographic bomb had not yet exploded, urbanization was still manageable, and secular parties had not yet been discredited. But the regimes were too authoritarian to understand the urgency of such a shift, let alone to embrace it; the soviet model was not yet invalidated, and the West was much less preoccupied with human rights and democracy.

Today, those regimes face a problem similar to the one many European governments experienced immediately after World War II: how to deal with large communist parties, representing about 20 to 30 per cent of the electorate, when those parties were not ready to commit themselves to the basic principles of democratic, peaceful alternation of governments. Governments in France and Italy chose to let the communists be represented in parliaments and city councils but kept them away from the executive for

decades until communist parties were waning from the political scene in the early 1980s.

If today's Middle Eastern governments followed a similar path, they would allow Islamist groups to register supporters and elect members of parliament to represent their views, represent their ties and constituents, and take over municipal or provincial governments. Doing so might expose the Islamists' inability to govern or devise economic and social policies that are radically different from (let alone superior to) those of the governments in place.

The governments do not accept that argument. They regard such an opening to the Islamists as too risky. Islamist groups might well register more than 20 or 30 per cent of the vote in a fair and free contest. Such support was demonstrated in Algeria's December 26, 1991 elections. The electorate, unused to free elections and unaware of what is at stake, could prove to be volatile and unpredictable. In a burst of populist enthusiasm, it could put the Islamists in power, especially if winning a plurality is sufficient to govern. Moreover, while West European countries had a Marshall Plan pumping more than US\$100 billion (in today's dollars) into their coffers and benefited from legitimate, charismatic figures like Charles de Gaulle etc., who could face down the communist challenge, the secular leaders in today's Muslim world are hardly inspiring, and no Marshall Plan is available to them. Those who do sit on oil riches tend to use them to strengthen their (and their neighbors') authoritarian rule rather than to democratize.

The West, for its part, seems as embarrassed by the Islamist challenge as do the local governments. What can the West do beyond its rather successful repression of Islamist-inspired international violence? Unqualified support for democracy antagonizes local governments and triggers mixed feeling in the West. No Western government wants to be faced with President Jimmy Carter's misfortune of having "lost" Iran to an obscurantist force through democratic means. On the other hand, a policy that punishes any interruption of a democratic process – except those in the Muslim countries – is not

tenable over the long run. Islamists undoubtedly have a point when they compare Western sanctions against Haiti's military junta, Burma's military dictatorship, or President Alberto Fujimori's post-coup regime in Peru with the West's ill-concealed relief after the coup in Algeria. The West cannot indefinitely pursue a policy by which it consoles the leader of the Burmese opposition with a Nobel Peace Prize while it embraces the generals in Algeria, or condemns Saddam Hussein's dictatorship and Iran's "obscurantist rule" while it overlooks other Middle Eastern dictators and absolute monarchs.

To find a realistic way out of their hypocrisy, Western governments should consider a few guidelines: First, they should seek to know who the Islamist groups are and what they are doing. That cannot be achieved if the West views the Islamist challenge solely from the perspective of a security threat, nor if it is preoccupied with content analysis of the Islamists' frequently contradictory statements. Too often, Islamist groups are lumped together as a single threat to Western interests. That is both unfair and self-deluding: it ignores the diversity among Islamists and implicitly assumes that they are the only anti-Western force in their societies. The West's security-driven approach to the Islamists underestimates the societal services they provide and the validity of some of their demands. And the West can hardly rely on frightened, isolated local governments to properly educate it on opposition forces.

More generally, the west has to learn that its model of the secular nation-state is not as universal as it presumes, and other forms of political organization may be as valid. Even if the world has ceased to be strategically multipolar, it remains so in the cultural sphere. Too often, the Western triumph in the Cold War is mistakenly equated with a triumph of Western political and intellectual models.

Some popular "truths" about Islam also need to be revised. Shallow and obsessive references to the religion of Islam by Western observers do not

explain the lack of democracy in Muslim societies, or the conditions of women and the lack of economic prosperity. After all, authoritarianism has reigned as the most common form of government from time immemorial, not only in the Muslim world but; in such areas as China, Russia, Latin America, and much of Europe. Economic mismanagement and squandering resources are not peculiarly Islamic features, either; they are all too typical throughout the Third World. Moreover, one can even argue that women's status in most Muslim countries is better than in many non-Muslim Asian countries.

Western attacks on Islam and negative media stereotypes of Muslims help confirm Islamist paranoia about a supposed Western plot to eradicate Islam. Some self-appointed Western "experts" also play into the hands of the most extreme Islamists through their excessive characterization of Islam's uniqueness as a religion. Islamists, too, would like their fellow Muslim to believe that Islam is really too self-contained to adjust to modernity or democracy. It is high time to denounce the implicit alliance between old-guard Western orientalist and new-wave local Islamists on the ill-defined presumed uniqueness of Islam.

Second, the West should encourage the present regimes to gradually associate moderate Islamist forces with their governments. The Islamist ideological trend can no longer be ignored; Islamists should take part in state's legislative bodies and later in the executive branches. To begin, pre-electoral pacts should be negotiated between the government and other political forces, including the Islamists. The pacts should guarantee that any party, though gradual, would not reverse the democratic process. It should never be forgotten that most governments and even many secular opposition groups have not shown themselves to be any more committed to democracy than are the Islamists. In addition, electoral laws must preclude a winner-take-all system, which is utterly inappropriate for countries where democracy is too fragile to be submitted to such a brutal form of leader selection.

Some countries have reached pacts preceding the organization of elections. Kuwait produced the Jeddah covenant, Lebanon the Taif accord, Jordan the National Charter, and Yemen the Unity Charter. Unfortunately, those experiments in gradual democratization, including guarantees for the permanence of the process itself, have been victims of manipulation by the government, in Yemen's case, or by some mighty neighbor, in Lebanon's. Such experiments have not been adopted in larger, more influential countries. But neither limitation diminishes the validity of reaching pre-electoral mutual guarantees.

Third, the West should criticize human rights violations and cheating in the electoral process whenever they occur. The West has little credibility on those issues: Saddam Hussein is justifiably condemned but none of his neighbors, some of them no less dictatorial, are so systematically scrutinized. The West's discourse on human rights and democracy always seems conditioned on strategic considerations. Such conditionality may be legitimate- crusades for morality stop where interests start- but then Western governments cannot claim a higher ethical standard than those of anti-Western forces. The West is selective indeed in its choice of enemies as well as in the United Nations resolutions it wishes to see implemented, so it should not be surprised if its moral discourse is ridiculed in the Muslim world.

Fourth, Western states ought to acknowledge that democracy is not necessarily built upon a one-person, one-vote system. In complex developing societies, established ethic or sectarian group rights are as important as human or individual rights. Individualism is not a universal, or a morally superior, philosophy; communitarianism is still valid as a shield against authoritarianism and arbitrary rule. Hence, the protection of minorities must be part of any approach to the Middle East and North Africa. Islam has historically provided formulas for maintaining several bodies of legislation within the same polity, which apply to individuals on the basis of their religious affiliation. If Muslims are to be ruled according to the *Shar'ia*, non-

Muslims need the right to be ruled according to their own legislation and customs. Returning to those unique forms of legal and social plurality is easier, and possibly more urgent, than creating Western-style pluralism. Islamists are more willing to abide by those forms than by Westminster-type pluralist politics.

Fifth, the West must help achieve substantial results in resolving the Arab-Israeli question. The rapid realization of Palestinian self-determination and the eventual emergence of a Palestinian state, are the only antidotes to the growing Islamist radicalism among Palestinians. A balanced end to that conflict would also help minimize the military control over Arab polities and help dispel the deeply held view that the (Christian) West backs (Jewish) Israel against (mainly Muslim) Palestinian Arabs. Arab government may be preoccupied with issues other than fighting Israel (such as dealing with the Islamist challenge to their own rule), but Muslim masses manipulated mostly by their governments on this issue in order to deflect problems at home, are still very concerned about the Palestinian issue as a case of foreign seizure of mostly Muslim land.

Israel's apprehensions about Islamic groups in the Middle East and the Iranian military build-up have of late grown very loud. Yet, Israel for years has been playing HAMAS against the PLO, and Hizbullah against the legitimate governmental authorities in souther Lebanon. Israel was an important actor in the arms-for-hostages exchanges of the U.S. Iran-contra affairs, sending arms to Khomeini's Iran. Now, Israel complains about the growing Islamist influence it helped foster.<sup>607</sup>

The new cliché of Israeli commentators is to contend that Israel and Arab governments should be allies against Iran and Islamism. But Israel has a long way to go before it can realize such an alliance. It will have to admit its strange relationship to pro-Iranian groups in the past and its tilt toward Iran in the Iran-Iraq war; and it will also have to accept the politically pluralistic PLO

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<sup>607</sup> *Primary Source. The B.B.C. World Service News, during the 1980s.*

as an interlocutor in the peace process and Palestinian statehood as an eventual outcome. Israel's posture will also influence how strong the Islamist rejectionist challenge to the Arab governments supporting the peace process will become. To delay a settlement acceptable to the Palestinians is to encourage HAMAS as an alternative to the PLO, and Islamists as a replacement for secular Arab governments. The Israeli deportation of hundreds of Islamists in December 1992, without any progress having been recorded in the peace talks with the Palestinians, has been a blow to Israel's credibility, to the peace process, and Lebanon's sovereignty. It tells a lot about Israeli nervousness and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's inability to grasp that to decapitate HAMAS without offering concessions to the Palestinians is to reinforce HAMAS's position in their ranks.

Finally, the West will need to stop its highly selective approach to military intervention. Any Muslim, even one who does not support the Islamists, would observe that Western governments have been willing to intervene where Muslims were killing or threatening other Muslims (in Kuwait, in Kurdish areas, in Somalia, and in Afghanistan) while those same governments remain passive where Muslims are killed by a non-Muslim force (in Bosnia, in Chechnya, and in Kashmir). In the West, decisions on intervention are viewed as the product of varying strategic interests, military feasibility, and objectives. But to Muslims, it is at best the application of an old double standard.

Muslims have taken note of the rise of Western, notably American, interventionism in the Muslim world over the past decades: Syria (1983), Libya (1986), Iran (1988), Iraq (1990-91), Somalia (1992-93), Afghanistan (2002- ), and currently in Iraq. While the motivation may differ in each case, Muslims recall that their part of the world had not previously experienced direct military intervention by the United States (with a minor exception in Lebanon in 1958). Westerners thus should not be surprised by a resurgence of Muslim xenophobia toward Western interference, even for humanitarian

purposes. Islamists are likely to use that xenophobia to challenge, embarrass, and eventually topple regimes. Western intervention will only be acceptable if they are accompanied by an even-handed approach to the area's problems, particularly the Palestinian-Israeli issue and the inequitable distribution of wealth among Middle Eastern countries. Otherwise, Western double standards, misconceived and selective military interventions, and an obsessive emphasis on security in the west's approach to the Muslim world may prove to be the push Islamists need to take power.

### **Challenge and Response**

The first two decades of the twentieth century saw the direct or indirect colonization of the Muslim world by various western countries, thus representing one of the bleakest periods of Muslim history. In the inter-war years some rays of hope emerged in the Muslim world with the launching of various independence movements. This period also saw the rise to prominence of two Islamic movements that were to have a major influence on the Islamic response to the western challenge for the rest of the century: the *Ikhwan al-Muslimum* in Egypt and the *Jama'at-i Islami* in the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent. The socio-economic, geopolitical, and intellectual-cultural challenge of the west to the Muslim world produced varying responses on the part of the Muslim world. While movements such as the Wafd Party or the Muslim League represented the "nationalist" response to this challenge, the *Ikhwan* and the *Jama'at* were manifestations of the "Islamic" response.

After more than sixty years of struggle, it is becoming painfully clear that the response articulated by these movements to the western challenge is proving to be ineffective. Despite some impressive historical achievements, they find themselves marginalized in their own countries, having almost no influence whatsoever on policy formulation and the intellectual and cultural character of society, for these areas continue to be dominated by westernized elites. As a result, Muslim intellectuals have started to ask "why?" Why have these

movements, which at one time held so much promise and even produced some impressive results, failed to respond adequately to the western challenge, and what steps need to be taken to remedy the shortcomings? Questions of this nature are being asked increasingly in Muslim circles, and some possible answers have been offered.

Khalid Bin Sayeed's *Western Domination and Political Islam: Challenge and Response* explores precisely these questions and issues. The author argues that the major shortcomings of the *Ikhwan* and the *Jama'at* are their commitment to ideological purity, the attendant disregard of political realism, and the failure to adhere to the logic of their own thinking.<sup>608</sup> Due to these shortcomings, Islamists have not been able to diagnose properly the true nature of the western challenge and, as a result, cannot formulate an effective response. Sayeed goes on to argue that the first step in formulating an effective response has to be a clear understanding of the nature of this challenge. It is only after this proper understanding has been developed that specific Islamic principles can be gleaned from "the world of Islamic ideas" and implemented and contextualized in order to give birth to an Islamic order.<sup>609</sup> After putting forth this critique, Sayeed analyses the Islamist response in three countries: Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. These three chapters cover familiar territory in that they document events and issues that have received much attention previously. The final two chapters of the book are the most interesting, in that one detects an attempt to articulate an alternative plan of action that will allow Muslims to respond adequately to the West.

Sayeed's alternative is based on certain key principles borrowed from the thought of such prominent Muslim thinkers as Muhammad Iqbal, Ali Shari'ati, Abdul-Karim Surush, and Fazlur Rahman. According to Sayeed, first the Muslims have to realize that each Muslim state has to concentrate on

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<sup>608</sup> Sayeed, Khalid Bin, *Western Domination and Political Islam: Challenge and Response*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, p. 37.

<sup>609</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 48-49.

its own socio-economic development before one can even begin to talk about Muslim unity. In their enthusiasm, Islamists often glorify the concept of the *ummah*, forgetting that one cannot talk of a strong and united *ummah* if its individual constituents are weak. This is an idea that Sayeed borrows from Muhammad Iqbal. He then argues that the methodology used by the Muslims to implement Islamic principles has to be examined critically and modified. Sayeed notes that Muslims must separate “normative Islam” from “historical Islam”. The implication here is that many of the cultural norms that exist in contemporary Muslim societies have nothing to do with Islam and therefore are not to be considered as binding and obligatory. Next, Muslims must engage in a process of identifying the specific problems that plague their societies and then turn to the Quran for guidance, identify the general Islamic principles enunciated therein, and then return to the problematical situation to contextualise the general Quranic principle.<sup>610</sup> Here Sayeed echoes the thought of Fazlur Rahman. In his opinion, Muslims can learn valuable lessons by studying the methods of mass mobilization used by Ghandi and Mao for the purpose of building a healthy modern society. Sayeed credits Khomeini for tapping the masses’ latent energy and using it to bring about political change, but notes that Khomeini failed to use the same resource to bring about a socio-economic revolution.

Even though one may disagree with some of the diagnoses and prescriptions regarding the issue at hand, the author has done an admirable job in presenting his argument. The book is a valuable contribution to the debate regarding the steps Muslims must take in order to respond adequately to the western challenge in the coming decades.

### **Islam and the Challenges of Democracy**

Devising a secular system that accommodates Islamic *Shari'a* is the main challenge facing the attempt to win the Islamists to the cause of democracy.

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<sup>610</sup> Ibid. pp. 138-39.

The subject of Islam and democracy is at the core of the debate between regimes and Islamist movements in the Muslim world. Both use it, in fact manipulate it, to further their purposes, to rally the support of the population, to counter their image in the West that they are anti-democratic and allay the 'fears' of the West, especially the United States, as to their intentions. Both try to affect U.S. foreign policy, to exploit to its own advantage the new American activism for democracy and to steer to their benefit the answer to the question of when and under what conditions will the Muslim world join the democratic revolution.

In the past several years as a result of events in the ex-Soviet Union, developments in Latin America, the growing movement towards privatization and the free market economy and the Gulf War, suddenly interest in the question of "Islam and democracy" has grown exceptionally in the United States. Scores of seminars, conferences to debate the issue were organized. Tens of books, pamphlets and monographs were published. Some of course, jumped to clamor their long-held and characteristically patronizing orientalist premises about the despotic nature of Islam and its basic incompatibility with democracy.

Others, students of the subject, knowing full well the misunderstandings, which surround Islam in the West and how the behavior and pronouncements of some Islamists and fundamentalist were going to reflect on the perception of Islam, became defensive where they could and should have been critical. Many of us turned apologists.

It has become imperative, therefore, in a discussion of Islam and democracy to start by asserting that whatever the merit of the case theoretically, it doesn't reflect in any way on our position towards the behavior of some of the Islamist parties in their bid for power. To condemn unequivocally the killing of unveiled women in Algeria, to condemn the targeting of intellectual in Algeria, Egypt and wherever else it is taking place, to condemn vehemently

the insensitivity to minorities in the Sudan, should be posited as an axiom before addressing the question of Islam and the challenge of democracy.

It is also necessary to reiterate certain basic premises, most importantly that there is no monolithic interpretation of Islam and that liberal interpretations are just as valid as conservative interpretations and that the freedom to interpret is open to every Muslim. To quote no less an authority than Hassan al-Turabi: “Private individuals in Islam do not enjoy freedoms, they assert them, they have to enjoy those freedoms, they have to speak their mind... You have to worship God by thinking originally and contributing. And you have to express that contribution and you have to do it even if the other party, even if the government doesn’t like it. And you are a better Muslim if you present a dissenting view rather than a conforming view. This is the typical Islamic education”.<sup>611</sup>

Killing and otherwise silencing the opposition to conservative, fundamentalist, and Islamist interpretations has gone on for too long. Other Muslims or students of Islam have been put on the defensive. Islamists and fundamentalists have set the agenda and the methodology of the debate. Liberal Muslims have in general, felt insecure on Muslim grounds. Most of them were Western-educated, knew little about Islam and did not really feel the need to learn because they assume that the domains of the political and religious were clearly delineated by the traditionalist of the nineteenth century. Politics and religion were thought to be two totally different disciplines. Liberal Muslims accepted assertions of Muslim *ulema* like Ali Abdel-Raziq that Islam had no political content. They quoted the Prophet as saying: “You know better in matters pertaining to your daily life”, thinking that this settled the argument. They did not appreciate the extent to which Islam has a practical political significance for Muslims nor did they face a political culture. They historicized and socialized Islam thinking they were thus transcending it by relegating it to the domain of the spiritual. And, when

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<sup>611</sup> *Al-Ahram Weekly*, Cairo, May 5, 1994.

confronted by Muslim fundamentalists pointing out contradictions between their thought and Islam, liberal Muslim thinkers fell back on Muslim reformist interpretations to claim legitimacy within the Muslim establishment. Thus they allowed the discourse to be hijacked by the conservatives and fundamentalist *ulema*. Many scholars on the subject who were known for their liberal interpretations have either been silenced by fear of the fundamentalist, or have turned conservative themselves.

Ironically, the twentieth century has ended with the Muslims rehashing the same arguments, which were prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century. The question of the compatibility of Islam with democratic forms of government was then addressed very seriously, and many thought resolved by highly respected Muslim scholars. In fact, in the twentieth century many Arab and Muslim countries – Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and other – had democratic experience, with parliamentary systems of government, separation of power and human rights activists and no one questioned the compatibility with various forms of socialist government, without any questions about Islam either.

In fact, until the late 1970s few Muslim intellectuals considered it relevant to discuss the subject of Islam and its compatibility with democracy.

## **Conclusion**

The governments in Middle East are most greatly affected by Islamist activity because of the destabilizing effect violence and terrorism have on the regimes. Public support is lost as the Islamists financially sustain the public where the government cannot, and politics is in disorder as government officials and leaders are targeted for assassination attempts.

Regimes have responded to the Islamist threat to their stability in several ways. In many cases they have used inclusionary tactics where Islamists are permitted to become institutionalized and spread their message through

mosques, educational facilities and other institutions in society. The regime is then able to keep a close watch on Islamist development but must also incorporate Islamic rhetoric into its dialogue and policies so as to balance the societal leaning towards Islam, as was apparent in Egypt under President Sadat's rule.

Conversely, governments strictly control the media and often propagate messages in order to legitimize themselves and compromise the Islamists. Co-optation of the *ulema* is also another tool used by regimes in order to have control over what is dispersed into public discourse and teachings. *Ulema* cooperation is also valuable when the government requires the support of the religious leaders in order to carry out its policies. Saudi Arabia has employed this type of tactic by making the *ulema* salaried state employees. The regime has then been able to rely on their backing, for example, when the need arose for Islamic approval for Western assistance when Iraq invaded Kuwait. "On 18 January 1991, the ulema described the battle then just beginning as a jihad against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, identified as an 'enemy of God'"<sup>612</sup>

In the case of violence and terrorist activity regimes use an exclusionary tactic where Islamists cannot participate at any level of society legally. In these cases regimes resort to a hard-line policy of repressing Islamists through imprisonment, torture and execution. However, as a result of repression there is little chance of democracy being able to take hold, so there will always be instability within the regime. As a consequence, corruption is rampant in order that the incumbent ruler can retain power through co-optation of supporters.

Furthermore, regimes have instituted regional links in order to gather information on or restrict movements of Islamists. For insurance, Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia made liberal and multilateral agreements in order to obtain information regarding Islamist movements and activities.

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<sup>612</sup> Karawan, I. A., *The Islamist Impasse*, Oxford: *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, 1997, p. 32.

## **PART SIX: CONCLUSION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In times of crisis and historic change, some social groups look to the past to find out how to cope with the present. In the Middle East and North Africa, dissatisfaction with the present and fear about the future have led some groups to develop a restorationist image of society. The phenomenon most often associated with this view of history and society is what is more recently called Islamism.

The thesis analyses that Islamism can be interpreted as a theocratic totalitarian political ideology bent on establishing a pious Islamic state wholly based on the radical interpretation of Islamic *Shar'ia* law by the Islamists. The thesis describes Islamists as those who wish to use political Islam to organize and guide society as a total way of life, which encompasses not only social life but also politics and economics. Anchored in a religious creed, Islamists are a radical utopian movement closer in spirit to communism, fascism and nazism than traditional Islam. They advocate that Muslims true to God's message must reject the status quo and build entirely new institutions. They see Islamism as the basis of a political system touching both the spiritual and temporal aspects of life. Whatever the problem, Islamism is their solution.

### **Islam**

It has been argued that Islam begins with an understanding of the deep and abiding appeal of traditional Islam, a religion, which today has close to a billion adherents. Their loyalty to Islam is quite amazing: Muslims rarely leave their faith in favour of another one.

It argues that Islamic problems began during the Renaissance in Europe. The religion of Islam is essentially a religion of success; it is a winners' religion. The Prophet Muhammad fled from the city of Mecca in A.D. 622. By 630,

only eight years later, he was back in Mecca as a ruler. The Muslims began as an obscure group in Arabia and within a century ruled a territory from Spain to India. In the year 1000, Islam was on top no matter what index of worldly success one looks at- health, wealth, literacy, power. This association became customary and assumed: to be a Muslim, was to be a favourite of God, a winner.

The trauma of modern history that began almost 200 years ago involved failure. This began when on 1 July 1798 Napoleon landed in Alexandria, Egypt, and has continued since then in almost every walk of life- in health, wealth, literacy, culture, and power. Muslims are no longer on top. Then, they were masters of the world, and now they are not even masters of their own destiny. The thesis presents that there have been three main responses to this trauma. Three main efforts to make things right again: secularism, which means openly learning from the West and reducing Islam to the private sphere; reformism, which means appropriating from the West, saying that the West really derives its strength by stealing from Muslims, therefore Muslims may take back from them, a middle ground; and Islamism, which stresses a return to Islamic ways but in fact takes hugely and covertly from the West- without wanting to, perhaps, but still very much doing so.

### **Islamism**

It has been argued that Islamism is an ideology that demands man's complete adherence to the sacred law of Islam and rejects as much as possible outside influence, with some exceptions such as access to military and medical technology. Islamism is imbued with a deep antagonism towards non-Muslims and has a particular hostility towards the West. It amounts to an effort to turn Islam, a religion and civilization, into an ideology.

The word "Islamism" is highly appropriate, for this is an "-ism" like other "-isms" such as *fascism* and *nationalism*. Islamism turns the bits and pieces within Islam that deal with politics, economics, and military affairs into a sustained and systematic programme. As the leader of the Muslim Brethren put it some years ago, "the Muslims are not socialist nor capitalist; they are Muslims." I find it very telling that he compares Muslims to socialists and capitalists and not to Christians or Jews. He is saying, we are not this "-ism," we are that "-ism." Islamism offers a way of approaching and controlling state power. It openly relies on state power for coercive purposes.

Islamism is, in other words, yet another twentieth-century radical utopian scheme. Like Marxism-Leninism or fascism, it offers a way to control the state, run society, and remake the human being. It is an Islamic-flavored version of totalitarianism. The details, of course, are very different from the preceding versions, but the ultimate purpose is very similar.

Islamism is also a total transformation of traditional Islam; it serves as a vehicle of modernization. The ideology deals with the problems of urban living, of working women and others at the cutting edge, and not the traditional concerns of farmers. As Olivier Roy, the French scholar, puts it, "Rather than a reaction against the modernization of Muslim societies, Islamism is a product of it".<sup>613</sup> Islamism is not a medieval programme but one that responds to the stress and strains of the twentieth century.

It has been argued that Islamism is a huge change from traditional Islam. One illustration: Whereas traditional Islam's sacred law is a personal law, a law a Muslim must follow wherever he is, Islamism tries to apply a Western-style geographic law that depends on where one lives. Take the case of Sudan, where traditionally a Christian was perfectly entitled to drink alcohol, for he

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<sup>613</sup> Roy, Olivier, *The Failure of Political Islam*, Paris: Le Seuil, 1992.

is a Christian, and Islamic law applies only to Muslims as in the days of the Moors of Spain. But the current regime has banned alcohol for every Sudanese. It assumes Islamic law is territorial because that is the way a Western society is run.

It has also been noted that Islamism has few connections to wealth or poverty; it is not a response to deprivation alone. There is no discernible connection between income and Islamism. Rather this movement is led by capable people; coping with the rough and tumble of modern life. The ideology appeals primarily to modern people; it's fascinating to note how many Islamist leaders (for example in Egypt, Turkey and Jordan) are engineers and physicians.

Islamism is by now a powerful force. It runs governments in Iran, Sudan, and was in Afghanistan until recently. It is an important force of opposition in Algeria, Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Authority. It is estimated that some small minority of the Muslim population worldwide is Islamist. But it is a very active minority and it has a reach that is greater than its numbers. Islamists are also present in the West, and particularly in the United States, and, to an stunning extent, dominate the discourse of American Islam.

The Islamists' success in Iran, Sudan and Afghanistan show that were they to come to power elsewhere, they would create enormous problems for the people they rule, for the neighborhood, and for the West. Their reaching power would lead to economic contraction, to the oppression of women, to terrible human rights abuses, to the proliferation of arms, to terrorism and to the spread of a viciously anti-American ideology. These are, in short, rogue states, dangerous first to their own people and then to the outside world.

Islamism is not one ideology. Inside the same society, several directions of Islamism can be found, and these are seldom cooperating. Groups of ideologies in Islam that want to use the Shar'ia to its full extent, meaning that secular forms of governments and institutions are considered foreign to a true Muslim society.

People belonging to an Islamist group, call themselves, and are called by others *'islaamiyy* for men and *'islaamiyya* for women. Both men and women are called Islamists in English.

### **The four central motifs in Islamism:**

#### Differences

Islamists are strongly concerned with social differences between the rich and the poor world, as well as inside the Muslim communities. As responsibility for the poor and the needy is central to Islam, any situation with unevenly divided wealth and many poor people is unacceptable to a zealous Muslim.

Islamists react towards the West for its reluctance to address the poverty of the world, and towards the rich in their own societies, who are considered equally reluctant.

#### Cultural Problems

Islamists feel that they are losing their culture; that Western clothes, values, social patterns, political structures, language and identity are replacing what there once was. Islamists reject many elements of the modern culture (but accept a lot); such as those they feel are superfluous and dangerous.

In many countries, the growth of Islamism must moreover be seen in connection with an inferiority complex towards the prosperous West, which is not only felt by Islamists, but many Muslims.

## The Golden Age

All Muslims are well aware that they were the superior military and cultural force in the world for centuries; the reversed situation in the modern ages hurts the pride of Muslims.

Many Muslim countries have tried to copy both the capitalist system, and others the socialist system, but all have seen little but marginal success. Islamists are working for re-establishing a third alternative: the political system that once made their society grow from unknown tribes into world rulers in few a centuries.

In order to achieve this, the Islamists are not rejecting modern technology, but are very concerned about implementing it on a grand scale in an Islamist society. And because of the technology, the Islamists believe that the coming Islamist society will be an even better society than the one of the Golden Age. However, there are no Muslim sources indicating that the Islam of the Golden Age was as strict and conservative as the Islamists believe. All indications show that it was the liberal Islam that paved the ground for cultural, social and military achievements of those days — values foreign to all major Islamist groups. Hence, there is reason to say that the Islamist idea of the Golden Age is a dramatic falsification of history.

Moreover, the Muslims of the Golden Age were often pragmatic in the sense that they borrowed solutions from other cultures, both from the lands they conquered as well as neighbour states. Except for the Islamists' fascination with modern technology, they have almost only negative attitudes towards culture and values outside the Muslim world.

## Political Alternative

Islamism has been implemented as a real political alternative in modern times. Several countries have implemented Islamist politics: principally Iran and Sudan, but also to some extent Pakistan and Libya. Saudi Arabia has had

an Islamist politics for a long time, but it is not regarded as Islamist by many because of the differences between the rich and the poor.

But the large numbers of problems these countries have faced have, to a large extent, discredited Islamism. What has been represented as good solutions for economy, safety and welfare have not yielded the promised results. In many cases, the situation has worsened compared with the time before the implementation of Islamism, as is the case of Sudan, Pakistan and Iran.

On a smaller scale, but just as important in many countries, are all the small welfare institutions that Islamists have set up in rural areas and in poor neighbourhoods in the cities. These institutions have served people often left out of state run services, like health care and support for unemployed. It is not clear however, if the Islamists run these with sincerity or because these institutions have proven effective to spread their ideology.

### **General Characteristics**

Islamism is a phenomenon primarily taking place in cities, and the most prominent members are young people with higher education, often with a modest background and often with parents living in the countryside. Islamists often have a feeling that, despite the efforts they have put into their studies, they have not managed to climb very much socially, and that the jobs they were aspiring for are given to people with good social connections but fewer qualifications.

Islamists do not see themselves as revolutionaries, in the sense that a revolution will turn the society upside down and create new social structures from scratch. The revolution that Islamists hope for is the one that will bring old values *back*, and wipe out all degenerated elements in the modern society. But Islamism is just as much a fight against what they perceive as old, rigid values, still found among many Muslims living in rural areas. Islamists seek

to bring people of the rural areas into the modern age, at the same time as they fight for preserving many old values they believe cities dwellers are losing.

For quite some time, Islamists' political programmes were simple and basic: it was based on the Shar'ia. But demands from rulers, intellectuals and people have forced the Islamists to concretize the actual content in their politics. Sayyid Qutb, one of the main characters of Sunni Islamism, in response has stated that this content would be clarified through the practice of Islamism, which was a statement that Shar'ia was not clear on all points, and that man had to base his decisions on more sources than just it.

In economical politics, most Islamists defend a system close to the social democracy practised in many European countries. When Islamists diverge from social democracy it is more often in the direction of capitalism, which is the case with FIS in Algeria, than in the direction of communism. The most specific Islamist view on economics is the refusal of interests on loans and deposits. Instead banks should work as investment organizations earning money from real profits. There have been attempts to establish such banking systems, but in some cases the results have been catastrophic, as in Egypt in the 1980's.<sup>614</sup>

The Islamist view on women are variable, but in many cases the structure of the Islamic organizations, along with the political programmes, have made many women join the Islamists in order to liberate themselves. It is quite common that Islamists defend the woman's right to work and to have political and social influence. But in general, Islamist groups see men as belonging more to life in society, while a woman's primary obligation is towards the family. Therefore, seclusion of women; is rarely professed by Islamists.

Islamists are not democrats, even if there have been successful attempts at making the Islamists part of a democratic structure, as in Jordan and for a brief period in Turkey, but yet, Islamist programmes are not in favour of dictatorship even if this has been the temporary result of Islamism in Iran and

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<sup>614</sup> Kazarian, E. *The Failure of Islamic Banking in Egypt*, London, 1991.

Sudan. Dictatorship can be transitory, but the ideal structure in an Islamist society is the system of *Shura*, where the leaders are in frequent contact with the entire society, and ask about their needs, and for their ideas, and are obliged to show respect for what they are told. Islamists have shown little ability to define structures that will prevent the leaders in the *shura* system from starting to rule as dictators.

Islamists have in many cases been involved in violent acts. The reason for resorting to such means appears to be the same over and over again: the Islamists try to change the rulers and men of power through intellectual means, but as this seldom leads to anything and as there are seldom any democratic channels to use, violence has been the last resort.

But during the last three decades violence seem to have become an intrinsic part of the Islamist ideology, and the will to use violence doesn't need much provocation anymore. This seems to be the situation for some groups both inside and outside the region.

Islamism's most enduring feature remains its capacity to provoke anger, frustration and fear. Most Islamist groups seek to create a climate of fear through seemingly indiscriminate barbaric acts of violence against innocent members of society throughout the region. Their terrorist actions are sudden, violent, and highly publicized.

Unlike conventional warfare and guerrilla insurgencies, terrorism is primarily an urban phenomenon carried out by small cells of individuals who rarely battle government troops. Most Islamist groups seek to create a climate of fear through seemingly indiscriminate acts of violence. As a lone Islamist in protest at a specific government policy can perpetrate terrorism.

The problem of finding an appropriate military response further distances terrorism from warfare among nation-states. Deterrence, pre-emption and retaliation take on new meaning when applied to Islamist groups. Deterrence rests heavily on rationality. But the rationality posited in how governments

react to each other's policies cannot be applied to Islamist groups that use suicide tactics. It is likewise difficult to deter an enemy whose objective is to activate an escalating cycle of violence. Identifying who perpetrated a given incident is often difficult, as is locating the Islamists' base of operations. Islamists can move quickly from one location to another, making intelligence on their whereabouts outdated. They can merge easily into urban areas, thus ensuring that any retaliatory or pre-emptive attack will result in the death of innocent civilians.

Unquestionably, each terrorist attack upon American, Western, or Israeli citizens and facilities becomes an assault upon national pride and honour. The emotional impact of watching terrorists' hold, abuse, or kill innocents is understandably great. The public demands action, and no president or prime minister can walk away from the event. In this charged atmosphere, the distinction between threats to national security and threats to national honour is blurred. While the public may not always recognize a national security threat, it certainly can see the death and destruction inflicted by Islamist terrorists on September 11, 2001.

The gist of the Islamist ideological current is that neither nationalism nor socialism has been able to deal with the challenges facing the Muslim world. Restoring faith and discipline, with the associated values, and rekindling the fervor that characterized early Islam, as Islamists see it, are considered key to a revival that will restore dignity to the people of the region. Revealingly, they vaunt Islam as the best ideology not the best religion, therefore exposing their focus on power. By nature, Islamism is anti-democratic and aggressive, anti-Semitic and anti-Western. Outside their own movement, Islamists see every existing political system in the Muslim world as deeply compromised, corrupt and mendacious.

It has also been argued that Islamists have charged their governments not only with corruption, impiety and neglect of the national culture and heritage, but also with disrupting traditional national society in the name of modernization without providing the promised benefits in compensation. Inherently, Islamists argue that basic values have been destroyed. The city has corrupted the soul. But poverty is more pervasive than it ever was in traditional times. The wealth of the few is more ostentatiously flaunted. And yet the developed world surges ahead: mocking the house of Islam. This is the language of the new antithesis- Islamists, turned against the former national synthesis- current dictators, of modernity and authenticity and carrying the banner of resurgent political Islam. It analyses that these moments of confrontation and challenge to a former synthesis do not arrive by chance, and it is no accident that Islamism is radiant in the Middle East and North Africa since the end of the twentieth century. Such times occur when the current order is in difficulty, and no longer is a source of stability and satisfaction. Thus, it has been argued that, when order, identity and resources collapse, believers flock back to their religion and seek in it not just a means of salvation in the after life, but also an answer to unsatisfactory conditions in the earthly life. Conversely, economic mismanagement, rising populations, urbanization and unemployment have led the disenfranchised, marginalized and disillusioned to use Islamism as a tool in order to protest against the state. However, the educated middle classes have often employed Islamism in an attempt to gain political participation or to emphasise the inadequacies of inept and corrupt governments. Islamism, therefore, in the Middle East and North Africa has had its greatest impact in its attempt to destabilize regimes.

It has been argued that Islamism poses serious problems for such autocratic Muslim governments throughout the region. Their failure to uphold civil liberties renders them illegitimate in the eyes of their citizens. When such regimes are aided by Western powers, the problems become internationalized.

Islamists have taken note of the rise of western, notably American, interventionism in the Muslim world over the past decades: Syria (1983), Libya (1986), Iran (1988), Iraq (1990-91), Somalia (1992-93), and currently in Afghanistan and, again, in Iraq. While the motivation may differ in each case, Islamists recall that their part of the world had not previously experienced direct military intervention by the United States. Westerners thus should not be surprised by a resurgence of Islamist xenophobia towards Western interference, even for humanitarian purposes. Islamists are also likely to use that xenophobia to challenge, embarrass and eventually topple regimes.

### **The rise of Islamism**

The rise of Islamism in the last decades of the twentieth century was as spectacular as it was unforeseen. The decline of religion in Islamic societies had begun in the nineteenth century as a result of secular political movements for modernization. At a time when the decline seemed irrevocable, the sudden emergence of groups "swearing by the Qur'an alone, calling for Jihad, and drawing their activists from the world's great cities" was bewildering.

Initially the leftist intellectuals considered Islamism merely a species of religious fascism, while for the liberals the Islamists were reactionary fanatics harking back to the Middle Ages. As the movement expanded, the ideologues of Left and Right changed their tunes: Marxist thinkers of every stripe, casting about for mass support, began to credit Islamist activists with "socialist virtues", while the conservatives approved of their preaching of "moral order and obedience to God". Islamism appeared as perhaps the outline of an Islamic civilization within the multicultural world of the coming century. Islamism, in the Middle East and North Africa, replaced the nationalism of the previous generations who had fought colonialism and won. It has been pointed out that Islamists are clusters of varied social groups, with different agendas, and that if they coalesced they could seize power. The two

core social groups were the "urban poor" and the "pious middle classes". The first consisted mainly of the young immigrants born after the wars of independence, with no memory of colonialism, who; unlike their parents, were literate and had social expectations that were not met. The second were the majority of the middle classes, for whom Islam had a deeper resonance than the Western ideologies of the undemocratic, often corrupt, and incompetent political elites that governed them. Both groups had sensitive feelings of social frustration and impotence, and "the latter used the former to seize power," as happened in Iran in 1979.

According to Gilles Kepel, the three most influential ideologues of Islamism were Sayyid Qutb, a leader of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt who was imprisoned by Nasser and executed in 1966; the Pakistani thinker Maulana Maududi; and the Iranian cleric Ayatollah Khomeini. Only Khomeini succeeded in seizing power, partly due to social and historical circumstances, and partly because he was an astute politician. He broadened his constituency to include the secular middle classes, whom the Shah had alienated, as well as the bazaar merchants. He presented a moderate, inclusive image and avoided specific programmes.

In general the Islamist discourse was ambiguous: strong on religious, moral, and political ideas but vague on social plans. The main argument was that all the problems of Muslim societies stemmed from the fact that they were not truly Islamic. Khomeini called the state of the world *jaheliyyah* (the age of ignorance/darkness, before the advent of Islam). Western ideologies-nationalism, Marxism, socialism- had resulted in poverty and tyranny; salvation would come through a return to the golden age of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad's seventh-century Medina polity. He opposed the *mostazafin* (the weak, the oppressed) to the *motakabberins* (the arrogant rulers) and urged the former to rise up against the latter.

Khomeini's message resounded throughout the Islamic world. It's rhetoric and Islamic symbols encouraged Islamists in other countries to rise up against

their regimes and install Islamist rule. The Islamisation of Khomeini's Iran has alerted its neighbours to the possible assertion of Islamist quests for power, and throughout the rest of the world the idea of revolutionary Shi'ism had become a reality. Two crucial events further contributed to the spread of the movement: the death of Gamal Nasser in 1970, bringing an end to the Arab nationalism he embodied, and Khomeini's success in toppling the Shah and establishing an Islamic republic in 1979.

### **The spread of Islamism**

The Islamist discourse found an echo among sections of the intelligentsia in other Arab countries, who saw it as a counterweight to communism and at first tolerated it. Egyptian president Anwar Sadat was among them, not knowing that the Islamists would end up assassinating him. Some Western intellectuals among them French philosopher Michel Foucault also backed Khomeini, believing that he would be a Gandhi figure who would retire to his aerie in Qom and be a spiritual guide. They were in for a rude awakening. Upon gaining power Ayatollah Khomeini established a theocracy, suppressed all opposition, brought back the *hijab* (veil, covering) for women, and did not fulfill promises of liberation and equity. He changed the country's democratic constitution, which the Shah had flouted, thereby causing his own downfall, to give the clerics absolute power. To be fair, the eight-year war with Iraq, instigated by the evil Saddam Hussein, did not help.

If Islamism succeeded in seizing power by revolution in Iran, elsewhere its adherents hoped to succeed by democratic means. In Pakistan, Maulana Maududi's project was democratic. In Algeria, the Islamic Front of Salvation was certain to win the 1992 elections, which were canceled to prevent such an outcome. As a result the group fragmented into factions; the appalling atrocities and massacres of innocent populations by the splinter group the Armed Islamic Group (G.I.A.) alienated the pious middle classes, driving

them to negotiate with the government for democracy and reform. In Egypt, the radical group that broke away from the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic Jihad, has been responsible for campaigns of violence and random murders. The 1997 massacre of tourists in Luxor was its last major terrorist act.

In 1974, the price of oil skyrocketed, and Saudi Arabia used some of its unprecedented wealth to acquire political clout, spreading Wahhabism- its own brand of Islamic fundamentalism- through mosques and Islamic schools. It is worth remembering that the majority of the September 11 hijackers were Saudis, as are Osama bin Laden and many connected to Al Qaeda. Also noteworthy is the Saudi influence among the Taleban. Wahhabism is a small, formalist sect, born in Egypt in the nineteenth century, opposed to Sufism and Shiism and all other spiritual doctrines of Islam. When Saudi Arabia was created after World War I, ibn Saud, the governor of Hijaz, became the absolute ruler of the new country. Saud was a Wahhabi and declared Wahhabism the official religion. He established the strictest interpretation of Sharia law, calling for the oppression of women and punishments such as hand cutting and beheading. In the Gulf States, Islamism thrives among the dislocated young, whose livelihood depends on a single, diminishing source: petroleum. Should these Islamists succeed in toppling the present pro-Western regimes, a period of instability and strife might spread through the whole region.

### **The roots of Islamism**

It is important to note that Islamic fundamentalism is not homegrown, that it was born from the encounter of Muslim intellectuals with Western doctrines.

The modern Islamic paradigm has drawn on three centuries of encounter between the Islamic and the Western worlds. In the eighteenth century, Sufi orders launched social and political resistance movements to colonial powers. In religious terms, they emphasized the importance of *hadith*, Islamic political

mobilization, and a spirituality rooted in the personality of the Prophet.<sup>615</sup> When this resistance collapsed, it was followed by an Islamic reformism that sought to re-educate Muslim intellectuals and demanded political representation from Muslim monarchs. Many reformists later joined the nationalists who inherited the reigns of power in the new nation-states. As these new nation-states could not realize the people's aspirations, an Islamic ideology formulated mainly by Egypt's Muslim Brothers and Pakistan's Jamaat-il Islami became the Islamic answer to modern worldviews.

The themes and structures of the modern Islamic paradigm constitute the shared meanings of a discursive universe. Although its images and forms have distinctive patterns in regional contexts, the commonalities are unmistakable. Indeed, Gellner likened standard Muslim beliefs and practices to a deck of cards dealt out differently in various Muslim societies.<sup>616</sup> In the modern period, a corresponding deck makes up the modern Islamic paradigm.

As John Esposito has observed, Islamic discourse has moved from the periphery to the mainstream of the Muslim world.<sup>617</sup> Numerous Muslim regimes have adopted the Islamic idiom as a social and political discourse. In spite of the failure of the specific political programmes advocated by such organizations as the Muslim Brothers and the Jamaat-I Islami, the ideology of Islamic resurgence, with its promise of an Islamic society and an Islamic state, has captured the imagination of a wide range of social groups in the Muslim world.

The writings of the Muslim Brothers' Sayyid Qutb and the Jamaat-il Islami's Abu al Ala al Mawdudi captured the basic elements of the Islamic paradigm in the twentieth century. Their teachings were reflected and nuanced by

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<sup>615</sup> Voll, John Obert, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1982, pp. 44-49, and 87-147.

<sup>616</sup> Gellner, Ernest, *Muslim Society: Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology*, Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 100.

<sup>617</sup> Esposito, John L., et al., *The Contemporary Islamic Revival*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991, p. 44.

others, among them Algeria's Malik Bennabi (d. 1976) and Iran's Ali Shariati (d. 1977). The modern Islamic paradigm is elastic and malleable enough to embrace both the conservatism of Mawdudi and the radicalism of Egyptian extremist groups. In other words, divergent and individual groups use the ideas to construct their discourses.

All major ideologues of the new paradigm have had some kind of direct exposure to the West. The images of Shariati at the Sorbonne studying for a doctorate in sociology and of Qutb as literary critic are linked inextricably with the production of the modern Islamic paradigm. Prominent Western converts to Islam have added ingenious dimensions to the paradigm by bringing their own understanding of the West and its possibilities and limitations.<sup>618</sup> The paradigm has been appropriated by an increasing number of modern and educated Muslims. In Iran, for example, Khomeini's popularity among the mullahs and the masses was matched by Shariati's appeal among educated youth.<sup>619</sup> The paradigm, however, enjoys its widest appeal among the educated youth, especially those in the science faculties. Since the new Islamic paradigm is constructed at the intersection of the modern West and traditional Islam, it is most appealing to students who straddle these two worlds. Such support, especially in the science and technology faculties, is not surprising, for the most potent symbol of the West is technological advancement, with which science students come into direct contact. As a reaction to this challenge, the paradigm is born.

The paradigm; is not appropriated by illiterate workers and peasants, for it rests on the twin legacies of Islam and modernity, both of which are logocentric discourses. The resultant discourse is also logocentric and thereby

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<sup>618</sup> Marty, Martin E. et al., *Fundamentalism Observed*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991, p. 825; Gerholm, Tomas, et al., *The New Islamic Presence in Western Europe*, London: Mansell, 1990, pp. 275-77.

<sup>619</sup> Ahmad, Mumtaz, "Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia: The Jamaat-Il Islamic and the Tablighi Jamaat", in *Fundamentalism Observed*, ed. by Martin E. Marty and Scott R. Appleby, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991, p. 461; Arjomand, Said Amire, "Social Change and Movements of Revitalization in Contemporary Iran", in *New Religious Movements and Rapid Social Change*, ed., by James A. Beckford, Paris: UNESCO, 1986, p. 87.

marginalizes such people. At the same time, the Islamic paradigm is not built on Western philosophical foundations or the rational disciplines of Islam. For many students of science, contact with the Islamic legacy is tenuous. They had only the most random selection from both sources, which ensures that the resources of the new paradigm appeared to be almost inexhaustible.

From Marx and Nietzsche to Heidegger and Sartre, Western thinkers have therefore been the inspiration of Islamist ideologues of various hues. Thus the radical Islamist groups behind terrorist campaigns are more akin to the Red Brigade and the Baader-Meinhof gang than to anything connected with real Islam.

### **Policy Implications**

There is a great battle under way for the soul of the Muslim world. This battle is not between the West and the Muslim world; the West is a bystander. It is essentially a battle between Muslims, between the Khomeini and Atatürk dispositions. Which one is likely to prevail? It is strange to observe that the lively, new ideas in Kemalist Turkey are Islamist ones, whereas the lively, new ideas in Islamist Iran are secular ones. This points to the turmoil and the dynamic developments taking place in the Muslim world.

Despite the fact that the West is a bystander, on the outside, but it must protect its interests. To start, in devising strategy towards Islamism the West must very specifically distinguish between Islam and Islamism. It is about developing a policy toward Islamism, not Islam. States do not have policies towards religions, but they do respond to ideologies. The Western governments and the Western public must be clear about this distinction.

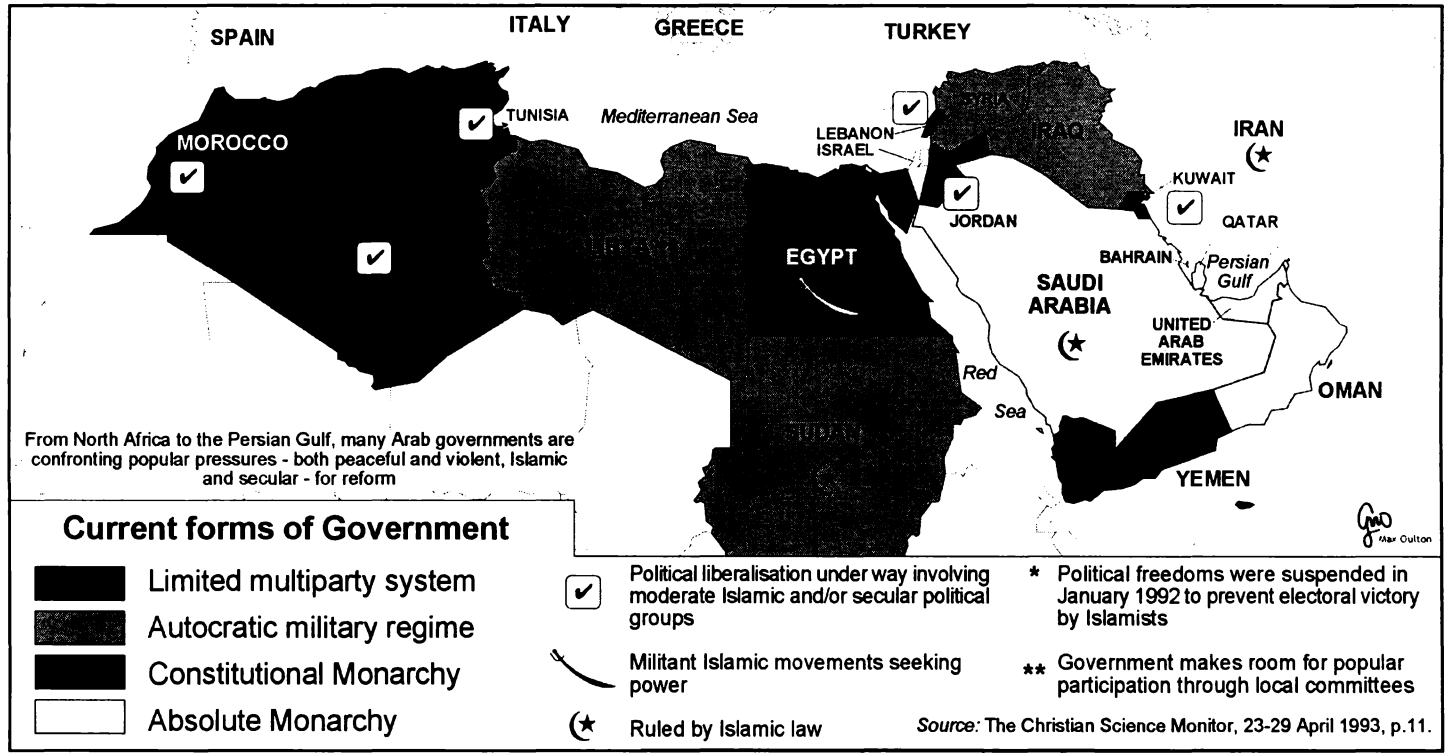
The calamities committed by Al Qaeda and the Taleban, and the political failure of radical Islam in Iran, Sudan and elsewhere mean that the Islamist movement will have much difficulty in reversing its trail of decline and

isolation. The region is poised on the edge of both rising hopes and deeply entrenched extremism. Hope needs careful nurturing, while extremism needs containment. Perhaps the last word should be left to Revelation, “Whoever kills a human being, shall be looked upon as though he had killed all mankind”.<sup>620</sup> It is obvious that the Islamists have not adhered to this fundamental Qur’anic belief.

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<sup>620</sup> The Qur’an, chapter 5, verse 32.

# POLITICAL CHANGE IN THE ARAB WORLD



Map 1. Political Change in the Arab World

# Northern Africa and the Middle East



Map 2. Northern Africa and the Middle East

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AIS</b>	: Islamic Salvation Army
<b>AMAL</b>	: Afwaj al-Muqawimah al-Lubnaniyah, an Acronym for Groups of the Lebanese Resistance
<b>CDLR</b>	: The Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights
<b>DFLP</b>	: Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
<b>DOP</b>	: Declaration of Principles
<b>FIS</b>	: Islamic Salvation Front
<b>FLN</b>	: National Liberation Front
<b>GCC</b>	: Gulf Cooperation Council
<b>GIA</b>	: Armed Islamic Group
<b>HAMAS</b>	: An acronym for Harakat Al-Muqawama Al-Islamiyya- Islamic Resistance Movement in the Palestinian Territories
	: The Movement for an Islamic Society in Algeria
<b>HCS</b>	: High Committee of State
<b>IDF</b>	: Israeli Defense Force
<b>IMF</b>	: International Monetary Fund
<b>MP</b>	: Members of Parliament
<b>MDA</b>	: Movement for Democracy in Algeria
<b>MNI</b>	: Movement of Islamic Renaissance
<b>MTI</b>	: Islamic Movement Tendency
<b>OIC</b>	: The Organization of Islamic Countries
<b>P.B.U.H.</b>	: Peace Be Upon Him
<b>PCP</b>	: Palestinian Communist Party
<b>PFLP</b>	: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
<b>PLO</b>	: Palestine Liberation Organization
<b>UN</b>	: United Nations
<b>UNLU</b>	: United National Leadership of the Uprising
<b>USA</b>	: United States of America
<b>WB</b>	: World Bank

## GLOSSARY

<b>Al-‘Alam</b>	: Publication
<b>Al-Alamiyyah</b>	: Worldism
<b>Al-Hakimyyah</b>	: Governance of God
<b>Al-Ihtikar</b>	: Monopoly
<b>Al-Ihya’ al-Islami</b>	: Islamic Revivalism
<b>Al-Islamiyyun</b>	: Islamists
<b>Al-Kheyriyah</b>	: Charity
<b>Al-Mudaraba</b>	: Described as a partnership for profit and loss system
<b>Al-Muwatin</b>	: Citizen
<b>Al-Nakbah</b>	: The Catastrophe
<b>Al-Qaedah</b>	: The base, foundation
<b>Al-Sahwa al-Islamiyyah</b>	: Islamic awakening
<b>Al-Salibiyyah al-Alamiyyah</b>	: World Crusaderism
<b>Al-Umamiyyah</b>	: Internationalism
<b>Al-Usuliyah al-Islamiyyah</b>	: Islamic Fundamentalism
<b>‘Alim</b>	: Scholar, doctor of theology
<b>Amal</b>	: Hope
<b>Aman</b>	: Security
<b>‘Aqa’id</b>	: A set of beliefs
<b>Ashaheed</b>	: Martyr
<b>Ba’ath</b>	: Resurrection
<b>Baraka</b>	: God’s blessing in the world
<b>Bay’ah</b>	: The obligation of every Muslim to swear allegiance to a prince ( <i>Amir</i> )
<b>Bida’</b>	: The spirit of innovation, heresies, heretical
<b>Bonyadgarayan</b>	: A literal translation of ‘fundamentalism’ in Persian
<b>Caliphate</b>	: Islamic state
<b>Caliph</b>	: Successor to Prophet Muhammad as a leader of the Muslim community.
<b>Dhimmi (dhimma)</b>	: Considered worthy of protection
<b>Da’wa</b>	: Literally “sermonizing”, call, Preaching
<b>Fatwa</b>	: Judgmental opinions
<b>Faqih</b>	: Jurist
<b>Fitrah</b>	: The innate human nature, the recipient of revelation
<b>Hadarah</b>	: Civilization
<b>Hadith (sayings)</b>	: The recorded tradition about the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions, compiled into six authoritative collections in the

	ninth Century AD.
<b>Haj (Haji)</b>	: Pilgrimage
<b>Halal</b>	: Permitted by God
<b>Hamas</b>	: Zeal, courage, bravery
<b>Haram</b>	: Prohibited by God
<b>Hizb al-Tahrir</b>	: Freedom Party
<b>Hizbullah</b>	: Party of God
<b>‘Ibadat</b>	: Specific acts of worship
<b>Ihtijaj</b>	: Protest
<b>Ihya</b>	: Revival
<b>Ijma’</b>	: Consensus
<b>Ijtihad</b>	: Reasoning
<b>Ikhwan al-Muslimum</b>	: Muslim Brotherhood
<b>Inkilab</b>	: Overturing, revolution
<b>Intifada</b>	: Uprising
<b>Jahili</b>	: Apostate
<b>Jahiliyyah</b>	: Godlessness, idolatry, Imperialism
<b>Jama’at (Jama’ah)</b>	: Group, community, collective, Brotherhood, association
<b>Jama’at el-Islami</b>	: Islamic Group, Islamic Brotherhood
<b>Jihad</b>	: Strive, holy war
<b>Jund Allah</b>	: Soldier of God
<b>Katibah</b>	: The true and believing commando
<b>Kufr</b>	: Unbelief, infidelity, apostasy
<b>Lejnat (Lejnah)</b>	: Committee
<b>Maghreb</b>	: (Arabic) West
<b>Maqalat al-Islamiyyin</b>	: The Theses of the Islamists
<b>Mahdi</b>	: Deliverer
<b>Mashriq</b>	: (Arabic) East
<b>Mu’aradah</b>	: Opposition
<b>Mumarasah</b>	: Praxis
<b>Mu’min</b>	: A genuine Muslim who unconditionally and unequivocally believes and practices ‘The Five Pillars of Islam’.
<b>Mustaqillun</b>	: Independents, but partisans of the jihad
<b>Muta’assib</b>	: Fanatic or religious extremist
<b>Nahda (Nahdah)</b>	: Renaissance
<b>Nizam</b>	: System
<b>Qur’an (Koran)</b>	: The holy book of Islam as the Word of God as revealed to, and recited by, Prophet Muhammad
<b>Riba, al-Riba</b>	: Charging interest, usury
<b>Risalat al-Tawhid</b>	: Treatise of Oneness
<b>Roshanfikr</b>	: Intellectuals in Persian

<b>Sahwa</b>	: Awakening
<b>Salafi</b>	: Traditionalist
<b>Salafiyyun</b>	: Followers of the pious ancestors
<b>Salat</b>	: Prayer
<b>Sawm</b>	: Fasting
<b>Shahadah</b>	: The creed
<b>Shar'ia</b>	: Islamic law
<b>Shaykh (Sheikh)</b>	: Religious or an elderly respected man
<b>Shi'a</b>	: The family of sects in Islam which regard Muhammad's son-in-law and cousin, Ali, as his rightful successor.
<b>Shuyukh (Sheikhs)</b>	: Priests
<b>Shirk</b>	: Polytheism or infidelity
<b>Shuba</b>	: Branch
<b>Shura</b>	: Consultation
<b>Shu'ubism</b>	: A pejorative code word for communism
<b>Sirah</b>	: Normative biography of the Prophet
<b>Sufi (Sufis)</b>	: Mystic, mystics
<b>Sunnah or Sunna</b>	: Traditions, which is the Prophet's day-to-day practices
<b>Sunni</b>	: One who considers as a follower of the Authentic Sunna- followers of mainstream or orthodox Islam as opposed to the Shi'a and other sects.
<b>Sura (Surrah)</b>	: Chapter
<b>Suras</b>	: Chapters, which are in metrical form
<b>Tabligh wa Dawa</b>	: Transmission and Preaching
<b>Tawhid</b>	: Oneness. Negates the governance of man, class, and race. It is the elimination of systems based on human independence in earthly affairs from the governanc of God.
<b>Thaqafah</b>	: Culture
<b>Turath, (al-Tutath)</b>	: Heritage, Islamic tradition
<b>Ulema (Ulama')</b>	: Religious intellectuals/leaders, clerics, learned men, Islamic scholars
<b>Umma, Ummah, Ummat</b>	: Community of believers or the Muslim nation
<b>Ummat-e-Wusta</b>	: The Middle Nation, which avoids the extremes in its spiritual and worldly convictions and beliefs.
<b>Ummi</b>	: Illiterate
<b>Ummyyah</b>	: Illiteracy
<b>Usra</b>	: Family
<b>Usuli</b>	: Fundamentalist
<b>Usulis</b>	: Fundamentalists

<b>Usul</b>	: Fundamentals, sources, basics
<b>Usus</b>	: Bases, foundations
<b>Usul al-Din</b>	: The Fundamentals of the Religion
<b>Usuliyah</b>	: Fundamentalism
<b>Wahdah</b>	: Unity
<b>Wahy</b>	: Revelation, i.e. the Quran as a revelation
<b>Wajib</b>	: Required by God
<b>Yakazah</b>	: Awakening
<b>Yawm al-Ba'ath</b>	: Day of Judgement
<b>Zakat (Zekat, Zeakah)</b>	: Almsgiving, voluntary tax system

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