ISIM Newsletter 1

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international institute
ISIM
for the study of islam
in the modern world

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Newsletter 1

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It is often claimed that Islam is not only a religion but a culture and a civilization. 'The Islamic world' and 'Islamic history' are commonly used terms, both in popular public discourse and in academic writing, suggesting some kind of coherent unity. At the same time, writers point to the diversity of Muslim countries from Morocco to Indonesia, from Nigeria to Turkey. Is there a unity behind the diversity, at least in the 'heartlands' of Islam in the Middle East and North Africa, as Ernest Gellner and others have claimed?

Muslim Societies
Unity or Diversity?

SAMI ZUBAIDA

Now, more than ever, with Islamic voices contesting politics, culture and society in practically every country with a Muslim population, Islam would appear to have a unity and a common purpose across political and cultural frontiers: to provide a common identity for Muslims who wish to live in a society of their faith and be ruled by their sacred law. This picture can only confirm in the public mind the idea of Islam as a common essence of all these societies, one that rules and determines their culture and their social and political processes.

The views asserting the uniqueness, unity and exceptionalism of Muslim society and history are all the more potent in the current intellectual climate which has seen the demise of universalist theories of historical causation and social analysis such as Marxism. The idea of cultural and civilizational essences and identities underlying unique histories of particular civilizations have been most prominently stated in Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' thesis. Even though this has been widely criticized, the assumptions behind it are equally widely held, not least by many Muslim and Arab intellectuals.

Muslim exceptionalism and uniqueness and the centrality of religion to Muslim society and history are, of course, the pillars of Islamist political advocacy. Many 'secular' intellectuals, specially in Egypt, while challenging Islamist illiberal interpretations, would, nevertheless, wish to base their own advocacies on 'authentic' Muslim and Arab 'culture'. Many advocates of Human Rights, for instance, insist on deriving these rights from liberal (and strained) interpretations of the Qu'ran and the traditions. I have encountered strong hostility to my argument that the modern discourses of Human Rights are products of recent political struggles and ideologies, many of them against the establishments of state, church and dominant classes, and which have no ancestry in the much older ethical and legal discourses of any religion.

What is unique about Islam? I argue, alongside many colleagues, against this cultural essentialization of an exceptional 'Islamic world', contrasted implicitly or explicitly with an equally exceptional and totalized 'West'. Of course, every history is unique. The conceptual tools of social and historical analyses are however common, and are used to analyse diverse unique histories. The question also arises of what is the object whose unique history is being told? Does 'Islamic society' constitute a unitary entity with a common and consistent history extending to the present and underlying the current 'Islamic phenomenon'? Many eminent writers such as the historian H.A.R. Gibb and the anthropologist and philosopher Ernest Gellner, have advanced arguments to that effect. These arguments are the products of deep scholarship and often thorough familiarity with the histories and cultures of the region. The question however is conceptual: the essentialism rests on a totalization of histories and societies as 'Islamic'. This label cannot be denied: yet, what commonality does it entail? It can be argued for instance, that the modern history (from the eighteenth century) of Iran shows a totally different political and social structure to that of Turkey or Egypt, let alone Arabia. It can be plausibly argued that the Christian and Muslim shores of the Mediterranean shared many common features of popular culture: Tunisian coastal cities had more in common with Sicily and the Italian south than with Arabia or Iraq. The manifest reality, for instance, of women in southern Europe covering their heads in a similar manner to their Mediterranean Muslim counterparts seems to have escaped the notice of observers intent on totalized contrasts! Indeed, we can date the divergence from previous common elements between the two shores of the Mediterranean to the second half of the twentieth century as many Muslim Mediterranean cities, such as Alexandria or Algiers, became 'peasantized' by the great rural influx, and European Mediterranean cities increasingly integrated into a national culture dominated by the North, a process accelerated by the regional policies of the European Community.

I still have to deal with the question of what it is that lends credence to the essentialist arguments: what is the common denominator which makes diverse societies Muslim beyond the obvious fact of religion? Perhaps a good way of answering this question is by drawing parallels with European Christianity. The Christian world shares a universe of discourse referring to sets of institutions, doctrines and personnel: the church, the priesthood, the Holy Trinity, the Bible, the problems of salvation and grace. These are not restricted to the religious sphere but have involved many spheres of culture, law, morality and family. Divorce, homosexuality and abortion, for instance, continue to be issues in the politics of several Western countries. A good historian of Europe will tell you however, that these entities of Church, scriptures, law and so on, have taken vastly different forms and social significance at various points in European history and in different regions. The Medieval Catholic Church, for instance, was a very different institution from the eighteenth century Church and with a very different role in society and politics.

Similarly, we find in Islam a common set of vocabularies referring to institutions, doctrines and personnel: the Qu'ran and Hadith (traditions of the Prophet), the ulama, the Shari^{c}a (religious law) and many others. These have similarly varying structures, forms of organization and social significance over the centuries and in different societies. Ernest Gellner in his characterization of a constant pattern of Muslim history and society, attributes a central role to the ulama and the Shari^{c}a. His model, however, crumbles before the many different forms of ulama organization, power, and institutions, not only in different societies and histories but even within the class structure of the same society. The elite ulama of late Ottoman times, for instance, were integrated into the ruling institutions and bureaucracies, while their Iranian counterparts of the same time constituted parts of local, decentralized power elites with their own revenues and institutions separate from the govenment. Both were distinct from the ulama 'proletariat' of their own time, the multitude of students, preachers, dervishes and mendicants, performing services for the poor. Similarly, Sufism and sufi brotherhoods, regular features of practically all Muslim societies display a great variety of manifestation and of relations to the mainstream religious institutions, from elite intellectual mystics counting the higher ulama in their ranks, to illiterate rural charismatic saints ruling peasant communities with magic, medicine and ceremony.

And how do we understand these social formations and their historical and geographical variations and transformations, the logic of their coherence and contradiction? Well, by the same repertoire of social and historical concepts and analyses which we use for Western or any other societies. It is by these means that we grasp the uniqueness of each manifestation, not of a totalized history with an Islamic essence.

Finally, does the current 'Islamic resurgence' vindicate the essentialist position that Islam remains the essence of Muslim society, which is peculiarly resistant to secularization and to separating religion from politics? I am more convinced by the opposite argument: that current political Islam is partly a reaction and a defence against the secularizing processes that have inevitably come with modernity and which continue to have their effect on all societies in the region. Law, even where elements of religion have remained within it, has become codified state law, subject to political and social exigencies; education has been largely removed from religious spheres and authorities (that is why these authorities are trying, in vain, to hang on); religious authorities cannot, try as they may, control the manifold channels of information and entertainment of the modern media; modern economic exigencies have forced women into the labour market and the public spheres, subverting patriarchal authority and traditional values (associated with religion). Only in a society so thoroughly destroyed by successive wars such as Afghanistan can the religious reactionaries succeed in reversing these inexorable processes. Saudi Arabia, where wealth from petrol has partly exempted the authorities from the exigencies of modern socio-economic processes, has also partly succeeded in arresting these trends, but for how long? In Iran, the 'mullocracy' of the Islamic Republic has had to retreat repeatedly (but discreetly) in the face of these contingencies. Family planning, for instance, initially denounced by Khomeini as contrary to Islam and an imperialist measure against Muslims, was restored after a few years as government policy. Family law, after initial reversals, has now restored most of the Shah's reforms and more. Regarding working women, the level of employment in the work force was mostly maintained, and there is increasing participation of women in public life, politics, the arts, sport and even as junior judges. Crucially, Khomeini, faced with the exigencies of governance, ruled in 1988 that in the interests of the whole Islamic Umma, the Islamic government is empowered to suspend any provision of the Shari^{c}a, including prayer and fasting! Since then the category of 'interest' (*maslaha*) has been written into the constitution and institutionalized, opening the gates wide for pragmatic legislation and policy. I rest my case. ✦

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The ISIM Newsletter is a tri-annual publication of the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM). Responsibility for the facts and opinions expressed in this publication rests solely with the authors. Their views do not necessarily reflect those of the Institute or its supporters. The ISIM Newsletter is free of charge.

Editorial

The *ISIM Newsletter* is the principal source of information on the activities of the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World. In this inaugural issue you will find information on the plans and policies of the Institute as well as on its organization and structure. The ISIM is an institute under construction; its activities are to develop in the coming years. In order to reach its ultimate goal, the execution of innovative interdisciplinary research with an international orientation, the ISIM needs your support and collaboration. The *ISIM Newsletter* is one way of inviting individual academics and institutes to contribute to the development of this initiative. The ISIM operates in the broad field of the study of modern Islam and Muslim societies and communities, a field in which a multitude of academic traditions and approaches co-exist. Many more institutes are actively involved in this field. Some of them have been in the business for centuries, but quite a number of them, in particular those institutes which focus explicitly on contemporary Muslim movements and societies, are relatively recent. The *ISIM Newsletter* pays special attention to national and international institutes and projects and invites them to use the *ISIM Newsletter* as a means of disseminating news on their plans and activities; as a platform for discussion and exchange; and as a tool to help diminish the fragmentation in the field.

In this first *ISIM Newsletter* an attempt is made to mirror the multifaceted world of Islam, in particular its broad regional spread and its highly diverse local and supra-local expressions and practices, as well as social and political formations. Furthermore, a variety of research approaches are presented, which often combine methods and principles from various trends and traditions, most notably the social sciences and the humanities. The contents of this first edition are not meant to define the way the ISIM should organize and direct its research. It demonstrates instead the broad scope of interest of the ISIM, both thematically and regionally, and its openness towards the diverse regional, thematic, and methodological approaches. Undoubtedly, many more issues in research need to be addressed.

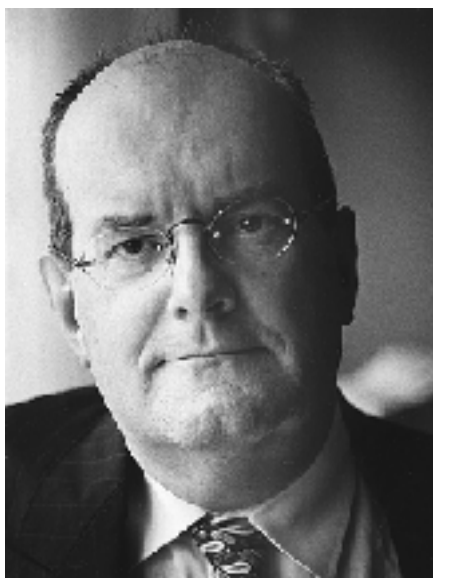
The *ISIM Newsletter* primarily addresses scholarly concerns, but seeks to disseminate expertise on modern Islam and Muslim societies and communities to various audiences such as policy makers, the media, non-governmental organizations, and educational institutes in general. Just as the ISIM as an institute has to find its way and establish its reputation, the *ISIM Newsletter* has to create its own image and to find ways of effective dissemination and stimulating response. In other words, the Newsletter needs its readers' input. In particular, we invite you to send us information on projects, institutes, seminars, lectures and other activities which you think should be included in the Info Pages of the coming issues of the *ISIM Newsletter*. By your comments, suggestions and critiques, the ISIM can attain its goals of cooperation, service, and high academic standards. ✦

Dick Douwes, *editor*

OBITUARY

Dr J.K.M. Gevers

The Chairman of the board of the ISIM, Dr Jankarel Gevers, passed away on 5 August 1998 at the age of 54. His untimely death was a shock not only for the ISIM, but especially for the University of Amsterdam, of which he had been President for the last 10 years, and for all other institutions and organizations in which he was active.



Dr Gevers was born in 1944 in Valkenswaard and read Sociology at Leiden University, a study he began in 1962. From 1967, he was affiliated with the department of Sociology and until 1981 was frequently exempted from teaching duties in order to fulfil administrative functions at the university. From 1969 to 1973 he was member of the Leiden University Council as, among others, deputy chairman and member of the committee of finance and planning. In 1974 he became member of the Board of that university. He was appointed advisor for national university planning in the Netherlands in 1978 and was instrumental in the implementation of an operation to redistribute teaching and research tasks to the Dutch universities. As Chairman of the Council of Polytechnic Institutions from 1984 to 1988 and as President of the University of Amsterdam from 1988 onwards, he continuously engaged himself in higher educational affairs. Not limiting his endeavours to the Netherlands, he was also active in the international arena, for which he was conferred *honoris causa* a law doctorate from New York University.

Dr Gevers advocated the concept of universities as independent institutions in the Netherlands that would assume their own responsibilities. He cherished the university as a place of learning, science and culture, and favoured the foundation of institutions of learning beyond the scope of universities, which would function as arenas for the free exchange of thoughts and ideas. As a true intellectual, he was opposed to the notion of 'political correctness' and was known to be, at times, provocative. He aspired to the classical universal ideals of freedom, truth, justice and beauty, while remaining realistic about the world in which we live. His pragmatism by no means hampered him from living life to the fullest, striving to attain his ideals, and adhering to a humanistic approach.

More than simply an enthusiastic Chairman of the ISIM Board, the role he played in the founding of the ISIM was crucial to say the least. The ISIM, in form and in content, shall carry on in the spirit of Dr J.K.M. Gevers.

We deeply regret his loss and will continue to honour his memory. ✦

The ISIM Board

Introduction

BY PROF. DR W.A.L. STOKHOF
ISIM Director in Charge

In addition to opening its doors officially, the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) would like to simultaneously open itself to your cooperation. This Newsletter, which complements the ISIM Website, is to be the main mode of disseminating information about the Institute and its activities.

At this crucial stage in the design of research programmes, I would like to solicit your participation to ensure that the ISIM attains its goals of service to the academic community as well as to society at large. In order to set and maintain high standards of research, the ISIM must establish itself firmly in the national and international academic environments. This, we feel, can only be effective through concerted efforts.

As the ISIM aspires to international, interdisciplinary collaboration, colleagues from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, the Americas, Australasia, and Europe are asked to contribute through their ideas and suggestions. Sounding board meetings are to be held to offer a structured venue for the dual purpose of introducing the Institute and welcoming international input. Calls for research project proposals will be announced regularly in this Newsletter, but please feel free to contact us in the meantime with any comments or suggestions. ✦

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Research Approaches and Thematic Profile

International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World

The International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern world (ISIM) promotes interdisciplinary scholarship on social and intellectual trends and movements in contemporary Muslim societies and communities. It will coordinate and carry out research on Muslim responses to the various challenges and opportunities associated with modernity, modernization, and processes of globalization. The Institute recognizes the relevance of traditional scholarship on Islam (Arabic philology, textual studies of the Qur'an, *hadith* and other texts, religious studies, etc.) to the understanding of contemporary processes, and will make optimal use of the available expertise in these fields.

The Institute's *raison d'être*, however, is the fact that developments of great intellectual, social and political importance in the Muslim world have remained seriously underresearched in the social sciences and humanities. The Institute's research approaches are to be expressly interdisciplinary: they are to be grounded in social and cultural science theory and methodology (which implicitly means a rejection of obsolete essentialist conceptions of Islam) but will attach great importance to solid knowledge of the languages concerned and integrate, where this is relevant, the methodologies and accumulated insights of such disciplines as philology, literary criticism, Islamic studies, religious studies, history, legal studies, etc. The approaches are to be informed by critiques of orientalism and of positivist social science, without dogmatically rejecting the contributions of traditional disciplines.

The Institute will not concentrate its research on any single geographical area in the world of Islam. In the regional specializations of its staff, North Africa and the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, South and Southeast Asia, as well as the Muslim communities of Europe/the West will be represented. Research programmes will be comparative in the sense that they will be concerned with more than one region.

Thematic Profile

Some of the most remarkable recent developments in the Muslim world correspond to the worldwide Islamic resurgence, first noticeable in the wake of the 1967 Israeli-Arab War and increasingly vigorous since the Iranian revolution. Political radicalism in the name of Islam is only one aspect of this development and not necessarily the most interesting from scholarly points of view. Following a period of apparent secularization (which was long believed to be inherent to modernization processes), Islam returned to the public sphere in most Muslim societies with vigour. The public expression of Islam is no longer primarily associated with the more 'backward' segments of society but precisely with relatively well-educated, socially rising groups, who do not reject all modernity but who embrace at least its technological aspects along with various conceptions of democratization. Recent developments in the Muslim world seem to show that secularization is not a necessary, inevitable concomitant of modernization.

The appeal of radical Islam to the rapidly growing underclass of marginalized, unemployed or underemployed youth in many Third World cities is more often asserted than actually demonstrated. It is true that numerous Muslim preachers and writers address these classes or speak in their name, but the underprivileged often prefer quietistic, mystical-magical varieties of Islam to the politically radical. Be this as it may, both this potential constituency and the Muslim discourse specifically addressing it are new to Islam. The concern of Muslim thinkers with increasing social inequality has given rise also to new forms of Muslim social thought.

Intellectual Challenges

Much creative effort in the Muslim world is directed towards the formulation of Islamic answers to the social, political, economic and intellectual challenges faced by these rapidly changing societies. Due to dramatically improved communication, Muslims are regularly confronted with moral and intellectual alternatives to their own convictions and values (i.e. other religious and philosophical systems with comparable claims to universality), in some cases backed up by economic and military superiority. They have had to reflect on such civil concepts as human rights, minority group rights and women's rights, popular sovereignty, accountability, democracy, representation and self-determination; define their attitude towards free-market liberalism and international law; and work out Islamic ethics of modern technological phenomena such as gender change, in vitro fertilization or cloning.

This intellectual challenge is not new, and its beginnings of course long predate the recent Islamic resurgence. Contemporary Muslim thought, although experiencing a quickening and perhaps a qualitative change, builds on the work of several generations of predecessors. Islamic responses to modernization (which often means colonization and westernization) go back to the 18th century, and they emerged in a context of, though often in reaction to, a learned tradition.

Islam and the State

One aspect of the resurgence is the intensified debate on the relationship between Islam and the State. Virtually all states in the Muslim world have institutions and legislation that ultimately derive from the West, either adopted in deliberate imitation of, or initially imposed by, colonial regimes and retained by the first generations of post-colonial politicians. Efforts to accommodate those foreign borrowings and Islam with its divine Law also have precedents dating back to the 18th century, but they have significantly intensified recently. Several states have declared themselves Islamic and have made efforts to properly develop Islamic alternatives to, or adaptations of, institutions and legislation. Other states have integrated more *shari^{c}a* into their secular legislation, while also intervening in the teaching and development of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), the practice of *ifta'* (issuing authoritative opinions on questions of Muslim law) or the codification of the *shari^{c}a*. Even secular regimes such as those of Turkey and Tunisia have to make new compromises with Islam. In states where Muslims are in a minority position, such as India, the terms of the equation between Islam and the State are different, but elements of Muslim law have also entered the jurisprudence of secular courts.

Muslim Diasporas

The emergence of significant Muslim diasporas in the West as well as throughout the Muslim world itself is another recent development. Labour migration, study abroad, civil wars and political conflicts have caused tens of millions to spend parts of their lives, voluntarily or involuntarily, far away from their native lands. Muslim expatriate communities are not a new phenomenon as such; Arab and Persian Muslim trading communities have existed throughout Asia since the first centuries of Islam and have played a central role in the spread of Islam on that continent. Since the 1960s, however, there has been unprecedented growth of labour migrant communities. Students and political refugees have done much to organize and provide leadership to these communities, and improved communication techniques (air travel, phone and fax links, satellite television, computer networks) now link these communities with their home countries as well as with similar communities elsewhere. Dispersed expatriate communities have thus become integrated into diasporas that are increasingly transnationally organized. Islam has been an important factor in the process of diaspora formation (the mosque is perhaps the diasporas' most prominent institution), and it has in turn become more important in the lives of the communities. Debates and developments within Islam in the home countries have an impact on the diasporas and may generate freer and more creative debate there because of, for instance, less restricted freedom of expression. In return, developments in the diaspora may greatly affect the home country.

Diasporas have inherently ambivalent relations with both their host countries and their countries of origin. Both states perceive these diasporas as potential threats and make efforts to bring them under control. Members of the diaspora may lay claims to civil rights in both countries but often feel rejected by both as well. Diasporas may, on the other hand, also serve as interfaces and channels of communication between the two countries and their cultures. Insofar as the diasporas are increasingly transnational, new orientations may be emerging, more diffuse than those to home and host country. These developments are of great theoretical and political importance, and of direct relevance to the ongoing debates in the Netherlands and other European countries on 'multicultural society' and on 'social cohesion'.

Increasing mobility and improved communications have not only resulted in the formation of significant Muslim minorities throughout the non-Muslim world (and new immigrant communities, both Muslim and non-Muslim, in all Muslim countries). They have also brought ethnic and religious minority communities in the Muslim world (e.g. Alevis in Turkey, Ahmadis and Shi'is in Pakistan) into closer and more regular contact with the surrounding majorities, which has resulted in various forms of accommodation, adaptation, or conflict.

Transnational Islam

Related to the above is the great increase in the flow of people and ideas across the globe and the multiplication of centres from which Islamic ideas are disseminated. Traditional Muslim education always used to involve a certain amount of travel to different teachers and schools, and confrontation with different environments; but in this respect, too, there has been a qualitative change. Mass literacy and the new media are reaching much wider audiences than were ever touched by traditional Muslim education. The same media convey also other than Islamic messages, which forces Muslims of all levels of education to formulate their beliefs and values in contrast to alternatives.

A whole range of Muslim international and transnational institutions has come into existence, from inter-governmental forums to Islamic investment banks and international Islamic universities. Some institutions, such as the Muslim World League and the World Association of Muslim Youth, have extensive international bureaucracies and are largely deterritorialized. Others, such as the Muslim Foundation or the Institute for Muslim Minority Affairs, are based in the West, which has contributed to their detachment from specific national or regional ties. Muslim diasporas, though not renouncing ethnic/national ties to their home countries, are also playing key roles in the establishment of transnational (or non-national) Muslim institutions in the 'guest countries'.

Modern *da^{c}wa* movements were once 'national' in that they concentrated their activities mostly in one country, but there are now a growing number of transnational *da^{c}wa* movements. Local forms of Islam no longer are contrasted primarily with a privileged (and highly idealized) Arabian Islam as the source of inspiration for reformers. New transnational forms of Islam offer themselves as the models to be emulated. The originally Indian movement, Tablighi Jama'ah, has grown into a multinational network of *da^{c}is* ('missionaries') stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The thought and organization of Egypt's Muslim Brothers are not only emulated in other Arab states but have had a significant impact in countries as Turkey and Indonesia. Iranian shi'i thinkers have, since the Islamic Revolution, exerted a considerable influence on Muslim discourse in many Sunni countries. A branch of Turkey's Nurcu movement has established an impressive network of schools in the Central Asian republics. Muslim thinkers based in European and North American universities contribute significantly to new Muslim discourses that are less nationally grounded. ✦

Institute
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A Short Description of the ISIM

The International Institute for the Study of the Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) was founded by the University of Amsterdam, Leiden University and Utrecht University. The Institute is funded, in addition to these latter, by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OC&W) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Development Cooperation. The constitutional documents were signed on June 30 of this year.

The ISIM develops and conducts research on social, cultural, economic, political and intellectual developments in the Muslim world and Muslim communities in the West. Although the emphasis is laid upon recent and contemporary developments, historical dimensions are taken into account. The ISIM's research approaches are expressly interdisciplinary and comparative, covering a broad geographical range encompassing all relevant geographical areas: North Africa and the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, South and Southeast Asia and the Muslim diasporas in the West.

Borne out of a national initiative in which cooperation with Dutch universities and research schools is paramount, the ISIM is also clearly international in orientation. The ISIM will integrate existing expertise in the Netherlands in its programmes and will combine resources and expertise of academic institutes in the West and in the Muslim world.

ISIM sounding board meetings

One apparent expression of the national /international interaction is the ISIM sounding board meetings. The opening day of the Institute is to serve as the first such meeting. With the support of the Minister for Development Cooperation subsequent meetings will take place in cities of the Muslim world with respected centres of learning. These meetings are fundamental to the ISIM for they serve as a medium for introducing the ISIM to relevant scholarly audiences, as well as for reflecting upon institutional plans and policies. The second meeting is scheduled for March 1999 and will take place in Cairo.

Research

Research constitutes the core activity of the ISIM. The Institute follows open and flexible research policies aimed at mobilizing scholarly interest and support at both national and international levels. The ISIM research agenda contains:

- Long-term joint research programmes;
- Ateliers, short-term joint research projects;
- Individual ISIM research projects.

The research is to be executed by the academic staff of ISIM in conjunction with PhD, Postdoctoral and other fellows, who are recruited nationally and internationally. ISIM Chair-holders comprise the main academic staff of the Institute. The Chair-holders are to select, design, and execute long-term research programmes in consultation with the ISIM Academic Committee and the participating universities and research schools. They cooperate with staff of other national and international institutes, in particular research schools and project-proposing bodies. Suggestions and proposals for research are invited from all interested parties through announcements in the ISIM Newsletter. Joint proposals which link up with research in various regions are to be given preference. Application forms and information about the criteria for evaluation and selection will be made available.

Long-term Research Programmes

Long-term research programmes constitute the core of the ISIM research. They will be designed to stimulate interdisciplinary research that concentrates on social, socio-economic, political, and intellectual developments in the Muslim world, particularly those that have so far been under-researched. The programmes are comparative in the sense that they encompass two or more geographical regions of the Muslim world. Each programme consists of a number of thematically linked projects. The programmes will be set for a maximum period of five years. The selection, design, and execution of these programmes are the responsibility of the Programme Director, who preferably is an ISIM Chair-holder. PhD students are sponsored within the framework of these programmes. The output of the programmes will comprise PhD theses, monographs, and/or major works summarizing the research. A report, translating the results for a wider audience, with recommendations for future policies and research, will be made available.

Ateliers

ISIM organizes ateliers: short-term research projects in which a small number of researchers work closely together for a maximum period of three months. The ateliers are designed to stimulate cooperation between scholars from different disciplines, regional specializations, and scholarly traditions. They aim at the strengthening of interregional cooperation in research.

Individual Research Projects

ISIM offers scholars of international standing the opportunity to engage in research work in the Netherlands for a maximum of three months. These distinguished fellowships promote cooperation with leading figures and institutes in the field of the study of Muslim societies and communities. Junior researchers who have demonstrated the ability to conduct innovative research will be given the opportunity to engage in individual research.

Academic Staff

There will be a nucleus of three ISIM Chair-holders who form the backbone of the Institute, headed by the Academic Director. These full-time professors will be appointed at participating universities in the Netherlands. The ISIM Chairs have been created to support and attract highly-qualified scholars of international standing who have the task of placing the Institute firmly on the map. They will constitute a firm link between the participating universities/research schools and ensure a strong national base for the ISIM. The Academic Director is appointed to the ISIM Chair at Leiden University. The Director is in charge of the various functions of the ISIM and supervises all of its activities. In close consultation with the Academic Committee and the participating research schools and institutes the ISIM, the Academic Director and the other ISIM Chair-holders will select, design, and execute research. In addition they will coach, tutor, and supervise the ISIM students at the Advanced and PhD Degree levels. Some may be involved in supporting the educational programmes at the participating universities/research schools. They will supervise, when necessary, visiting fellows and other guests of the Institute in their research.

Fellowships

A constant influx of researchers serves to ensure that the horizons of the Institute are constantly broadened and that high academic standards are upheld. The ISIM will support research fellows at various levels and in a number of capacities. They will contribute to the long-term joint research programmes, create ateliers for the execution of short-term research, or conduct individual research. There will be ample room for visiting fellows who will serve as bridges between the ISIM and the outside world. Sabbatical stays will be made available for staff of participating universities and research schools. Application forms and information on the criteria for evaluation and selection will be distributed.

Education

The targets the ISIM has set in the field of education are to create a pool of expertise on developments in the fields of Islamic societies, institutions, practices, and doctrines upon which the academic community, policy makers, and society at large can draw. The activities add a substantial new initiative to current PhD research programmes in the study of modern Islam and Muslim societies. The ISIM seeks to attract talented students from the Netherlands and from abroad. In cooperation with the participating universities/research schools, ISIM is planning to develop three instruments by which to reach its educational goals:

- Educational programmes and courses at various degree levels and in various formats, in particular at the Advanced and PhD degree levels;
- Support for existing international programmes and for new initiatives in the field;
- Grants for graduates from the Netherlands and abroad.

Library Support, Documentation and Information

The ISIM aims to strengthen existing library collections in the Netherlands related to Islam and Muslim societies and communities, in view of improving the availability of reference and research material on recent and contemporary developments thereof. The Institute intends to establish library/documentation exchange agreements with universities in the Muslim world. The aim is to exchange costly works of references for materials that are difficult to access by scholars outside of the Muslim world.

ISIM has it own website (http://isim.leidenuniv.nl) and WWW server and is developing a database. The creation and maintenance of an Internet gate to pertinent academic sites on the Internet is another undertaking of the ISIM, improving access to digital data, in particular to libraries, documentation and information services, news agencies, periodicals and other publications in the Muslim world and/or by Muslim organizations. The database will provide up-to-date information on researchers and specialized institutes in order to stimulate international cooperation and, in particular, to facilitate access to expertise and documentation.

ISIM's central mode of disseminating information about its activities as well as other activities in the field of contemporary Islamic studies will be through this Newsletter, which can also be found on the ISIM Website.

Outreach activities

In addition to the academia, ISIM addresses itself to non-university educational institutes and public bodies. Dissemination of information to society at large is a vital aspect ISIM's public service function. Expertise on contemporary Islamic issues is to be made available to various audiences through the following means: issuing reports which render scholarly research results accessible to all; training and refresher courses for those who require knowledge about Islam and Muslim societies and communities in their work; and support for institutes which initiate training for those who have frequent contacts with Muslims in their profession.

Organization

The Board is the highest authority of the ISIM. It is responsible for establishing strategy and approving activity plans, budgets, and accounts. The Board consists of the presidents of the participating universities. For the year 1998 the Board has appointed Prof. W.A.L. Stokhof as Director in Charge. He has drafted the constitutional documents which were signed by the Founding Partners on June 30, 1998.

Working Group

The Director in Charge is assisted by a Working Group consisting of:

- Dr M. M. van Bruinessen *(Utrecht University)*
- Prof. P. T. van der Veer *(University of Amsterdam)*
- Prof. E.J. Zürcher *(Leiden University)*

Apart from the drafting of documents, they are involved in the search for an Academic Director and in the formation of the Academic Committee and the International Advisory Committee, which will be appointed by the Board later this year.

The Academic Committee will advise the Board and the Director on all academic affairs, in particular on the design and execution of the research. The International Advisory Committee will serve to anchor the Institute in society and to provide advice on the strategies to be adopted by the Institute in its national and international environment.

A small office staff supports the director and Working Group. Dr D. Douwes (Leiden University/Nijmegen University) acts as academic coordinator and ISIM Newsletter editor and Drs M.E. Bakker as administrative coordinator. ✦

The West

YVONNE YAZBECK HADDAD

Towards the Carving of **Islamic Space in 'the West'**

Since the early 1970s, Western Europeans and North Americans have demonstrated increasing concern over the latest chapter in the Western encounter with Muslims. This concern is focused on the current trend of human migration from South to North and from East to West, with the potential of altering the ethnic and religious composition of Western nation-states and, what some fear, their democratic and capitalist traditions, as well as liberal social values. To those in the West who believe in the purity of race, civilization, or culture, or in a supersessionist 'Judeo-Christian' worldview this movement of people is a menacing threat to their cherished ideals of a homogeneous Western society. For many, it increasingly represents a significant demographic shift that posits a major cultural challenge whose precise consequences are unpredictable and unforeseen since they require a variety of adjustments by the host countries and by the new immigrants.

The Muslim encounter with 'the West' is an on-going drama that has intertwined the histories of the two peoples for over fourteen centuries. While the actors have changed, past experiences ranging from peaceful coexistence and cooperation to mutual vilification and armed conflicts influenced the collective and invented memories of both Muslims and Westerners and tend to colour their relationship. Two distinct features mark the current encounter between Muslims and the West. The first is the assumption of world leadership by the United States with the consequent creation and empowerment of the state of Israel and the promotion of the idea of a superior 'Judeo-Christian' worldview by some sectors of Western society. The second is the growing Muslim emigration, settlement and acquisition of citizenship in the West: in Western Europe, and established countries of European migration such as Australia, Canada, Latin America, South Africa, and the United States.

It is estimated that there are about eighteen million Muslims living in the West. The majority in Western Europe were recruited as temporary guest-workers with the full expectation that they would eventually return to their homelands. The emigration to the Americas during the last quarter of the twentieth century came initially from the educated classes seeking higher education, better economic opportunities, and political and religious freedom. Since then, asylum seekers and refugees have significantly augmented the diversity of Muslims in the West. In the process, Muslim communities have been transformed from collectivities of migrant, predominantly male labourers to immigrant families, from sojourners to settlers, and from transients to citizens. Attempts by various Western nations to halt Muslim migration have led to the creation of Muslim minority communities which increasingly appear to have become a permanent fixture in the West.

Each Western nation has a particular relationship with its immigrant population that has been conditioned by its colonial legacy, its historical memory, and its traditional perception of its former subject people as well as its heritage and perception of its role in the world. Each is in the process of developing policies and models for the treatment of its newest citizens who are challenging its perception of its liberal traditions and religious tolerance. These range from containing Muslims as permanently foreign, encouraging their integration, promoting their assimilation, or forging them into distinct manageable ethnic minorities. Canada, which identifies itself as a multi-cultural society, encourages and subsidizes the maintenance of distinctive cultures. The United States has experimented with a variety of models beginning with 'Anglo conformity', to melting pot (until discovering that there were too many unmeltables), to equal religious conglomerates: Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish. Currently, two controversial paradigms compete for adoption. The first, promoted by Christian fundamentalists, the Jewish community, and a large number of politicians, identifies America as grounded in Judeo-Christian values. Its critics note that such a definition threatens the separation of religion and state, maintaining the current power structures, confining Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and peoples of other faiths and values to the periphery. The second model advocates a pluralistic society, which celebrates difference, raising fears of the division of America into ethnic identities, or 'grievance groups'.

At the same time, Muslims have been grappling with the problem of living in the context of an un-Islamic environment. The initial concern came out of the experience of 'minorityness' in the Indian context. The late Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi travelled to Europe, the United States, and Canada admonishing Muslims to eschew integration into their new environment or leave the West lest they lose their soul in its wayward ways. Other scholars have insisted that such an opinion is misguided since the proper interpretation of Islamic law allows Muslims to live outside the abode of Islam, as long as they have the freedom to practise and propagate their faith. Still others are of the opinion that Muslim presence in the West provides them with an unprecedented opportunity to fulfil their Islamic duty to propagate the faith. In the process, they not only obey God's commandment to call people to Islam, they also help to redeem Western society from its evil ways and restore it to the worship of God.

Advice on how to survive in the West comes from a variety of quarters. H.H. Bilgrami (director of the World Federation of Islamic Missions, Karachi, Pakistan) prescribed a programme of Islamic education that inculcates an ideological identity:

a. To maintain the means whereby Muslims in the West remain conscious of their identity;
b. To ensure a dynamic element which can face the onslaught of the Western cultural influence on the minds of Muslim children;
c. To ensure that Muslim minorities remain conscious of their position as an ideological group with values different from those of non-Muslims;
d. To function as a source of information about Islam to non-Muslims;
e. To serve as a means for the propagation of Islam, which is the sacred duty of every Muslim;
f. To ultimately raise a strong ideologically-integrated community for the consolidation of the *ummah* to the basis of unity.

The conscious effort to define Muslims as distinct became the concern of Zain el-Abedin, the founder of the Institute for Muslim Minority Affairs in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He, too, worried about Muslim loss of identity in the West. To protect the community from disintegration, he prescribed developing Islam as an ethnicity, erecting ramparts not only to keep the non-Muslims out, but more importantly, to hold the Muslims in. Thus he identified important ideological constructs and behavioural distinctions as indispensable markers of the cultural divide between Muslims and Westerners. For him, the West becomes a laboratory where a now modern identity is to be fused, one that fosters particular behavioural patterns, promotes a common language, distinctive customs and traditions, recognizable styles of dress and food, among other cultural distinctions. These are easier to identify and particularize, than the effort to inculcate ideas because they are more tangible. At the same time, he was aware that ethnicity could be very divisive given the diversity of migrant groups. The difficulty would be in determining whose language, customs, or behaviour is more Islamically legitimate.

Furthermore, he noted that ethnicity itself is un-Islamic. Thus while cultural distinction promotes cohesion, and functions as a barrier to being absorbed or assimilated into a multi-cultural society, it may also veer from the truth of Islam which affirms that 'physical traits, cultural traditions, dress, food, customs, and habits are subordinate or subsidiary to their main doctrinal identity, that God created differences in people in order to facilitate recognition, that the true identity is determined by the manner in which a person or group of any race, colour or physical type approaches the business of living, uses his faculties, selects ends and means for his worldly endeavours.'*

Some Muslims have become active in the mosque movement in the West and are defining the mosque as the centre around which Muslim life should revolve. For a growing number strict adherence to ritual practice in the adopted country marks the boundaries of faith. Announcing the need for a clean space for daily prayer, the act of praying, donning Islamic garb, refraining from eating pork and improperly slaughtered meat, as well as fasting during the month of Ramadan have become self-delineated boundaries that help immigrants feel secure, distinct, and outside the bounds of pollution. For some, conforming to Islamic prohibitions has become a conscious act of witness of a distinctive faith despite public ridicule and a demonstration of steadfastness and perseverance in the face of social obstacles to their performance. Muslim immigrants and their children are aware of the necessity of dealing with prevalent pre-formed stereotypes, honed over centuries of conflict and competition. They also have to deal with the increasing rhetoric of demonization and prejudice propagated in the United States by right wing public intellectuals (Pat Buchanan and George Will), Christian fundamentalists (Jimmy Swaggart and Pat Robertson), and Zionists (Bernard Lewis, Daniel Pipes, Steve Emerson, and Charles Krauthamer). In Europe, they have to cope with the rise of xenophobic statements of right wing European political parties such as the Front Nationale in France, Vlaams Blok in Belgium, Republikaner in Germany, and the Centrumpartij of the Netherlands.

The public discussion about the Islamic threat accompanied by violence against Muslim life in Europe and North America as well as acts of terrorism perpetrated by Muslims have heightened tensions. Islam is accused of being a religion that is devoid of integrity and progressive values, one that promotes violent passions in its adherents, a menace to civil society, and a threat to the peace loving people of the world. Muslims are cast as bloodthirsty terrorists, whose loyalty as citizens must be questioned since they are obsessed with the destruction of the West.

Muslims in Europe and North America are aware that they have little political power to influence the government, the media, or the elites in the West. They have very few channels of communication to policy makers. A variety of factors hamper effective participation in the political process including the lack of experience of participating in political activities, the fear of the consequences of political involvement, and lack of experience in grass roots organizations or coalition-building. They also lack seasoned leaders and efficient organizations that are able to forge coalitions with other groups in order to bring about change and influence legislation.

To Muslims in the West, the situation is becoming increasingly threatening. Azzam al-Tamimi of Britain has recently identified it as a state of crisis. Options promoted for survival of the community in the seventies have not succeeded. His assessment is that while not all of the obstacles that appear in the relations of Muslims with non-Muslims in Western societies are fostered by Muslims, the more dangerous and difficult ones are the consequence of Muslim perceptions and behaviour. Some Muslims erroneously seek to overcome these obstacles through melting into Western culture and abandoning some or all of their Islamic identity. Others insist on ignoring these obstacles by resorting to isolation and hiding in cocoons. For al-Tamimi, this discrepancy in dealing with the crisis has led to the sundering of relations between the generations. On the one hand is the generation of the fathers and mothers as well as grandparents who have an emotional and cultural tie to the original homeland and who hold on to the same customs and traditions whether or not they accord with their new environment. On the other hand is the generation of the children and grandchildren who have no emotional ties to the homeland of the fathers, and find little of value in their customs which are seen as counter-productive and an impediment to progress in the society in which they are born. Thus the new generation is in need of a new paradigm that can provide a comfort zone as it carves a space for Muslims as part and parcel of the West.

Muslim presence 'within the gates' is challenging Westerners' self-assured perceptions of their liberalism, pluralism, democracy, and tolerance. Still open to discussion is whether these Western traditions are broad enough to guarantee Muslims, not only freedom of religion and the right to propagate their faith, but also to enjoy the culture of their choice. Are Western democracies liberal enough to make room for Islamic input into the national consensus, or will there be an insistence on a Judeo-Christian culture? Will Western pluralism or multiculturalism be flexible enough to provide for Islamic input into the shaping of the future of Western society? Or will Muslims continue to be marginalized, ostracized, studied and evaluated, always judged as lacking, and always the 'other'? ✦

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Note

* Syed Z. Abedin, 'The Study of Muslim Minority Problems: A Conceptual Approach', in: *Muslim communities in non-Muslim States.* London: Islamic Council of Europe, 1980, p. 21.

Sudan

HEATHER DEEGAN

Moves Toward **Conflict Resolution in Sudan**

In the summer of 1998, the Khartoum government and John Garang of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) signed a temporary ceasefire in order that international aid could reach the war-torn areas. Some discussion has also taken place regarding the institution of a new constitution, which would include the political clauses of the 1997 Agreement. Although there is no easy solution to the conflict in Sudan, one aspect seems clear: if there is to be peace within the country, a political settlement must be both achievable and sustainable.

The civil war that has raged in Sudan, apart from a brief respite during the Jaafar Nimeiri period since 1955, is estimated to have cost 1.3 million lives. A Peace Agreement was signed on 21 April 1997, between the Sudanese government, under the leadership of President el-Bashir, and the United Democratic Salvation Front (UDSF), comprising the South Sudan Independence Movement (SSIM), the Union of Sudan African Parties (USAP), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the Equatoria Defence Force and the South Sudan Independence Group (SSIG). Although the agreement does not include the government's chief opponents, Colonel John Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), or the leader of the exiled Umma Party, El-Sadiq el-Mahdi, it does outline a number of political issues, which, if resolved, could provide the basis for a move towards a conflict resolution.

Ethnicity and religion are seen as integral factors in the war: a predominantly Arab-African, Muslim North against an animist or Christian black African South. Certainly ethnicity and religion are major contemporary factors, but their origins are historic. The 1962 Missionary Act prevented the spread of Islam to the south of the country and forged a religious tension within the country. By 1983 and with the institution of *sharia* law, tensions were exacerbated. From that time, State Minister of Foreign Affairs Gabriel Roric believes, minority rights became confused with religious rights. Yet it would be erroneous to generalize about the conflict in such terms as 'the North-South Conflict' or 'Islam versus Christianity' or 'Arabism versus Africanism'. In Sudan, the issue of nation formation, regionalism, ethnicity, religion, and economic justice 'have been left to accumulate over time, without being resolved'.[1]

The civil war is essentially concerned with two fundamental issues: firstly, the identity of the Sudanese state and secondly, the question of who gains control over the natural resources of the south. Because of the area's reserves of oil, hardwoods and minerals and vast tracts of unexplored land, the economic potential of the south has been seen as the key objectives for all parties. Yet ethnic diversity is complex in Sudan. The 1996 census reported a population of 27 million people. According to an earlier census conducted in 1955/56, the only one that included ethnic origin, there are 19 major ethnic groups. These groups can be further divided into 597 smaller sub-groupings, speaking over 100 different languages. Around 60 per cent of the population are Muslim; 15 per cent are Christian and the remainder adhere to traditional religions. The demographic composition has been altered through years of civil war and ecological disaster, but one of the important aspects of the April 1997 Peace Agreement is that it attempts to address some of these socio-ethnic imbalances through its federal structure.

The Peace Agreement, April 1997

The general principles contained in the peace agreement signed on 21 April 1997, aim to attain a 'just and lasting peace'. The document declares that 'only a sustainable peace based on justice, equality, democracy and freedom can lead to a meaningful development and progress which would assist in the solution of the fundamental problems of the people of Sudan.' Concerning the basic issue of the relationship between religion and the State, the agreement states that Sudan is a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious society. Islam is the religion of the majority of the population, and Christianity and the African creeds are followed by a considerable number of citizens. Nevertheless, the basis of rights and duties shall be citizenship, and all Sudanese shall equally share in all aspects of life and political responsibilities.

The status of *sharia* is arguably the most contentious constitutional issue and its repeal has continually been called for by the SPLA as a conditional step if negotiations are to take place between the SPLA and the government. On the crucial issue of *sharia*, the parties to the April agreement decided on a complex formula. Laws of a general nature that were based on general principles common to the states would apply at the national level, provided that the states had the right to enact any complementary federal legislation on matters peculiar to them. In other words, *sharia* would not be abandoned at the national level but it was not to intrude to the governance of the regions.

The terms of the rights and freedoms accorded to every person are far reaching and would not be out of place in a liberal democracy. Yet Hasan Turabi asserts that the emphasis in the Sudanese model of Islam is on 'rights and obligations' in which there is no coercion but equally 'no freedom of will in the Western sense'.

The relationship between religious identity, citizenship, and the State is critical. Particularly significant is the idea of religious freedom based on the principle that affords the individual not only the right to choose for himself or herself, but also the protection against any compulsion. In a sense, this right grants the general population individual freedom. It also represents a commitment on the part of both the State and the organizations within civil society to ensure and enhance political rights. Sudan's political system has organized structures and processes of decision-making. Dr Ghazi Salahuddin Alabani, the Secretary General to the Congress, describes the system as containing the 'bare rudiments of a democratic system'. The Western pluralist model is seen as too divisive but the Sudanese system does involve a range of representatives from trade unions, professional associations, tribal chiefs and so on, who tend to become involved at the state level. Ideas can be individualistic without party discipline but this structure is regarded as more democratic than previous governments with political parties which 'were never representative'.

One cause of conflict within the country has been identified as regional inequity with regard to the distribution of productive assets, and educational health and social services. The Peace Agreement contains a section dealing with wealth sharing, one clause of which states: 'The federal government shall lay down a comprehensive economic and social plan to develop the country in general and to bridge the gap between the various states in particular, so that within a definite period, a parity in provision of basic needs such as security, employment, water, food, education, health and housing could be reached'.

In order to consolidate economic policies, Sudan's economy is moving towards a free market focus. Hassan Turabi refers to the country's privatizing economy as one which aims to be more efficient. Emphasis is now placed on the productivity of farmers and agricultural improvement, and the government has given the production of food for domestic and regional consumption priority status. Women are encouraged to cultivate their land, grow food and exchange and barter in cooperation stores. As women became more productive in home agricultural pursuits such as growing food, keeping chickens and so on, large-scale acreage can be devoted to growing cash crops which earn foreign currency through exports.

The country, however, faces difficulty in looking towards an expansion of its productive base when previous productivity has been low. The lack of basic commodities such as petrol holds back efficient production. In addition, there have been major problems in gaining foreign investment since the Gulf War and the country's deteriorating relationship with the IMF. Sudan looks to the Middle East, China, and Malaysia to provide external funding, but that may not be quite so readily forthcoming now that the economies of South East Asia are in trouble. More generally, some Sudanese commentators suggest that liberalizing the economy is undesirable and may fuel 'old fears of ethnic exclusion from positions of power and wealth'. 'The government must be cautious in its privatization programme. Otherwise, disposing of commercial enterprizes will give undue advantage to capital rich, better positioned and well-established Northern merchants and industrialists whom, rightly or wrongly, non-Northerners in the South, East, and West consider to be responsible for their economic miseries and whom they eye with suspicion and jealousy'.[2]

Although the Agreement is for an interim period of four years, it can be shortened or lengthened according to the recommendations from the Coordinating Council. The remit of the Council is broad. The Coordinating Council is responsible for supervision, socio-economic planning, confidence building, peace nurturing, policy making and political mobilization. It is accountable to President el-Bashir and provides a link between the government and the Southern States. In order to be viewed as non-partial and impartial, its composition must reflect an appropriate balance between the different parties in the conflict.

The security arrangements during the interim period of the Agreement are particularly important in establishing the basic elements of conflict resolution. The South Sudan Defence Force (SSDF) will remain separate from the National Army and will be stationed in their locations under their command. However, police, prisons, civil defence, and public security in the Southern States will be drawn from the people of the area and the presence of the Sudanese armed forces will be reduced once violence has stopped. A joint Ceasefire Commission is to be established to monitor ceasefire violations and the disengagement of troops in the Southern States.

The Agreement also accedes to the right of the peoples of Southern Sudan to 'determine their political aspirations and pursue their economic, social and cultural development' through the process of a referendum to be held before the end of the interim period. The options contained in the referendum will present a choice between either unity or secession.

Conclusion

The perennial conflict in Sudan has hardly created an environment conducive to the remedying of economic disparities and social injustice. The Peace Agreement of April 1997 is of course, only partial, in that its signatories represent a segment of the range of oppositionists within the country. The central question is how likely is the agreement to result in a measure of success? As Dr Atabani, Secretary General of the National Congress asserts, 'Government is not divine. The government is accountable to the people ultimately'. In a sense, the 1997 Agreement has gone some way towards demonstrating an understanding of the problems confronting different groups within Sudan and in identifying a number of key political aspects, all which could help lessen tensions and offer the possibility of a 'suitable peace' for all people. ✦

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This is a shortened and updated version of the article 'Conflict in Sudan: The Peace Agreement of April 1997', Africa Insight, 27, 3, 1997

Notes

1. Adlan Ahmad Al-Hardallo, 'The quest for a permanent constitution for Sudan' in Hassan M. Salih (ed.) *Federalism in the Sudan*, Khartoum UP 1995.
2. Atta el-Battahani, 'Ethnicity and economic development in federal Sudan 1989-1994' in *ibid*.

Senegal
MAMADOU DIOUF

Paths of Islam in Senegal

It is not easy to say exactly when Islam first established itself in our region. On the other hand, one can be sure that this religion infiltrated progressively from the central valley of Senegal or, to be precise, from the kingdom of Tékrour. To understand the influence of Islam in Senegambian societies, one must first trace its complete history from the conversion of War Jabi, the 11th century king of Tékrour, via the colonial conquests to the present day. Between these dates, social movements inspired by Islam took various forms according to the moment, the regions, and the ethnic groups, favouring always transactions between the influences and modifications provoked by Islam and the Senegambian cultures.[1]

A large part of Tékrour's fame is due to its status as the first Black kingdom to convert to Islam. Its economic power lay in its location on the edge of the Sahara, which enabled it to benefit from trade between North Africa and the *Bilad-es-Soudan*, the Black African countries. It exerted control on some of the commercial routes along which gold and slaves were transported from the South to the North, and cowries, arms and horses in the opposite direction.

Arab traders carried products, male and female slaves, and a religion – Islam – to this part of Africa. In the 11th century, the importance of economic interests and the close intermingling of economic and political activities and religious interdependence motivated the conversion of the sovereign, War Jabi. His subjects followed his example.

The distinctive face of the first wave of Islamization restricted itself to court Islam: well-read marabouts – usually Arabs or Moors, with a total absence of natives – and the peasant masses depending on their rural religions, were totally impervious to the new faith. The beginning of the slave trade that was gradually to kill off the economy of the Sahara and the Sahel (which fell into a deep crisis with the shift of commercial activities to the Atlantic coast and the mouths of the Senegal, Gambia, and Casamance Rivers) closes this first sequence.

With the expansion of the slave trade, European trading posts multiplied, as did wars and raids within and between the kingdoms. In effect, war was the means of producing slaves and one consequence of the strong European demand beginning in the second half of the 17th century was a generalization of violence, a profound economic and social crisis and feverish migrations of certain peoples and social groups.

The upheavals resulting from the slave trade were the origin of a very strong protest and resistance movement led by the marabouts. This movement, which in its ascendant phase attempted to seize power in the Senegambian kingdoms, is known as the Marabout War (1673-74). Initiated by a Moorish marabout, Nasr-al-Din, it shook all of the northern lands in the region.[2] The quick victory of the marabout party was short lived. The traditional aristocracies enjoyed the armed support of the slave traders of the coastal trading posts who had an interest in putting a stop to insurgents hostile to the Atlantic slave trade. In spite of their brief success and the violence of the repression that followed, the marabouts and the Muslim communities had, for the first time, succeeded in mobilizing the principal victims of the violence of the slave trade.

The second face, born in a time of frequent famines, wars and pillaging, imbued Islam with the following characteristic traits: a warlike, militant orientation; an increasing hostility towards the 'Christian' slave traders and the 'pagan' traditional aristocracies; and a resilient ability to recover and to restructure human communities which had been, at first, traumatized by the violence of the slave trade and then of colonization.

This reorientation, which continues unabated today in new forms in the face of the economic crisis, rests on the erosion or the redefinition and the reformulating of the community structures and the challenging, dissolution or division of political power and command; 'The Muslim community has a specific composition. It is multi-ethnic and bases its existence not on some filiation or reference to a common ancestor, but on a religious conviction which puts the community ideal before all else while exalting it and affirming it in daily life. Work being the same for everyone, it pushes aside the obvious exploitation of the disciple by his marabout… Group solidarity is no longer based on ethnic membership; it transcends it to favour the community of faith. Muslim communities exist in networks which are within and beyond states. Their political appeal transcends national frontiers. In this way are forged the frameworks of a new history'.[3] Finally, the Marabout War enlarged the Islamized area of Senegambia by attaching the northern regions of the *wolof* country to the *toucouleur* country. Here strong Muslim communities (some of them in the minority), were very attractive to their neighbouring communities, demonstrating great capacities for resistance and offensive action when confronted by traditional power, while creating the first training centres for native marabouts in these new territories.

The failure of the marabouts in their attempt to control the whole of northern Senegambia did not put an end to the holy wars or *jihad*. Muslim communities continued to revolt against the aristocracies, the slave traders and then the expeditionary forces, from the second half of the 17th century up to the creation of the AOF (French West Africa) in 1895.

This sequence closes with the first great victory of the Muslim communities in the Fuuta Tooro in which the *toorodo* marabouts seized power and put an end to the *denyanke* regime, which they accused of paganism. In fact, while exerting tyrannical power, the *denyanke* practised a lax form of Islam. These characteristics explain the considerable mobilization of the masses to support the insurgents. They accused them of pillaging their own subjects to supply the Saharan slave trade and of being unable to guarantee the protection of the kingdom against foreign incursions, notably by the Moors.

The *toroodo* revolution of 1776 was thus a revolt of the oppressed. Its instigator was Souleyman Baal, while Abdel Qadir Kan assured its success.[4] He became the first *Almami* of Fuuta Tooro with the establishment of the Muslim theocracy, founded on a new political morality and whose order rested on the *shari^{c}a*. The *toroodo* authorities sent missionaries and warriors throughout the whole of Senegambia and lent their unfailing support to all Muslim communities to promote Islam and to overturn the traditional aristocracies.

This religious proselytism, which coincided with the beginning of the colonial conquest, opened a third sequence – that of the jihad of the 19th century – the objectives of which were to destroy the pagan aristocracies, to convert the population and to put a brake on the territorial expansion of the colony of Senegal (Saint Louis and Gorée).

One figure totally dominates this sequence: El Haj Oumar Foutiyou Tal, whose action touched the whole of Senegambia and the loop of the Niger. Oumar's work was taken up and amplified by his disciples, of whom the best known were Maba Jaxu Ba, Cheikhou Amadou Madiyu and Mamadou Lamin Dramé. El Haj Oumar was born in Fuuta Tooro around 1794 into a family of *toroodo* minor nobility. He led a spectacular holy war against the traditional aristocrats and the colonizers in the regions of Upper Senegal-Niger from 1852 to 1864, after having undertaken a long journey to Mecca and the Arab and African Muslim countries, between 1825 and 1832. During the pilgrimage, at the foot of the Ka'aba, Oumar was initiated into the *tariqa* (way) *tijaan*. He was raised to the rank of Caliph of the brotherhood for West Africa.

Between 1854 and 1857, he controlled several states on the right bank of the Senegal River (Gidimaxa, Bundu, Khasso and Kaarta). His repeated calls for an uprising of the Muslims of Kajoor, Bawol, Jolof, Fuuta Tooro, and Saint Louis against their rulers mobilized the governor of Senegal, General Louis Léon Faidherbe, against the 'toucouleur' marabout. After several skirmishes with the French, El Haj Oumar turned his forces eastward. In 1859, he seized the *bambara* kingdom of Senegal before defeating the alliance of Ségou and Macina, thus creating the biggest *pulaar* Muslim empire in West Africa. He abandoned Senegambia to the French forever. Oumar met with his death on the cliffs of Bandiagara following the insurrection of the *peul* of Macina in 1864.

Of the marabouts who followed in the footsteps of Oumar, three deserve mention: Maba Jaxu Ba, Cheikou Madiyu, and Mamadou Lamin Dramé. With them the phase of warrior Islam ended. Other marabouts attempted to repeat the *jihad* adventure briefly but to no avail. Islam took on a new face – that of the Sufi path of the brotherhoods – an Islam which rejected military holy war and favoured the constitution of solid, stable, and productive communities.

The new sequence merges with the ancestry of the principal Senegalese brotherhoods, *Qaddiriyya, tijaan,* and *mouride*. On the one hand it marks the end of armed opposition between the Muslims and the traditional aristocrats following the victory of the expeditionary forces and, on the other, the permanent admission of the brotherhoods into the project of colonial exploitation.

The Qaddiriyya Brotherhood

The Qaddiriyya was the first brotherhood to establish itself in Senegal. It was introduced there following the reform movement initiated by Mactar-al-kabir Kunta, one of the greatest scholars of Timbuktu in the 18th century. In order to accelerate the Islamization of West Africa and to purify the message, he sent numerous disciples into the main regions of the Sudan. One of them, Bounama Kounta, arrived in Kajoor at the beginning of the 19th century. His excellent qualities as a trader and his erudition gained him access to the royal court in Kajoor.

The king of Kajoor granted him a fief on which his successors founded Njassan, the holy place and religious centre of the Kounta branch of the brotherhood. In fact, the *qadir* brotherhood was subdivided into several, more or less rival branches, each having its own marabouts and holy places. The *qadir* sphere of influence is confined to the regions of Thiès, Loga, the outskirts of Dakar, and several pockets in Casamance. Demographically speaking, the Qaddiriyya is the smallest of the great Senegalese brotherhoods.

The Tijaaniyya Brotherhood

It has already been mentioned that El Haj Oumar introduced this brotherhood into West Africa. His initiative was continued by various charismatic leaders. Each of them marked out his own territory for his religious undertaking.

El Haj Saïdou Nourou Tall (1879-1980), a grandson of Oumar, had numerous disciples and a large influence among the populations of the Senegal valley and towns such as Dakar and Saint Louis. He played a significant role in Senegalese political life from the colonial period until his death. For his disciples, the political and religious success of Saïdou Nourou was not translated into economic success compared to that of the mourides.

El Haj Malick Sy (1855-1922) was the founder of the principal *Wolof* branch of the *tijaan*. He was first a wandering marabout before deciding to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. Afterwards he settled in Saint Louis, then at Tivaouane where he established his *Zawiya*. Today, this town is the holy city of this religious branch. El Haj Malick launched a vast programme of proselytism and religious education. He appointed marabout teachers at the commercial stops along the railway and in the cities, thus imparting a strong intellectual and didactic orientation to Senegalese Islam.

Upon the death of the founder, his son Ababacar Sy (1890-1957) succeeded him and assumed the title, recognized by the colonial administration, of Caliph General of the *tijaan*. He had to confront the opposition of his two younger brothers, El Haj Mansour Sy and Abdoul Aziz Sy. At the end of World War II, this opposition had taken a political turn: the Caliph supported the partisans of Léopold Sédar Senghor, the Senegalese Democratic Block, while his two brothers took sides with the French Section of the Workers' International (SFIO) of Lamine Gueye. This confrontation within the brotherhood has left indelible stains on the history of the brotherhood.

The defunct Caliph General, Abdoul Aziz Sy (1905-1997), credited with great erudition and a deep sense of justice and political compromise, succeeded his brother in 1957. He too had to confront the insurrection of the late Caliph's children, one of whom, Cheik Ahmed Tidiane Sy (1920-), has been one of the principal figures in the politico-religious life of Senegal since the end of the 1950s. He is the moral guide of a movement of young Muslims, the *Moustarchidin wal Moustarchidati*, which was the principle opposition party to the power of the President of the Republic during the 1990s. Accused of being at the instigation of the bloody riots of 16 February 1994, the son of this marabout, who is the moral leader of the organization, was imprisoned for a year.[5]

The main commemorative religious festival of the *tijaan* is the celebration of the birth of the Prophet Mohammed, the *Gamou*, which is an evening recitation of the Koran and a revalidation of the brotherhood's collective memory. Every year, this religious ceremony brings thousands to Tivaouane. As did the colonial administration, the Senegalese government sends a strong delegation.

Today, the *tijaan* branch of the Sy is profoundly shaken by internal crises provoked by the struggles for power and antagonistic political positioning of the principal marabouts who are immersed in partisan political quarrels. The multiplication of political parties and manifold dissidence within the party in power have led to a restructuring and rearrangement of alliances and vote-catching groupings which are traumatizing the marabout families, certain segments of which found themselves profoundly opposed to the others.

The Niass de Kaolack branch was founded by Abdoulay Niass (1850-1922) but the principal ▶

creator was his son El Haj Ibrahima Niass (1902-1976). An erudite and charismatic marabout, he succeeded in establishing his brotherhood firmly in the Gambia and the north of Nigeria. Like Cheik Ahmed Tidiane Sy, with whom he allied himself in creating a political party opposed to Senghor, Niass was a political player of the first order. The great success of this branch of the *tijaan* is, thanks to its Gambian and Nigerian connection, the fact that it took root in the United States, notably in Chicago and Washington DC.

The Mouride Brotherhood

Demographically speaking, the mouride brotherhood has fewer followers than the *tijaan* brotherhood but, in terms of organization, discipline and its capacities for mobilization and economic entrepreneurship, it has the most influence. In spite of critical episodes and serious confrontations with the colonial administration, by directing the development of the groundnut industry (the product of colonial exploitation) it was able to interfere in political affairs by very quickly granting itself a privileged position.

Today, the economic, social, and religious networks of Mouridism extend throughout the world, most notably in the marketplaces of international commerce. This 'spider web' assures them control of Senegalese commerce and of the informal *Sandaga* sector – the big market and the small shops in the adjacent streets in the centre of the Senegalese capital are the bridgehead of their influence. The holy city of Touba and the minaret of the grand mosque (*Lamp Fal*) symbolize their attachment to one earth (the Bawol) and to one ideology and source of inspiration: Mouridism, the central values of which are the cult of work, success, discipline and absolute obedience to the marabout (*Jebëlu).*

The *bawol-bawol* reference, the mouride attributes, and inclusion in a genealogy of which Ahmadou Bamba Mbacke is the ultimate expression, drawn out on a holy land (Touba), and captured completely in a monument, the mosque and its minaret, offer an identity which is exhibited throughout Senegal. Its most spectacular moment is the great *Magal* which sees not much fewer than a million people converge on the town. Every year, the *Magal* commemorates the return from exile of the founder of Mouridism, Ahmadou Bamba.

Amadou Bamba Mbacke (1850-1927) was the son of a former Kadi of Kajoor, close to Maba Jaxu and Lat Joor. He lived for a certain number of years at the Kajoor court. On the death of the *damel* of Kajoor in 1886, he settled in MBacké-Baol and began to attract a considerable and growing number of *taalibe* (disciples), from among the poor, peasants and slaves to princes who had been traumatized by the violence of colonial conquest.

Although he only viewed his actions in a spiritual context and his resistance to colonization in a passive sense, his notoriety and influence alienated him from the colonizers. He was arrested and deported to Mayombe in Gabon where he stayed from 1895 to 1902. The *Magal* commemorates his departure into exile. This episode, the origin of the Mouride collective memory, constitutes the framework for the miracles of Bamba: the prayer on the carpet held up by the waves of the ocean; his resistance to the attempts of his French jailers to debase him; and the domestication of the dense forest, of wild animals and supernatural beings.

His return to Senegal was of short duration. He was once again deported by the colonial authorities – this time to Mauritania where he stayed from 1903 to 1907, the date on which he returned to Senegal to remain under house arrest in Jolof. Ahmadou Bamba's deportations increased his fame and the number of *taalibe* only grew. In 1910, it finally dawned upon the French that Bamba was not plotting a jihad. They allowed him to found his holy city of Touba and, in 1926, to make a start on the great mosque of Touba in which he is buried.

The understanding with the French opened up new territories for the Mourides who adhered to Bamba's message of 'work is a form of prayer; it sanctifies'. They therefore supported the expansion of growing groundnuts. The marabouts developed a particular relationship with the colonial administration and their own marabout way of representing the peasantry. From this time, the marabouts installed themselves as the inescapable intermediaries between the colonial administration and the rural masses.

The other great figure of the saga of this first Mouride period was the faithful disciple (the 'man to do and undertake everything') of the marabout, Cheik Ibra Fal, called Lamp Fal (1858-1930), who founded the sub-brotherhood of the *Baay Fal*. His name is closely associated with that of the founder of Mouridism. Because of his noble, warrior background as a *ceddo* (a traditional Wolof warrior), he symbolizes the link between the old *Wolof* political formations and the new communities of the brotherhood. His integration, at the periphery of the latter, favoured the granting of the right to transgress certain Islamic prescriptions: the consumption of alcohol and a dispensation from regular prayer. The *ceddo* and the slave warriors rushed towards this opening.

The *Baay Fal* branch of Mouridism retained the clothing and certain aspects of the *ceddo* way of life: long hair, wide leather belts encircling their loins, multi-coloured gowns, half a pestle to use as a club, drum music and religious chants deeply influenced by the *Wolof* 'peasant' rhythm and beat and an expressiveness in dancing which is now found in contemporary *mbalax* (dance music). Of the totality of the teaching which issued from Ahmadou Bamba – the piety, obedience, discipline and work – *Baay Fal* have retained only the last element. Their devotion, dedication and commitment to the quest and to work in the service of the brotherhood and of the marabouts have assured the primitive accumulation of the brotherhood. Like the other brotherhoods, the *Baay Fal* sub-branch has a Caliph General and has been fragmented into several 'houses' (branches).

Trade and the cultivation of groundnuts favoured the rapid enrichment of the mouride community and its leaders. Today, a blind belief in work and economic success has innervated the entire brotherhood.[6]

On the death of the founder of Mouridism, a dispute arose regarding the succession between his brother, Cheik Anta Mbacke (1878-1930), a prosperous businessman, also known as 'the brotherhood's banker', and his eldest son Mamadou Moustapha Mbacke (1880-1945). The colonial administration preferred the latter who was the real organizer of the brotherhood. He maintained the structure, the hierarchy, the principle of absolute submission of the *taalibe* to their marabout and the cult of *diggël* (marabout prescription). He accelerated the construction of the mosque, the cultivation of groundnuts and the territorial expansion of Mouridism which extended beyond the *Wolof* groundnut basin to reach the *sereer* and the city dwellers of the colony of Senegal.

The succession to Mamadou Moustapha Mbacke created the same difficulties as that of his father, with a conflict between his eldest son Cheik Mbacke, also known as *Gaïndé Fatma* (1905-1978), and his brother, Falilou Mbacke (1885-1968). Benefiting from colonial support and that of Léopold Sédar Senghor, the most influential politician of the period, the latter became Caliph General while his rival was supported by Lamine Gueye, who was entering a phase of political decline. Having failed to control the brotherhood, Cheik Mbacke devoted his life and his energy to the construction of an economic empire which was to make him one of Senegal's most important private successes, investing both in the production and the commercialization of groundnuts and salt, as well as fishing and real-estate.

Falilou Mbacke continued the work of his brother by consecrating the mosque in Touba and by strengthening relations between the marabout hierarchy and the BDS, Senghor's party which would later become the Progressive Senegalese Union (UPS). His importance in the history of the Mouride brotherhood lies in the fact that throughout his reign he maintained the unshakeable support of the peasant masses. It was also during this caliphate that the fragmentation of mouridism into increasingly numerous 'houses' was accentuated, as was the acquisition of a certain autonomy vis-à-vis the central authority of the brotherhood by the marabouts.

The death of the Mouride marabout coincided with the intensification of social movements, notably strikes by workers and students. For the first time, the urban crises were now combined with peasant unrest, which thanks to the unfailing support of the marabouts had always been contained. The causes of this were: the end of French subsidies to the groundnut industry, which was henceforth aligned at a lower world price (an alignment which entailed a lowering of producers' prices and a fierce erosion of the incomes of peasants and marabouts); an exacerbation of the debts owed by peasants; and increasingly frequent recourse to brutal methods of recovery by the Senegalese authorities. Even worse, this marked the start of the cycle of droughts which would accelerate the exodus of peasants from the groundnut basin to the towns and towards commercial activities.

This context led the new Caliph General to inaugurate a new style. The seventh son of the founder, Abdou Lahat Mbacke (1905-1989), took charge of the grievances of the peasants whom he publicly defended, notably at the annual *Magal* in Touba. However, he did not break with the regime which he continued to support while developing autonomy for himself and his community. He will certainly be remembered by the Mouride community under his nickname 'the Builder'. Indeed, he was the architect of the urbanization of Touba, the centre of gravity where a mosque was completely finished under his caliphate. He constructed an immense library and set up a print-shop to preserve and disseminate the works of the founder.

He was simultaneously the architect of the brotherhood's financial security and of its entrance into the city, with the control of the commercial sector by the *Modou-modou* (itinerant traders, organizers of the informal sector, importers of household electrical appliances and rice, small industrialists, haulage contractors, etc.) Today, the success of Mouride urban economic enterprise can be read in all of the features that bear traces of Mouride identity. The followers of Mouridism have become the masters of all the urban markets in Senegal and have woven dense networks of solidarity throughout the markets of the world, through which they circulate capital and offers of work with an unrivalled security. These changes mark the end of the 'groundnut marabouts' and herald in the era of the 'wheeler-dealer' marabout.

The secular marabout, Abdou Lahat, was succeeded by the erudite Abdou Khadre Mbacke, the imam of the mosque of Touba for two decades. His caliphate was of short duration (1989-90). He preferred meditation and the silence of prayer to his predecessor's flamboyant personality and clear-cut political stand in favour of President Abdou Diouf. He passed away on 13 May, 1990.

Abdou Khadre was succeeded by Serign Saliou Mbacke (1915-). Closer in style to his predecessor, he seems to wish to put an end to the brotherhood's political engagement. No longer having a secretary to maintain a link with political power, the new Caliph seems to be opting for a return to the original Mouridism and agricultural activities. He has thus succeeded in obtaining the declassification and the deforestation of the last protected forest in the western centre of Senegal – Khelcom. Nevertheless, he has resumed the urbanization of Touba by deciding to enlarge the mosque and complete the construction of an Islamic university begun by Abdou Lahat Mbacke. Certainly his style leaves more room for the activities of different branches of Mouridism, notably the young marabouts looking for economic and financial opportunities and for lucrative political patronage.

The organization of the brotherhood is hierarchical. It relies on the relationship of submission of the *taalibe* to the marabout. The latter may require the former to make a contribution in kind, money, or work in the fields just as he may tell him how to vote, which must be obeyed without any sort of hesitation or question. On the other hand, the marabout undertakes to save the soul of his disciple. He must also act as his intermediary with the bureaucracy and modern institutions. He must help him in time of need. Even if the relationship tends to favour the marabout, the latter does have his duties towards the *taalibe*. From their marabouts *taalibe* civil servants derive the support needed to occupy the highest positions in the administration and the government.

Beyond these contingencies, it is clear that the brotherhood system has been the particular form of appropriating Islam of certain Senegalese societies which, at the same time, have made of it a syncretic way of conserving/expressing their traditional religiosity. Senegalese Islam has followed varied and unstable paths, embracing all of the economic, political, social, and cultural sectors. Today, in the diversity of its brotherhoods, in its idioms and its areas of predilection, it is attempting to construct an identity removed from the influence of the ruling class and the ruling party. If the Mouride brotherhood fulfils itself in its economic activities and in its venture to achieve modernization and internationalization rooted in its own values, the *tijaan* will not succeed in freeing themselves from the constraints of political vote-catching. Probably the convergence of the different brotherhood identities is the principal obstacle to developing so-called fundamentalist religious movements. This would probably result in the marabouts' direct participation in the political arena. ✦

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Notes

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3. Mamadou Diouf (1990), *Le Kajoor au XIXème siècle. Pouvoir Ceddo et Conquête coloniale.* Paris, Karthala, p.89.
4. See D. Robinson, 'Almamy Abdul Kader', *Les Africains*, Vol. 10, Paris, Jeune Afrique, 1978, 'The Islamic Revolution of Futa Toro', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 1975 and *Chiefs and Clerics. Abdul Bokar Kan and Futa Toro, 1853-1891*. Oxford, 1975.
5. See Ousmane Kane and Leonardo Villalon, 'Les Mustarchidin du Sénégal', *Islam et Sociétés au Sud du Sahara*, No.9, November 1995.
6. J. Copans (1980), *Les Marabouts de l'arachide.* Paris, Le Sycomore, E.B. Diop (1984), *La Société wolof. Traditions et Changement*. Paris, Karthala, and D. Cruise O'Brien (1971), *The Mourides of Senegal. The Political and Economic Organization of an Islamic Brotherhood.* Oxford, Clarendon Press, and *Saints and Politicians. An Essay on the Organization of a Senegalese Peasant Society*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975.

Nigeria
LAMIN SANNEH

Religion, Politics, and the Islamic Response in Africa

The relationship between religion and politics, between church and state, has been a well rehearsed issue in Muslim thought and practice, because Islam emerged fully into history as a dual tradition of church and state, and because as such Muslims have been less sanguine than Europeans about making a rigid separation between the secular and the sacred, or between the public and private domain. By virtue of such history and by reason of the subsequent Western secular expansion in the Muslim world, there is widespread reaction to the legitimacy of national secular governments among contemporary Muslims. Some of that reaction goes back to the effects of colonial rule.

The Colonial Legacy

The Western colonial encounter with Muslim Africa had a direct impact on the pre-colonial legacy of church-state relations. In general the encounter helped strengthen the tradition of Muslim religious and political integration, either through direct provocation or through conciliation and collaboration. Thus the British invasion of north Nigeria provoked resistance among the guardians of the Muslim theocratic state founded in 1804, forcing the British to use conciliation and concessions to overcome that resistance and legitimize their power. The British proceeded to cut a deal with Muslim leaders: there would be no undue interference in religious institutions and local customs, but instead the colonial administration would work through those religious structures to govern the people. In effect, Muslims would become co-partners in the colonial enterprise.

The French colonial policy was a variation of the British one. In theory, the French demanded total surrender and commitment from their Muslim subjects, setting up the colonial bureaucratic state to reformulate and regulate Muslim affairs, with military muscle added for demonstrated effect. In practice, however, bureaucratic or military confrontation was too costly a way to achieve permanent subjugation, and so the French decided to invest in the Muslim rosary and the ink pot to reach the hearts of the people. As a result, pious saintly figures were courted and patronized; they were invited to state functions. sent on pilgrimage to Mecca at state expense, and treated to lavish official blandishments. Muslim learning was endowed, schools supported, colonial administrators trained in Arabic language and literature and in Islamic subjects, Arabic works collected and translated, and libraries furnished with Islamic books, manuscripts and journals. By thus identifying themselves with Islam's intellectual and educational heritage, the French hoped to earn the lasting gratitude and respect of their Muslim subjects, which in many significant places they were able to do.

Yet it became clear that this policy of colonial reinforcement was contradictory, because the justification of colonial rule as the transmitter of Western enlightenment and progress sat awkwardly with the contrasting logic of the colonial system as the propagator of Islam. Ultimately, colonial rule would have to abdicate to the Muslim agents it had successfully raised and trained, handing over to them the fruits of power and the machinery of a modern state.

Thus both in the British and French cases, the Muslim religious and political impulse was strengthened with the decision to conciliate and reward. A certain identity of interest came to exist between administrators and Muslim leaders, allowing the imperial overlords to press one of two options: either colonial rule could continue through strategic alliance with Muslim structures and institutions, or else it could cease formally through an equally strategic handing over to predisposed Muslim elites. In so far as Britain had an official Muslim policy, one colonial authority described it in the 1870s as follows: 'The Mohammedan question is regarded by the Government as one of the most important in the future of west and Central Africa. If Islam is properly understood, if its youth inoculated with British civilisation and British ideas are utilised by British administrators and merchants, it will give England a wider and more permanent influence upon the millions of the Sudan than can possibly be wielded by any other agency.'[1] In the particular case of north Nigeria and its large and significant Muslim population, the British targeted the Muslim political elites, the emirs, as indispensable to this Islamic policy. The administrators reasoned that 'the placing at the disposal of the Emirs of the resources of an ordered State inevitably strengthened and developed all Moslem institutions in Northern Nigeria.'[2]

Colonialism became the Muslim shield, and the riposte to the West's religious minimalism. In one example in British administered Adamawa in Nigeria, the resident colonial officer presided over a meeting called by Muslims who headed the Native Authorities set up by the British. The meeting would receive charges from the Muslims against the Danish missionaries of the province for allowing the classes for religious instruction to be taken by village catechists in mission schools. The meeting, held at Yola, the provincial headquarters, considered how these classes were in fact political platforms producing 'young rebels', i.e., a class of young people not under the direct influence of the Muslim Native Authorities. The colonial administration backed the Muslim demands against missionary objections, for abolishing the religious instruction classes.[3] Thus colonialism became the Muslim shield, and the guarantor of Islam as the public alternative to Christianity for Africans.

The Roots of Controversy: Integration or Separation?

The issue of integrating religion and politics plunged post-independent Nigeria into a major constitutional controversy when the military government of General Babangida, who ruled from 1985 to 1993, enrolled Nigeria as a member of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC). To challenge that decision the Christian association of Nigeria (CAN) was formed in 1986 as an ecumenical grouping of Protestants, Catholics and African Independent Churches. CAN issued a statement protesting the federal government backing for *shariᶜah* courts in north Nigeria and asking for an identical public status for Christianity. Yet CAN's strategy of demanding privileges for Christians comparable to those being offered to Muslims set it on the Muslim side of the fault line, with Christians wheeling and dealing on a stage Muslims constructed for their own purpose. For example, the Kaduna Branch of CAN published a statement asking the government to offset any concessions to the *shariᶜah* with similar concessions to Christians by establishing a Christian constitution based on ecclesiastical courts.[4] Muslims welcomed CAN's platform, forcing a catch-22 upon Christians by challenging them to say which they preferred, ecclesiastical canon law, English Common Law, or secular law. The debate as it has been conducted in Nigeria has been a one-sided affair in which Muslims have taken the offensive and Christians have reacted with high decibel slogans about pluralism and multi-culturalism, and with strategies of ecumenial unity striking for their ephemeral, tactical skittishness. If, by contrast, the example of Christendom and its disastrous consequences for genuine pluralism and multiculturalism were available to Muslims, it might calm passions and provide instructive lessons about the liabilities of religious territoriality in Africa or elsewhere. In that case, the secular state, shorn of its anti-religious bias and conceived as a pluralist apparatus, might be less objectionable, and might thus remove any conspiratorial odor from Christian support for such a state. It turns out, however, that events have preempted the issue, with the regime of General Babangida acting in 1989 to allow *shariᶜah* court jurisdiction in the north, thus setting aside the position taken by Christians.

International Muslim solidarity has aided and abetted national efforts, and has distracted local Christian attempts to respond to Muslim initiatives. After several years as an observer, Nigeria in 1986 joined the OIC. The OIC was set up following the Third Conference of Islamic Foreign Ministers in March, 1972 and was registered with the United Nations in February, 1974. A number of Islamic agencies was established within the OIC whose religious mandate was stated as the commitment 'to propagate Islam and acquaint the rest of the world with Islam, its issues and aspirations.[5] Membership in the OIC was limited to sovereign nation states which are Muslim by definition, although several states with minority Muslim populations have joined, including Benin, Sierra Leone and Uganda. However, somewhat incoherently, India and Lebanon, which have significant Muslim populations, have not been allowed to join. In other respects the OIC has applied stringent confessional criteria, from deciding on the venue of its meetings to granting economic assistance from its $2 billion development fund and awarding scholarships.

However, such historical cooperation has not removed all Muslim grievances, so that their need for trans-national solidarity has pitted Muslims against the West as the source and guardian of the secular national state, a state that divides Muslims and sets at naught the just claims of the *ummah*.

Thus, in spite of differences of culture and language, and in spite of a common desire to succeed economically, such religious groups are, even in the West where they have chosen to immigrate, in the words of legal manuals, 'bound together by the common tie of Islam that as between themselves there is no difference of country, and they may therefore be said to compose but one *dar* [i.e., *dar al-Islam*, 'the abode of fraternal Islam']. And, in like manner, all who are not [Muslims], being accounted as of one faith, when opposed to them [i.e., Muslims], however much they may differ from each other in religious belief, they also may be said to be one *dar* [i.e., *dar al-harb*, 'the sphere of war and enmity']. The whole world, therefore, or so much of it as is inhabited and subject to regular government, may thus be divided' along these lines.[6]

Conclusion

The intellectual challenge to the modern West is whether it can conceive a modification of the separation of church and state to allow a degree of interdependence. Too much is at stake in the importance of the State as a non-corporate, non-doctrinaire institution to allow it to fall victim to Enlightenment scruples about not mixing religion and politics. The pragmatist liberal scruple that proceeds upon religion in the fashion of individual entitlement and free speech is in one sense the spoilt fruit of the original insight about keeping Caesar and God separate, about ensuring religious freedom against state power and jurisdiction. That insight became twisted into religion as individual enlightenment and free speech, as a rights issue under state jurisdiction, in fact as a matter of private, individual choice without public merit. So Muslim critics are correct that rights without God are meaningless, but mistaken to require from that a religious state. Muslims are right that if we only have human authority as final arbiter of human rights, then there simply is no basis for saying one individual has rights of person and property against the multitude: against the individual, the multitude's will is inexorable and final by reason merely of numerical preponderance. Human rights as such is meaningless in that environment precisely because the individual has been assured no God-given rights. That is why human rights must presume a public tribunal insulated from the tyranny of numbers by being grounded in faith in the divine right of personhood, a faith that fosters the twin culture of rights and obligations, of freedom and community. Yet we have to say that the religious view also needs qualifying. A church-state integration is bound to threaten civil society, so that in one move of state capture of religion the brakes are removed from political excess and in turn applied to freedom and commitment, in effect pressing political expediency into the service of a false absolute.

The modern West would do well to appreciate the crucial role of religion and politics in the Muslim world rather that to persist with the secular liberal preference of 'commodifying' religion for short-term political goals. Alexis de Tocqueville noted this tendency, saying government by habit preferred the useful to the moral and would, therefore, require the moral to be useful. Muslim tradition represents it differently, arguing for the proximity of church and state on the grounds that religion is too enmeshed in life to exclude it, though historical experience suggests that integrating the two damages both of them. Governments that anoint themselves with religious warrants endanger themselves. We need the safety wall of separation thus to tame the State and to create a public space for religion and also to foster pluralism and minority rights. ✦

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10 years after the October 1988 riots

Algeria
TASSADIT YACINE

The HAMAS Movement
A Moderate Face of Algerian Islamism

The legislative elections of June 1997 have enabled an apparently new political map to be drawn up. From these elections emerged a coalition government composed of ministers representing the RND, the FLN and the MSP (Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix [Movement of Society for Peace], formerly Hamas, the moderate Islamic political tendency described in more detail below). These three parties constitute the current majority in the Assembly – a majority which gives President Zeroual a degree of room to manoeuvre.

For its part, the parliamentary opposition is made up of parties occupying about a hundred seats. Some of these parties are very old; others have appeared more recently. The former are characterized by the charisma of their leaders, the leaders of the national movement. Essentially, they are the FFS (Hocine Aït Ahmed's Front des Forces Socialistes), the PRS (Mohammed Boudiaf's Parti de la Révolution Socialiste; which dissolved itself in 1979), the PCA (Parti Communiste Algérien which was later to become the PAGS) and the MDA (Ahmed Ben Bella's Mouvement pour la Démocratie en Algérie). As their acronyms suggest, the PRS and the FFS, as well as the PAGS, remain attached to the principles of the revolution in its socialist sense. Ben Bella's MDA, which arrived late in the day, advocates democracy and does not abandon the idea of modern Islam. They recruit from the older generation (those who experienced the Algerian War) but also from younger people: those who are discontented with the system. As far as the FFS, the PRS and the PAGS are concerned, they are composed of intellectuals who are looking for an ideological and political doctrine (socialism and democracy in the case of the first two parties, socialism without democracy in the case of the PAGS and democracy without socialism in the case of the MDA). In addition to a radical reform of the system that it has always advocated, the FFS has succeeded in opening itself up to other demands: the Berber culture and gender equality. Generally speaking, almost all of these parties are open to progress and the separation of politics and religion.

Recent Opposition or Radical Islamism

It is the Islamists who are mobilizing the most and who are mainly recruiting among the working class (the FIS) and the more favoured classes (Hamas, Nahda, etc.). Roughly speaking, one could say that two main currents run across the opposition parties as a whole: radical opposition to the government such as the old FIS (dissolved). This movement has given birth to at least two armed branches (MIA and AIS), as well as the GIA. With the 'truce' of 1997, the old FIS is attempting to return to the political stage. The guerrillas, led by the GIA, are, of course, opposed to negotiation. The Islamist area is troubled by bloody disputes according to the objectives of the various factions which appear to follow different strategies. The GIA, on one side infiltrated by the security services and by groups linked to the organized crime surrounding it are also in favour of the eradication of everything which does not conform to their vision of the world. The armed wing of the FIS (the AIS) seems more politicized than the GIA and it is no coincidence if the government undertakes negotiations with representatives of the AIS, thus 'killing two birds with one stone': it is a way of excluding the GIA and the political leaders of the old FIS.

'Moderate' Opposition or Islam à la Carte

This is composed of Islamists who are militating in favour of the institution of an Islamic republic but within the context of 'republican' order. Through their participation in political life, these parties are trying to reconcile religion and modernity, opposition and government and not opposition to the government, as can be seen with Hamas which, led by Mahfoud Nahnah, has become the Movement of society for civil peace – one of the important parties on the political scene.

HAMAS (MSP)

If ambiguities, contradictions and demagogy are the characteristics of government, then the latter is not alone in making use of these because opposition parties have recourse to the same practices. With the RCD and Euahadi, we are dealing with the 'radical', anticlerical opposition to the government while Mahfoud Nahnah's Hamas constitutes a moderate 'religious' opposition to the government since it is the only one (with Djaballah's Ennahdha) to officially embody Islam. But the Islam to which Hamas lays claim is very open and modernist in appearance compared with that advocated by the old FIS.

Since Algeria gained independence, Hamas, now the MSP, has been represented on the political scene by its charismatic leader Mahfoud Nahnah. Arabist in the eastern manner, linked to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Sheikh is nonetheless far removed from other Islamists both in terms of image and strategy. Physically, the Sheikh resembles any other modern-day Arab or Muslim leader. Dressed in an expensive Western suit and tie, his beard neatly trimmed, he gives the impression of membership of a modernist elite which is nevertheless linked to Islam. In fact, Hamas embraces a middle class from the business world (tradesmen) but also Arabist technocrats and a scientific elite. Hamas' social base distinguishes itself diametrically from that of the FIS sphere of influence. Contrary to the FIS, which extols social justice, Hamas bases its strategy on order and thus respect for the 'prince'.

It is doubtless for this reason that Sheikh Nahnah will very soon distance himself from the radical Islamists. Is this really based on principles of tolerance and open-mindedness or political calculation? We shall never know.

Since 1988, he violently opposed Ali Benhaj whom he calls a fanatic. He was, at first, equally opposed to the formation of Islamic political parties before creating one himself. According to Nahnah's project, it is the State as a whole which must be re-Islamized. Sheikh Nahnah's project is not far removed from that of the fundamentalists of the 1940s in that it is based on the moral and religious education of society, preaching and charitable action. He shows himself favourable to the emancipation of women and their participation in modern society, thus granting them the opportunity to improve and raise themselves but while remaining within the context of Islamic law. According to the Sheikh, women are equal to men in the context of the family code (inspired directly by the Sharia) that is currently in force and which does not recognize this equality that Sheikh Nahnah nevertheless makes his hobby horse.

Contrary to that of his rivals, Mahfoud Nahnah's strategy thus consists of compromising with the system while making token concessions. As in the struggle which opposed the radical nationalists (Messali Hadj) and the others (the moderates, UDMA and Oulémas united), the struggle here consists of claiming the paternity of Islam, thus legitimacy. Hamas is showing itself open (is it?) by making concessions with the aim of gaining the sympathy of the population which was hostile to the old FIS, in the hope of winning over the 'middle-class' strata which had little sympathy for the 'secular' democratic parties. He is encouraging commerce, private enterprise, the participation of women in development, etc. With the FIS banned, the Sheikh has all the room he needs to channel an entire 'Islamist' population that is now in disarray. His situation as a representative of Islam in a position of strength (with Djaballah's Ennahdha) – in other words, aligning itself with the government – does not entirely earn him credit. On the contrary, because, in the eyes of the radical Islamists, Hamas discredits itself by siding with the government. He allows the system to use religion in the same way as it uses secularity. None of these contradictions embarrass Hamas which exists legally not because it represents Islam but because basically it poses no danger to the existing system. The last elections are there to prove that Nahnah is the man of the moment. He has succeeded in granting himself real legitimacy by capturing part of the old FIS's power base. Nahnah knows how to bend his shoulders to achieve his final objective: to wait and compromise in order to share power legally.

Perhaps recent events (following the massacres of the summer of 1997) will lead to a recomposition of the political scene, particularly in view of the civil truce initiated by the FIS and its armed wing, the AIS (Armée Islamique du Salut, or Islamic Salvation Army). If the radical Islamists return to the political scene (even under a different banner), they will unquestionably contribute to a change in circumstances and, in a way, to an intrusion on their rivals' preserves. With the civil truce, the government will have succeeded in fragmenting the Islamist movements in the hope of isolating the GIA who are continuing to practise their own bloody form of guerrilla warfare. In that it is eminently political, the game played by moderate Islamists appears from this fact to be more profitable than that of the radicals. ✦

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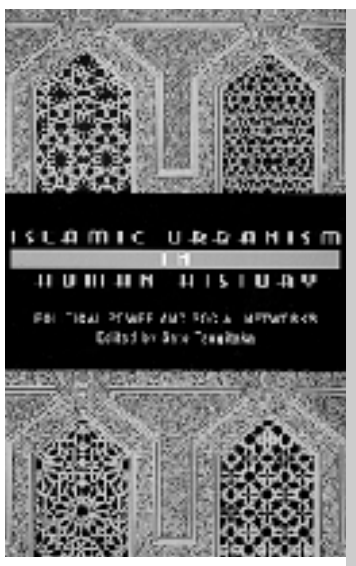

Islamic Urbanism in Human History

Political Power and Social networks

Edited by Tsugitaka Sato
Hardback 246 pp
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Islamic cultures have inherited and developed a legacy of urbanism that stretches back to the ancient civilizations of the Middle East.
In contrast to well-organized states such as that of historic China Islamic societies formed themselves into loosely-organized states based on intricate social networks.Network theory and network models seem to fit the actuality of Islamic society and help us to comprehend a society that has a coherent overall order without having a formal structure. But until now, most studies of Islamic society have focused exclusively on urban social organization, often neglecting the extension of power to rural areas.

In this important work, the authors examine the social religious and administrative networks that governed rural and urban areas and led to state formation,providing a more inclusive view of the mechanisms of power and control in the Islamic world than has ever been available before.

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10 years after the October 1988 riots

Algeria
HAMOUD SALHI

Algeria's Islamist Movement
Victims of Success

Following the 'bread riots' of October 1988, the Islamist movement was the biggest benefactor of the introduction of democracy in Algeria, quickly amassing huge political support and winning landslide victories in local and legislative elections. But instead of using its newly acquired power to install democratic principles throughout Algeria, the Islamist movement fell victim to its own aspirations. Today, as Algeria observes the tenth anniversary of the October riots, certain conclusions are self-evident. Overall, Algeria's Islamist leadership has proven ill equipped to handle its success or its own agenda.

The Riots

The typical Algerian who demonstrated in the country's major cities, now a decade ago, was compelled more by immediate economic concerns than long-term political goals like democracy. For years, Algerians suffered the consequences of failed economic policies and had finally grown frustrated with chronic unemployment, inadequate wages, inflation and substandard housing. Those who took to the streets in October 1988 protested for basic necessities, hoping to get the government's attention if not economic reform.

Political pluralism was not on their agenda: the FLN's (National Liberation Front) one-party system of government maintained such firm control of opposition activities inside the country that it became too difficult to engage in political activism against the State. As such, opposition leaders like Ait Ahmed of the Socialist Front Forces (FFS) and former President Ahmed Ben Bella concentrated their activities within Europe, trying to mobilize Algerians living abroad, not locally, against the FLN's political monopoly. Furthermore, Algerians were disinclined to pursue pluralism as the opposition groups were widely perceived as weak and 'out of touch' with the population.

In this way, the religious Islamist opposition was somewhat an exception. Though active, the Islamist movement was too divided to effectively challenge the state authorities when the bread riots occurred. The Islamists, however, were succeeding in relating to Algeria's disheartened society and capitalizing upon the failure of the FLN's secular approach to development. More importantly, they channelled the population's mounting anger against the government to their own advantage: collecting huge sums of money from donors, they promoted themselves by constructing privately-run mosques and responded to social needs by providing houses for newly-weds and Islamic dresses for young girls.

Effects of the Riots

Following the October riots, the political liberalization initiated by President Benjedid was welcomed by Algerians of every ideological stripe: in less than six months, more than 50 parties were formed. Unlike any other time, Algerian leaders were now seen debating, criticizing each other and government policies. Behind the scenes, however, the FLN retained its colossal powers and continued to privatize the economy, relaxing laws on importation and price controls.

For the vast majority of Algerians, the quick combination of democratization and privatization was proving disastrous. Government policies were benefiting a privileged few who could seize new opportunities in the markets. In contrast, the Algerian state struggled with international debts due to a sharp decline in oil revenues, forcing the FLN to relinquish some of its social welfare responsibilities, particularly in health care, education and housing.

The government's failure to address the socio-economic problems of the masses had a tremendous impact on the Islamist movement, now legalized and represented by more than 15 political institutions. Specifically, it legitimized the Islamists' struggle for a better state and even rallied enough militant support to make violent change an option. With social disparities even more glaring, the Islamists had become the voice of the impoverished. As democratic change slowly became a part of Algerian life, the Islamist movement was growing rapidly and evolving into the most potent political force in the country.

Rise of the Islamist Movement

Undoubtedly, the Islamists' greatest success was in connecting with Algeria's abandoned youth – those who failed in school and in the labour market and who were portrayed as society's losers. To them, the mosques became a place of refuge where respect and understanding could be found, where the state's policies and the government's shortcomings were to blame for their personal failures. Armed with a new attitude and seen as being in touch with God, the abandoned youth quickly regained respectability in society, something it clearly owed to the Islamist movement and no one else.

Although the budding Islamist movement was gaining momentum, internal strife hindered its development as a viable political entity. Though bonded by common religious symbols, sets within the movement were increasingly divided over political strategies and ideological issues and appeared to be moving in two distinct directions: one towards greater unification and the other towards fragmentation. Before 1988, many religious and political disagreements were left to be sorted out in the mosques. This continued during the democratization process; all Islamists seemed united in their antagonism towards the secular state, but sharp differences remained over how Islam was to solve Algeria's problems. Ultimately, the mosques themselves became host to disputes, contributing to fragmentation within the movement.

Ideological Divisions

Divisions within the Islamist movement have existed since the 1970s between the Liberal-Algerianites, Djeza'ara, who advocated an indigenous form of Islamic activism and the Shoyoukh, 'elder persons', who believed in linking Algeria's Islamist movement with the Mashreq's, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt. The differences between Djeza-'ara and Shoyoukh have centred on how they perceived the role of Islam in modern society and in governmental policies.

The Djeza'ara have followed Malek Bennabi, an Algerian scholar and philosopher. Educated in France in the 1950s, Bennabi later lived in Egypt and returned to Algeria when it became independent. Bennabi's thoughts encompass elements of Western modernity and Islamic traditions and intend to reconcile these two contradictory facets of Algerian life. To Bennabi, Western civilization can be beneficial to the Muslim world, especially in the areas of science and administration. But Bennabi has also criticized Western civilization for its moral decay and has urged Muslims to be cautious in what they take from it. Bennabi has been influential among university students and others who believe that openness to Western culture is necessary for Algeria's development and, more recently, parties such as the Algerian Islamic Assembly.

In contrast, the Shoyoukh have long contended that the Algerian religious establishment lacked the intellectual background to form a religious doctrine without the Mashreq's help. Many of this group were former students of Sheik Abdel Hamid Bin Badis, the founder of the Ulama Association, a reformist movement formed in 1930 to combat France's colonization and prepare Algerian society for independence. During the 1970s and 1980s, many leaders sought to establish ties with the Egyptian Brotherhood in an attempt to link the Algerian struggle for an Islamist state with others in the Mashreq. Now, the reformist ideas of the Shoyoukh are represented by many moderate Islamist parties, like Hamas, even though an alliance with the Mashreq is no longer sought.

Despite their differences, the Djeza'ara and the Shoyoukh have shared a common disdain for the FLN's overall treatment of religion, especially its moves to impose state control over mosques. Additionally, the two Islamist camps have both supported incremental social change and working to change Algeria's political structure from within society.

Since the mid-1980s, however, this moderate approach has been shunned by the younger Islamist recruits who reject peaceful change and adhere to a strict interpretation of Islamic texts. Known as Salaf, in reference to the followers of the Prophet Mohammed and his way of life, this camp espouses the ideas of many militant thinkers, including Egyptian Seyyed Qotb and Pakistani Abou Alla al Mawdudi. These recruits have come to see Islam through the eyes of Iranian revolutionaries, Afghan rebels and older militant Islamists who have provided literature and tapes about radical Islam. It has been this younger set that has so markedly radicalized the Islamist movement in the 1990s, as many of them have become members of groups preaching violence as a means of change. Consistent with their role models, the ultimate goal of these recruits is to establish a Sharia state, the rule of religious authority.

When the October events occurred, no opposition group – religious or secular – was in a position to effectively organize the Algerian masses with the intent to impose a new political order. In the absence of a charismatic leadership, the Islamist movement grew but the loyalty of its adherents was mostly directed to a local leader, not a national figure. As a result, while the Islamist movement was expanding, it also became increasingly prone to fragmentation. Generally, people were joining Islamist institutions out of religious conviction, not for political reasons. Consequently, many found themselves supporting political parties that did not necessarily represent their views. This was characteristic of the membership of the FIS.

Rise and Fall of the FIS

Soon after Algeria's democratization process began, the Islamist movement was dominated by a single party, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). Unlike other Islamic political parties, which had strict recruitment policies, the FIS recruited various types of people, regardless of their educational background, gender or race. This open-door policy gave the FIS a truly populist appeal and helped it to cinch victory in the electoral polls of the early 1990s.

But other FIS policies were partly responsible for the fragmentation of the movement. On several occasions, FIS leader Abassi Madani declined invitations to attend the gatherings of other political parties, even making a mockery of some. Instead of acting as a unifying force within the movement, the FIS alienated the smaller Islamist groups. In addition, the FIS's open-door recruitment policy brought serious divisions within the party's own political structure; with so much diversity, it seemed impossible to maintain the democratic spirit at all times. The FIS's second-in-command, Ali Belhaj, exacerbated the problem with his repeated objections to democracy, calling it an alien concept and a source of evil. Having never visited a democratic state, Belhaj was merely reiterating what other militant thinkers, particularly Qotb and Mawdudi, had written. Still, since the FIS included members from the Djeza'ara, Shoyoukh and Salaf camps, Belhaj's position fuelled more disagreement among the ranks.

It was increasingly evident that for Madani and Belhaj, the struggle in Algeria was not for democracy, but rather for the establishment of a Sharia state. Several instances indicated that the FIS leadership was more interested in accumulating political power than in actually sharing it. The FIS acted as if it were a state within the Algerian state, setting up courts in the mosques to punish violators and creating its own military force, the Armed Islamic Salvation. Furthermore, the FIS leaders appeared tolerant of political violence; they stood silent when militant Islamists from their own ranks formed the menacing Armed Islamic Group. Then, in June 1991, they called for a strike to boycott the country's electoral laws, a strike that later turned bloody as over 500 people died in clashes with the state police. It is also notable that, until recently, the FIS had not condemned the horrific violence perpetrated by some militants against Algerian civilians.

Of all of its shortcomings, the FIS's biggest mistake was to underestimate the Algerian military. With its overwhelming success in the local elections in the early 1990s, the FIS became overconfident, believing that it could topple the military politically. The FIS went so far as to solicit soldiers to join its ranks in an attempt to rescue the State from its malaise of corruption and socio-economic problems. This was a gross miscalculation; the military saw the FIS's call as a threat to its national supremacy. In response, the military forcefully intervened before the FIS could win an absolute majority in the 1992 parliamentary elections and rewrite the Algerian constitution to its own terms. Shortly thereafter, the FIS was officially banned. But since the ousting of the FIS from the formal political arena, the smaller Islamist parties have also failed to lay claim to the Islamist leadership or to put an end to the terrorism carried out by certain extremist groups.

Undoubtedly, the Islamist movement was a major political force in Algeria during the initial stages of its democratization. Ideological fragmentation and the spread of militant Islam, however, has since undermined the movement and spun it out of control. In retrospect, the Islamist movement misused the democratic process, but did not escape the consequences of that abuse. ✦

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Egypt
IMAN FARAG

Educational Debate in Egypt

The discourse on education in Egypt uses key terms such as reform and crisis. It is rare to find a society that is satisfied with its educational system. What seems important here is to analyse that which is considered as related to education. In other words, to what extent education is considered among the major causes of societal problems or, as the magic solution to these problems.

On the one hand, educational policies are mainly guided by socio-economic orientations and the Egyptian case is nothing but the illustration of the irreconcilable social choices that may emerge in a neo-liberal context. On the other hand, this debate is embedded in what seem to be competitive cultural choices and the educational debate often borrows the terms of identity. The Islamic idiom here plays the role of a common language, but it does not imply any prior agreement on the meaning of the key terms of this language. Finally, the ongoing educational debate takes place in a society characterized by a high rate of illiteracy. The latter subject is discussed less passionately than other topics. This has to do with the social interests which are directly affected by education rather than by its absence; it seems that those who share literacy and who are concerned by the struggle over central values, seem also to share a common view on those who are excluded from education. They are commonly perceived as an obstacle to Egypt's successful entry into the twenty-first century.

One can identify three points in this debate. First, it seems that those who produce knowledge about education are very little concerned with the relationship between their own critical discourse and the knowledge they have acquired via schooling. The only type of discourse that gives room to such a testimony seems to be autobiographies. But this kind of literature shares another feature of the 'objective' discourse. It is the assumption that the past is always better than the present. Here again, one may wonder about this vision of history based on steady regression. Finally, as for the participants in this public debate, we note the absence of some of the main actors: schoolteachers are hardly present, as if being only part of the problem.

Reconsidering Polarities

It is quite simplistic to reduce the debate to the familiar opposition between two options setting tradition against modernity, or even allegedly secular against religious views of the world. This goes for trends within the State's apparatus itself. Supporters of the social agenda of neo-liberalism perceive education as a way to correct some side-effects of economic liberalization. They are more concerned with social exclusion than poverty and they call for the partial withdrawal of the State and the introduction of an economic rationale; they may belong to Islamic or to secular trends as well. Those who defend education as a means of class restructuring do stress the view of education as a social right and the role of the State as guarantor. Here also, cultural options are not homogeneous. When it comes to social choices, the extreme views, either neo-liberal or exclusively state-centred, are quite marginal and there is room for consensus on the centrality of education in realizing competing objectives ranging from equality to the formation of a highly qualified elite. There is a common concern about both development and identity whatever their definition is, and the educational debate shows similarities in antagonistic opinions.

Overestimation of the role of schools seems closely related to the self-perception of the Egyptian elite. What seems more difficult to understand is the fact that Egypt is often perceived by its elite as characterized by millennial continuity, while being constantly threatened by civilizational invasion. The quest for identity does not seem to create tremendous problems in the daily life of millions of Egyptians, while the debate on the identity of Egypt is the most recurrent. One of the issues of this latter relates to educational programmes; it seems that language, history, civil education and religious programmes are subjects of passionate debate, while mathematics does not arouse the same interest among intellectuals.

Despite the importance of educational reform as a ritual theme, the educational issue in Egypt was reshaped in the 1990s. This is essentially due to re-islamization, which acts more as a common reference than as a homogeneous trend. It may take the form of an oppositional trend but some of its aspects contribute to the preservation of the social order. Rather than perceiving these processes of re-islamization as stemming solely from the Islamic movements, it seems possible to relate them also to the official discourse of the State.

Schools did not represent one of the major issues in the debate on re-islamization, till this debate centred on political violence. This suggests that daily and common practices of re-islamization, including those directly related to education, were not perceived as a political threat or as a challenge to the dominant values before the confrontation between the State and the participating component of the Islamic trends.

On one hand, political violence is perceived as a by-product of the educational system. According to the defenders of this view, this has to do with the kind of pedagogic authority exercised within the school. It is said to be undemocratic and based on obedience. The role of school is reduced to a mechanical transmission of knowledge, which is said to be memorized without any criticism nor any reflection on the values that stand behind it. For some, educational programmes do not stress the civic and universal values and carry an extremist view on religion. For others, these programmes are intentionally Westernized and it is the lack of their Islamic component that prompts the demand for religious knowledge.

On the other hand, the debate addresses the question of Islamist propaganda within schools. It is said that there is an Islamist plot to direct young students to the faculties of pedagogy and to indoctrinate students in the schools through sermons and books, not to mention the conflict over the veil between some students and their families and the Ministry of Education. Unsurprisingly, both sides were quoting the same references: the individual's freedom and the shari^{c}a. The effect of this debate was an eventual politicization of a practice which is not obviously a political one.

From Reform to Privatization

In the early 1980s a critical discourse on education emerged from within the highest level of the State. This discourse did not deny at first the legacy of the Nasserist Etat-Providence. But it pointed out the dysfunctional aspects of these orientations, especially the fact that so-called 'mass education' has affected quality, a controversy familiar to Egypt since the 1930s. This discourse underlined the fact that the generalization of free schooling should be maintained along with access to higher education which should be more related to job opportunities.

Nowadays the agenda for policy reforms contradict former truths. Public provision of education is said to be largely responsible for existing inequities and inefficiencies associated with schooling in developing countries. This means that the pricing system should play a role in allocating educational services and that State involvement in this sector should be reduced. The neo-liberal agenda argues that governmental resources are not sufficient for expanding schooling and not equally allocated as for basic education, which concerns the majority and does not receive the corresponding resources.

The political concern was reflected in two practical orientations: reform and profitability. The aim of reform here is to rehabilitate public schools. Educational reforms were directed toward the renovation of school buildings, the modernization of educational programmes and the enhancement of teachers' skills and working conditions. This goes too for the implementation of a medical insurance plan for students and for the school nutrition programme in disadvantaged areas as an incentive. Analysts underline the fact that there should be an immediate impact of schooling on the daily life of students and their families in disadvantaged groups as they are allegedly unable to perceive the future prospects nor to invest time, money or energy in schooling on the basis of these prospects.

It would be oversimplifying to describe this concern as a retreat of the State. However, profitability of what is supposed to be a public service, raises constraints. The implicit rule here is that profit-earning or at least cost effective schooling has to be partial and gradual. It should remain at the margin of the public system and should be accepted at least by the people who are ready to pay for a public service which is perceived as being of better quality than the standard free service. In other words, profit-earning has to respond to – if not create – a solvent social demand. Policy makers seem convinced that when people have to pay they are more concerned about the rational use of public services.

Reform and profitability are competing orientations. Profitability in high-performing sectors may contribute to depreciating the other disadvantaged sectors which are in need of reform. The private sector's logic within public services has been gradually introduced in other sectors due to the claim that the paid services may raise funds in order to improve free services. This policy has contributed to the creation of a dual public system; if this logic has a limited effect in a sector like transport, the situation is different when it comes to education because it has durable effect on the structure of social opportunities.

With partial privatization within public schooling, come genuine private schools and their great variety. The new private schools range from the leisure-class schools to the ones for the lower middle class in so-called informal areas, from the allegedly modern schools according to Western criteria to the Islamic schools. Since the early 1960s, private schooling includes not more than 6% of the total number of students. But this reduced proportion confirms the social selection, and evidence from field studies has proved that a great proportion of the students of the top faculties comes from private schools.

Concerning projections, some authors described the reform of educational programmes as a long-term selection process aiming to reduce future demand or at least to drive this demand to basic education. This could explain the reshaping of educational programmes, often described as lacking in critical thinking, abstract and disconnected with the environment. It seems that basic education programmes are now oriented towards a more operational profile to meet the needs of a majority of students who will be driven to work and not to study further, as basic education conceived as an ultimate educational cycle.

Surely, Egypt will continue to produce educated people, but it is said that the rate must be determined by the needs of a market which is also said to be a global one. One of the leitmotifs of the discourse holds that for Egypt education is a matter of national security. This statement is an accurate summary of the situation: on one hand it reflects a deep concern; on the other hand, it expresses the nature of this concern. As for national defence, internal security and the preservation of private property, education becomes one of the major attributes of the minimal State directly guided by a *raison d'état*. It will take time before the effective results of the neo-liberal orientations affect social practices which have their own tempo. Furthermore, neo-liberalism has to deal with its own illegitimacy and the deeply-rooted ethical perception of the State. Despite the neo-liberal orientations, the State still acts as if it were assuming full responsibility for people's welfare and asks them to respect the corresponding virtues of allegiance and patience, while protest movements continue to address the paternalistic State.

As for the cultural orientations regarding education, they are merely the combined effect of Americanization, Islamization and statism. Concerning social choices too, the present state offers paradoxical faces. ✦

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Jordan
JONATHAN BENTHALL

The Qu'ran's Call to Alms
Zakat, the Muslim Tradition of Alms-Giving

It is a mass-produced plastic model of the octagonal Dome of the Rock shrine in Jerusalem. Two circular strips of paper glued round it depict the ceramic-faced outer walls. There is a slot for coins to be inserted in the roof, and the dome slides off so that coins can be taken out. Mudar, the organiser of the Islamic Zakat Supporting Committee for the Palestinian People, gave me this collecting mosque in Amman, Jordan. I was there conducting a research project to study Islamic philanthropy and obligatory alms (*zakat*). Well, souvenir models of Christian churches are two a penny all over the world, and it would be incredible if some with slots for coins had not been made somewhere; but I do not remember seeing one. Could it be that my gift from Mudar has something to say about a difference between the two religions?

It is a mistake to react against the Islamophobia common in the West by accepting a rose-watered version of Islam as a social panacea. However, mainline Islam does not get nearly enough credit for the imperative to give alms, which is deeply entrenched in the Qu'ran and traditional authority. *Zakat* is one of the five 'pillars' of Islam. Unlike other great sacred books, the Qu'ran sets out the basic headings of the budget and expenses of the state, and historically anticipated by some 12 centuries the principle of what we call social security.

More people should know of the existence today of big Islamic relief agencies such as the International Islamic Relief Organisation, whose headquarters is in Jeddah and which operates in countries including Bosnia and Somalia. Some of the Red Crescent national societies are highly thought of within the Red Cross international movement: for instance, the Iranian Red Crescent, which has special expertise in earthquake relief. Though the international movement is strictly secular, the ethos of the Red Crescent national societies is underpinned by Islamic tradition.

Mudar's committee in Amman is more of a grass-roots operation, of a kind which has relevance to the future of the Middle East. *Zakat* was originally a form of wealth tax, and some Islamic states such as Pakistan have tried to reintegrate it with the official taxation system, which predictably results in layers of bureaucracy. In Jordan, giving *zakat* is optional but is encouraged by the government through tax concessions. Mudar's committee is licensed to raise funds in return for a 10 percent contribution to the government's own central *zakat* fund. The committee has eight employees and collects primarily during the month of Ramadan, when giving alms is specially meritorious, but also throughout the whole year by means of telephone, fax, videotapes, mail-shots, and other techniques. Its main activities are food relief to the West Bank and Gaza, 'caravans of charity' (mobile health services to isolated villages), scholarships, income-generating projects and – above all – sponsoring orphans. Orphans, defined for this purpose as children without fathers, are specially favoured by Islamic charities because of many Qu'ranic injunctions, and because the Prophet Muhammad was an orphan himself.

Mudar is in his early thirties, an educated moderate Islamist living in Jordan. His committee is affiliated to the Muslim Brothers, who are particularly active in charitable affairs and who also form in politics the equivalent of a loyal opposition to the Hashemite monarchy.

Mudar was insistent on the importance of trust in matters of charity, with the implication that the people at large do not trust government departments. This is no surprise, for the concept of trust is fundamental to the English law of charities. But the commitment to door-to-door charitable giving has strengthened Islamist movements in the urban areas of the Middle East where governmental provision falls short of often pressing needs. In Jordan, as in neighbouring countries, when a breadwinner dies it is common for the widow and orphans to be visited by one of the Islamist groups and financially supported – which is remembered in the neighbourhood when the time comes for a political choice. Studies in both Egypt and Israeli Arab villages confirm that local welfare services provided by Islamic groups are on the whole more effective than state-sponsored alternatives.

This fusion of politics and religion tempts some western commentators to infer that Islamists are like Leninists, politically motivated tribunes who ruthlessly manipulate popular sentiment. But this is a misinterpretation. All popular movements tend to get taken over, to some degree, by demagogues. But the Qu'ranic imperative to help the poor was vital to the beginnings of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1920s Egypt and remains an important constituent in most present-day Islamist movements, even when some of their factions have turned to political violence. By contrast, the Bolsheviks had no time for private charity and immediately dissolved all the philanthropic institutions of pre-revolutionary Russia.

I have no reason to believe that Mudar's committee is not strictly humanitarian in the disbursal of its funds. He told me that a West Bank orphan will be treated the same way whether his father was a martyr or an informer – though I could not check up on this claim. However, the committee's appeal literature is politically emotive, depicting helpless women and children in confrontation with Israeli soldiers. The committee's logo shows the entire territory of Palestine (including Israel) superimposed on the Dome of the Rock, and this represents implicitly a rejection of the Oslo accords. Their collecting mosque thus embodies the view that the conflict is like any other one of colonial liberation.

Islamic philanthropy seems to have concentrated until recently on helping first, compatriots and second, fellow Muslims. Many traditional readings of the Qu'ran taught that only Muslims should be given *zakat*. The main thrust of the large Islamic relief organisations funded by the Gulf states is to help poor and oppressed Muslims – fair enough, considering the huge numbers of Muslim refugees and the poverty of many Muslim states – and their work also includes building mosques and sponsoring religious education. More recently, liberal interpretations of the Qu'ran, such as Sheikh Al-Khayyat's, have argued that *zakat* must be paid to the 'poor'; that is, all the poor. At the same time, some of the international Arab charities are gaining a new standing in the corridors of Geneva by making a point of extending part of their relief work towards non-Muslim communities in need.

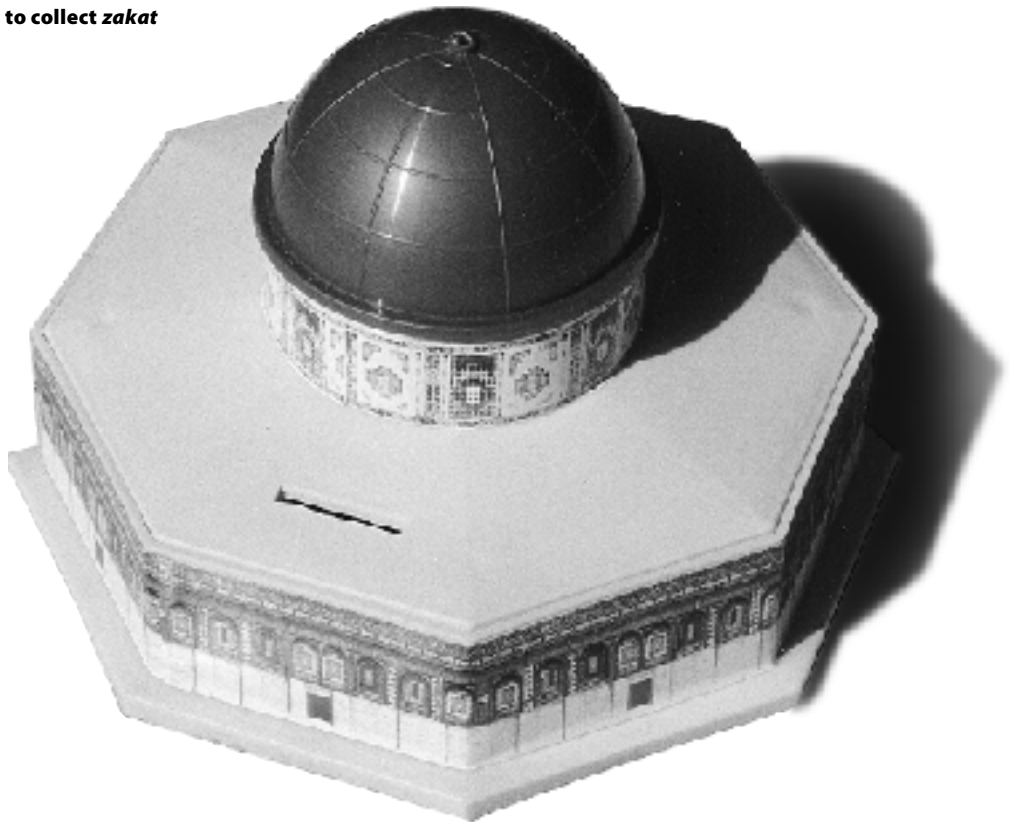
Zakat is a major support in the Islamist case against both capitalism and communism. Some ideologues such as Sayyid Qutb claim that *zakat* is a specifically Islamic concept superior to Christian charity because, being in principle mandatory, it neither exalts the giver nor demeans the recipient. In English, much confusion has been caused by the conflation of two entirely different senses of the English word 'charity': charity as spiritual love, or the New Testament agape, and charity as alms. This ambiguity has allowed Christians, when they put their alms in a collection plate, the luxury of assuming that they are engaged in an act of spiritual love. Modern churches, by using terms such as Christian Stewardship, try to bring the practice of alms-giving back to its historical origins, where there is hardly more than differences of emphasis between Jewish, Christian, and Muslim teaching: all say that wealth belongs to God rather than to us.

Many New Testament texts praise material poverty and attack the love of money. Yet in practice it was within Christianity that capitalism emerged, and very few Christians today give away all they have to the poor. The Islamic prescription of *zakat* – payment of one fortieth of one's assets per year, with many refinements of detail – has much in common with the references to tithing found in the Pentateuch. In general, Islam is more down-to-earth and practical about money than Christianity. The many Qu'ranic injunctions to give alms are reflected today in popular preaching and religious education; but Muslims are also advised to keep some money for themselves and to give in keeping with social rank.

One Jordanian, a civil servant with the ministry of religious affairs, neatly defined *zakat* for me as 'financial worship'. This is surely a concept alien to mainstream Christianity.

Back to the collecting mosque. I hope not to find too many plastic churches with slots and removable spires, for that would disprove my hypothesis. But I would be happy to come across the equivalent thing in synagogues, for in their teaching about wealth the Jewish and Islamic traditions have much in common. ✦

A small replica Dome of the Rock to collect *zakat*



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Kurdistan

CHRISTINE ALLISON

The Evolution of Yezidi Religion

From Spoken Word to Written Scripture

The Yezidis of Kurdistan have been called many things, most notoriously 'devil-worshippers,' a term used both by unsympathetic neighbours and fascinated Westerners. This sensational epithet is not only deeply offensive to the Yezidis themselves, but quite simply wrong. Yezidism is not devil-worship, but something far more elusive, and interesting.

Yezidis probably number about 250,000 (though reliable statistics are difficult to find) and their largest communities are currently found in the Dihok, Mosul and Sinjar areas of Northern Iraq. Under the Ottoman Empire, Yezidis played an influential role in Kurdish tribal confederations, but successive persecutions reduced their numbers and drove waves of emigrants into the Caucasus, where they played a notable role in the republics of Armenia and Georgia. Many of the Yezidis of Eastern Turkey were by the second half of the twentieth century living in small, poor villages surrounded by hostile neighbours, and were often reduced to practising their religious and cultural rituals in secret. They have moved *en masse* to Europe, mainly Germany, and the troubled situation in Northern Iraq has prompted many prominent members of the community there to follow them.

The Yezidis are not Muslims. They do not claim Islamic identity; the majority of them disapprove of attempts during the 1970s, enthusiastically backed by Arab nationalist groups, to depict them as Ummayads (largely on the basis of the somewhat suspect derivation of the name 'Yezidi' from the Caliph Yezid ibn Mu'awiya). Some Orientalists, such as Roger Lescot, posited a purely Islamic origin for the Yezidis, but such interpretations ignore important elements of Yezidi mythology and practice which undoubtedly have ancient Iranian roots. Historical sources tell us that Yezidism as we now know it grew from the establishment in Kurdistan of the 'Adawiyya order of Sheikh 'Adi ibn Musafir (c. 1073-1162 CE); Yezidi texts and customs show that the enormous influence of Sheikh 'Adi and his order was overlaid upon a background of more ancient beliefs. However, there is not enough evidence to describe this ancient Iranian religion fully, nor to trace the interplay between it and the Islamic elements in Yezidism. We may note some tantalizing similarities between the religion of the Yezidis and that of other groups who do claim Islamic identity, such as the Ahl-e Haqq of Iranian Kurdistan, but too much speculation on origins soon founders on lack of evidence and risks missing some of the defining aspects of Yezidism today.

This religion, which has aroused so much antagonism, is difficult to summarize succinctly. It is not a religion of the Book; its holy texts are oral and literacy was formerly forbidden to Yezidis. As a religion of orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy, it has no single statement of faith embracing all Yezidis and no single way of praying. It is a belief-system in a very loose sense, with many variations in practice between individuals and communities. To generalize, seven Holy Beings are venerated, chiefly Melek Tawus (the Peacock Angel identified by some non-Yezidis with Satan). These may be incarnated in human form many times and are called *khas*, enabling the Yezidis to incorporate holy figures from other religions. Islamic figures thus venerated include ᶜAli, the Caliph ᶜAbu Bakir and Hasan al-Basri; from Christianity, Jesus is equated with the Yezidi Sheikh Shems. The overriding importance of respecting purity is obvious not only in the Yezidis' attitude towards the elements, particularly earth and fire, but also in their caste system. Many outsiders have remarked their taboos, particularly the apparently bizarre, such as those on eating lettuce or wearing blue clothes.

Non-Yezidis, almost invariably people of the Book themselves, found this religion without apparent dogma highly deficient. Its holy texts as became known to Westerners were dismissed as childish and nonsensical, as if they were attempts at Western-style 'theology', without any consideration of their purpose or use in the Yezidi cultural context. For them, because Yezidism apparently lacked the ingredients of a 'proper' religion, its spirituality must be bogus (and the Yezidis mentally deficient) or deceptive (and the Yezidis dishonestly hiding a deeper secret). Sunni Muslims tended to presume less esoteric secrets; as with the Alevis, it was often automatically assumed that different rules of purity implied lack of cleanliness, and festivals where men and women celebrated together to be orgies.

The best way for contemporary scholars studying Yezidism to avoid the above prejudices is to try to understand how the adherents perceive their religion and what it means to them. A good medium for this is the interview. Perhaps we may call this the 'oral religious studies interview'; it is certainly more akin to the oral history interview than the anthropological interview. Questions about dogma and exegesis may be meaningless to the Yezidis, but those about practice and emotional responses can be very revealing. If one has heard pious Yezidis talk about the *khas*, or met the tiny group who lead a life of prayer at the sacred shrine of Lalesh, it is hard to doubt the reality of Yezidi spirituality, despite the lack of formal 'theology'.

This traditional spirituality will no longer be enough for the Yezidi community as it becomes more urban and literate. In Europe in particular, young Yezidis need a religious identity with core beliefs and concepts which can be debated intellectually and explained to outsiders, not expressed merely through non-European practice and odd taboos. They are beginning to rebel against such fundamental rules as marrying within caste. Senior Yezidis realize that the future of their community in Europe is at stake, and have begun initiatives to collect all relevant oral traditions and forge a written scripture, and to reform some of the taboos. Yezidism will change from an oral religion of orthopraxy to a scriptural religion of orthodoxy, yet even such a fundamental change will be in keeping with its traditions, as it has always evolved to suit its environment, borrowing elements from elsewhere when necessary.

Yezidism is very unlike textbook Islam, but perhaps its spirituality has something to show us about possible ways of studying more mainstream Islamic groups. In rural areas of Kurdistan, there are many illiterate people who are devout Muslims but whose knowledge and expression of their religion is rooted more in the orthopraxy of 'folk religion' than in Islamic scriptural texts. Oral religious studies is a developing field in Near and Middle Eastern studies, and may have much to teach us, not only about minorities, but also about the Muslim majority. ✦

Dr Christine Allison is a lecturer in Anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

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Middle East

MARTIN KRAMER

The Muslim Middle East in the 21st Century

What will be the face of Islam in the twenty-first century? A preoccupation with the future is always acute at the turning of a century, still more so at the turning of a millennium. The speculation about world futures, from the optimistic 'Endism' of Francis Fukuyama to the pessimistic 'Clash of Civilizations' of Samuel Huntington, is already well under way in the West.

In the predictions of these generalists, Islam and the Muslim world receive fairly short shrift, at least as far as their internal evolution is concerned. The generalists have been criticized by the area specialists, on the usual grounds that the generalists do not know enough about Islam or Muslims to generalize. But the critics have yet to engage in the same kind of controlled speculation, or to provide alternatives of their own. Over the last century, the most commonplace prediction for the future of Islam has been its renaissance along Western lines. Commenting on the trend in Islamic thought in the 1880s, the English poet-explorer Wilfrid Scawen Blunt wrote that it 'stood in close analogy to what we have seen of the reawakening of the Christian intellect during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Europe and its adaptation of orthodox doctrines to the scientific discoveries of the day.'[1] An American observer put the same idea this way in 1963: 'Perhaps the Arab world in this century is in the first pages of a renaissance that may ultimately be comparable to the changes that took place in Western society in the fifteenth century.'[2] 'If my suspicion is correct,' writes a leading American anthropologist in 1998, 'we will look back on the latter half of the 20th century as a time of change as profound for the Muslim world as the Protestant Reformation was for Christendom.'[3] This expectation of reformation is a recurring theme in the Western vision of Islam. It leaves nothing to predict but the proximate emergence of a Luther, followed by the modernization of Islam and the emergence of democratic governance. Yet while the twentieth century has been the stage of numerous 'revolutions' in the name of the people or the nation or Islam, it could well be argued that Muslims have failed to resolve issues which appeared on their agenda a century ago. Indeed, the more instructive analogy may not be with the fifteenth century in Europe, but with the end of the nineteenth century in the Middle East.

1900 and 2000: BACK TO THE FUTURE

Indeed, there are striking parallels between the end of the nineteenth century and the end of the twentieth. And if repetition is one possible scenario, analogous reasoning may offer some clue to the future.

The global context

It is the global context which defines the parameters of action in the Middle East. Then as now, preservation of the status quo in the Middle East was a prime interest of the great powers. The European order itself seemed stable: there had been no major European war since the end of the Franco-Prussian war in 1871. Great Britain, anxious to guarantee its access to India, became effective guarantor of the existing order in the Middle East. The foundations of that order were being eroded by nationalism in Egypt, and Britain had acted to protect the route to India by occupying Egypt. Yet it also became the champion of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and led the powers in shoring up the status quo.

Is this not similar to the situation today? The West now also enjoys a long peace, secured through détente and the end of the cold war. Under the Pax Americana, the US guarantees the world's access to oil at reasonable prices, and when that access has been challenged, the US has moved to restore and keep its peace, as it did following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The US role in managing the Arab-Israeli peace process is no less an example of its status as ultimate guarantor. The US largely acts off shore, without the need for prolonged occupations, but its ability to project power is still formidable.

Ultimately it is the US that underwrites the stability and status quo of the Middle East. But if a repetition is possible, then perhaps the Middle Eastern order will be buffeted by some dramatic shift in the international order. It has always been difficult for one outside power to maintain hegemony in the Middle Eastern system, the very structure of which invites challenges. A century ago, there was a Pax Britannica, but the first decades of the twentieth century saw a gradual emergence of continental powers rivalling Britain in Europe and overseas. These rivalries were carried over into the Middle East; they ultimately led to war and the break-up of the Ottoman Empire. If rivals to the United States emerge over the next twenty years, might their rivalry spill over into the Middle East? Unified Europe is on the doorstep of the Middle East, has a vital interest in its stability, and is already staking out independent policies. When China begins to emerge from the role of regional power to that of a world power, the Middle East will be of paramount importance to it, on account of China's growing energy needs. If Europe and China assert themselves in the Middle East, might this undermine or upset the order America now guarantees?

The Domestic Stalemate

At the end of both centuries, the regimes of the region seemed not only stable, but unassailable. In the Ottoman Empire, Sultan Abdülhamid II had come to power in 1876, and would continue until 1908, a reign of 32 years. In the Qajar Empire, Nasir al-Din Shah had just ended a 48-year reign, which had commenced in 1846 and ended with his assassination in 1896. Their long personal rule epitomized the long period of political immobility that seemed to characterize the last two decades of the last century.

Today, too, the Middle East is ruled by the same men who ruled it a generation ago and more. King Hussein has ruled Jordan since 1953. King Hasan has ruled Morocco since 1961. Asad has presided over Syria since 1971. Qadhdhafi made his coup in Libya in 1969. Arafat has been chairman of the PLO since 1969. Kuwait's Emir has ruled Kuwait since 1978, with help from foreign friends who restored him to his throne. Iraq's Saddam Hussein has been president since 1979, and Egypt's Mubarak since 1981. The Arab lands are today the last preserve of protracted individual rule in the world. This is a symptom of political immobility, of a failure to find any way to regulate political change. In this respect, the parallel between the end of both centuries is almost exact.

But the first decade of the twentieth century saw two constitutional revolutions, in both the Ottoman Empire and Iran. Is it possible that beneath the surface of today's authoritarian rule, there are forces coalescing that could try to establish limits on the arbitrary powers of rulers? Might these forces be capable, in another decade or so, of effecting constitutional revolutions? (Today we would probably call them 'democratic revolutions.') Whether they would succeed is another matter, but the turmoil they would unleash might see the triumph of the same populist forces that first appeared in the beginning of this century, in the guise of nationalism.

The Islamic Factor

Towards the end of the last century, there had been a revival of Islam, and even an Islamic revolution in Sudan. That revolution, taking a millenarian and Mahdist form, had defied the great power of the day, Britain, and had established an Islamic state in 1885 that lasted thirteen years, until Britain destroyed it by force. Elsewhere in the Muslim world, other revivalist movements seemed to threaten the status quo.

Does this not closely parallel our own times? This, too, has been a period of Islamic revival. There has been an Islamic revolution in Iran, also with strong millenarian overtones, defying the great power of our own day, America. (The US was traumatized by the seizure of the American embassy in Tehran in ways reminiscent of the shock delivered to Britain by Gordon's fate at Khartoum.) Elsewhere, in the rest of what used to be called the 'Northern Tier,' Islamists have made themselves felt in Turkey, and they have taken complete power in Afghanistan. South of Egypt, bulwark of US influence in the Arab Middle East, Sudan is also under Islamist rule. And of course other Islamist movements have emerged to challenge the status quo.

But the first decade or so of the twentieth century saw the containment, then the decline, of Islam as a focus of political allegiance. Is it not possible that in a decade's time, the Islamic revival will also appear as a phase that exhausted itself, as other ideologies of power more directly inspired by the West make their long-delayed comeback? Already there are signs that the Islamist surge has been blunted. Might it even be reversed?

The Minority Factor

A century ago, European and local minorities in the Middle East were at the peak of their influence, from Algeria to Tunisia, from Egypt to Syria. They were the engines of economic growth, and they formed a target of growing Muslim resentment.

The new nationalism identified the erosion of minority power as an immediate objective, so that no minorities exercise this kind of influence in any Arab state today. But today, a concentration of five million Jews in the state of Israel, with strong links to the West, has acquired immense military and economic power. As in the past, this exercise of non-Muslim power in the heart of the Muslim world is the cause of a continuing Muslim resentment. Might the erosion of Israel's power remain a prime objective of the Arab world, whether pursued through diplomacy or confrontation? If so, the Arab-Israeli conflict, rather than ending in final peace agreements, may have entered a new phase.

More parallels could be drawn, some more persuasive than others. The historian might well be tempted to borrow the phrase coined by an American athlete: déjà vu all over again. Still, the repetition of history is not its replication, and many of today's realities have no parallel. Two are particularly striking: the dissemination of weapons of mass destruction, and the explosion of populations. These are the two wild cards that could well shatter the existing political and social structure of the Middle East and bring on ungovernable change. They would create difficulties not only for the West, but dangers for the peoples of the Middle East itself.

Islamic Reformation?

No doubt, there will be crises and changes – but a reformation? A century ago, the great Islamicist Ignaz Goldziher predicted that Islam could be regenerated from within – not through a 'return to the Qur'an' which, 'contrary to the laws of historical evolution, risks putting Islam behind instead of modernizing it,' but rather through bold, rational reinterpretation.[4] It did not happen. In the twentieth century, some Muslims simply abandoned Islam for Western doctrines, and others opted for the 'return to the Qur'an,' embodied in a militant and aggrieved fundamentalism.

If a reform is in the making, the work of adaptation has not yet even begun. An American historian of Islam has put it succinctly: 'The ideas that will be taken as the most authoritative synthesis of Islam and modern conditions fifty years from now have not yet been thought and are not on the current agenda.'[5] If the thoughts have not been thought, if the issues have not been defined, then the twentieth century can only be described as an opportunity lost. Its repetition is something even a faith as vibrant as Islam can ill afford. ✦

Dr Martin Kramer is director of the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University

Notes

1. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt (1907), *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*. London: Unwin, p. 102. The reference here is to Jamal al-Din 'al-Afghani.
2. Charles F. Gallagher, 'Language, Culture, Ideology: The Arab World,' in: K.H. Silvert (ed.) *Expectant Peoples: Nationalism and Development*, New York: Random House, 1963, p. 229.
3. Dale F. Eickelman, 'Inside the Islamic Reformation,' *Wilson Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (winter 1998), p. 82.
4. Ignaz Goldziher, 'L'Avenir de l'Islam,' *Questions diplomatiques et coloniales* (Paris) 11, no. 102 (15 May 1901), pp. 600-2.
5. Richard W. Bulliet, 'Rhetoric, Discourse, and the Future of Hope,' in: Richard W. Bulliet (ed.) *Under Siege: Islam and Democracy*, New York: Middle East Institute, Columbia University, 1994, pp. 11-12.

Iran
SASKIA GIELING

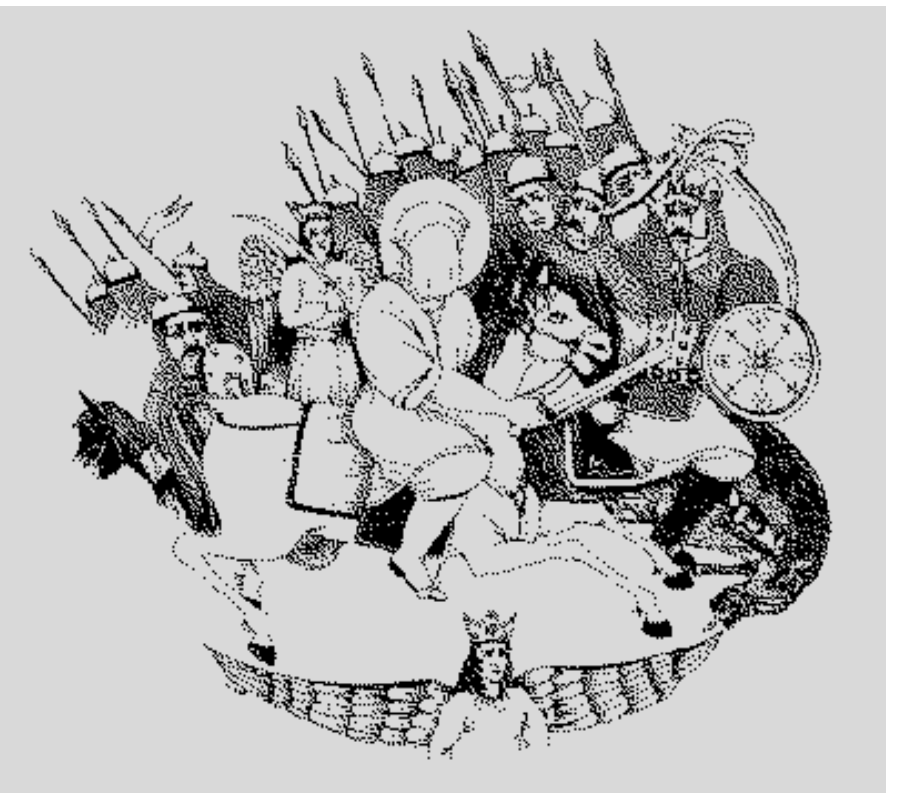
The Iconography of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Audiovisual material played a vital role in the Iranian revolution of 1978/79. Khomeini's use of audio cassettes is well known, but the internal opposition against the Shah also made frequent use of visual material to spread their ideas. After the proclamation of the Islamic Republic, the new leaders continued this system. They regarded the use of wall paintings, posters and billboards, as an effective method for propaganda and mobilization, since many of their supporters were illiterate.

Two examples of iconography of the Islamic Republic are presented here. Most of the visual topics are presented in a religious setting. As a rule, the social or political message are combined with themes taken from Islamic, mainly Shi'ite history. Islamic symbols and motifs (such as the Kaᶜba, the Dome of the Rock, and Husayn) are frequently used, but the artists also employ motifs and symbols such as the dove, which have their origin in Christianity. Where the style of the posters is concerned, traces of many twentieth century currents in European painting can be discerned, from Catholic romanticism and symbolism to expressionism and social realism. In some of the posters the influence of modern cinema and advertising artwork is also clearly visible.

1. The martyrdom of Husayn

In 680/61, on the day of ᶜÂshûrâ', the Tenth of Muharram, the third Shi'ite imâm Husayn was killed in a battle with an Umayyad army on the plain of Karbalâ' in what is present-day Iraq. This fight was the outcome of an uprising against the Umayyad Caliph Yazîd, planned by Husayn in order to revive Islam. Shi'ites consider Husayn's death as one of the crucial events in history. Traditionally, Husayn's martyrdom to the cause of Islam has been regarded as a unique event in history, impossible to emulate for ordinary Muslims. This traditional view contrasts with the revolutionary interpretation illustrated in picture 2.



ILLUSTRATOR: SHARAREH SALEHI LORESTANI

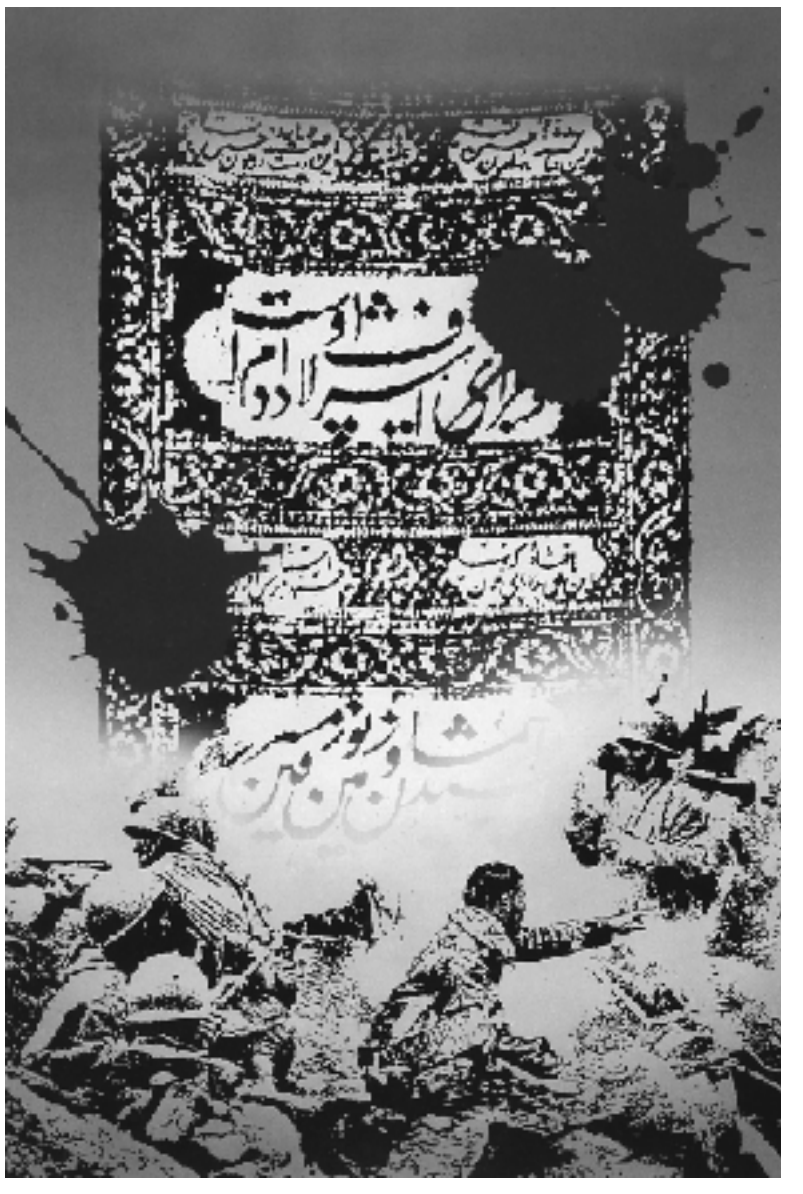
1

Many Shi'ites see Husayn's role as that of an intercessor between man and God; and participation in the annual rituals and commemoration services during the first days of Muharram is seen as essential for obtaining a place in Paradise.

2. Kull yawm ᶜÂshûrâ'

During the Iranian revolution, a more revolutionary interpretation of Husayn's death gained the upper hand. Husayn's struggle for the defense of Islam was presented as a model and example for the Iranians. His sacrifice and martyrdom were not unique but could, and should be emulated by every Muslim. During the war with Iraq, the leaders of the Islamic Republic emphasized that in Iran a re-enactment of the Karbalâ' event was taking place: *Kull yawm ᶜâshûrâ', kull ard Karbalâ'* (every day is ᶜâshûrâ', every place is Karbalâ'), emphasizing how much the Iranian population was prepared for martyrdom. ✦

2



FROM: 'A DECADE WITH THE GRAPHISTS OF THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION (1979–1989). PUBLISHED BY THE ART CENTRE OF THE ISLAMIC PROPAGATION ORGANIZATION, TEHERAN

Dr Saskia Gieling studied Arabic and Islam at the Catholic University of Nijmegen.

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United Arab Emirates
SATI MOOKERJI

Subjugated to What Extent? Women in the Workplace today in the United Arab Emirates

The black veil is still by and large in place, but is the woman behind it in the stereotyped position of subjugation and dominance that much of the world associates with her, especially in the workplace? This article examines the position of Muslim women in the workplace in one of the richest Gulf countries, the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The Arab Work Force

The Arab work force is unique in the sense that it employs more expatriate workers than nationals. According to a study prepared jointly by the Arab Monetary Fund and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development in 1995, the Arab work force accounts for around 28 per cent of the population, which is a very low ratio compared with international levels. The study says this ratio stands at 49.1 per cent in industrialized nations, 43.7 per cent in other developing countries and 50 per cent in the world at large. The study further indicates that the Arab work force in the 22-member Arab League was estimated at around 67.5 million in 1993 and was expected to grow by 3.3 per cent annually till 1995, and at 3.6 per cent between 1995 and 2000. This would add 2.3 million workers per year until 1995 and around 3 million per year between 1995 and 2000. Women workers in the Arab world form nearly 19 per cent of the total work force compared with 43 per cent in Western industrial countries and 35 per cent in Third World countries. The study also expresses concern about the fact that in the Gulf, regional states are heading for an internal labour imbalance as the work-force is growing faster than demand. Growth in the number of female workers at around 4 per cent during the 90's has exceeded that of male workers, and consequently the base of demographic pyramid labour supply exceeds demand. With more women getting educated and professionally qualified, jobs which were previously filled by expatriates are being sought by nationals.

History and Today

Historically, Islam recognizes the important role that women play in society. Ayesha, the daughter of the Prophet, was said to have led an army of 30,000 soldiers. It is reported in the Qur'an and from history that women not only expressed their opinions freely in the Prophet's presence, but also argued and participated in serious discussions with him and other Muslim leaders of the time. In this century, Turkey, Pakistan and Bangladesh have had women political leaders. But Ciller, Bhutto and Rahman come from privileged backgrounds, and the gap between them and the average Muslim woman is quite vast.

A question which arises frequently, especially in the case of many Muslim countries, is why do women so often come out in second place professionally? This point was highlighted recently by Dr Moza Ghobash, Professor of Sociology at the Emirates University of Al Ain in Abu Dhabi while speaking at a forum on 'Women and Management: Challenges and Opportunities for the Year 2000', which I attended. Ghobash pointed out that this opposition stems from a male reluctance to see a woman assume 'charisma' and social standing, and has its roots not in Islamic precepts, but rather in practice. While Islam makes it the paramount duty of men and women to learn, and the woman is ordered by God, as is the man, to learn, to read, to seek the truth and to educate herself. Unfortunately, reality lies elsewhere. Details of a recent study on the under-representation of young Muslim women in higher education and professional employment reveal that Muslim women are 'often perceived as an invisible and unobtrusive element of the labour market and under-utilized in terms of their potential as human resources contributing to the economy' (*Q-News International*, No. 284, January1998). The study found that Muslim girls face intense family pressure to select feminine career options like home economics, and are actively discouraged from pursuing interests in engineering or management.

In interviewing people over the years, during the course of my travels for writing, I have been told time and again that this kind of family reticence largely stems from the fact that a man would not like a wife who is more educated than he is, and therefore can command more social standing. Girls consequently feel pressurized to conform, to groom themselves to be wives and mothers. Individual career aspirations are rarely an option. Families too are concerned with social pressure and acceptance. If a daughter is perceived to be a maverick or aggressively career-minded, her chances in the marriage market are lessened and the family faces humiliation from social peers. Muslim men in some countries are unwilling to share economic power with their wives, fearing competition from within the home, and a relative loss of position and power in the workplace. Their world is a comfortable monopoly and they guard it well. Roles are clearly defined, one is the breadwinner, the other the homemaker, and overlapping of roles is usually frowned upon. Yet, changes are coming about and nowhere is this more evident than in the UAE today.

The United Arab Emirates

Some Arab countries of today find more and more of their womenfolk stepping outside the threshold of their homes to find their own place under the sun. The United Arab Emirates, a country which is a confederation of seven Emirates, namely Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah and Umm Al Quwain, seems to be leading the way in this regard.

In a significant move which springs to attention from my travels even ten years ago, when national UAE women were wary of interacting with strangers in the workplace, and few were gainfully employed, today's working woman in the UAE is an increasingly central figure, holding responsible positions in the private and public sectors. One of the main reasons for this is the increase in numbers of educated women. Today, more women than men are opting for higher education, and better still, are completing their studies instead of opting out halfway – always an easy option for people who have among the highest per capita incomes in the world. In terms of numbers, the number of female students in schools went up from 4 per cent in the 1970's to more than 50 per cent in the '90's. Most of these girls go on to finish their college education, after which a suitable job is just a step away. The large number of working women in the age group of 25 years and below is having a domino effect on their siblings and friends. They become role models for the young, an active group of increasingly independent and outspoken women, who now come out openly to proclaim, 'I have ideas just like any other person, man or woman. I have a particular viewpoint that I would like to put across, that I would like to see bear fruit' (Kawther Mohammed Ahmed, Assistant Branch Manager of the National Bank of Dubai to Gulf News, 4 Dec 1996).

In the UAE, participation of women in the labour force has risen from 5.3 per cent in 1980 to 12 per cent in 1995, according to a UAE socio-economic development report. The Ministry of Information Yearbook for 1997 attributed this significant rise to the government's policy of providing equal educational and professional opportunities to men and women to further the development of it's total human resource group. A percentage increase of women in the total population was also cited as a reason for the increase. In the UAE, many women are employed in the government sector, particularly in the areas of education and health. Interestingly enough, their numbers in the federal civil service are also on the rise, currently accounting for almost 40 per cent of the total employees. Women are also breaking new ground in the police force, with a growing number of policewomen performing various functions from criminal investigations to customs control.

Male Bastions Stormed

A women's team from UAE's General Department of Protective Security recently won a gold medal in the US in 1997. The General Department of Protective Security carries out specialist protection services on behalf of the government which includes protecting VIP visitors and trade establishments. Protective services at this level require highly complex knowledge and training, which include shooting with various types of weapons, and mental and physical development to react effectively in hostile and dangerous situations. A large number of women have also entered the last all-male bastion – a military school only for women, the Khawla Bint Al Azwar Women's Military School in Abu Dhabi. All women joining the School have an intermediate level school certificate and after training serve in the armed forces for at least five years. The six-month training course includes field training on self-defence and combat techniques, in addition to tactical and theoretical courses. At the end of the course, candidates have to pass an examination which qualifies them to graduate with a military rank. A significant number of women have shown interest in the course and the numbers are rising each year.

Women in the UAE today are found in almost all spheres of economic activity. Banking is perhaps their most preferred vocation, followed by other government services, such as police, customs and other regulatory services. The last year has seen their numbers increase in the private sector as well, where their level of education normally determines the position they hold. Some join the managerial cadres, while others have come to terms with holding non-managerial jobs, thus making them competitive in the job market along with expatriate workers. Traditional career options for women also hold great appeal, such as nursing, teaching, and social welfare.

Conclusion

The case of the UAE presents a break with many other Muslim societies even today, where for example in nearby Saudi Arabia, women are still not permitted to drive or be seen in public without the mandatory black veil. What seems worth noting in the case of the UAE is not so much the exact numbers of women in paid work; but that in the 1990's, in sharp contrast to even the 1970's, the 'working woman' is operating as an increasingly central figure; and seems to have appeared alongside the 'housewife and mother', as a paradigmatic feminine subject in the social, economic and cultural discourses of the UAE. She is certainly today one of the icons around which the UAE's position as a 'modern' Muslim country is legitimized; and this iconic figure is premised – both covertly and overtly – on the working woman rather than the housewife. ✦

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Dubai
POROMA REBELLO

Politics of Fashion in Dubai

Modesty is fashionable. Long black gowns called *abayas* cover many women from head to toe, and the *hijab* or scarf covers the head and is draped over the shoulders. Since it is generally difficult to say whether religion or culture dictates this sartorial choice, it remains a debated issue, both within and outside academia. Contests about the position and place of women are a continuing feature of Muslim (and perhaps all) societies. Critiques about the 'Western style' of modernization have increasingly become centred around the question of women's chastity, modesty and sexuality. As is almost always the case, it is on the figure of the woman that the responsibility of maintaining tradition and upholding family values becomes centred.

The *Abaya*, *Gallabya* and *Hijab*

Interestingly, even the stark black *abaya* makes a fashion statement of its own. Some are in lustrous silk, some in more staid fabrics, some have borders embroidered with an exquisite hand, and the garment looks like elegant evening attire, albeit very modest. Under the *abaya*, women wear long gowns or *gallabyas* which is the traditional Arab dress for women in the region. *Gallabyas* are long, wide-flowing dresses with long sleeves, and come in a variety of materials and colours. For normal daily activity, cotton or thin polyester is preferred, while heavy silks and shimmering satin make for evening wear. Designers are now also experimenting with chiffon, georgette, lace and velvet. Often the robes draw on the talents and skills of calligraphers and draughtsmen and use miniature art and embroidery, gold and silver ribbon work, lead crystal, pearls, sequins, beads and semi-precious stones. Most of the decorative embroidery is at the throat, covering the frontal part of the garment, at the base of the sleeve and near the ankles. Decorative work on the body of the garment is less, except of ornate gowns worn during weddings and religious functions. *Gallabyas* come in an explosion of colours, emerald green, purple, fuchsia, brilliant blues, sunflower yellow, and ever dramatic favourites of gold and silver. Moroccan designs and animal motifs are among the favourite decorative patterns. Designers are now experimenting with slightly bold touches like one-shoulder-off gowns with a lace stole showing glimpses of the bare shoulder.

The *hijab* too, does not escape the changing trends in fashion. They are sometimes beaded, fringed, sequined, and ornately decorated.

Weddings give an opportunity for local designers to indulge their most ornate fantasies. The traditional white wedding gown, much like gowns worn at Christian weddings, are normally high-busted, with a narrow waist and flowing lines from the hips. The embroidery and decorative work is splendid, with pearls, sequins, precious stones, lace, ribbons and diamanté – the limits are set only by the designer's imagination.

Designer Wear

If women wear the all-covering *abaya* and the *hijab*, and below the *abaya*, mostly their *gallabyas*, then what are some of the biggest names in fashion doing in Dubai, vying for a small market of a few million people? Armani, Givenchy, Gucci, Ralph Lauren, Jean Louis Scherrer – the list is endless. They are all here, along with the ready-to-wear big names like Mex'x, Benetton, Giordano, Laura Ashley, Liz Clairborne, and others. In addition, many Asian designers from India, Pakistan and the Philippines have also set up major retail outlets to cater to increasing local demand. And most of the demand is from the very fashion conscious urban middle class woman, who can afford their prices. She may wear the *abaya* and below it the *gallabya* along with the *hijab,* but she has a keen eye for Western fashions as well. Quite often, under the *abaya*, one can faintly make out the trendy cut of a Givenchy creation. Depending on the occasion, women dress to please themselves, be it a Gucci original or a casual T-shirt from Benetton complete with Levi's jeans and Armani belt. Interestingly enough, while the dictates of fashion would have women show off what they are wearing, the *abaya,* quite contrarily, covers the ultimate fashion statement.

The Politics of Fashion

The decision to veil or not to veil has attracted wide media attention in recent times. Writing from the viewpoint of someone who lives and works in one of the more 'modern' Gulf cities of Dubai for several years now, one sees that the *abaya* and *hijab* have assumed a central place in issues of ethnicity and identity in what has largely become an expatriate society. This short article is informed from the perspective of what anthropologists would perhaps term ethnography. They are essentially some reflections on discussions which I have had with Muslim women in Dubai who are simultaneously co-workers and friends. Their decision whether or not to wear the *abaya* and the *hijab*, and its signification are seemingly important issues for them.

What comes out repeatedly in these discussions is that if they choose to wear the *abaya* and the *hijab*, they do so more as a symbolic gesture that marks them out as honourable and respectable women who wish to avoid any undue attention. They say, for them, the *hijab* signifies *iffa* (modesty), *tahara* (purity), *taqwa* (righteousness), *haya* (bashfulness) and that it is their *iman* (belief or faith). When asked whether or not it is also an act of obedience, they do agree. But at the same time, they take great pains to make a finer point of distinction: that generally speaking, working class Muslim women find that the *hijab* gives them a sense of worth, both individually and socially; while for urban, middle class women generally, it can be more because of the superintendence of Islamic law and tradition.

Discussions seem to indicate that for the urban, middle class women at least, covering their bodies with the *abaya* and veiling their heads and faces with the *hijab* have taken on meanings at multiple levels. At one level, it is not merely covering themselves, but more importantly, it is also behaviour, form, manners, etiquette and appearance in public. Thus, in this aspect, dress is merely one facet of a greater totality of being a Muslim woman. This allies closely to issues of morality and purity, in being like Caesar's wife, i.e., above suspicion. In any case, amongst immediate and extended family, she has the freedom to dispense with the *abaya*. Thus, we find a distinction being made between 'private' and 'public' spaces.

At another level, there are fascinating contradictions. For instance, when below the *abaya*, the woman chooses to wear decorated *gallabyas* or trendy Western and Asian designer creations, she is constructing her own, personal 'private' space. Furthermore, as mentioned above, while contradictorily enough, the *abaya* covers the designer fashion statement; at the same time, it also gives the woman more freedom in a way to participate in the 'public' sphere.

It is the dichotomies between the so-called First World and Third World feminisms which are critical in the conceptualization of women and gender to Islam. Is Euro-American theorizing in feminism appropriate in the context of Muslim societies like the Gulf countries? My discussions seem to indicate that women colleagues and friends in Dubai are explicitly or implicitly articulating aspects of such ongoing debates in their talks with me. They are always ready to discuss their decisions of wearing the *abaya* and *hijab* or not, and certainly wish to clarify any misconceptions which I may have about it. Those who do not wear the *abaya* or the *hijab* are generally the ones who are more critical about any so-called 'Islamic atmosphere' at their places of work (should it exist) where they implicitly feel a pressure to conform to 'Islamic' dress codes and behaviour. For others, who do wear the the *abaya* and the *hijab*, at one level, it is a personal decision, taken after long consultation with relatives and friends. At another level, it is a highly charged political gesture – a way for them to engage in 'modernity' on their own terms.

In Dubai at least, from where the data for this article are mainly based, the *abaya* and the *hijab* are not as much a domain of political contest as Saudi Arabia or Kuwait for example. That fact in itself is an interesting problem. In one way, it is definitely a form of protest against a perceived sense of a so-called 'Western' modernity: and what better way to explicitly mark difference than the *abaya* and the *hijab*? But is it just this, or can there be other levels of resistance as well? Should this protest not also be looked at within the framework of the globalizing forces of Islam today, and the intricate, multi-layered relationship of such forces to the development of a different 'Middle Eastern modernity'? ✦

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Dagestan
DMITRI MAKAROV

Enacting the *Sharia* Laws in a Dagestani Village*

Calls for, and practical attempts of introduction of the *sharia* laws are the core issue of the contemporary process of Islamic resurgence in the North Caucasus. In 1997 the Chechen Republic officially proclaimed itself an Islamic State living by the *sharia*. Despite some shortcomings of the Chechen experience in this respect, the idea of the *sharia*'s enactment is nevertheless getting more public attention and proponents in other north-Caucasian republics, Dagestan in particular.

Historically, Dagestan has been the major centre of Islamic culture in the whole North Caucasus. Through the years of Soviet rule peoples of Dagestan, Avars and Dargins in particular managed to keep their Islamic traditions alive. That is why the difficulties of the transition to the post-Soviet development and the aggravating crisis of Dagestani society, especially its spiritual-ethical dimension, provoked a reaction with discernible Islamic overtones. The government's inability to put an end to the spread of crime, drug addiction, alcoholism, prostitution and other moral deviations little known to Dagestanis' life-style before *perestroika*, draws many people to consider Islamic religious and juridical principles as a means to society's spiritual and moral recovery, and possibly a way to the establishment of more righteous socio-political order.

There are two major forces pushing the cause of Islamization in Dagestan: the official Muslim clergy represented in the Spiritual Board of the Muslims of Dagestan (SBMD) and adherents of Islamic fundamentalism, generally but not quite correctly called 'Wahhabis'. They are bitterly opposed to each other. The SBMD is controlled by followers of sufi sheikhs and thus advocates the ideology of Sufi brotherhoods ('tariqat'), which has been dominant in Dagestan since the early Middle-Ages. So, official clergy condemns 'wahhabism', whose presence became noticeable in Dagestan only since the late 1980s, as a an ideology 'imported' (from Saudi Arabia), which is absolutely alien to Dagestani traditions and which is nothing more than a tool of dividing the Muslims and a religious disguise for those seeking political power and personal wealth.

On their part, the 'Wahhabis' blame the Sufi 'tariqat' Islam for having distorted the authentic Islamic beliefs and practices established by the Prophet Muhammad, for various reasons. One reason is because the sufis allegedly worship their sheikhs (saints) alongside Allah which is incompatible with the basic Islamic principle of monotheism (*tawhid*); another reason being that they have introduced many new traditions that did not exist in early Islam and left out many others that are essential to Islamic doctrine (such as *jihad*). Criticizing the cooperation between the SBMD and Dagestani authorities, the 'Wahhabis' accuse the tariqatist Sheikhs of selling the religion to the 'unbelieving' secular government.

Despite this rivalry between 'tariqatists' and 'Wahhabis', the results of their accumulated efforts leads to further Islamization of the society. Yet, while the official clergy and sufi brotherhoods are concerned mostly with building their institutional infrastructure and religious propaganda through the opening of new mosques, 'madressas', Islamic charitable foundations, publishing religious books and newspapers, celebrating religious holidays and organizing pilgrimages to Mecca; the 'Wahhabis' skilfully combine this agenda with practical efforts to introduce Islamic regulations into daily life of some local, and mostly rural communities. Although institutional resources and access to mass-media are relatively more limited for the 'Wahhabis', they undeniably hold the initiative in practical, on-the-ground Islamization.

In sharp contrast to the behaviour of the SBMD leaders who, just a few years ago had made an abortive attempt to convince the government to declare Friday an official holiday in Dagestan, and still tend to appeal to the authorities on every small issue; the 'Wahhabis' in recent years have persistently worked on establishing the Islamic order in regions where they feel most self-assured. Thus, the contours of Islamic enclaves in some villages of Buinaksk and other districts have been in the making since 1995-96. In August, the villages of Karamakhi, Chabanmakhi, and Qadar, proclaimed 'a separate Islamic territory governed by *sharia* laws'. By the beginning of September this conflict was resolved through an agreement between the 'Wahhabis' and the authorities, which brought the villages back under the political and administrative control of the government. The agreement tacitly accepted the socio-cultural hegemony of the Islamists at the local level, leaving them free to keep the *sharia* rulings applicable in the villages.

No less challenging for the government, a different pattern of Islamization can be observed in Kirovaul, a village in the Kyzilyurt district (about 50 km. west of Makhachkala). Kirovaul is one of those many villages that emerged in 1940-70 due to the enforced resettlement of mountainous *auls'* dwellers in the plains of Northern Dagestan. It has some 3 000 inhabitants, almost all of them Avars. 70% of them came from the village of Sildi, Tzumada *rayion*, and the rest came from other Tzumada villages.

By the early 1990s, its population had also become divided into adherents of traditional 'tariqat' Islam and 'Wahhabis'. The 'Sildis' turned out to be more disposed to fundamentalist ideology, and by now almost half of them are considered 'Wahhabis', while there are virtually no 'Wahhabis' among those coming from other villages. Thus, the 'Wahhabis' make up roughly 1/3 of Kirovaul's population.

Ideological controversy could not be avoided. Religious disputes had been occurring even during prayer times in the village mosque. To prevent these disputes from disrupting the prayers, it was eventually decided to pray separately: the 'Wahhabis' were to stay at the existing mosque, and the 'tariqatists' began to construct a new mosque for themselves. The solution had been negotiated peacefully and satisfied both parties. Since then the relationship between the followers of the two trends has been quite normal. It is amazing that the village madressa 'Sildi' makes room for both 'Wahhabi' and 'tariqat' scholars teaching there side by side. Contacts are also normally maintained in everyday life. Children from Wahhabist and tariqatist families play together, while in many other Dagestani settlements they are dragged into their parents' quarrels (for instance, the 'Wahhabis' are often accused of inciting their children to tease tariqatists' children by calling them '*mushriks*', meaning 'polytheists'). One possible explanation of such unusual mutual tolerance is the fact that the majority of tariqatists in Kirovaul follow Naqshbandi Sheikh Tadjuddin of Khasavyurt and not Sheikh Said-Efendi of Chirkey, whose *murids* (disciples) control the SBMD and are consequently much more hostile to Wahhabis.

Recourse to Islamic regulations is not something absolutely new in Kirovaul, whose inhabitants have kept much of the traditional mountain dwellers' respect for religious values. Selling of alcoholic beverages had been virtually banned for several years. But this did not prevent alcohol abuse from spreading. Intoxicated persons were quite often seen in the streets using foul language and provoking quarrels. Besides, drug dealers from neighbouring Chechnya started to come to the village, selling 'anasha' (a sort of narcotic) and recruiting local, unemployed youngsters for their criminal networks. Thefts of livestock, crops and personal property have become frighteningly frequent. Families have been increasingly anxious about the moral integrity of women and young girls. Local police paid almost no attention to people's requests to restore safety and order, which led many village dwellers to believe that the police were corrupt and unreliable.

It is against such a background that the gathering of Kirovaul inhabitants voted in May 1998 for the establishment of the *sharia* court and *sharia* guard to fight alcohol and drug abuse, theft and moral laxity. Tariqatists and Wahhabis got equal representation among the 6 judges (3 most competent scholars from each side) and the guard, which consisted of some 40-50 people. Leaflets informing the population about the principles of the *sharia* structures' activity were posted on the mosques' walls. Then the *sharia* guard started patrolling the village streets, especially at night.

All those picked up in the street for appearing drunk or committing theft are being brought before the court, which determines an appropriate punishment in accordance with the *sharia*. Of course, such measures as the cutting off of hands or throwing stones have never been applied, and the only punishment in use is beating with a stick. The number of blows depends upon the nature of the transgression. There are no public floggings in Kirovaul. All punishments are executed in the madressa building in the presence of the judges and guard members only. However, the names of the punished become immediately known all over the village.

At least within the first month of its activity the *sharia* guard did not face serious resistance on the part of the transgressors or their families. On the contrary, some women suffering from their husband's addiction to alcohol, started urging the *sharia* guard to step in. Most of the respondents in Kirovaul admitted that since the enactment of the *sharia*, the situation in the village has become more safe and relaxed, there have been less thefts and other crimes.

Assessing the implications and the prospects of the Kirovaul experience however, one should not overestimate its relevance for other regions of Dagestan.

The initial success of the *sharia*'s enactment was facilitated by some peculiarities of the microcosm of the Kirovaul society, such as the relatively high incipient level of religious feelings; relatively strong tradition of self-government typical of mountainous and recently resettled communities used to settling internal problems by themselves, without recourse to official authorities (the element of change is that the power of Islam has become more pronounced than the power of elders); and the monoethnic composition of the village which makes it difficult for the opponents of the Islamization to hamper it by playing on inter-ethnic rivalry. Besides, virtually all the Kirovaul inhabitants are bound by ties of close or distant blood relations; thus going against the *sharia* guard would be tantamount to going against one's own relatives, which is considered extremely reprehensible by Caucasian traditions.

The character of punishments applied and the list issues regulated by the *sharia* show that the scope of Islamization in Kirovaul remains rather limited. The Islamists confine mostly to maintaining public order, and so far it is not even clear how they would handle the issue of 'immoral behaviour' and if this implies the enforcement of the veil and Islamic dress for women. All socio-economic issues, including the land ownership disputes that are so crucial for Dagestan, and political and administrative issues are regulated by state legislation. Enactment of the *sharia* does not seem to be a strategy to drive out the state structures as much as an attempt to fill the security void left by weak and corrupt authority.

The fate of Kirovaul will also depend upon the local Islamists' ability to restrain their ambitions and to take public opinion into account. It is essential to understand that people's support of Islamization is conditional to how much it meets their social expectations rather than of any special ideological commitment. If, in their religious zeal, the Islamists go too far, if people feel any infringements on their traditional values and life-style which do not necessarily correspond to some Islamist blueprints, a substantial part of the population risks turning against the Islamists. As the *sharia* structures lose their legitimacy, it will be much easier for the government to split and neutralize the Islamist forces. Conversely, as the local authorities are losing faith in assistance from the central government, they may increasingly opt for joining this protest movement under Islamic slogans.

It is obvious that the Islamization and enactment of the *sharia* do not necessarily imply violent, separatist and anti-state inclinations, as some incidents have shown. The issue of integrating some Islamic legal regulations into the legislation of Dagestan, and maybe some other predominantly Muslim republics of North Caucasus, should be paid more serious attention. ✦

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* *Fieldwork information was gathered during a trip to Dagestan in late June 1998 made with financial support from the Economic & Social Research Council, UK.*

China

DRU C. GLADNEY

Internal Colonialism and China's Uyghur Muslim Minority

The Turkic people known as Uyghur will most likely be in the same situation at the beginning of the next millenium as they have been for most of this one: an internally colonized people, subject to the Chinese nation-state. How this came to be and how it might cease to be so is the subject of this article. I argue that it is through the model of internal colonialism that we might begin to understand how it is the Uyghur, and other indigenous peoples such as Tibetans, now labelled as 'minority nationalities,' have been turned into 'internal colonial subjects' despite being indigenous peoples in lands they once called their own. Through initial occupation, gradual integration through immigration, and finally 'minoritization' as a result of nationality policy, the Uyghur (and perhaps many others like them) have been internally colonized by the Chinese state.

The categorization and taxonomization of all levels of Chinese society, from political economy, to class, to gender, to religion, to ethnicity and nationality represents a wide-ranging and ongoing project of internal colonialism. Though now long subsided, the debate provoked by Michael Hechter's (1976) history, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966*, led scholars to consider applying Hechter's model to many other societies beyond England and Ireland. Hechter suggests that the channelling of certain peoples into 'hierarchical cultural divisions of labor' under colonial administrations led to the development of ethnic identities which superseded class. This 'internal colonialism' is predicated upon the unequal rates of exchange between the urban power-centres and the peripheral, often ethnic, hinterlands. In his study of 'The Celtic Fringe,' Hechter traces the national development of the post-colonial British state, as though these areas were still under economic colonial exploitation.

Internal colonialism was found to be applicable to South Africa, Thailand, Sudan, Wales, Brittany, Quebec, Austria-Hungary (as it was formerly), Scotland, Bangladesh, Cherokee Native Americans, Chicanos in America, the Palestinians in Israel, and the original intent behind and reason for the success of Stalin's nationalities policy in the Soviet Union (Gouldner 1978:11-14). The majority of these examples stress the exploitation of the many ethnics, who are less culturally literate in the dominant tradition, by the few urban power elite who control access to and distribution of capital. Interestingly, though the theory was later criticized and generally abandoned for being too general and too widely applicable, it was never applied to China. It is quite ironic that while the People's Republic was founded on an 'anti-imperial nationalism' (Friedman 1994), in the current postcolonial world, at a time when most nations are losing territory rather than recovering it, China is busily making good its claims on Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the Spratleys, as well as jealously guarding its border territories.

Uyghur Ethnogenesis and Internal Colonialism

Chinese histories notwithstanding, every Uyghur firmly believes that their ancestors were the indigenous people of the Tarim basin, now known as Xinjiang. The Uyghur were recognized as a nationality in the 1930s in Xinjiang under a Soviet-influenced policy of nationality recognition that contributed to a widespread acceptance today of continuity with the ancient Uyghur kingdom and their eventual 'ethnogenesis' as a *bona fide* nationality. While rebellions by Yakub Beg in the late 19th century, and the short-lived establishments of the Eastern Turkestan Republics (TIRET) in Kashgar in 1933 and Yining in 1944, indicated Uyghur attempts at resisting expanding Chinese colonialism, these efforts failed just as those of the Uzbeks and Tadjiks in Czarist and Soviet Central Asia.

'Minoritization' of the Uyghur became objectified when they were recognized by the Chinese state in 1950 as the Uyghur nationality, and the region was recognized as the Uyghur Autonomous Region in 1956. Chinese practices of 'integration through immigration' has meant the in-migration of Han Chinese since the 1950s, with populations increasing from an estimated 5 percent in 1940 to 38 percent in 1990. They then become known not as an indigenous people attached to a region once their own, but one of 55 minority nationalities in China, with a documented population of 7.2 million in 1990 (with 98 percent, or 7.1 million in Xinjiang alone). The Uyghurs are one of ten mainly Muslim nationalities, with a total Muslim population in China of nearly 20 million. The expropriation of Xinjiang's vast mineral and petrochemical resources, with processing of petroleum products in the interior, primarily Lanzhou, and sold on the international market (with revenues to Xinjiang based on domestic prices) further fits the internal colonialism model (see Dorian, Wigdortz, Gladney 1997). Finally, the development of the tourist industry in the region as a 'silk road' destination follows the line of touristic development in the minority areas that Oakes (1995) has also analysed as the results of 'internal colonialism' in the Southwest. The constructed indigeneity of the Uyghur poses an alternative to Chinese historiographies of the region, which is consonant with 'internal' colonizing powers seeking to assert authority in a region not previously their own.

Chinese Nationalism and its Implications for Minorities

After denying them for decades and stressing instead China's 'national unity,' official reports have recently detailed Tibetan and Muslim conflicts in the border regions of Tibet, Yunnan, Xinjiang, Ningxia, and Inner Mongolia. With the March 7, 1997 bus bombings in Beijing, widely attributed (though never verified) to Uyghur separatists, coupled with the Urumqi bus bombings on the day of Deng Xiaoping's 1997 memorial on February 25 (killing nine people), Beijing can no longer keep them secret. The Yining (Ghulja) uprising from February 2-7, 1997 that left at least twenty-five dead and hundreds injured and arrested, has been heavily covered by the world's media. This distinguishes the last few events from on-going problems in the region in the mid-1980s that have previously met with little media coverage.

The government responded with a host of random arrests and new policy announcements. In Spring 1998, the National Peoples Congress passed a New Criminal Law that redefined 'counter-revolutionary' crimes to be 'crimes against the state', liable to severe prison terms and even execution. Included in 'crimes against the state' were any actions considered to involve 'ethnic discrimination' or 'stirring up anti-ethnic sentiment.' Many human rights activists have argued that this is a thinly veiled attempt to criminalize 'political' actions and to make them appear as illegal as traffic violations, supporting China's claims that it holds 'no political prisoners.' Since any minority activity could be regarded as stirring 'anti-ethnic feeling,' many ethnic activists are concerned that the New Criminal Law will be easily turned against them. At the same time, Han Chinese who stir up ethnic problems can also be arrested.

Chinese authorities are correct in their assumption that increasing international attention to the plight of indigenous border peoples has put pressure on the regions. Notably, the chair of the Unrepresented Nations and People's Organization (UNPO) based in the Hague is the Uyghur, Erkin Alptekin, son of the Uyghur Nationalist leader, Isa Yusuf Alptekin. There are at least five international organizations working for the independence of Xinjiang, known as Eastern Turkestan, and based in Amsterdam, Munich, Istanbul, Melbourne, and New York. Clearly, with Xinjiang representing the last Muslim region under Communism, Chinese authorities have more to be concerned about than just international support for Tibetan independence.

Internal Colonialism and Muslim Separatism

Practically speaking, China is not threatened in the near future by the loss of its 'internal colonies.' Such as they are, China's separatists are small in number, poorly equipped, loosely linked, and vastly out-gunned by the People's Liberation Army and People's Police. Local support for separatist activities, particularly in Xinjiang, is ambivalent and ambiguous at best, given the economic disparity between these regions and their foreign neighbours, which are generally much poorer and in some cases such as Tadjikistan, riven by civil war. Memories in the region are strong of mass starvation and widespread destruction during the Sino-Japanese and civil war in the first half of this century, not to mention the chaotic horrors of the Cultural Revolution. China's economic progress is an important check on Uyghur secessionism: the nearby alternatives are still not that enviable. International support for Tibetan causes has done little to shake Beijing's grip on the region. Many local activists are calling not for complete separatism or real independence, but more often issues express concerns over environmental degradation, anti-nuclear testing, religious freedom, over-taxation, and recently imposed limits on child bearing. Many ethnic leaders are simply calling for 'real' autonomy according to Chinese law for the five Autonomous Regions that are each led by First Party Secretaries who are all Han Chinese controlled by Beijing.

Recent moves suggest efforts to promote Chinese nationalism as a 'unifying ideology' that will prove more attractive than communism and more manageable than capitalism. By highlighting separatist threats and external intervention, China can divert attention away from its own domestic instabilities of natural disasters (especially the recent flooding), economic crises (such as the Asian economic downturns drag on China's currency), rising inflation, increased income disparity, displaced 'floating populations,' Hong Kong integration, Taiwan reunification, and the other many internal and external problems facing Jiang Zemin's government. As Bruce Kapferer has noted, nationalism 'makes the political religious.' This is perhaps why religiously-based nationalisms, like Islamic Fundamentalism and Tibetan Buddhism, are targeted by Beijing, while the rise of shamanism and popular religion goes unchecked. At the same time, a firm lid on Muslim activism in China sends a message to foreign Muslim militant organizations to stay out of China's internal affairs, and the Taliban to stay well within their Afghan borders. In a July 1994 interview with Iran's former ambassador to China in Tehran, I was told that Iran would never intervene in a Muslim crackdown in China, despite its support for the training of Kubrawiyyah Sufi Imams from Gansu and close foreign relations with China.

In a recent visit to the U.S., Defense Minister Chi Haotian, declared: 'We hope to see a peaceful settlement [regarding Taiwan] yet refuse to renounce the use of force – The entire Chinese history shows that whoever splits the motherland will end up condemned by history.' This follows the new Chinese History Project launched by Song Jian, Minister of Science and Technology, aimed at writing a new chronology of China. In a *Science and Technology Daily* editorial, published May 17, 1997, Song Jian stated that the project's goal was to demonstrate its 6,000 year 'unbroken, unilineal' development. 'Unlike those in Egypt, Babylon and India,' Song declared, 'the Chinese civilization has lasted for 5,000 years without a break.' The project, to be completed by October 1, 1999, clearly will take a dim view of anyone accused of separatism. As long as Muslim activism is regarded as 'separatism', it will be seen not only as going against China's national destiny, but against history itself. Xinjiang, in this scenario, becomes just one of many former internal colonies to be dissolved into the advancing Chinese state, rather than the ancestral home known to the Uyghurs as Uyghuristan. ✦

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The opinions in this article are the author's alone.

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Tajikistan

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Religious Poetry in Tajik Badakhshan

One of the customs of the Ismailis of Tajik Badakhshan is the performance of a specific genre of religious poetry, called madâh. In madâh, literally meaning praise, the veneration of 'Alî, the holy family of the Prophet Muhammad, the Ismaili imams, and the 11th century Ismaili poet-philosopher, Nâsir-i Khusraw, is expressed in combination with mystical ideas common in Sufi poetry.

Madâh is usually performed by one or two men, accompanied by a rubâb and a daf. They perform for their own community, which is in most cases a small village or a certain quarter of a town. Men, women and children may be present: sometimes the men join the performers in singing the refrains, but most of the time everybody listens in silence to the performance. Approving exclamations are expressed when the madâh comes to an end, which is usually after many hours.

Madâh is performed often as a ritual of mourning. It is also performed on Thursday evenings and Fridays, or on the occasion of an anniversary of one of the numerous holy places in Badakhshan. Holy places, called mazâr, are scattered throughout the country. They contain the remains of mystics or extremely pious men of past times, surrounded by horns of the ibex.

The poetry sung in madâh is exclusively in Persian. For many Badakhshanis, this is their second language. In most cases one of the Pamir languages, Shughnî-Rushânî or Wakhî, is their mother tongue. Persian has of old been in use as a lingua franca of the area and as the language for writing, since the above-mentioned languages did not have a script. Persian also served as the language of religion, together with Arabic.

In a performance of madâh different forms of Persian poetry are linked together. The beginning of the performance is usually slow and solemn. The first poem is often a ghazal. In the course of the performance, the tempo rises. The poems tend to be longer in the middle of a performance, when versified stories are sung. In between, quatrains or short prayers form a pause.

Madâh poetry is largely orally transmitted. The madâhkhâns, the performers of madâh, state that the poetry comes from 'the bayâz', notebooks with miscellaneous poems. Some madâhkhâns keep a similar notebook with poems written in Tajik script, used to memorize the texts. Many poems sung in madâh are attributed to classical Persian poets like Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî. Often these poems can be characterized as Sufi poems. Like many instances of classical Persian Sufi poetry, madâh is intended to elucidate religious matters.

Madâhkhâns are not professional singers. To be a madâhkhân is not even a profession. It is a gift, from which one should not make money. Therefore all madâhkhâns have other professions; many of them are farmers. They perform madâh when requested. ✦

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A Few Examples of Madâh Poetry

The first example is a mystical poem, addressed to a pupil on the mystical path, literally a 'searcher for unity (with God)'. The pupil, and implicitly the audience, is accused of having too much pride and vanity. The poet speaks for a divine initiator, who appears in all forms and who stands above the cycle of beings. The listener is invited to heed this Absolute Truth, which is invisible to the physical eye, unless the outward eye is turned inwards, to the interior aspect of everything. Awareness of the interior aspect of things and beings leads to an understanding of the Secret. This secret is only known to the initiated.

Oh you searcher of Unity, you are all the boasting I am looking for
Listen to my words because I am saying the words of God

Be the pupil of my heart in the school of learning
If you want me to open the door of secrets for you

If you want to serve in this divine horizon
Then be ready for my command and listen to everything I say

In this treasury of nine roofs there are four houses and six views
Know the talisman of the treasure of meaning in it – it is my world-adorning Being

If you want to see my face then open the eye of Secret Knowledge
Because the worldly eye does not see a thing except my world-adorning Being

Where do you see me in the earthly world with this eye?
Since I am on a place and without a place, I stand above place and abode

If you want to know me then first know yourself
I know every one, I bring knowing and I am knowing

In that sense I have become visible so that you know that
I am wise as well as unwise, blind as well as seeing

Become drunk of the cup of longing so that you learn to know
That I am sometimes wine, sometimes the cup and sometimes the cup-bearer

Although everyone is from God on his way to God, I am master of this all

Whatever be the place of highest essence, whatever be the place of lowest essence
I do not need anything and I am free from this all

You will not see anything but me, nor at the beginning, nor at the end
In this sense that I am hidden and always visible

For me, there is no change in meaning but in outward appearance
I change sometimes and I appear in every form

The second example may be seen as a heterodox poem, in which ᶜAlî is more or less deified. The first part of the sixth line is a sort of spell against the accusation of blasphemy; it is obvious that the composer of this poem is aware of a possible reproach in consequence of his statements. In the Ismaili religion, ᶜAlî is not deified; but in the Ismaili doctrine of prophetic cycles he holds a key position as the wasî or deputy of the Prophet Muhammad. The deputies in the different prophetic cycles knew the secret meaning behind the outer form of religion. This secret was only revealed to a limited number of initiates. One of the reasons for the prevalence of ᶜAlî in the poetry of Badakhshan may well be the fact that ᶜAlî as a deputy of Muhammad represents the inner dimension of faith, which is deemed more important than the outer form. In this poem, ᶜAlî is identified with a number of prophets. It has been recorded as well among the Ahl-i haqq of Kurdistan. The alleged author of this poem is Shams-i Tabrêzî: but this is probably a false attribution.

Since the world came into existence, ᶜAlî was
Since earth and time came into being, ᶜAlî was

The king who was executor after the Lord, was ᶜAlî
Sultan of generosity, benevolence and liberality was ᶜAlî

Adam as well as Seth, Job as well as Enoch
The prophet Salih as well as David: it was ᶜAlî

First and last, exterior and interior
Devotee, place of worship and deity: it was ᶜAlî

Jesus came into being and spoke these words
'The inner meaning of my story is: it was ᶜAlî

This is no blasphemy, these words are no blasphemy
As long as something is, ᶜAlî will be; as long as something was, ᶜAlî was

Listen to the luminous Lamech, so that you will know
That friend, who was this prophetic soul, was ᶜAlî

Gabriel came from near the incomparable Creator
In the qibla was Muhammad, but the goal was ᶜAlî

Moses saw in a dream that the kernel of prophecy
which he showed to the Pharaoh in Egypt, was ᶜAlî

The seal on the finger of Solomon the Prophet
That divine light that was in it, was ᶜAlî

That conqueror who on the fortress of Khaybar
destroyed the door with one stroke and opened it, was ᶜAlî

That mighty king who on the road of Islam
did not rest till he had success, was ᶜAlî

That mighty king who was one with the chosen Ahmad
in the night of the Ascension, was ᶜAlî

The theme of the third example of madâh poetry is the transience of this world. In all genres of poetry performed in Badakhshan, allusions to the transience of the world are common. Admonitions not to attach oneself to the world are eagerly listened to by the audience.

Do not feel secure in this world, for no rose or rose-bed remains
Do not be negligent in remembering God for in the body no soul remains

Do you not fear the day that you put your side against the earth?
For you, as an ornament not even a piece of turban and clothes remains

Surely there is a ray of the soul as a loan in the house of the body
For life not even a ray of the sun in a small window remains

The kings of the world delighted in pride of their palace and throne
They were unable to consider 'to me, nothing of this remains'

The greedy people have collected earthly possessions out of greed
Look, in the end not even earth in the hem of the skirt remains

Alas I spent the house of my life in negligence
Everything I threw in the wind and from the heap of corn no grain remains

Think well, for our past life does not return
Such is the portion formed by day and night: from going nothing remains

White became the eye of Jacob because of separation from Joseph
'For my heart's comfort nothing but the smell of the shirt remains'

Qalandar, if you boast Love for Him then learn from the nightingales
For no long nights to wail over separation remain

India
MANOJ JOSHI

Islamic Reformism and Militancy in India

Roots of Islamic Reformism

The roots of Islamic reformism in the subcontinent can be traced to the eighteenth century and the decline of the Mughal empire and to the emergence of British colonialism. Central to these are the ideas of Shah Wali Allah (1703-63) and his son Shah Abdul Aziz (1746-1824). Their influence was felt through a variety of movements ranging from the Tariqa-i-Muhammadiyya of Syed Ahmed Barelwi to the ulema who founded the great seminary of dar-ul-Uloom at Deoband. Though the school was initially politically inactive, many of its teachers and students became influenced by the call of pan-Islamism from Istanbul. Foremost among these was Maulana Mehmood-ul-Hassan (1852-1921). The main thrust of his movement was the declaration that India was *dar-ul-harb*; territory of war requiring a *jihad*. He was among the founders of the *Jamiat-ulema-e-Hind* (Organization of the Ulemas of India), which participated shoulder-to-shoulder with Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress in the Khilafat movement, in support of the Caliph and the conservative Deobandis, who believed that India could remain united as a federation of communities, remained aligned with the Congress in the ensuing decades and opposed the formation of Pakistan. Many saw Pakistan as an idea put forward by westernized Muslims and many were not unaware that any scheme of partition would leave large numbers of Muslims in India. However, some Deobandis who founded the *Jamiat-ulema-i-Islam* (JUUI) at a meeting in Calcutta in 1945, supported the formation of Pakistan.

The idea of Pakistan was not acceptable either to Maulana Abul Ala Maudoodi who, in 1941, founded the *Jamaat-e-Islami* who saw it as a Muslim state rather than the Islamic one he wanted. In all fairness, that is exactly how the Qaid-e-Azam, Mohammed Ali Jinnah envisioned Pakistan. Maudoodi advocated the idea of the *Nizam-e-Mustafa* or a system, as he perceived it, to be ruled the way it was in the time of Prophet Mohammed.

After Partition

With Partition, many organizations split. The entire JUUI went over to Pakistan while the *Jamiat-ul-ulema-i-Hind*, remained headquartered in India. The *Jamaat-e-Islami* split and the Indian branch came under the influence of the nationalist Deboandis and accepted and even lauded the secular ideal as a means of preserving minority culture and focused on education and social uplift of the community. *Jamaat-e-Islami* Kashmir had an ambivalent attitude towards politics. It participated in several state assembly elections, the last one being in 1987.

The Pakistani branch headed by Maudoodi, on the other hand, became active in what can be called 'Islamic' politics, beginning in the 1950s with the instigation of riots against the Ahmadiya community. In the past three decades, the organization has become the core of radicalism and fundamentalism in Pakistan. It played an important role in the campaign against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and then supported the military regime of General Zia-ul-Haq. The Pakistani dictator skilfully used his alliance with the *Jamaat* to strengthen his position.

Turning on India

In the years after Independence, organizations of Indian and Pakistani Muslims kept a wary distance from each other. However, the sharp increase in the wealth of the Arabian Peninsula led to an enhancement of Wahhabi influence on Indian Muslims. This effort was spearheaded by preachers who collected funds from the Arabs to run *madrasas* (schools) and other organizations in service of the community. The US-supported *jihad* against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan led to the radicalization of Indian Islam as well through the enhanced interest of Saudi Arabia in the region and the activity of fundamentalist preachers in India and Bangladesh, many receiving funds from the Arabian peninsula. Quietistic movements like the *Jamiat-e-Ahle-Hadith* (Organization of those upholding Hadith to the exclusion of all juristic schools of Islam) and the *Tablighi Jamaat* became militant, spawning off organizations like the *Markaz Dawa-ul-Irshad* (Centre for Spiritual Guidance) and the *Harkat-ul-Ansar* (Movement of Helpers).

But the major impetus for external involvement in India came from Pakistan's external intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Under General Akhtar Abdul Rehman, the agency had perfected the technique of using religious fundamentalists to fight the Russians in Afghanistan. With the outbreak of the revolt in Kashmir 1989-1990 they decided to use them for the cause of Pakistan. General Akhtar was dead. He perished in the same plane crash as General Zia-ul-Haq, but his successors, Lieutenant Generals Hamid Gul and Javid Nasir, proved equal to the task.

Their task was not too difficult. The *Jamaat-e-Islami*, Pakistan, and its counter-part group in the Valley were both for the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan. However, the uprising was led by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, a secular formation, seeking independence. In 1990-1991, the ISI systematically starved the JKLF of funds and built up the *Hizbul Mujahideen*, a militant group created by the *Jamaat-e-Islami*.

To enhance the combat efficiency of the group, its members were trained alongside the Afghan mujahideen owing allegiance to the *Hizb-e-Islami* of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. After the fall of Najibullah, Hekmatyar sent a number of his fighters to fight alongside the Kashmiri and Pakistani cadres of the *Hizbul Mujahideen*. In 1993-1994 the Indian Army's tough response resulted in great setbacks to the Hizb and the ISI began to explore other options as well.

Principal among these were two groups who had been involved in the Afghan *jihad*. The *Harkat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami International* (HUJI) had been founded in 1980 by the *Jamiat-ul-ulema-Islam* and the *Tablighi Jamaat* of Pakistan to run relief camps for the Afghan *mujahideen*. It was led by Maulvi Irshad Ahmed and its support base lay in the Punjabi business community with JUUI and *Tablighi Jamaat* affiliations.

As the war developed, it established links with the ISI and was subcontracted to recruit and train the *mujahids* as well. The HUJI developed links with the Afghanistani *Hizb-e-Islami* (Yunus Khalis) faction. After the death of Maulana Irshad Ahmed, *shahid* (martyred) in the *jihad*, there was a poser-struggle within the organization. Fazal-ur-Rehman Khalil, the commander-in-chief of the group split with the new *Amir*, Qazi Saifullah Akhtar and formed a new outfit *Harkat-ul Mujahideen* (HKUM) which retained the connection with the Khalis faction of *the Hizb-e-Islami* and its military commander, Jalaluddin Haqqani located in the Khost area where they were permitted to retain training camps. These camps, many set up during the US- Saudi- Pakistani *jihad* against the Russians in Afghanistan, were destroyed by American cruise missiles in August 1998 as a reprisal of the bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania by a group owing allegiance to Saudi millionaire and now anti-American *mujahid* Osama bin Laden.

The HKUM sent a *lashkar* (war party) into Kashmir under Sajjad Khan, a Pakistani national, also known as Sajjad Afghani. He set up a training camp near Srinagar, but he was not able to establish effective links with the local groups and returned to Pakistan. The first HUJI lashkars began entering the state in early 1992. Later that year, Nasarullah Mansur Langaryal, its deputy chief commander and Afghan war veteran was sent in to head the *lashkar*.

In 1991 the Deobandi *ulemas* of Karachi asked the two *Harkats* to reunite so as to prosecute the Kashmir *jihad* more effectively. This was done and the *Harkat-ul-Ansar* was born in October 1993. The General Secretary of the new organization, Mohammed Masood Azhar was sent to India on a Portugese passport to work out the details of the merger between the Langaryal and Sajjad Afghani's *lashkars*. Unfortunately for them, all three were arrested in quick succesion. The arrest of their top leaders derailed the *Harkat's* planning in the Valley. In the next year or so, they became involved in making efforts for their release through four separate incidents of kidnapping. In the first case, an Army road-building engineer was kidnapped and then executed when the government refused to trade him for the *Harkat* leaders.

The following year, Qari Zarrar, a Pakistani who was heading the *Harkat* in the Valley and Abdul Hameed Turki (from Turkey) an associate of Langaryal, decided to take matters into their own hands. They organized the kidnapping of five foreigners, of whom one, John Childs, managed to escape. Another, Hans Christian Ostro, was executed and his body left in a place where it could be found by the authorities. The four others- American Donald Hutchings, German Dirk Hasert, and Britons Keith Mangan and Paul Wells – are believed to have been executed following Turki's death in an encounter with the Indian Army in late 1995. This episode, and subsequent internecine quarrels affected the *Harkat-ul-Ansar's* combat capabilities.

With the *Harkat* coming apart, the ISI has now put all its bets on yet another pan-Islamic group, the *Markaz Dawa-ul-Irshad* and its military wing, the *Lashkar-e-Taiba* (Army of the Pure). Among the fundamentalist sects that backed the Afghan *jihad*, was the *Jamiat Ahle Hadith*, an ultra-orthodox grouping of organizations who accept the austere Wahabi practices of Saudi Arabia.

Saudi money channeled through Sheikh Abu Abdul Aziz helped set up the Markaz which is headquartered at Muridke, near Lahore in 1987. Its founders were three university teachers, Zafar Iqbal, Hafiz Mohammed Sayeed and Abdullah Azam. This organization has institutional links with the *Jamiat-ul-ulema Islam* of Pakistan headed by Maulana Fazlur Rehman, a former Senator in the Pakistan's parliament and a political ally of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Its principal aims, according to its founders, are *jihad* and preaching. But while many are involved in preaching, the Markaz is one of the few that still stresses *jihad*. However, its main battle-ground is Kashmir. The first fighters were sent into Kashmir in early 1993 through the *Islami Inquilabi Mahaz*. Later it associated with the *Al Barq*, a Valley Kashmiri group. But since the beginning of 1994, it has been sending its fighters under the banner of the Lashkar-e-Taiba. Currently, of an estimated 300 fighters in the Valley, some 90 per cent are Pakistanis.

The *Ahle-Hadith* movement, stressing 'pure' Wahhabi Islam, has found support among some of the *ulema* in India. Nevertheless, the conservative mainstream Deobandis do not see India as a *Dar-ul-harb* since Muslim life is still run by their own Personal Law. The Indian Muslims suffer from many of the infirmities afflicting their Pakistani counterparts, primarily poverty and illiteracy. Some of them are falling prey to fundamentalist preachers and sects, many of whom had links with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Not surprisingly, the Pakistani intelligence agency has been using some of them as a cover for its activities.

The key watershed for the attitude of many Indian Muslims, especially in northern India, has been the the destruction of the Babri Masjid by a mob of Hindu fanatics in December 1992. They cited as their reason a belief that the mosque had been erected by the first Moghul Emperor Babur in the sixteenth century after razing a temple commemorating the birthplace of Rama, one of the most popular gods of the Hindu pantheon. The emotive campaign roiled the politics of northern India and set the stage for the collapse of the Indian National Congress. It also led to horrific riots in which the minority Muslim community paid a disproportionate cost in terms of loss of life and property. The worst occurrences were in Mumbai following the destruction of the Mosque in December 1992, followed by another round in January 1993. In retaliation, as it were, elements of the Mumbai's Muslim underworld, with the help of the ISI, carried out a series of bomb blasts across the city in March 1993, arguably the worst act of urban terrorism in recent history.

Pan-Islamic groups see all this as an opportunity. Both the *Markaz dawa-ul-Irshad* and *Harkat-ul-Ansar* (it has reverted to *Harkat-ul-Mujahideen* after the American proscription in 1997), make it clear that Kashmir is merely a gateway for a larger *jihad* in India. To this they have expanded their network across the country. Mosques and *maulvis* (teachers) owing allegiance to the *Ahle-Hadith* sect are a major link for an underground terrorist network run by the HUA and MDI in collaboration with the ISI. These stretch from Bangladesh, across West Bengal, northern Bihar and Uttar Pradesh to Delhi. Both Nepal and Bangladesh have been used as a base by these groups and, across India, Debandi *madrasahs* are a target of subversion and a source of recruitment. Information on this development has come through those arrested for the bombing campaign that saw nearly a hundred bomb blasts across northern India in 1996-97, taking the lives of scores of people.

Islamic fundamentalism and militancy are now a fact of life in South Asia. Whether or not forces of modernization will moderate their impact is difficult to tell. The steady decline of the State's ability to influence the every-day life of the citizens of the region is playing an important role in the growth of fundamentalism. Political parties, especially in Pakistan, take quick recourse to hoisting the flag of Islamization to handle problems. To compound things, there is a new factor that must now be taken into account – the success of the Taliban in establishing control over Afghanistan. ✦

Manoj Joshi is a senior editor for India Today.

Indonesia

MATTHEW ISAAC COHEN

Semar Makes the Hajj
Shadow Puppet Theatre and Islam in Indonesia

Indonesia, with a population of more than 200 million, of which perhaps 80 percent is Muslim, is frequently portrayed in popular presses as 'the world's largest Islamic nation.' Typically, this statement is then immediately qualified. But, portrayals often continue, 'the' Islam practised by Indonesians is different than that practised in the countries of the Middle and Near East. It is more tempered or syncretic, less dogmatic, doctrinal, or fundamentalist. If proof of this more 'relaxed' attitude to the strict observance of Islam is offered, more often than not it is not through what Indonesian scholars of Islamic law have written (which tends to be rather conservative) nor by attendance figures at Friday mosque services or the number of women who are wearing *jilbab* head covers (both of which are escalating at remarkable rates). Rather, commentators characteristically turn to the continuing popularity of pre-Islamic cultural forms in contemporary Indonesia – Java's celebrated shadow puppet theatre or *wayang*, with its stories based on the characters and situations of the Indic epics of the Mahabharata and Ramayana, above all.

The fact that many of the people who live in Java (which contains nearly half of Indonesia's population) enjoy watching the adventures of Arjuna and Gathotkaca enacted as theatre is taken as incontrovertible evidence that Indonesians, as a people, are somehow 'less Islamic' than other member-peoples of the Islamic world community. This view is not limited to reporters, but pervades the discourse of anthropology. Ward Keeler, a renowned scholar of Javanese culture and language, has written that 'the message of Islam stands counter to the Hindu-based image of the cosmos inherent to the world of the *wayang*', while James Boon has argued that 'Islam diminishes the *wayang*ish properties of culture.'

Such views are stereotypes, of course. There is no monolithic 'message of Islam' nor are wayang and Islam really in a state of competition for the souls of 'the Javanese.' Going beyond these reified absolutes requires more nuanced understandings of the relation of wayang and Islam, and particularly how Islam is represented in wayang performances. For if wayang really is the encyclopedic crystallization of Javanese culture that anthropologists and philologists have long claimed, Islam merits at least an entry.

Historical research on Javanese literature demonstrates that before the late nineteenth century, wayang and Islam interacted in complex ways. *Suluk*, or Javanese mystical poems, appropriated images and symbols from the shadow puppet theatre to meditate upon notions of unity of God and Man, the workings of fate and free will, and knowing and doing. Encyclopedists and chroniclers redacted genealogies and tales co-articulating the formerly distinct histories of Javanese gods and culture heroes and Islamic prophets and holy men. Stories circulated concerning the exemplary uses of wayang by Sunan Kalijaga, one of the semi-legendary *waliullah* or 'Friends of God' credited with introducing Islam to Java in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. One particularly well-known tale describes how Sunan Kalijaga gave wayang performances for sponsors who paid by reciting the Islamic declaration of belief: 'There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger.'

So much does the Javanese manuscript tradition, as compiled in public collections in Leiden, Jakarta, and Yogyakarta, tell us. The question arises as to what continuity such practices have with contemporary Java, after the rise of Islamic mass organizations, the development of Middle Eastern-style Islamic modernism, and the massive growth of Islamic institutions of learning through the university level.

A partial answer to this query is found in a particular 'school' or 'regional sub-style' (*kaol*) of wayang, the so-called *kidulan* or 'southern' style epicentred in the town of Palimanan, some 15 kilometres west of the city of Cirebon, in north-coastal West Java. The greater Cirebon area is renowned throughout the Indonesian archipelago as a centre for Islamic learning, and particularly its mystical traditions. It is also famed for its characteristic art forms, particularly its distinctive batik cloth, reverse paintings on glass, and mask dance. Southern puppeteers, over four generations of an extended family, have inflected wayang in particularly Islamic ways, taking seriously their charge as descendants (biological as well as spiritual) of Sunan Kalijaga. Wayang is viewed as a *warisan sing para wali*, an 'inheritance from the Friends of God,' and the puppeteer as a *juru dakwah* or 'Islamic proselytizer.' In southern wayang, the familiar characters of wayang, including the Hindu gods and culture heroes, remain at centre stage. But they are animated by Islamic ideas and ideals.

A characteristic southern wayang play is Semar Munggah Haji, 'Semar Makes the Hajj,' which I saw performed by the young southern puppeteer Purjadi in 1994. Purjadi is a graduate of Cirebon's branch of the National Institute for Islamic Studies, and frequently draws upon his Islamic learning in performance. The play's title character is Semar, the elder brother of Divine Guru (Shiva to South Asians), the faithful clown-servant of Arjuna and the other Pandhawa brothers. A toll road, not unlike the Jakarta-Surabaya superhighway that passes through the Cirebon region, has been constructed through Semar's hamlet of Karangtumaritis and Semar has received 25 million rupiah as retribution for the appropriation of his property. Subsequently, Semar receives a divine vision: he must use this windfall profit to make the pilgrimage to the Arabian peninsula. He sends his youngest son, Cungkring, to see if Semar's brother, Divine Guru, will come to see him off. Guru refuses, for going on the hajj is for Muslims and he and his ancestors have always been Hindu-Buddhists. Semar's de facto conversion to Islam would be a black mark on Guru's genealogy. Battles erupt. After many complications, including the destruction of Semar's corporeal body, Semar is instructed in the various laws concerning the hajj by a Muslim *jinn* (genie) named Nalikaparman (with reference to Algensindo et al.'s *Fiqh Islam*, an oft-reprinted textbook on Islamic law that the puppeteer read in his student days at the Islamic Institute), goes on the hajj, and changes his name to Haji Asmaruddin.

Semar Munggah Haji, and the southern wayang school in general, cannot speak for the entire 'Javanese wayang tradition,' if such an entity exists. Nor is it clear whether such plays and institutions are prognostic of a new integration of wayang and Islam, a remnant of an old tradition, or both. They do serve to unsettle old assumptions and boundaries, however, and sensitize us to the remarkable range of local dynamics of Islam world-wide. ✦

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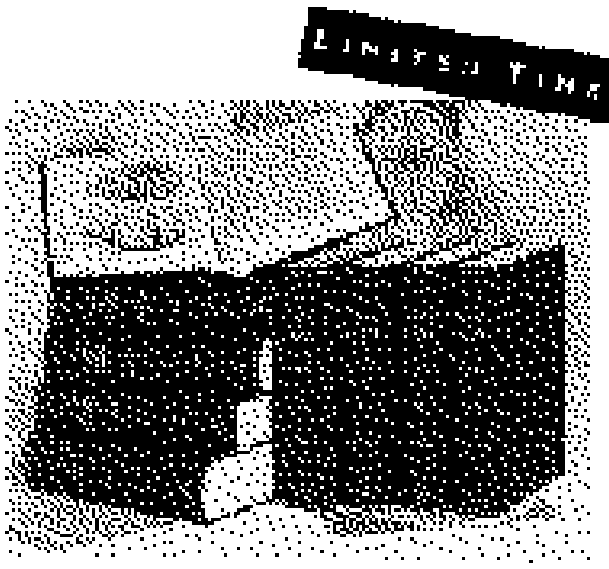

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In Search of the Muslim Consumer
Islamic Butchers in the Netherlands

In recent years, the number of Islamic butchers has been growing at an increasing rate. This brings a few problems with it. Not only are there Dutch regulations for butchers, Muslims also have their own requirements for the meat that they buy.

The overall number of butchers in the Netherlands has steadily declined in the last years. Whereas in 1990 there were still 5,300 registered with the professional association of butchers in Rijswijk, by the end of last year this number had dwindled to 4,500.Yet remarkably in recent years the proportion of Muslim butchers has risen sharply. At the end of last year, the butchers' association had 490 Islamic butchers registered with it – twice as many as four years ago. By the end of June this year, this number had already risen to 523. 'I'm sure that there are still a few hundred missing from our books,' says A.L. Moerman, the association's spokesman.

The vigour which Islamic butchers show in establishing themselves is matched by the worries that the association has about this 'subsector'. In Islamic circles, attempts are also being made to keep a sharp eye on the way Islamic butchers practise their trade. The association is concerned about whether the butchers work competently, observing hygiene and safety rules, as well as acting in an economically responsible manner.

Of paramount importance to the Muslim community is that it is ensured of the religious side of the business. The meat must be approved as 'halal'. But, random samples and surveys of everyday practice indicate that there is no effective check. This means that many Muslims, confident that they are eating halal food, are, in fact, eating food which is 'haram', forbidden by Allah. 'Quite often we receive signals that the rules are being taken with a grain of salt,' says Abdul Qayyoem, chairman of the Halal Food and Foodstuffs association (HVV), based in The Hague, which runs its own inspection service.

Even in the 1960s, the specific position of the Islamic butcher was already a bone of contention, which had raised its head after Dutch companies began the large-scale recruitment of guest-workers from countries such as Turkey and Morocco.

As early as 1967, a Moroccan butcher had already started a business in Utrecht. In the same year, another settled in Amsterdam. These first Islamic butchers had no official papers and worked in rooms which bore little resemblance to a butcher's shop. Until 1969, when he was able to rent a shop, the butcher in Utrecht worked in a garage. Ritual slaughtering took place without a permit. It was not until between 1975 and 1977 that a small number of butchers obtained a special permit. Chamber of Commerce figures show that these pioneers were mostly Moroccan, and that Utrecht was the most important retail centre. From their bases here, these fairly wealthy butchers established branches throughout the country. Most of these butchers had enough money to invest and almost all of them came from the cities of Tétouan and Nador in the north of Morocco.

These butchers did extraordinarily well. Among them were entrepreneurs with a turnover of ten to twenty thousand guilders per week. Their customers stood in long queues in front of the door. This is also not surprising since Muslims in the Netherlands are relatively big meat-eaters. Last year for example, according to estimates, the ethnic minorities accounted for ten percent of the total purchases of meat in the Netherlands.

In the first half of the 1970s, despite a constantly rising demand for ritually slaughtered meat, the number of butchers with a permit remained at 33. Those who wanted to begin faced a number of problems. In order to complete formalities such as legal requirements, it was necessary to obtain the advice of 'a pioneer' – in other words, a competitor. Besides this it was difficult to raise starting capital and contacts also had to be established with abattoirs and exporters of Moroccan foodstuffs in France and Belgium.

Turkish butchers lagged behind their Moroccan counterparts for a long time. In 1974 there were eight Turkish butchers in the four big cities compared with 22 Moroccan ones. Surinamese butchers appeared even later. For instance, although the first Moroccan butcher started in Utrecht in 1967, his first Turkish colleague did not follow suit until 1974 and the first Surinamese only came on the scene in 1980.

That the number of Islamic butchers has now risen to 523 or perhaps even higher, is ineluctabaly linked the fact that the number of Dutch Muslims now totals an estimated 800,000 to 1,000,000.

Nowadays, the Islamic butcher is required to have a professional diploma and be registered with the butchers' association, to which he must pay an annual contribution of more than a hundred guilders. 'Actually, it's quite simple,' says Moerman. 'Even though there is wide diversification – they often sell vegetables, dates, olives, herbs, tableware, bread, and household goods as well – if his business involves jointing meat, he must be a butcher and must satisfy the technical and hygienic requirements.'

'It can happen that someone sometimes registers himself and says that he completed his training in, say, Ankara. In a case like that, we ask him to 'hone a knife', as we call it – in other words, to sharpen it. This is a simple check because it is done in the same way all over the world. If he cannot do this, you can be pretty sure he is not telling the truth.'

'It is also extremely important that he works according to the HACCP code. This is a hygiene directive drawn up in Brussels for various sorts of businesses-like hotels and restaurants and the fish trade. HACCP stands for *Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points*. Since 1 January 1997, every butcher is required by law to work in accordance with this food-safety system.'

Moerman says that, in the case of a number of Islamic butchers, it is not only the hygiene aspect that is worrying, it is also the way they manage their business. 'They often do not do their sums properly and then operate with far too low a profit margin. Usually, a business like that doesn't last long. To some extent, the roots of this problem lie in the clientele; their customers are quick to find their way to the cheapest shop.'

'This is the reason why supermarkets have not yet seized upon that market segment en masse. Of course, a million Muslims represent a lucrative market but supermarkets are not interested in going to so much trouble for such a minimal profit margin.'

'These profit margins are often crippling for the Islamic butchers as well, and they soon lead to bankruptcy. The situation also creates friction between the butchers. While one of them has his professional diploma and works according to the HACCP code, he has to compete with neighbouring 'colleagues' whose businesses are absolutely not above board. That is not good at all.'

Abdul Qayyoem has concerns of a different nature. He is Surinamese by birth, originally a chemist, and is now chairman of the HVV Association as well as chairman of the Dutch Muslim Information Centre.

'In 1972, we started talking about a federation of Muslims that could represent a point of reference to which the government could turn. At the time, there were about fifty organizations active on behalf of the group then known as guest-workers. This federation – the Dutch Federation of Muslim Organizations – was founded in 1975. At the time, we had regular discussions with the Permanent Parliamentary Commission for Culture, Recreation, and Social Welfare about the problem of Islamic butchers, and other related matters.'

'In 1980, ethnicity began to raise its head once more and the whole thing fell apart. We then carried on with the Dutch Muslim Information Centre in order to maintain the dialogue regarding education, training, integration, Islamic festivals, and activities. By 1987, there seemed to be a tangible demand for a sort of 'halal certification', by which we mean that food and foodstuffs are certified pure, in accordance with the requirements of the Koran.'

'Of course there was nothing we could do – we are not a police organization. But finally, in 1994, the HVV association was set up and this has an autonomous inspection department. The association also has a 'fatwa council' consisting of five *muftis*.' 'The muftis also instruct the inspection department, which consists of ten men, about all sorts of questions regarding slaughtering and foodstuff problems for Muslims. Actually, ten inspectors is far too few. We should have a hundred, but let me hasten to add that I would also be very satisfied with thirty.'

The inspectors supervise ritual slaughtering, and inspect the way the meat is processed but also, for example, supervise the composition of baby-food sold in shops. 'For instance, recently it turned out that low-fat vegetable margarines contain gelatines derived from offal that serve as a binding agent. They also occur in desserts, ice cream, sweets, and medicines for example. This is absolutely forbidden to Muslims. So the inspectors do not restrict themselves to inspecting meat. We would also like to have our own laboratory where we could investigate the ingredients present in all sorts of foodstuffs.'

The association's inspectors have no formal authority. 'It is a sort of gentlemen's agreement that they can visit a butcher's shop with a view to certifying it. Their findings are announced in the mosque. That can be a source of annoyance for certain butchers. All the same, we do not go into the matter with them,' says Qayyoem.

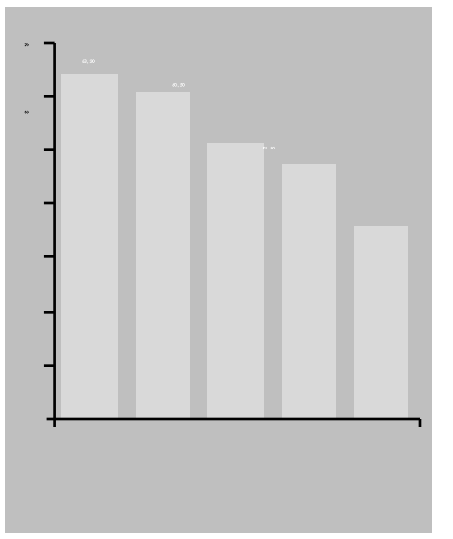
Moerman points out that meat is also sold in mosques – a trade which takes place completely hidden from sight of the Inspection Department – but, according to Qayyoem, this trade is extremely limited.

If Islamic butchers knowingly sell meat that is not 'halal', they are committing a grave sin, says Qayyoem. 'Every Muslim knows this. But we do not have the authority to force someone to close his shop.' 'The eating of pork is absolutely forbidden,' says Qayyoem. 'But then nor is beef allowed just like that. That would be putting it too simply. There are also requirements set for the slaughtering of beef cattle. The slaughtering must be accompanied by the prayers of a 'true Muslim' who doesn't necessarily have to be an imam. The slaughter should also be supervised by people who have been approved by the HVV Association.'

A butcher who sells meat according to the requirements does not necessarily have a 'halal' shop, says Qayyoem. 'You sometimes see – mostly with Turkish butchers – that they also sell alcoholic drinks such as beer. According to Islamic law this is a grave sin. In fact, you could also say that a butcher like that is not a true Muslim.' ✦

Turks Buy the Most Meat

Purchases of meat in kilos per person household (incl. cooked meats)



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Bram Pols is a journalist for the daily NRCHandelsblad.

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Research Approaches

GILLES KEPEL

The Political Sociology of Islamism

By the year 2000, Islamism will be approximately a quarter of a century old. This movement, though it claimed deep roots, surfaced and flourished with the major social breakdown which took place in the mid 1970s in the Muslim world. Twenty-five years later, social sciences – provided they take stock – have the opportunity to make a significant breakthrough in the analyses of what was one of the most puzzling – if unexpected – social phenomena of the contemporary period.

A quarter of a century covers the span of a generation. Activists who were in their twenties in the mid 1970s, on Egyptian, Pakistani or Indonesian campuses, are now middle-aged. Their black beards are turning barley and corn. They chanted slogans and forwarded the utopia of the *daoula islamiyya*, the Islamist state. As for now, for better or worse, they have a record. They are established, part of the political game. Some are in power – where they distribute patronage –, others are in jail, some dead, others in exile in the impious lands of the West – to which they have an intimate exposure –, and many are in business. In some cases, their world-view has changed. And they have children. The new generation which is coming of adult age in the 1990s has no memories of the fights of the late seventies and early eighties – the Iranian revolution, Sadat's assassination, etc. – just like the activists of the seventies were foreign to their own parents' stories: the struggle against colonialism, the battles for independence, and everything that had taken place from the middle forties to the early sixties. The young Islamists of yesterday had built their vision and mobilized their followers to a large extent as a reaction to the status quo of their time – which they described in categories of thought and speech which were grounded in Islamic parlance but adapted to the social, political, cultural and economic conditions of those days. To what extent are they still relevant for the young adults of the year 2000? The 1997 presidential election in Iran gave advance notice that a majority of the children of the Islamic republic were willing to oust the incumbents. In Turkey, Refah Partisi's short-lived venture in government showed that Mr Erbakan and his friends could not engineer enough social pressure to remain in power. Egyptian and Algerian Islamist movements, in spite of their wide following, were unable to topple the State, and could not help their splitting up into competing splinter groups: the violence and terrorism of the extremist factions blurred the accomodationist message of the mainstream organizations.

These and a few other examples should help us understand that Islamism is not the tidal wave that its supporters longed for and its opponents dreaded. It is by no means the End of History of the Muslim world today. It is but a social movement like any other – communism, nationalism, liberalism, fascism, socialism, … – which is subject to ebbing and flowing, to internal contradictions, and it has to compete fiercely with other social movements in order to attract and mobilize followers. Twenty-five years ago it was a new issue: today, it is no longer so, and we have to consider post-Islamism.

A quarter of a century of existence provides a lot of data, and allows for comparative analysis – something which was hardly feasible for those of us who engaged in early studies of the phenomenon by 1980. Then, the task of the social scientist who tackled such a topic was to be an eye-opener, to uncover the significance of Islamist movements – in contradistinction to the *prénotions* or the common wisdom of the social sciences discourse of the times, that discarded them as insignificant, epiphenomenal, reactionary, fascist, and the like. During this pioneering stage, each of us was discovering his own field, and we had very little access to comparison, because social science literature was scant. As a new phenomenon, it did not bring with it much historical depth: it could be put into perspective with earlier movements – such as the Egyptian Muslim Brothers for instance – but the social environments of British-controlled and independent Egypt were worlds apart. It could be related to intellectual history – such as the *œuvre* of Sayyid Qotb – but ideology was by no means a surrogate for political sociology. For the few who took the movement seriously at its onset, it was fascinating – all the more so because it provided for an 'indigenous' conceptual language that seemed to reveal the malfunctions of society, that had a tribune tone. But we were not equipped at the time to analyse the movement in terms of political sociology, to evaluate its relation, as an object, to the field to which it belonged. Hence, we focused on what was at hand and expedient – on discourse and militancy.

Since then, the environment of the research on Islamism has undergone a sea change. Scarcity was replaced by hypertrophy. Many valuable studies (and many less valuable) were published, and their first and foremost asset was to provide grounds for comparison. It is outside the scope of one individual, even of a team of scholars, to cover an array of movements that function in so many different societies and use so many different idioms. Fieldwork research is now available on Islamism in China; Southeast, South and Central Asia; Iran; Turkey; Africa; the Arab world; Europe; and America. To take but one example, students of the Arab world, who rarely know Urdu, had to rely on hearsay when it came to Mawdudi and the *jamaat-e Islami*: now that we have S.V. Nasr's superb scholarship, not only can our knowledge *per se* of that ideologue and his organization make a leap forward, but it also brings invaluable food for thought when one embarks on a study of FIS or *Refah*. Hence, the challenge of the social sciences has changed: though there always will be a lot more to discover, much has been done in terms of description and inventory of Islamist movements as an object of research. What remains in front of us is the study of the interaction between such an object and the social field in which it functions. In other words, the political sociology of Islamism is now the continent to be explored.

One of the difficulties of this task is due to the extremely politicized aspect of the majority of the literature which is produced on Islamism, and the strong normative pressure which is exerted on scholars to take sides – something that blurs the very process of research. To some extent, the present situation is comparable to studies of communism in the post World War II period, when specialized scholars were caught between the hammer of the fellow traveller and the anvil of the social traitor. Nowadays, one is torn between apologists and enemies. Both groups are backed by powerful, well-funded interest groups and foundations, control research centres, university chairs, journals, and the like, particularly in the United States. When one does not want to enrol in either camp, financial resources become scarce. Both apologists and enemies share one basic assumption: Islamist movements as they view them are representative of Muslim societies today. Either they are altogether 'bad guys', hostile to the West, and should be contained; Or they are mainly 'good guys' – except for a few 'extremists' – with no hostility to market forces, and they should be co-opted into power. An increasing amount of the social sciences literature on Islamism is now being produced in order to reinforce either of these two normative views.

The risk here is to jump to conclusions and to miss the object of research – to confuse the representation of Islamist movements with their reality. All the more so as the movements themselves contribute to this process of representation as they produce a lot of discourse, which is self-promoting. Some is aimed at the West, some at local bases of support. Some is replete with *salam*, some with *jihad*. Twenty years ago, when nothing was available but discourse and militancy, we had to take discourse very seriously. Nowadays, with a quarter of a century of social history of Islamism, we should start with facts, and consider discourse as part and parcel of the political process, not as a key to its understanding.

One very simple starting point, for those convinced that it is now time to take stock, would be to look back at the divergent fates of Islamist movements in the many countries where they have emerged – and for which there is serious monographic research available. How is it that they have been successful in some cases, managed to seize power, have failed in others, were unable to resist state repression and/or to mobilize wide enough a constituency? Comparative data now allow researchers to find new evidence on the social cluster that composes Islamist movements: everywhere, they brought together different social groups with diverging agendas, which could remain united under certain circumstances, but whose alliance could break under other circumstances. If one compares the movements of Iran and Algeria, for instance, one of the keys to understanding why they succeeded in seizing power in one case and failed in the other lies in the interaction between the pious middle-classes, the young urban poor and the Islamist intelligentsia in each society. In Iran, Khomeini managed to control the whole mobilization process and keep all groups united until the outcome of the revolution. In Algeria, the FIS was able to mobilize side by side the *hittistes* and the goldsmiths during the early phases, from 1989 to 1991, but it was incapable (lately) to prevent the splitting of the ranks between the pious middle-classes and the young disenfranchised – something which hampered its capacity to seize power, and then to resist repression. Such phenomena should lead us to be more aware of the social composition of the Islamist parties, and of the relevance of social factors to their capacity for mobilization – whether it be in the case of Refah Partisi, of Jama'at-e Islami and the other Pakistani religious parties, of the Arab Muslim Brothers organizations and their rivals within the political Islamic field, of ICMI and the Muhammadiyya in Indonesia, etc. To what segments in contemporary Muslim societies do those movements eventually deliver, and what do they actually deliver – particularly when they have partial or hegemonic access to power? And, conversely, which are the social groups that feel deprived, or ill-treated by them?

A quarter of a century should have been long enough for social scientists to dispel their fascination for the mystique of contemporary Islamism: it is now high time for scholars to treat it like any other social object – something which may well, in turn, shed more light on our understanding of the social use of religion on the eve of the twenty-first century. ✦

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Research Approaches

ANNELIES MOORS

Debating Women and Islamic Family Law **Disciplinary Shifts, Different Perspectives**[1]

Up until the early 1970s the academic study of Islamic family law was largely the privileged terrain of those involved in Oriental studies. In their work, they mainly focused on the texts of the leaders of the major schools of Islamic law, on the one hand; and the newly codified and reformed twentieth-century laws, on the other. Considering family relations as the outcome of the provisions of Islamic law, they tended to define the classical Islamic family as monolithic, static and rigidly patriarchal, and saw the promulgation of the twentieth-century legal reforms as signaling the eclipse of this type of family.[2]

During the last twenty years, such an approach to women and Islamic law has become subject to serious criticism, and the grounds of debate have fundamentally changed. With an increasing number of historians and anthropologists involved in research on Islamic family law, new perspectives have been brought to the fore, and firmly held assumptions have come in for scrutiny. Rather than assuming that law texts determine social relations, these scholars question the ways in which such texts relate to other genres of legal discourse and to various forms of social practice. In order to do so they make use of a greater variety of sources and methodologies, including a wide range of court documents and oral narratives.

This disciplinary shift intersects with the entry of a rapidly growing number of women into the field of Islamic family law, many of them either from the region itself or having close ties of family or residence, also coinciding with the increasing importance of women's and gender studies. This has led to more theoretically informed work on gender relations. Rather than taking the meaning of gender for granted, the focus is on the ways in which gender is constructed in particular local contexts. More nuanced and finely-tuned notions are employed to deal with gender relations rather than patriarchy or male oppression and female subordination. Women's agency is taken into account and women are recognized as knowledgeable actors who make strategic use of the means and resources available, however limited at times these may be. With differences amongst women foregrounded, they are no longer seen as a homogeneous category, and the complex relations between gender and other axes of distinction, such as class, are elaborated on. Recent work, then, has focused on such topics as the construction of gender in various genres of Muslim legal discourse, the ways in which women's voices are represented in court cases and other court documents, and how oral narratives draw attention to the ways in which women from different backgrounds deal with the courts, devise strategies and express their points of view about marriage, divorce, and inheritance.[3] What insights have such shifts in perspective brought about?

Women's Agency and Classical Islamic Law

To start with, whereas many Orientalists and Muslim scholars underline the similarities between the various classical schools of law, a comparison of legal provisions 'from a woman's point of view' brings out substantial differences. For instance, according to Hanafi law women of legal marriageable age were able to arrange for their own marriages; according to Maliki law they had the possibility to ask for a divorce under specific circumstances, and according to Hanbali law women were able to include certain conditions in the marriage contract. If this already indicates some of women's options in classical law, all schools of law grant women the rights to deal with their property in whatever way they wished.

Recent studies, employing *fatwas* and court cases in order to discuss how gender is constructed in specific legal discourses and practices, have further undermined the notion of a monolithic, static and patriarchal Islamic family. Authors have pointed to the ways in which *muftis* and *qadis* enforced women's rights and, at times, attempted to modify provisions which would affect them negatively. Those working with court documents used for property registrations, such as *waqfiyyat*, sales registrations and so on, have provided ample evidence that women were, indeed, property owners. Summaries of court cases have been used to prove that women did not hesitate to make use of the court system in order to claim their rights. Those working with contractual provisions, such as the dower, have elaborated on its flexibility and the great variety of arrangements made.

Still, the use of such written sources poses problems. The relation between the information that written sources provide, and actual social practice always needs to be questioned. Authors working with women's narratives (oral history, life stories, interviews, informal talks) have drawn attention to the, at times, substantial contrasts between the amounts registered as dower and what women receive in practice. With respect to court action, they have pointed out that women may turn to the court to ask one thing (for instance maintenance or the balance of the dower) in order to get something else (such as a divorce on their own conditions). In fact, women's turning to the court in itself may have divergent meanings. Whereas it indicates their ability to act as a legal person, it may also point to the lack of any other viable options available to them. In a similar vein, women's access to property does not necessarily imply gendered power; women may claim their share of inheritance because they find themselves in a highly problematic situation (being without the support of brothers, or being pressured to do so by their husbands, for instance), rather than as the expression of a position of strength. A major challenge is then to understand how specific genres of legal writing interact with social relations.

The Complex Meanings of Family Law Reform

The notion that twentieth-century legal reforms greatly improved the options of women needs modification. Classical family law was considerably more flexible and varied than often assumed, and in respect to certain issues such as paternity claims legal reforms did away with some of the leeway classical law had provided to women. As such it actually worked against women's interests. Also, when comparing classical Islamic law with twentieth-century reforms, there is more at stake than the issue of the substance of the law. As family law reform also entailed its codification, a greater emphasis on written and official documents, and a much greater control of the State over the court, it may well be argued that reforms have increased its rigidity. In setting clear standards for all, it has been pointed out, codification guarantees the equal treatment of all citizens. There is, however, a contradiction between such proclaimed equality of men and women as citizens, and the gender differences which are inscribed in Islamic family law. If the classical Islamic system was strongly gendered, the codification of Islamic family law has further grounded such gender differences.

Analyses of legal reforms have pointed to the need to place such reforms within the context of processes of state-formation and nation-building, which are far from gender neutral. Twentieth-century Islamic family law has become a powerful political symbol: in Turkey, Pahlavi Iran and Tunisia, the codification and reform of Islamic family law was a strong sign of the State's commitment to modernity; whereas in Iran after the Islamic revolution, the reforms instigated by the Pahlavi regime were immediately abrogated in order to express the State's commitment towards the Islamization of society. Codification has also been employed to unify the nation-state, and legal reforms often entailed attempts at creating a new type of family, undermining kinship loyalties and placing a stronger emphasis on conjugal relations. If, at times, legal reform may limit the control of both kin and husbands over women, it may simultaneously imply greater state control over their lives.

Women have approached family law issues from divergent perspectives. Some have argued for replacing Islamic family law with a secular system. Others have worked for the implementation of Islamic family law reform which would extend women's options and support their interests, whether from a modernist, or from an Islamist point of view. At the same time, women have also made the most of options available to them within existing systems of Islamic family law, for instance through including stipulations in the marriage contract, or by registering particular forms of dower, at times refraining from claiming their legal rights in order to gain other benefits. In order to gain insight into the impact of legal issues on gender relations, we need analyses which pay attention to different genres of legal texts and juridical practices, as well as to women's actions, narratives and strategies. ✦

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Notes

1. This contribution is a brief summary of my article 'Debating Women in Islamic Family Law: Legal Texts and Social Practices', forthcoming in Judith Tucker and Margaret Meriwether (eds), *The Social History of Women and Gender in the Middle East.*
2. See for instance J. Anderson (1968), 'The Eclipse of the Patriarchal Family in Contemporary Islamic Law', in J. Anderson (ed.), *Family Law in Asia and Africa*. London: Allen and Unwin. Pp. 221-34.
3. See, for instance, Shahla Haeri (1989), *Law of Desire. Temporary Marriage in Iran*. London: IB Taurus; Ziba Mir-Hosseini (1993), *Marriage on Trial. A Study of Islamic Family Law: Iran and Morocco Compared*. London and New York: IB Taurus; Annelies Moors (1995), *Women and Property in Islam. Palestinian Experiences 1920-1990.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Judith Tucker (1998), *In the house of the Law: Gender and Islamic Law in Syria and Palestine, 17th-18th Centuries*. Berkeley: California University Press; Margaret Meriwether, *The Kin Who Count. Family and Society in Ottoman Aleppo, 1770-1840,* forthcoming; Lynn Welchman, *The Islamic Law of Marriage and Divorce in the Occupied West Bank*. forthcoming.

Research Approaches

JAMAL MALIK

Making Sense of **Islamic Fundamentalism**

There is no doubt that what is called Islamic fundamentalism is one among many facets of the Islamic world which in itself represents a public phenomenon with many divergences. Just like colonialism and folk religion, this religious fundamentalism does not represent a monolithic system of cultural expression. Rather it is an outcome of colonial encroachment, as well as a negation or rejection of both folk-religious tradition and colonialism. This recent Muslim self-concept goes back to the evolution of an Islamic ideology that was only developed in the 1930s and arose out of the need to distance and distinguish its adherents from the politically dominant colonial sector as well as from the handed-down Muslim tradition. This new Muslim identity expresses the relationship of tension between what may be called colonial and indigenous life worlds. It is part of the multi-layered social relationships within modern Muslim society. I will try to explain the genesis and dynamics of this fundamentalist identity.

The incremental social complexity is, among other things connected to the establishment of the colonial sector that emerged parallel to the traditional sector in the 19th century: Colonial and indigenous sectors are, ideally speaking, socially coherent, being informed by what can be called an 'internal arrangement'. However, in between these two extreme – coherent – poles, areas of transition have emerged: People caught between the boundaries of the different milieus and social groups on the borders between traditional and colonial societies. It is important to note that these groups comprise far less definite, closed, social strata than segments of different strata or classes that overlap. They are chiefly to be found in the lowest to middle levels of the colonial hierarchy as well as in the intelligentsia. They oscillate between fixed positions and are ambivalent in their constitution – hybrids so to speak. While they work for the colonial or postcolonial economy, their area of reproduction is to be found in the traditional realm. In other words, social forces exist here, which are based on structural differences that manifest themselves, for example, in traditional and modern economic and social sectors and thus constitute completely different levels of identity that are not socially coherent. Rapid social change puts into question what has so far been obvious, leading to intense problems of identification and to reorientation. Having broken away from social ties, these identities are increasingly dependent on a network of social relations: It appears that the ordinary citizen, who is firmly bound by organization, profession and relations, is as little dependent on networks as members of simple societies. If one follows the postcolonial discourse, the hybrid view of the traveller-between-two-worlds, in-between two border conditions, basically allows a perspective on historical and contemporary reality and a re-definition of the world, not so much from the viewpoint of some authority outside but as the result of an inner consciousness. A double vision arises which lays the ground for a creative indigenous discourse that can enable a new construction of identity, towards one that asserts: 'I want to be different.' This desire for difference leads to a transformation of identity, a rebirth. The conflict which arises between a modern technological work context, such as the assembly line, and a traditional life-style, like the *biradari* system, can be negotiated in at least three different ways:

1. Integrationism, i.e., adapting or modernizing one's tradition which continues to be articulated in Islamic symbols and terms;
2. Isolationism, i.e., enriching or even replacing the world of modern production with tradition; or
3. the creation of a substitute culture – which provides at least a temporary refuge from the sharp contrast between modern and traditional, such as urban crime, consumption of narcotics, or the world of cinema. The veneration cult may also be considered here.

Each of these possible negotiations depends on the respective social position of the individual and the social prestige he relates it with. In short, the higher a person stands in the colonial and postcolonial hierarchy, the greater is the tendency towards modernization in which Islam serves as a frame of reference. Also, the higher the degree of social disintegration and the fewer the chances of upward social mobility, the greater is the inclination towards traditionalization and, in the medium term, even willingness for radicalism, hence isolationism.

The integrationist way is followed by leading Islamists like Abul Ala Maududi and other functionaries of Islamist organizations. They largely originate from this field of tension between identity and alienation, traditional and modern sectors. They are generally representative of middle range professionals bound up in the postcolonial system, and relatively highly placed in society. They live largely in a traditional world, but due to their integration into the dominant postcolonial system, they adopt and adapt main terms and ideas central to this system and recognize them as part of their own biography. Islamic terms such as *dastur* and *shura* are extricated from their religious context and given such new ideological values such as parliament and constitution, without, however, renouncing their Islamic identity. Party system and nation-state, for instance, are interpreted as having always been Islamic. With this normative replacement, these Islamic classicists can transcend traditional boundaries, legitimize modern developments within the Islamic semiotics and stabilize their own societal position. In this process of ideologization of Islam and re-invention of tradition, code or identity switching is most important. This switching, that is the reciprocal translation of symbols and terms, provides the ability of action on different societal levels. To the outsider – for example, to the colonial public – the Islamist argues ideologically, limiting the use of Islamic symbols to the indispensable. To the insider – that is the traditional society – he/she pursues the theological argument. The Islamic cult is reinforced. The theological discussion, however, is of debatable theological value. It is this network behaviour that is responsible for the particular dynamics of political Islam. Islamists usually promise a righteous society here and now through catharsis: a transformation from corruption to purity, from Jahiliya (pre-Muhammadan times, conditions of ignorance) to Islam. This Jahiliya was, according to Islamists, a result of the modernization policies of the State. The deviation from the right path and the neglecting of religious duties have resulted in the loss of religious and cultural identity. Hence, the Islamist concept of history is informed by the notion of constant decay. They call for the reconstruction of an idealized pure and pre-colonial cultural context – imitatio muhammadi. This radical re-invention of tradition seems to be grounded in a heritage under which the handed-down canon was blurred and lost, as in the obliteration and appropriation process of colonial power in the 18th and 19th centuries. Therefore, the only way to legitimate the necessary rebirth and revival is to go back beyond this obliterated tradition. Consequently, a new normative and formative past is created. These Islamists can thus distinguish themselves from other Muslims and from secular politicians. They are the avant gardes or the hegemonic identity which considers itself authorized to establish renewal – *tajdid*.

Aspects of their critique are systematized in the context of a history of salvation and formulated as an integristic programme that, however, has a clear integrationist character. In contrast to their slogan, *islamiser la modernité*, their own Islamic tradition is modernized, since the imagined Islamic society is to compete and correspond with Western achievements. This would only be possible in a centralized Islamic state over which they would wield control as the agents of God's sovereignty on earth, as with the Hizb Ullah (Party of God) or the Jama'at-e Islami (Islamic Society). The Qu'ran and Sunna would be the ideal basis for a universal, legally ethical monism. Up to this point of Islamist discourse, ideas such as pluralism, democracy and human rights have little value in an imagined Islamic territory, since the main concern is to establish a unique Islamic identity. On the other hand, these kinds of pan-Islamic ideas are always postulated within the boundaries of a nation state, with political Islam providing the imagination of the realization and reconstruction of a society within a nation-state. As is evident, fundamentalism preaches a traditionalism of solidarity, which is primarily oriented to life in the world and has certain ideas of reform. In closer view however, its postulates reveal mere prophecies, advice, threats and general desiderata with a little consistent programme. It fails to solve factual problems, offering mostly regressive attempts at solutions precisely because its orientation is mythical, hence restorative, and hardly utopian, that is social revolutionary. However, since the 1980s one can witness a clear change in the Islamist discourse. This is particularly true in postmodern times, when political Islam has failed, because Islamist promises were not realized. Analogous to this failure, new alternatives have emerged, reflecting the interaction of different social realities and cultural identities in a pluralizing society in which Islamists have also started increasingly using ideas of mythical re-establishments to mark out their social and political territories and to enlarge them, albeit within the existing nation-state. In this phase of post-Islamism their own position is constantly re-negotiated vis-à-vis the government, external patrons, other Islamist groups, and the masses or the target audiences. This involves competition and contest over interpretation of symbols and control of institutions, because symbols are an integral part of Muslim politics. They express the values and are constitutive of a political community. Hence, there is a constant struggle concerning people's imagination and, following that, about the objective chances and resources in a free market. Therefore, Islamic – even fundamentalist – principles must constantly be reinterpreted. The result is a flexibility of ideas and divergence over time and space. It is in the gap between divine plan – *sharia* – and human understanding – politics – that the perennially fertile space of critique can be found. This can intensify competition and conflicts. The alternative to fundamentalism is that multiple centres of power and contenders for authority come to certain accommodations. The recent rather peaceful change of the weekly holiday from Friday to Sunday in Pakistan can indeed be an indication of negotiation to the relative satisfaction of all. It is these different discourses that reflect the complicity of the Islamic public. This is particularly true in the field of the supposed latent and open tensions between Muslim scholars, sufis and intellectuals. There seems to be enough societal and economic overlappings and cross-connections or personal unions between, for example, Jama'at-e Islami and Barelwis so that both come to terms with one another, and given boundaries and norms are shifted, displaced, and extended. Thus, making sense of religious fundamentalism can be possible only if these complex and dynamic perspectives are contextualized. I contend that studies on Modern Islam therefore should be read in the light of articulations of particular social and cultural realities negotiating over boundaries between spheres of social activity and institutions. For, to approach Islamic culture normatively does not contribute to its understanding. Islamicity is merely the lingual and symbolic expression of this negotiation. Fundamentalism is one of the articulations through which Modern Islam is to be understood. ✦

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Research Approaches

JAN JAAP DE RUITER

Language and Religion
Moroccan and Turkish Communities in Europe

In the 1960s labour migration from Morocco and Turkey to Western Europe started to take place. This labour migration was incited by the shortage of manpower in the European market. Initially these labourers had a short-term goal in mind, to earn money and return to their countries of origin. This option of return soon changed into a myth. Spouses and children joined the working men and soon their children were born in Europe.

At present the Moroccan and Turkish communities in Europe count 1.2 million Moroccans and 2.5 million Turkish people. The largest Moroccan communities are found in France (more than 500,000), the Netherlands (around 160,000), and Belgium (around 150,000). Spain is a recent immigration land for Moroccans (80,000 persons). The Turkish community in Germany is the largest (nearly 2 million), followed by the Netherlands (around 200,000) and France (also around 200,000). All figures are based on the nationality criterion. In terms of generations one can distinguish the first generation, which consists of the labourers that came in the sixties and their wives; and the second generation, the children of the first generation born either in the homelands or in Europe. At present a third generation is being formed of which the members are nearly all born in Europe. Migration has not stopped yet. Uniting of families still takes place and through marriage new migrants from Turkey and Morocco come to Europe. These last groups form as it were new groups of 'first'-generation migrants.

The Linguistic Heritage

The Moroccans that came to Europe took with them the linguistic heritage of their homeland. Morocco is not, as is the general rule in nearly all states, a monolingual society. Its official language is Arabic in its formal form (Modern Standard Arabic or Literary Arabic, which is a modern variant of Classical Arabic). Arabic in its dialectal forms is spoken by nearly all Moroccans but is the mother tongue of only about 45% to 50% of the population. For the rest, the mother tongue is one of the three Berber languages spoken in Morocco. Berber and Arabic are, linguistically speaking, quite distant from each other. Berber in general is not understood by arabophone Moroccans. The Moroccan Arabic dialect serves as the general language of communication in daily life in Morocco. Finally French, and to a smaller extent Spanish, still plays a role in Morocco. The rate of illiteracy in Morocco is quite high with percentages of 41.7% for males and 67.5% for females.

The majority of the Moroccans that came to Europe in the sixties were illiterate or semi-literate. They came from the north of Morocco, the Rif area, where the berber language Tarifit is spoken. In Belgium and the Netherlands the majority of Moroccans is berberophone while in France this percentage is around 50%. In Europe the berberophones form, in general, the majority of the Moroccan community as opposed to the situation in Morocco. The Turks that came to Europe were generally better educated than the Moroccans. A minority of them is kurdophone.

A New Language Situation

Members of the Moroccan communities took with them their specific linguistic characteristics but were confronted with societies that were, linguistically speaking, totally different. For the first generation, there seemed to be no urgent need to adopt the new languages as they were in Europe only on a 'temporary' basis. This is why many of these migrants hardly acquired German, French or Dutch. But when children came and new children were born the situation changed drastically. These children were and are much more open-minded to the new societies. They had to enter into the educational system and thus were exposed to the new languages. In general this intergenerational language shift follows the following model (cf. Jaspaert & Kroon, 1993):

- G1 minority language dominates majority language;
- G2 minority language and majority language are in balance;
- G3 majority language dominates minority language;
- G4 majority language replaces minority language.

This implies that in due time the minority languages will disappear. Of course this is a model and as such cannot be considered as the standard path that is followed. Research on this situation in the Netherlands has already shown that the process is more rapid for the Moroccan community than for the Turkish community (De Ruiter, 1995, 1997). This seems to be caused by the fact that Moroccans are linguistically more diversified and thus the impact of the Dutch language is far greater than for the Turkish and Kurdish-speaking communities.

At present one can state that the first generation Moroccans still predominantly use Moroccan Arabic and/or Berber as the vehicle of oral communication. If literate, Arabic to a small extent is used as the language of reading and writing. The second generation is still quite capable of oral receptivity of Moroccan Arabic and/or Berber, but certainly more so for Dutch. This generation hardly uses Modern Standard Arabic as its language of reading and writing. Instead, Dutch is used. The third generation will be much more proficient in Dutch in all respects. For the Turkish community these processes are not so far advanced as for the Moroccans. Especially the first, but to a large extent the second, generation still in majority masters Turkish and/or Kurdish. The second generation as a whole seems to be relatively bilingual in Turkish or Kurdish and Dutch. But the process of Dutch becoming increasingly predominant will continue in the third generation.

Home Language Preservation

If the processes as described above continue to take place the end result will be that the Moroccans and Turks in Western Europe use German, French or Dutch exclusively. Of course this will be a matter of long duration because migration still takes place. For integration into the host societies, mastering the languages of these is a great advantage. But should this also imply the 'loss' of the original linguistic background? Most European countries installed a form of *Home Language Instruction* (HLI). Home Language Instruction is a form of education in which the language of the home countries of -in this case- Moroccan and Turkish children at the elementary school level is taught. Nearly all Western European countries offer some form of this type of education (cf. Obdeijn & De Ruiter (1998) for the state of the art of the Moroccan HLI in Europe). The original aim of this HLI, in the seventies and early eighties, was to preserve the home language and culture of these children, for eventually they would return to their lands of origin. In order for them to properly function there, they should maintain a minimum proficiency in these languages as well as maintaining knowledge of the cultures. Later on the goals changed into 'preservation of the original language and culture while integrating into the new receiving society'. It was considered essential that these children would not forget where they came from yet at the same time would integrate in the European societies. HLI hardly obtained a strong position in the curricula of elementary education in the various countries and its teachers often feel marginalized. Also in most countries it is taught only 1 to 3 hours per week which does not yield satisfactory results in terms of knowledge of the original culture and proficiency in either Modern Standard Arabic or Turkish.

Language and Religion

Generally all Moroccans that come to Europe are Muslims. Islam and the Arabic language are strongly linked. Does not the Koran say: *innanâ anzalnâhu qur'ânan ᶜarabiyyan* (sura Yusuf, 2)? This distinct relation can be seen in the Moroccan communities in Europe. It is striking to see that especially the parents (most of them still from the first generation) want their children to follow HLI because Arabic is the language of the religion of Islam. Their children, though, show more practical motivations. They want to learn Arabic because it is handy when they correspond with family in Morocco or go on holiday there. A more essential problem lies in the educational systems of the divers European countries. The teaching of religion is not self-evident especially for instance, in France, where it is not allowed within the national educational system. In the Netherlands and Germany, although not forbidden, the teaching of religion is marginalized. Furthermore, there is no clear definition of what the – religious – contents are to be. Actually, HLI does not seem to contain much religious instruction. The little research done on HLI shows that the contents of these courses consist in the teaching of languages for at least more than half of the time. Of course cultural and religious themes are tackled as well but only to a limited extent. It is important to consider that the Muslim community is not undivided: It is characterized by a large variation. One finds all political and religious main- and substreams in it. Within this context it is interesting to see that in the Netherlands a number of Islamic elementary schools (including one secondary school) have been recently established. The Dutch Educational Law provides the opportunity to establish schools on a denominational basis. We observe then that -in majority- it is either Moroccan or Turkish religious organizations that found these schools. Thus ethnicity seems to play a role within the Muslim community. Not much research has been done on these schools but it seems that Islam is given more expression in them.

A more recent development consists in Arabic and Islamic lessons given in the mosques of Western European countries. This could be due to the fact that the number of hours of HLI is limited and its effects are not optimal. Furthermore, HLI does not contain explicit religious education. Research on 'regular' HLI nearly always includes questions to children on the measure in which they follow 'extracurricular' HLI or mosque education. Most studies point to percentages varying from around 15% to around 45%. The number of hours that these children follow Arabic or Islamic lessons outside school varies from 1 to 10. Unfortunately, hardly any research is conducted on this kind of education. The world of the mosques in Europe is not an easy one to approach. Nevertheless, some studies do show that the mosque education does not significantly contribute to proficiency in Arabic. This seems to be caused by the conservative methods applied. Reciting the Koran by heart does not imply that one is fluent in Arabic.

It is not only the mosques that offer lessons in Arabic: secular autonomous organizations do so as well. These courses comply much more with modern teaching methods. In this context it is interesting to see that for example the Spanish authorities have recognized ATIME (*Asociación de trabajadores inmigrantes marroquíes en España*) as an official means for offering HLI to Moroccan children residing in Spain (Obdeijn & De Ruiter, 1998). Also in France secular organizations are active. The establishment of many Berber associations which strive for the promotion of Berber language and culture, possibly even within the context of HLI, is noteworthy.

The Research Group of Language and Minorities

The Research Group of Language and Minorities of the Faculty of Arts at Tilburg University has been focusing its attention on researching home languages and the instruction thereof. This small article is of course not sufficient to reflect all activities of the research group.

Interested readers are therefore referred to the following address to obtain more information:

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Research Approaches

RUUD STRIJP

Researching Moroccan Islam in a Dutch Town

Scholars from various disciplines have examined many aspects of Muslim migrants' lives but it has only been since the end of the 1980s, that the articulation of Islam has been investigated more seriously, leading to the publication of many academic studies. My PhD thesis, 'Around the Mosque – The Religious Lives of Moroccan Immigrants in a Dutch Provincial Town', written in Dutch, constitutes part of this growing academic interest in the religious beliefs and practices of Muslim migrants and their families in the Netherlands.*

The result of an explorative and qualitative research project, this study is based predominantly on anthropological fieldwork conducted in Tiel (the Netherlands) from 1991-1993, and subsequent visits. At the beginning of the 1990s, Tiel had some 33,000 inhabitants, of whom 1,000 were of Moroccan origin. In the summers of 1992 and 1993, I made two field trips to Morocco, specially to the Rif, the mountainous, predominantly Berber-speaking region in North Morocco from where the majority of Moroccan immigrants in Tiel originated.

The main goal of my research was to describe and analyse the ways in which, since their arrival in Tiel, Moroccan immigrants have practised their religion. The construction and maintenance of social, religious, and ethnic boundaries, between Moroccan immigrants and others (especially Turkish migrants and the Dutch), and among Moroccan immigrants themselves, were examined. The problems encountered during fieldwork induced an extensive reflection on the anthropological research conducted among Moroccan and other minority groups in Dutch society. Using the method of participant observation, I discussed both my own investigations and the research of other anthropologists among Moroccan immigrants, so that my dissertation forms part of the recent tendency in anthropology to reflect on the course of anthropological fieldwork, relations with informants, and the production of ethnographic texts.

Card sold to Dutch citizens to raise funds for the construction of the first mosque in Tiel.

My field research was generally tough-going, as full participation was hard to achieve. Relations of trust, which many researchers consider crucial yielding reliable, valid results, were difficult to maintain with Moroccan immigrants. Family life and the religious beliefs and practices of women, for example, were virtally inaccessible to me. Unfortunately having visited the local Moroccan mosque for about half a year, a conflict about my presence meant I was no longer permitted to attend religious services. Therefore I had to seek other opportunities to gather data.

In short, my participant observation was hampered by serious restrictions, which I think also applies to other anthropologists who have conducted research among Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands. They too, have found it difficult conduct intensive participant observation, particularly in the private sphere. Yet I would argue that participant observation offers several advantages. It may uncover what would otherwise remain hidden data. It enables researchers to check their informants' accounts by observing their actual behaviour. Most importantly, the method accesses the local context in which accounts are provided and within which they must be understood.

The crux of this article is the foundation of and activities in the various mosques in Tiel, particularly the Moroccan ones. The establishment and internal organization of the first (Moroccan-Turkish) mosque, founded in 1974-1978 and housed in a former synagogue, and the (exclusively Moroccan) Hassani mosque, founded in 1988 are described. Peculiar to the first mosque is that it contained two prayer-rooms, one for Moroccans and one for the Turkish. Both groups organized their own prayer sessions and appointed their own *imam*s. This situation resembles that in other Dutch towns, where the institutionalization of Islam has likewise occurred along ethnic or national lines. This process was reaffirmed and strengthened in 1988, when the Moroccans moved to another building and founded a new mosque, leaving the other building to the Turkish migrants.

The most important function of this new Moroccan mosque (the Hassani mosque) was religious. It offered a place for the daily obligatory prayers, and for other kinds of assemblies. In the evening, during Ramadan, for instance, approximately one hundred men came to say *tarâwîh* prayers. Gatherings with a more socio-religious character were also held in the Hassani mosque (for the birth of a child or the circumcision of a boy). On such occasions prayers were recited and food served.

Each evening, except during Ramadan, the imam gave an informal religious lesson (dars) to the men present in the mosque. The language spoken was Riffian-Berber or Tamazight, the mother tongue of most Moroccan immigrants in Tiel. The lesson was given after the maghrib prayer followed by a recitation of the Koran. The men then left the prayer hall going to an adjacent room for a chat and a cup of tea. The conversation then assumed a more serious note and the imam started his lesson. He focused on the proper performance of ritual duties and the memorization and accurate pronunciation of Arabic Koranic texts. In this sense, the lesson resembles the way in which religious knowledge has traditionally been transmitted in the Islamic world, in North Africa in particular. The atmosphere during the lesson can generally be characterized as informal, kindly and quite egalitarian. At times, it was even hilarious, which the following may illustrate.

One evening *hajji* Abdelkader, a man in his fifties and a very regular visitor to the mosque, demonstrated two versions of the greeting *as-salam ᶜalaykum* (Peace be upon you), pronounced at the end of the *salat* or obligatory prayer. He asked the other men present whether both versions were correct. The first time he said *as-salam* facing his audience directly. He then turned to the right, while saying *ᶜalaykum*. The second time, he repeated the full frontal face movement as before, while saying *as-salam*; but tilted his head very far backwards, looking to the side while saying *salam ᶜalaykum*. The other men asserted that they considered the second version incorrect, if not absurd. Although it was my impression that *hajji* Abdelkader actually shared their view, he repeated both versions several times. Then, another man demonstrated the same greeting. He pronounced the expression *as-salam ᶜalaykum*, first looking straight ahead, but then turned backwards and looked up into the air, thereby suggesting that this would also be absurd. Finally a third man stood up. Laughingly he demonstrated the example of a person who rises from a kneeling position during prayers. He did this in a very exaggerated fashion, leaning very far backwards and saying *Allah al-hamidah*. Seeing this, nearly all the men, including the imam, burst out laughing. Their hilarity was aroused by the gestures made, and by the expression 'Allah al-hamidah', which was a shortened and therefore incorrect form *of Sami Allahu li-man Hamidah* (May God listen to him who praises Him).

In spite of the open, and informal sphere during the religious lessons in the Hassani mosque, only a small minority of the Moroccan population actually fulfilled their religious duties there regularly. Pertinantly, women were totally absent. The most regular visitors were a small group of fifteen to thirty, mainly illiterate, Riffian men aged forty (or more). Younger men appeared less frequently, and youngsters only occasionally set foot in the mosque. Only at Islamic festivals or during Ramadan did the Hassani mosque attract a larger public. Even then, the number of men who came for the prayers was smaller than research elsewhere in the Netherlands would have led us to believe.

In a (tactful) attempt to examine the social organization of Moroccan immigrants, I also investigated the complications concerning the purchase of the Hassani mosque building from 1988-1993. Before that it had been municipal property. I argue that the mosque constituted a political arena in which the men competed for status. Positions within the Moroccan community had great significance and were worth competing for, epecially because most of the men belonged to the lower social strata and did not hold positions of respect and honour within the wider Dutch context. Apart from contested social status issues between individuals, familial and regional loyalties also influenced the way the conflict over the purchase of the building evolved.

Besides the religious, educational, and socio-political activities in and around the Hassani mosque, I also illustrate the way Islam was practised in Tiel through the analysis of some other events. Despite the existence of legal regulations and facilities for ritual slaughtering, the buying of *halâl* meat and the celebration of the *ᶜId al-kabîr*, or Feast of the Sacrifice, Muslims in the Netherlands are still sometimes confronted by obstacles. In 1991, the slaughterhouse in Tiel was closed on the Sunday that the Moroccan immigrants in the town wished to celebrate this feast. Attempting to persuade the owner to open his slaughterhouse, they organized a demonstration from the Hassani mosque to the municipal hall. This was in vain; and the slaughterhouse remained closed. The incident illustrates of the impact of Dutch society on the way in which Islam in the Netherlands is shaped.

The often-neglected issue of ethnic relations between Moroccan and Turkish immigrants at the local level was brought to the fore by a description and analysis of the construction of a prayer-room in the regional hospital in Tiel. Although the provision of this prayer-room suggests successful cooperation between the groups, in reality, their representatives competed for prestige. This was revealed in their discussions about their respective financial contributions and the furnishing of the prayer-room. In this competition, ritual differences between the Maliki and Hanafi schools of Islamic jurisprudence, were used to differentiate between the two groups. Largely considered of minor significance theologically, these differences were extensively discussed by the delegates. As such, they constituted the 'cultural stuff' enclosed between the boundaries of ethnicity.

The relevance of Moroccan migrants' relations with family members and other countrymen in Morocco drew my attention when I was in Morocco. The relationships between migrants and non-migrants were fairly ambivalent. Migrants longed to pass their holidays in their home countries, but were discouraged because many people, kinsmen and strangers alike, tried to cream off their (usually small) fortunes obtained in Europe. Non-migrants were envious of the relative wealth of Moroccan migrants and very eager to migrate themselves, yet disapproved of many migrants' inclination to display their wealth. Both categories competed for status, thereby demonstrating the great impact of migration on the position of individuals in the social hierarchy of the community of origin. In this respect, my anthropological fieldwork in Morocco emphasized the importance of including research in the migrants' country and it underlined the necessity of taking into account affairs which cross national frontiers and transcend national interests and government policies. ✦

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* *Om de moskee – Het religieuze leven van Marokkaanse migranten in een Nederlandse provinciestad* (Proefschrift Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, 1998, 304 pp.), Thesis Publishers Amsterdam, 1998 (ISBN 90-5170-456-9).

Research Approaches

ULRIKE FREITAG

The Significance of Studying a **Trade Diaspora**

Situated halfway between Aden and Oman, the Yemeni province of Hadhramaut is considered by most fleeting visitors a backwater, notable only for the highrise mud-brick houses of the former trading centre of Shibam and the extravagant but decaying palaces of neighbouring Say'un and Tarim. Little is known, however, about the people who built these remarkable constructions, and about their far-reaching connections in the areas bordering on the Indian Ocean. However, their story, if recovered, sheds light on a number of questions pertinent to current interests in Middle Eastern and Islamic history. Let us consider the biography of one such trader, whose cosmopolitanism in entrepreneurial, political, and intellectual terms is quite typical for a wider group of Hadhramis, as well as probably for members of other such groups in the Indian Ocean and beyond.[1]

Sayyid ᶜAli b. Ahmad b. Shihab al-Din was born in August 1865 in Pekojan, the Arab quarter of old Batavia (present day Jakarta). His father, Ahmad b. Muhammad was a native of Tarim in Hadhramaut and came from a family which claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad. Around 1849, at the age of twelve, he travelled to Batavia. There he made a fortune in trade which he invested in real estate. He also acquired and managed land for relatives in the eastern Javanese town of Gresik. At the same time, Ahmad b. Muhammad made a name for himself by donating large sums to charity and endowing it to the building of mosques. He married the daughter of another immigrant family from Hadhramaut, who later gave birth to ᶜAli. At the age of seven, his parents sent ᶜAli to Hadhramaut, where he studied for six years with some of the most famous ulema of his time. After spending three years in Jakarta, he returned to Hadhramaut in 1881 for a subsequent period of study. In 1886/87, Sayyid ᶜAli travelled once more to Jakarta where he became manager of the family's real estate. The father returned to his native Tarim where he died around 1890.

Part of the real estate which ᶜAli b. Ahmad managed,[2] and eventually acquired in 1911, was situated in the relatively new and fashionable European quarter of Menteng. It soon became the basis of the growing wealth of the 'landheer van Menteng', as Snouck Hurgronje called him.[3] Having established himself, Sayyid ᶜAli took once more to travelling. Between 1893/94 and 1896/97 he visited Egypt and possibly Istanbul, performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, visited Ottoman Yemen, Aden and Hadhramaut, and finally returned via Bombay and Singapore to Batavia.

As a wealthy Hadhrami trader and landowner, ᶜAli b. Ahmad continued the family tradition of charitable commitments by becoming, in 1905, a founding member and first chairman of a charitable organization (Jamᶜiyyat al-Khayr) which founded a new type of Arab school combining Islamic with Western knowledge. These schools form the nucleus of what is considered the Hadhrami 'renaissance'.[4] The commitment to reform included opposition to the Dutch colonial power by trying to rally support from Istanbul, where one of his sons studied, and by publishing anti-colonial articles in Egyptian newspapers. As a result, Sayyid ᶜAli spent a fortnight in jail in 1908. It is less clear, however, whether it was also Dutch intrigues or rather his extravagant life-style which lost him much of his land in Menteng just before World War I.

After the war, and possibly as a result of his political and economic troubles, ᶜAli b. Ahmad turned to new pastures. He participated in a fishing company, headed by his brother, which attempted to develop the fishing industry in the Arabian Sea, drawing in capital and know-how from Singapore, Penang, Madras, Bombay, Aden and Hadhramaut. Although this project failed, he also contrived a large agricultural project on the Hadhrami coast. His passion for politics continued: In Hadhramaut, he became involved in an attempt to negotiate an agreement between the Imam of Yemen and the coastal Quᶜayti sultanate. At the same time, he strongly lobbied in Hadhramaut and Batavia against a new reformist group which had been formed among Indonesian Arabs to challenge certain privileges of the Sayyid stratum to which ᶜAli b. Ahmad belonged.[5] This should not be understood as a move against reform per se; on the contrary, Sayyid ᶜAli spurred not only the educational movement in Southeast Asia but also urged the Hadhrami sultan to open a school in the coastal capital of al-Mukalla at a time when education in Hadhramaut was still scarce and limited in scope.

One could write more about this remarkable man, who also published a number of books, and about his offspring who played an important role in Arab and Indonesian publishing and in the Indonesian independence movement, as well as in perpetuating the contacts between the Arab world and Muslim Southeast Asia. However, this one life story suffices to point to a number of fascinating themes, the exploration of which sheds light on Islamic developments beyond the confines of the immediate group involved.

Most obviously, the history of Southern Arabia in the 19th and 20th centuries cannot be adequately understood without a closer examination of the influences of the emigrant community in Southeast Asia, India and East Africa. In a wider perspective, this might contribute to a better understanding of the role which migrants played in bringing about changes in conservative societies. Sayyid ᶜAli b. Ahmad invested some of his money in the Hadhramaut. Perhaps even more importantly, he tried to initiate entrepreneurial projects on a scale not known in Hadhramaut until his time. Even if his initiatives, like those of a number of his contemporaries, failed, they helped to create a climate in which, in the 1920s and 30s, hitherto having shunned economic initiatives, new technologies became acceptable. Beyond the impact of the migrant entrepreneurs on their homeland, their study also could – if the necessary source material could be made accessible – contribute to a better understanding of early capitalist Muslim business culture, which for a long time was a major economic factor in the Indian Ocean economy.

The political and cultural influences of the diaspora on the homeland, exemplified by Sayyid ᶜAli's political plotting and his support for educational institutions of a new style, can be considered in a similar way to the economic ones, as can the effect these migrants had on their host communities. Investigating such contact between non-European cultures in the imperial age can contribute, among other things, to a better understanding of the spread of modernity. While this is commonly attributed to the interaction of Western societies with non-Western ones, a closer investigation of the Hadhrami diaspora reveals a far more complex picture. The Jamᶜiyyat al-Khayr, which Sayyid ᶜAli chaired, was modelled on the Batavia Chinese Association, a branch of the Confucian renewal movement.[6] In turn, the Hadhrami schools influenced the educational and thereby also the religious orientations of the local population.

While many of these issues will to some extent be explored in forthcoming monographs by scholars in the Netherlands, the UK, Norway and the US, I would finally like to draw attention to a topic which would require widespread international cooperation. Sayyid ᶜAli b. Ahmad b. Shihab was not only an entrepreneur and supporter of the Hadhrami 'renaissance', he was also, through correspondence as well as personal contact, in touch with a wide network of like-minded scholars and politicians. While Pan-Islam as a movement has been explored quite thoroughly for the period starting in 1876, when it came to designate the policies pursued by the Ottoman sultan,[7] scholarship has very much focused on its ideological and organizational side. Colonial archives are primarily concerned with the 'dangers' constituted by this type of internationalism. Our knowledge about how and to what extent Muslims of different cultures and speaking numerous languages communicated, and to what extent they developed cooperation either in order to pursue common goals or oppose colonial expansion remains, however, quite limited, particularly for the 18th and 19th centuries.

In other words, can we find out more about the types of networks which existed? While Sufi orders, one important form of such networks, have found some attention, the networks of the numerous trading diasporas which played a crucial innovative role, and their interconnections, have not been investigated systematically. This, perhaps, is partly because it involves the study of countless biographies in many languages, which surpasses the capacity of individual scholars. However, it was not just the famous Jamal al-Din al-Afghani who spread anti-imperialist and modernist ideas and called for common Muslim action by travelling the Islamic world. Sayyid ᶜAli tried to obtain Ottoman support for the Arabs in Southeast Asia. Sayyid Fadl b. Sahl, another Hadhrami, was in 1852 expelled by the British from the Malabar Coast for being a Muslim propagator against Hindus and the British. He later made an appearance as self-proclaimed Ottoman governor of Dhofar in southern Arabia.[8] From the East African town of Lamu, ᶜAbdallah Ba Kathir al-Kindi (1860/61-1925), a scholar of Hadhrami extraction, was called to South Africa to mediate in a conflict among Cape Muslims. He also travelled to Mecca, Hadhramaut and Southeast Asia in pursuit of knowledge and scholarly contacts.[9]

While it is relatively easy, although enormously time-consuming, to reconstruct the networks within one such diaspora, it is much more challenging to investigate the interaction between a number of different networks. However, if we want to understand the transmission of ideas, the creation of political alliances and perhaps even the mechanics of Indian Ocean trade beyond national and linguistic borders, such an investigation would be well worth a large international research project. ✦

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Notes

1. The following biographical information was obtained from ᶜAbd al-Rahman al-Mashhur (1984), *Shams al-Zahira*, Jidda, pp. 160-5 and during research in Jakarta, May-June 1997. For a number of similar family histories, cf. Ulrike Freitag, 'ᶜArab Merchants in Singapore: Attempt at a Collective Biography', in H. de Jonge & N. Kaptein (eds), *Arabs in Southeast Asia*, Leiden (forthcoming).
2. The Arabic term used is *tawakkala*. It may well be that he obtained the commission to develop this area. On the growth of these new quarters, cf. Susan Abeyasekere (1987), *Jakarta. A History*, Singapore etc., p. 90.
3. Snouck Hurgronje (1959), *Ambtelijke Adviezen, 1889-1936* (ed. E. Gobée and C. Adriaanse), Vol. 2, 's-Gravenhage, p. 1573.
4. Cf. Deliar Noer (1973), *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1942*, Singapore etc., pp. 58-61.
5. He became one of the foremost advisers to the British on the reformist Irshadi movement which he denounced full-heartedly. Ulrike Freitag, 'Hadhramis in International Politics', in U. Freitag & W.G. Clarence-Smith (1997), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean*, Leiden, pp. 124-6, on the Irshadi movement Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, The Hadrami Awakening: Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900-1942, unpubl. PhD thesis, Monash University 1996.
6. Mobini-Kesheh, p. 43.
7. Jacob M. Landau, chqn, Reinhard Schulze (1990), *Islamischer Internationalismus im 20. Jahrhundert*, Leiden etc., Martin Kramer (1986), *Islam Assembled. The Advent of the Muslim Congresses*, New York, to name but a few.
8. Tufan Buzpinar, Abdülhamid II and Sayyid Fadl Pasha of Hadhramawt. An Arab Dignitary's Ambitions (1876-1900)', *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 13 (1993), pp. 227-39 and Stephen Dale, 'The hadhrami Diaspora in South-Western India: the Role of the Sayyids of the Malabar Coast', in Freitag & Clarence-Smith, pp. 175-85.
9. A short biography by ᶜAbdallah b. Muhammad al-Saqqaf is contained in the introduction to ᶜAbdallah b. Muhammad Ba Kathir (1939), *Rihlat al-ashwaq al-qawwiyya*, Zanzibar.

Interfaith

C.M. NAIM

Getting Real about Christian-Muslim Dialogue

Years ago, I had the occasion to sit in the audience at two Christian-Muslim dialogues in Chicago and to attend a pair of similar sessions at the 'Parliament of World Religions.' The sponsors on each occasion were different, as were the speakers; but what was said was alarmingly similar.

Interfaith dialogues, until recently, typically occurred only between Christians and Jews. And their urgency derived from the impact of the Holocaust on the Christian conscience, with the horror of the realization that what had happened to the Jews of Europe was partially a consequence of a long entrenched anti-Semitism among too many Christians. Such dialogues tended to be between those who viewed themselves as victims of unspeakable crimes and those who saw themselves, in some sense, as parties to the crimes. Surprisingly, the same modes of thought seemed to govern the proceedings at the Christian-Muslim dialogues that I witnessed.

The Christians usually began by denouncing the Crusades, the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonial expansions into Islamic lands, and the more recent Cold War policies of the United States against various nationalist movements in the 'Third World.' They readily identified themselves with 'the West' and its history, only to castigate all Western protagonists and proponents, past and present. Their Muslim counterparts began in the same vein. They denounced the Crusades and argued that the same crusading spirit worked equally behind the colonial expansion and the unquestioning American support of Israel against the Palestinians. These were the crucial moments, they argued, when the 'West' (Christianity) encountered the 'East' (Islam) and behaved shamefully. The listeners nodded in agreement. One Muslim speaker mentioned the expulsion of the Moors from Spain as another such moment, and all heads were further lowered in sorrow and shame.

Amazingly, no one asked how the Moors arrived in Spain in the first place, or what had brought Muslims to the land of the Testaments. It was as if there had been no imperial expansion of Islam, no Arab conquests of Syria, North Africa and Spain. I'm not denying the horrors of the *Reconquista* and the Crusades. I merely wish to point out the absurdity of denying any agency to the Muslims themselves. Islamic history unfolded as a series of conquests. This is not to say that Islam spread only by the sword or that Christians and Muslims should argue over who shed less blood. It is simply to acknowledge that the sword was very much present in the story of Islam's expansion too.

When this acknowledgement is not made, interfaith dialogue soon turns into an incoherent comparison of Islam, a faith without history, and Christianity, a history without faith. More, the inordinate emphasis in such dialogues on the scriptural and the juristic aspects of religion, with the simultaneous neglect of the experiential and salvific, turns the two faiths into two ideologies, of which one seems to control all of history while the other appears to have no agency at all -one standing for a body of aggressors, the other for a cohort of victims. By the same token, the dialogues manage to suppress the plurality of Islam – its many regional forms, the differing ways it adapted itself to local conditions and traditions. A rich and variegated religion is presented in such dialogues as a homogenous, featureless whole.

There is such a thing as Islam, of course, and there are many Islams as well. There is one Islam in the sense that there is one revealed book and one Prophet to whom it was revealed. There are many Islams in the sense that there are many different traditions of interpreting that book and understanding that Prophet. The lived Islam of a peasant in Bangladesh is similar to, but not identical with, that of his counterpart in Algeria, as is the Islam of a middle-class professional in Karachi and his counterpart in Indonesia. In each instance, the differences as well as the similarities are greatly cherished. These differences, however, found no mention in the dialogues I witnessed. They were not present in the remarks of the Muslims and formed no part of the understanding that the Christians sought.

This elision of Islamic differences has dangers not merely for the Christians engaged in dialogue, but for the Muslims as well. The Christians never scrutinized a repeated Muslim claim that what made Islam unique was that it was a totality, a complete system that covered each and every aspect of human life. That such a claim has a dangerous edge went unnoticed. Both for Muslims in self-proclaimed Islamic countries and for Muslims in such non-Islamic nations as India, Islam was said to be a total religion – which easily transposes into the demand that every Muslim be a total Muslim, a Muslim entirely in terms of the person making that demand. Any suggestion of diversity, any opposition to that proclaimed totality then becomes ruthlessly punishable. It takes very little to turn a dream of totality into a totalitarian nightmare.

The Christians who initiated these dialogues may have gained some understanding of contemporary Islamic politics. But if their aim was to get an insight into the lived religion of the Muslims, they should have brought to these dialogues their own lived religion. At none of the meetings that I attended did the Christians highlight any of the issues that are currently so problematic a part of their lives as Christians – issues related to homosexuality; women's rights; prayer in schools; and abortion. Or the three great issues of the recent past: ecumenism; race; and anti-Semitism.

The Muslims were not inclined to raise such issues either. And when they did, it was only to dismiss them with a scriptural quotation. For the overwhelming part, they used these occasions as opportunities to tell their story of grievances and hurts, placing their remarks precisely and entirely in recent history – in a narrative of defeat and loss, neglect, denial, and victimhood.

I am not blind to the brutality inflicted on Bosnian Muslims, the ferocity displayed against the Iraqis, or the unremitting injustice done to the Palestinians. But is that all there is to being a Muslim at this time? Should I not also shed a few tears for those who are victimized in the name of Islam – the Christians in Egypt and Sudan, the Ahmadis in Pakistan, the Bahais in Iran? The instances may not compare in magnitude with what was done to Bosnian Muslims, but shouldn't I at least note the horribly similar impulse behind them? As I denounce the abandonment of Bosnia by the Western powers, shouldn't I also point to their equally shameful abandonment of the Kurds – who are also Muslims – to the mercy of three so-called Muslim states: Iraq, Turkey and Iran? Not raising that issue, I remain blind to the systemic question the two cases share: how do modern nation-states go about forming and preserving themselves?

Most importantly, the Muslim narrative of hurts not only posits an immediate colonial past of utter decline and passivity but also implies a pre-colonial period of pristine Islamic glory. Both descriptions are not merely false, but also harmful; invoking them only distorts any effort to think through our shared future. A selective memory of caliphs and kings cannot help us much in working towards a world that is not just pluralistic but also democratic.

The goal of an interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims should certainly not be the position taken in a Qur'anic verse that was invoked by one Muslim: 'To you your way, to me mine' (109:6). That verse is explicitly addressed to *kafir*s, 'the Unbelievers.' Christians are not *kafir*s, perhaps not even in the sight of the most absolutist Muslim. More, in its full context, the verse is a statement of an absolute parting of ways, which, of course, cannot be the aim of any dialogue – any more than a dialogue can be for the sake of a victory for one of the participants. But neither should some compromise or syncretism be its goal. The only dialogues that we should deem fruitful must either clarify something that was obscure in our own thought, or at least make a little bit opaque what we earlier thought patently clear.

Judaism and Christianity are religions explicitly affirmed in the Qur'an, but the Qur'an equally explicitly commands Muslims to 'judge between [Christians and Jews] in the light of what has been revealed by God, and do not follow their whims, and beware of them lest they lead you away from the guidance sent down to you by God.' (5:49)—which would seem to rule out any kind of dialogue. The Qur'an, however, elsewhere seems to invite dialogue when it enjoins Muslims to say to Christians and Jews, 'O people of the Book, let us come to an agreement on that which is common between us, that we worship no one but God, and make none His compeer, and that none of us take any others for lord apart from God.' (3:64) The Qur'an also clearly places Muslims, Christians and Jews on an equal footing to the extent they are capable of performing deeds that are good in the sight of God. 'To each of you We have given a law and a way and a pattern of life. If God had pleased He could surely have made you one people (professing one faith). But He wished to try and test you by that which He gave you. So try to excel in good deed. To Him will you all return in the end, when He will tell you of what you were at variance.' (5:48)

How we can differently worship one God; what makes a given deed good or bad; how these critical issues play out in the lives of ordinary Muslims, Christians and Jews, at different times and in different places – some understanding of these matters is the worthy goal of any interfaith dialogue. ✦

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HERMAN DE LEY

Muslims in Belgium
Enemies from within or Fellow-Citizens?

In the core countries of the European Union, Muslims, today, are counted in the millions and Islam is engaged in a process of institutionalization in the midst of secularized societies. Whereas Christianity is receding to the countryside, Western Islam is manifesting itself as an urban phenomenon: Muslim populations are concentrated in towns and the symbolic attributes of Islamic faith and culture are becoming more and more conspicuous in this urban environment. In these closing years of the twentieth century, Europe is more than ever before becoming a space were Islamic, Christian, Jewish and secular traditions come together 'to fight, support, and fertilize each other'.[1]

If we would accept Huntington's well-known thesis of the coming 'clash of civilizations',[2] this state of affairs would imply that the 'front' between Islam and the West once again (i.e. since 1492) is no longer 'safely' located between the continents, or between the eastern and western parts of the European continent, but that it is actually running through our very towns and societies. Are we heading then for a kind of 'civil war' in Western society itself? And the Muslims in our societies: i.e. the Turks, the Moroccans and the others, naturalized or not, immigrants and converts, are they to be imagined as 'the enemies from within'? Will they, as a consequence, eventually have to be driven out again – just like the Moriscos in Spain were, at the beginning of the 17th century?[3]

There is no denying that there are signs that would superficially seem to confirm such a reading: for instance, the riots and confrontations between 'Muslim' youngsters and the police which on a more or less regular basis break out in our towns.

Already, a new racism is legitimizing this growing polarization between the so-called indigenous population and the so-called immigrants, not only in Belgium but in other European countries as well. This new racism, which is actually accompanying the construction of European unity, can be identified as an 'anti-Muslimism'. While it is being constructed along the selfsame lines as the anti-Semitism in the thirties,[4] this European racism is mainly based on the ethnicization of cultural, i.e. religious, differences between 'Europeans' and 'Muslims'. Starting from the myth of an originally 'white' and '(lay-) Christian' Europe, it operates by identifying 'Turk/Moroccan' and 'Muslim' and, generally, by identifying 'immigrant' and 'Muslim'. As Fred Halliday formulated it, this anti-Muslimism 'involves not so much hostility to Islam as a religion (…) but hostility to Muslims, to communities of peoples whose sole or main religion is Islam and whose Islamic character, real or invented, forms one of the objects of prejudice'.[5] Feeding on these anti-Muslim feelings and fuelling them at the same time, right-wing extremist parties are exploiting the situation, in Belgium as well as in other countries of the E.U., in order to win popular votes.[6]

However, there is no fatality in this evolution. All in all, the process of Muslim integration into our secularized society has been going on peacefully for many decades. It is urgent though that an end be put to all discrimination and also that Muslims, especially youngsters, get the chance to contribute as Muslim citizens to the social development of their country.

The number of Muslims in Belgium – i.e. of people having an immigrant Muslim background and/or considering themselves Muslim (converts included) – is rapidly growing. Of course, figures are necessarily inaccurate, for (a) the criterion of nationality is becoming less and less relevant since a growing number of people originating from Muslim countries acquire Belgian nationality; (b) the definition of Muslim identity has inevitably many nuances, going from strictly-practising believers to laymen and agnostics. In the early nineties, the total number of people in Belgium with a Muslim cultural background was estimated at 285,000 – more than 2.5 per cent of the total population. At this moment, the number is going beyond 350,000. Concurrent with this demographic growth, there has been a proliferation of mosques and prayer halls: on the eve of the new century, Belgium counts some 240 places of Islamic worship.

Whatever the precise figures may be, it is undeniable that 'Belgian Islam' has become a cultural and social fact. Quantitatively, it represents the second largest religious denomination of the country; or to put it otherwise, Islam is the largest minority religion in Belgium, far outnumbering Protestantism, Judaism, Humanism, etc.

The settlement of a large Muslim population in Belgium is an irreversible phenomenon. The major question therefore that has to be faced by a society that considers itself to be democratic and pluralist, is the one concerning the place and space that one is willing to concede to these cultural and ethnic minorities. Will we actually allow them to maintain – be it inevitably in interaction with their secular environment – their collective cultural and religious identity? Or will we, out of irrational fear for the future survival of the secular state (if not of 'the West' itself), impose upon Muslims a kind of privatization or secularization of Islam – something that, for the great majority of them at least, would be tantamount to demanding that they abandon their religion?

There is no denying that, from the perspective of basic human rights, the Belgian state made a good start when as early as 1974 it passed a law granting Islamic worship the same status as that accorded to religions historically established in the country: Catholicism, Protestantism and Judaism. The immediate and most spectacular effect of this recognition was the introduction (since 1975-76) of the teaching of Islam in public schools, on the same basis as the other religions. At present, there are about 700 Muslim teachers giving Islamic instruction in both primary and secondary schools, their salaries being paid by the State.

The law of 1974 also allowed for financial provisions to be made for the costs of the infrastructure (e.g. places of worship) and the 'personnel' of the religious group (e.g. the salaries and pensions of the Imams). The importance of this kind of religious 'engagement' by the Belgian state – which is officially a secular state, based on the principle of separation between Church and State – is measured when one considers that in this way the Catholic Church is annually receiving a total provision of no less than about 10 billion Belgian Francs. This sum is paid by the Belgian taxpayer – which is also by non-Catholics, meaning Muslims as well. As for Islamic worship, this kind of advantageous treatment has still not been put into effect. So, for a quarter of a century or more, Muslims financially contribute to a system they themselves are excluded from. The reason for this unfortunate state of affairs is officially the same one as that for the existing deficiencies in the status of the Islamic teachers: viz. that it requires the identification of a national Muslim authority, an issue that until now has remained unsolved.

This financial discrimination was accompanied, all these years, by violations against the basic rights of religious freedom, which in principle are guaranteed by the Belgian Constitution (e.g. the right to be buried according to your philosophical or religious faith). Generally, Muslims in Belgium as yet do not have the possibility of burying their loved ones in the cemetery of their own place of residence. The same goes for religious rights at school, in prison, and in hospital: for example, the right to eat food that is prepared according to your religious prescriptions; the right to safeguard yourself against (threats of) violations of your physical integrity – e.g. by wearing a head-scarf and modest dress; and the right to celebrate your religious feasts, etc. These infringements must be taken together with: the usually negative coverage of Islam in the press and the other media; regular conflicts in schools (e.g. concerning the head-scarf); the systematic stigmatizing of Islamic values and symbols as being obstacles for a smooth integration of Muslim immigrants; and, of course, the many forms of 'daily racism' being perpetrated by officials, for example by members of the police force, etc.

It goes without saying that this situation puts heavy pressure on the peaceful coexistence between the communities, and as a consequence on the democratic future of Belgian society as well. Luckily, there are political signs pointing in a more hopeful direction, i.e. of a society willing to really assume it's cultural and ethnic pluralism. The Belgian government, for one, has recently accepted a proposal for the election of a representative council of the Belgian Muslim communities. Once put into place, this council offers the perspective that the institutional situation of Belgian Islam one day will be finally regularized. Still more recently, a new law has been accepted on burial places, which could provide for Muslim sections in local cemeteries.

Of course, equality of treatment at the institutional level, if ever realized, does not suffice. Islam and Muslim culture should as well be enabled to develop their intellectual and social potential within a secularized society. Besides taking the necessary social measures, an efficient anti-racist policy requires the introduction of a whole set of measures in the cultural and educational domain as well. For example, in our secondary schools Arabic and Turkish should be introduced as optional languages for all pupils; the history and culture of the Mediterranean countries of origin and the history of immigrations in Belgium and Europe should receive a place in our schools' curricula; a comparative history of religions should be offered, etc. At the university level, an all-round curriculum of modern Islamic studies should be introduced: for the sake of Muslims but also for that of society at large, the study of Islam should be freed from the historicist and colonial shackles of traditional Orientalism.

The final goal should be the 'interculturalization' of our society. Muslims themselves, it should be said, whatever their ethnic affiliations, are playing more of an active role in this process of cultural and social interaction. Running their own social and cultural organizations and working together with non-Muslims as well,[7] they are demonstrating the correctness of the view that, far from being a threat, the West once again has much to gain from the new Muslim presence. ✦

Prof. dr Herman De Ley is the director of the Centre for Islam In Europe, University of Gent.

Notes

1. Gerholm, T,.& Y.G. Lithman (eds) , *The New Islamic Presence in Western Europe* (London 1988), in their Introduction, p. 3.
2. See S.P. Huntington (1993), *The Clash of Civilisations?* For an interesting critique of Huntington by an Arabic philosopher, see Mohamed Abed El Jabri, 'Choc des civilisations ou conflit d'intérêts?', in: M. Dureûas (ed.), *Xoc de civilitzacions*. Barcelona, 1997, pp. 324-31.
3. For this 'expulsion model', as a typical European 'logic of racism', see A. Rea, 'Le racisme européen ou la fabrication du "sous-blanc"', in: Rea (ed.), *Immigration et Racisme en Europe*. Brussels, 1998, p. 182.
4. See Marc Swyngedouw, 'La construction du "péril immigré" en Flandre 1930-1980', in: Rea (ed.) 1998, pp. 107-30.
5. Fred Halliday (1996), *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation*. *Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. London, p. 161.
6. The strength of racist feelings in many countries of the E.U. was openly revealed by the opinion poll that was organized by the European Commission, at the closing of the 'European Year against Racism', see 'Racism and Xenophobia', *Eurobarometer Opinion Poll,* NR. 47.1, presented in Luxembourg, 18-19 December 1997. For an analysis of the figures, see the contribution of Andrea Rea, *Le racisme européen ou la fabrication du 'sous-blanc'* (1998).
7. E.g. in the 'Forum voor Gelijkberechtiging en Interaktie' ('Forum for Equal Rights and Interaction'), and in the newly created 'Centre for Islam in Europe' (University of Gent).
8. So Brian Beedham, 'Not again, for heaven's sake. A Survey of Islam', *The Economist Surveys*, August 6th 1994, pp. 16-18.

Bangladesh
TASLIMA NASRIN

The Threat of Intolerance **Religious Extremism**

Taslima Nasrin, the writer from Bangladesh, shot into international fame and limelight with the publication of her novel 'Lajja' (Shame) which criticized Muslims for attacking minority Hindus in Bangladesh following the 1992 destruction of a mosque by Hindu zealots in neighbouring India. Nasrin's writing so angered Muslim sentiments in Bangladesh that Khaleda Zia's government ordered her arrest in 1994 on charges of blasphemy. After a year in hiding, Nasrin fled Bangladesh for four years of exile in Europe. Several Muslim religious leaders demanded her immediate arrest and trial. They warned the government of serious consequences if she is not put on trial for suggesting that the Qur'an should be rewritten. Nasrin has denied making the comments. However, it was finally confirmed that the 36-year old author should indeed stand trial. Nasrin has appealed to the international community for help.

I am not a great philosopher, a great historian, nor a great writer. I am a simple ordinary writer. But I am a writer who has been threatened in Bangladesh by the religious fundamentalists. They have decreed a *fatwa,* a religious sanction, against me and have set a price on my head. Even today you have only to mention my name to provoke their angry reaction. Not only that, I am a criminal according to my government, which accuses me of having exposed society's injustices and the government's failure to protect the rights of the religious minority. Now, the government has banned my book and issued an arrest warrant against me for committing blasphemy. As a result I have been forced to go underground. With the help of my friends, I managed to hide for sixty long days. Because of the pressure created by the international human rights movement, the Bangladeshi government granted me bail and let me leave. Away from my own country, I was surrounded by police who not only saved me from harm but also imprisoned me by their total protectiveness. My future is uncertain.

Although I have been far from my country and my own people for several years, I still remain true to my own ideals. I continue to believe in humanism, not in any religion. I do not pray to any god to end my sufferings. I still have confidence in myself. And, I assure you, I most definitely will continue my ideological fight against religious fundamentalism.

I am an atheist. Let me explain, although I am not a specialist in the study of religion, how because of my personal experiences I have come to the atheist position. I was born of a Muslim family. When I grew up I was shocked to learn that some of my neighbours were not the real owners of their houses. The actual owners had been Hindus forced to leave their homeland by the partition of India in 1947, a partition forced on the basis of religion. Just across the border was the land of the Hindus. The violent and fratricidal partition forced many Hindu families out of my country to seek refuge in the Hindu-majority country on the other side of the border. Meanwhile, many Muslim families came over to my country. I heard that it was religion that had led to all these disasters. So it followed that, when young, I could not understand what religion was, what type of thinking could lead to such negative acts.

Over time, and during the course of my training in science, I developed the powers of observation, experiment, analysis, and reasoning. Without reasoning, I found, nothing should be accepted as fact. I knew about the Hindu texts that are called Aptabakya, 'received wisdom,' facts which are supposed to have been received from some superior authority, an authority that cannot be questioned. There are similar unquestionables in all religions. But I could not accept the concept that some things are supposed to be unquestioned. When I began to study the Koran, the holy book of Islam, I was surprised to be told that 'the sun revolves around the earth,' just one more example of unreasonableness. Also, the Koran taught discrimination against women, describing females as slaves and as sexual objects. Naturally, I set aside the Koran. Meanwhile, wherever I looked I continued to find that religion was oppressive.

One day, I resolved to fight back. I took up my pen and started writing against injustice, unreason, and prejudice. I exposed the crimes of religion, particularly the injustice and oppression against women. And what happened as a result? My government, as I previously mentioned, has accused me of blasphemy and forced me to move from my friends, my family, my home, my homeland.

I am against religion for other reasons. Religion as practised does not always teach people to love one another. On the contrary, it often teaches them to hate people of a different faith. Religion also leads people to depend on fate, to be led, and thus to lose self-confidence in making individual decisions. It unnecessarily glorifies poverty and sacrifice and thus serves the vested interests of the wealthy few.

In all countries and throughout the ages, conscientious people have exposed the unethical aspects of religion. The *Charbakas*, philosophers of the *Lokayata* tradition, were the materialists of Ancient India. They raised many questions about religion, questions that appear simple but actually are very subtle. These materialists did not believe in reincarnation, did not believe in heaven, and did not believe in hell. They were quite vocal against the dominance of the priests. But priests did not allow the materialists to succeed, and their texts have almost been obliterated, only a few fragmentary references remaining. Despite this, they had a big influence on the common people. Hence, perhaps, their name: *Lokayata*, which really means (the option or philosophy of) the common people.

Today we are still carrying the same fight against unreason and prejudice. The rise of fundamentalism all over the world shows that the battle remains urgently necessary. What is behind the rise of religious fundamentalism? The rise of Islamic fundamentalism, I think, is attributable to the failure of secular democracy on the one hand, and of communism on the other, to solve the problems of the world's economic underdevelopment and its social inequities. Disillusioned and hopeless people are now seeking salvation by turning to the blind forces of faith. Beaten by science, overwhelmed by other civilizations, Islam is now in search of its 'roots'. There is an element of fear in its search. Of course the responsibility of inciting fundamentalism should not be laid fully on the so-called secular leaders of the ex-colonies who have used fundamentalism to serve their own interest. The responsibility should be shared also by the democratic and secular states of the developed world. It is they who have made compromises with the fundamentalist forces. We have seen how the so-called secular political parties in Bangladesh use the religious sentiments of the people to get votes. But similar instances of rank opportunism have been seen in India and elsewhere, too. We have also seen how the powerful Western states have declared the protection of human rights to be one of their supreme objectives, but then they patronized fundamentalism both overtly and covertly. Democratic governments recognize military dictatorships for short-run political interests. Secular states make friends with autocracies as well as theocracies. They even tolerate the completely inhuman behaviour of their own fundamentalists. Such double standards practised by so-called democratic and secular states at home and abroad give the fundamentalists a sort of legitimacy. Governments then have to succumb to the fundamentalists' pressure and proscribe books and make arrangements to send its writers and authors to prison.

Some authors in the West are coming forward in support of the fundamentalists. They argue that not all the customs in vogue in the third world countries are harmful for women. They find a sort of stability and social peace in the oriental world. They think that even *harems* are not necessarily bad for women, because they provide a degree of autonomy and independence! May I humbly observe that all this is plain nonsense. For me, there can be no difference in the concept of human rights between the East and the West. If the veil is bad for Western women, then it is bad for their oriental sisters as well. If patriarchy is to be fought against in the West, it should be equally fought against in the East. The fight, in fact, is more urgent there because most of the women have neither any education nor any economic independence. If modern secular education is good for Western women, why should the Eastern women be deprived of it. The peace that some authors visualize in the Eastern countries is, clearly, the peace of the graveyard. The point is, the fundamentalists cannot be countered without a relentless and uncompromising fight. The struggle should be both theoretical and tactical.

Democracy and secularism should be applied in practice and not remain a mere play of words. Fundamentalism is an ideology that diverts people from the path of natural development of consciousness and undermines their personal rights. I find it impossible to accept fundamentalism as an alternative to secular ideas. My reasons are: first, the insistence of the fundamentalists on divine justification for human laws; second, the insistence of fundamentalists upon the superior authority of faith, as opposed to reason; third, the insistence of fundamentalists that the individual does not count, that the individual is immaterial. Group loyalty over individual rights and personal achievements is a peculiar feature of fundamentalism. Fundamentalists believe in a particular way of life; they want to put everybody in their particular strait-jacket and dictate what an individual should eat, what an individual should wear, how an individual should live everyday life – everything is to be determined by the fundamentalist authority. Fundamentalists do not believe in individualism, liberty of personal choice, or plurality of thought. Moreover, as they are believers in a particular faith, they believe only in propagating their own ideas (as autocrats generally do). They do not encourage or entertain free debate, they deny others the right to express their own views freely, and they cannot tolerate anything which they perceive as going against their faith. They do not believe in an open society and, although they proclaim themselves a moral force, their language is one of hatred and violence. As true believers, they are out to 'save the soul' of the people of their country by force of arms.

Is it possible for a rationalist and humanist to accept this sort of terrible repression? The fight between obscurantism and enlightenment, between rationality and faith, is therefore inevitable. But it is to be fought in the realm of ideology, in the field of education, on political platforms, and in all the spheres of daily life. ✦

This is a shortened version of a speech delivered at the Humanist World congress in Mexico City (November, 1996).

Review Essay

Ann Elizabeth Mayer
Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics
3rd edition. Boulder, Colorado:
Westview Press, 1998. xix + 260 pp.
ISBN (paperback) 0-8133-3504-3
$26.00

FREDERICK MATHEWSON DENNY

Contemporary Muslim Discourses on **Human Rights**

The study of Islam and human rights is a challenging activity requiring immersion in a complex discourse of religion, law, culture, politics, postcolonialism, and comparative ethics, accessed both through texts and living contexts. The divide between traditional Islamic and modern Western sensibilities concerning such issues as individualist versus communal values, rights versus obligations, and human dignity as distinguished from human rights, provides ample opportunity for the testing of everyone's patience, empathy, objectivity, and simple courtesy. Although this essay primarily addresses a new edition of a significant book on Islam and human rights, it views the book as a kind of lens through which to observe many important aspects of the general subject.

Ann Elizabeth Mayer's work addresses her subject principally during the post-World War II period, more specifically since the 1948 ratification of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which only Saudi Arabia among Muslim nations declined to approve. The book does not treat all possible aspects of the subject but focuses on specific human rights declarations and positions that Muslim bodies and selected prominent Muslim thinkers have propounded. Within that range, the discussion addresses Muslim reactions to human rights, Islamic restrictions on human rights, discrimination against women and non-Muslims, restrictions on the rights and freedoms of women, Islamic human rights schemes and non-Muslims, and freedom of religion in Islamic human rights schemes.

Mayer is both a scholar of classical and modern Islamic legal thought and a lawyer. Although her book contains much in the way of sources and analysis that will be unpalatable and even repugnant, for very different reasons, to secular (or religious) humanists on one side and traditionalist patriarchal thinkers, on the other, it is a largely dispassionate study of human rights records and human rights discourses, mostly in the Arab Muslim world.

There are several guiding principles that inform Mayer's coverage of her topic throughout the book. The first is an assumption, based on her reading of Islamic history and literature, that Muslims have generally been concerned about the sorts of ideals, values, and behavioral patterns that undergird modern notions of human rights. But Mayer rightly warns against anachronistic modern readings when treating Islamic or Western ethical and legal concepts in pre-modern times, because the discourses that have produced contemporary international human rights agreements are decidedly modern in spirit and secular by design so as to be as inclusive as possible of diverse peoples and traditions.

A second assumption is that Islam and the Muslim world have not previously and do not now constitute a monolithic entity, but exhibit a wide range of regional and local diversity, not only in customs and cultures but in theological, ethical and, particularly, legal temperaments and positions. Closely related to this assumption is the recognition that what contemporary Muslim human rights declarations call 'Shari^{c}a,' when qualifying their articles so as to keep them tightly reefed against the winds of Western style interpretations, is not the traditional field of sometimes widely diverse legal opinions but a simplistic modern default notion that may unintentionally permit states and rulers to act absolutely and with impunity in all kinds of human rights abuses and challenges, rationalizing their behaviour as 'Islamic' in some sense.

A final assumption, or rather conclusion that has taken the form of an assumption until proven otherwise, based on careful analysis of human rights documents and declarations produced in the Muslim world, is that they are more focused on limiting than on guarding human rights.

This last point is really the key critical contribution of the book. It rests on the fundamental distinction between individual rights and state power. Whereas in Western democracies individuals are, in varying ways, protected from state absolutism, Mayer sees political orderings in the contemporary as well as traditional Arab world, whether Islamic or simply dictatorships, as entities against which individual persons have no real rights, although some citizens – mainly free adult males – may enjoy certain privileges. Closely related to the pre-eminence of state power is a long-standing distrust of human reason in defining and adjudicating human rights and duties and a strong preference for guidance based on scripture and juristic precedent and consensus.

The appearance of a variety of Muslim authored and ratified human rights declarations in recent years indicates a genuine concern for being connected with international discourses. It is not prudent, ethical or humane for a major population in today's international economic and political environment to absent itself from a movement that is, for many people and nations, as urgent and influential as human rights. Mayer contends that although many Muslims fully and enthusiastically support international human rights norms and agreements, official Muslim authored declarations seek to engage the subject from a carefully framed, conservative Islamic perspective, yielding as little as possible to secular, international, and pluralistic principles. The international order (including most Muslim countries) have their human rights declarations and agreements, and so now do Muslims in the sense of a separate community, and both deserve respect if not general acceptance.

Mayer summarizes and analyses several such declarations and comments on what she considers to be their sometimes diverging and even evasive shifts in meaning between the original language – usually Arabic – and translations into English and/or French. An example is Article III.a of the Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights of 1981, framed by members of the London-based Islamic Council of Europe. In English it reads: 'All persons are equal before the Law and are entitled to equal opportunities and protection of the Law.' The original Arabic term translated as 'Law' is *shari^{c}a* and not some generic notion of civil law as understood in the West. Mayer contends that the uninformed reader might understand this article in a very different manner than one accustomed to Islamic legal meanings. 'That is, people are not being guaranteed the equal protection of a neutral law, but 'equal protection' under a law that in its pre-modern formulations is inherently discriminatory and thereby in violation of international standards' (90). She refers particularly to women and non-Muslims who have a very inferior status under the Shari^{c}a than that enjoyed by adult male Muslims.

An example of the shading of meaning with reference to the rights of men and women is Article 6.a of the Organization of the Islamic Conference's 'Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam' of 1990 (and presented at the UN's World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 in Geneva as OIC's definitive statement at that time): 'Woman is equal to man in human dignity (*al-karama al-insaniyya*), and has rights to enjoy as well as duties to perform …' Mayer remarks that Article 1.a, also of the Cairo Declaration, shares the evasiveness of Article 6.a: 'All men (sic., i.e. *jami' al-nas,* meaning 'human beings, people') are equal in terms of basic human dignity and basic obligations and responsibilities, without any discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, language, sex, religious belief, political affiliation, social status or other considerations' (86). Mayer comments that 'one is alerted to the fact that the failure to stipulate equality in 'rights' is not accidental and that the equality in 'dignity' and 'obligations' is not intended to signify equality in "rights"' (*ibid.*). Mayer argues that the 'Islamic Shari^{c}ah' is not as simple a reality as the Cairo Declaration, or other similar documents, appear to assume; but that, as a regulating concept, it should not generally be expected to conform with international human rights standards.

Mayer's critical readings do not always lead her to negative findings with respect to human rights in Muslim contexts. In the 'Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran of 24 October 1979 As Amended to 28 July 1989' is Article 3.14, setting forth the aims of the Islamic Republic which include: 'securing the multifarious rights of all citizens, both women and men, and providing legal protection for all, as well as the equality of all before the law [*qanun*]' (196). Mayer contends that 'the fact that this provision was retained, even though it expressed a philosophy of equality that was radically at odds both with the actual policies of the regime and with other provisions in the constitution, is highly significant, because it shows how much normative force international human rights concepts retain in Iran despite the attempts by conservative clerics to discredit them'(86). Mayer sees in such examples signs of hope for the futherance of international human rights norms in Muslim majority countries and looks for their definition and application in distinctively Islamic ways as a most healthy and potentially productive direction.

Although a cursory reading of her book might lead one to conclude that Mayer sees nothing positive in Islam and Muslim societies regarding human rights, a careful reading will show that her criticisms are directed almost entirely towards politically motivated clerics and others who detest Western thought and culture and want to maintain as much distance as possible from them or from what they are perceived to be. Mayer acknowledges that there are significant human rights theorists and activists in the Muslim world, some of whom appear to consider Islamic human rights schemes as largely irrelevant. A key problem, she contends, is that the Islamic human rights schemes examined in her book all 'insist on the absolute perfection of the abstract Islamic ideals while ignoring altogether the myriad problems of institutionalizing and implementing human rights protections and democratizing closed systems of the Middle East' (190). There is nothing in Islam that is against human rights, she appears to be arguing. Rather, it is a prevalent selective reading and narrow interpretation of the tradition, from a strongly patriarchal bias, that results in weak, incoherent, and ineffective attempts towards defining and institutionalizing authentic human rights for Muslims in today's world.

Mayer's book, in its earlier editions, drew much hostile criticism as well as grateful praise. Her own very positive evaluation of some contemporary Islamic discourses on human rights centres on such figures as the Sudanese legal specialist Abdullahi An-Na'im. Mayer sees in An-Nai'im's extensive scholarly explorations of human rights an authentic Muslim voice in harmony with the essentials of international human rights norms and discourses, making significant contributions to them. One of the areas of greatest concern is the practice of some thinkers and countries of relying on cultural relativism as a means of setting one's own people apart from otherwise universally held norms. This has been the practice, for example, of Saudi Arabia since its refusal to ratify the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Cultural relativism, ironically, accords in a certain manner with much maligned 'Orientalist' thinking by viewing, as Mayer puts it, 'the peoples of the Orient and the Occident as having inherently different natures' (12) and thus unable to adopt each others' ideas and institutions because it would be 'somehow incongruous and unnatural' (12). Highly sophisticated and nuanced anthropological theories of cultural relativism, when simplistically packaged and crudely used as a policy imperative, remind me of the oft repeated opinion that today's Muslims should embrace modernity but not Westernization, as if the choice were that simple or even an authentic choice instead of a confused and misleading shibboleth.

The publication of this third edition of Mayer's book is most welcome during a period of increased concern about the general subject of human rights in a stressed and fractured world that leaves no major region or people free from threats to and violation of their rights. Her well grounded, keenly analytical, and empathetic book provides a reliable and extremely clear overview of the subject with an appropriate amount of challenging technical legal analysis as well as an abundance of forthright, independent interpretation. ✦

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Book presentation
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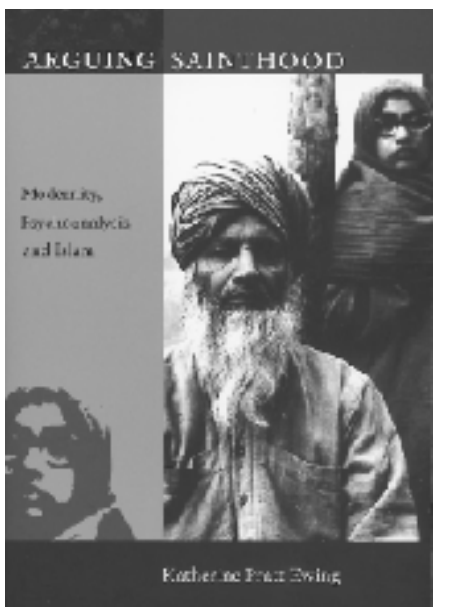
KATHERINE PRATT EWING



Book presentation
Women, Islamisms and the State:
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AZZA KARAM

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This book presents the views of leading Arab intellectuals, international experts and academics on the challenges facing Muslim women in the Middle East. The central theme of the book being the relationship between westernisation, identity and modernity.

Islamic Identity
Cultural, Religious and Social Perspectives
Political Ideas and Issues: A Cultural Challenge and a Dilemma Analysed
In the many movements for new political ideas and cultural identities, the Middle East has often emerged on the scene, demanding the immediate attention of Islamic university. This book examines the diverse responses in modern and new identities.

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In Arguing Sainthood, I examine Sufi religious meanings and practices in Pakistan and their relation to the westernizing influences of modernity in the shaping of the postcolonial self. The Muslim *pir* or sufi saint is a spiritual guide, a healer, a worker of miracles, an object of devotion at shrines, and a focus of social and political controversy as Pakistanis debate the true nature of Islam and its proper position in a modern nation-state that also sees itself as an Islamic state. With debates over the legitimacy and meanings of the sufi *pir* as my focus, I critically reinterpret theories of subjectivity, examining the production of identity in the context of a complex social field of conflicting ideologies and interests. I challenge the notion of a monolithic Islamic modernity in order to explore the lived reality of individuals, particularly those of *pirs* and their followers.

Furthermore, I examine how competing ideologies that have emerged in the process of nation-building in Pakistan are played out in individual experience among ordinary Pakistanis. Secularism, Islamic modernism, Islamic reform, fundamentalism, and 'traditionalism' are all platforms on which political leaders seek to shape government policy and public opinion. The *pir* has been a target of much of this ideological conflict about the place of Islam in the Pakistani nation-state. But the *pir* also plays an important role in the lives of individuals, who often turn to him for healing in times of personal crisis and conflict. I, therefore, focus on the *pir* as a nodal point where these political and personal processes come together. At this intersection, I observe the extent to which ordinary people are shaped or determined by a discourse of modernity and by the ideologies that arise out of this discourse. Just as the *pir* operates as a kind of nexus, this book stands at the nexus of several lines of academic inquiry. Drawing on my training in clinical and theoretical psychoanalysis as well as on historical sources, Sufi textual sources, and two years of anthropological fieldwork, I offer a basis for re-theorizing postcolonial studies. ✦

Dr Katherine Pratt Ewing is associate professor in the Department of Cultural Anthropology at Duke University.

This book presents an analysis of the contemporary power dynamics between Islamist thought and praxis, women's activisms and state policies. Although it focuses on Egypt (during the presidencies of Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak), the theoretical framework is relevant for other contexts involving this triangle. The book shatters three myths: that Islamism is a uniform and ultimately violent freak; that the state discourse in the Middle East is merely confronted with an ideology it is incapable of handling; and that women in the Arab/Muslim world, lack feminist vigour. This study highlights how the mediocrity of Islamist opposition is but a reflection of the State's own political discourse. Far from arguing that Islamism simply oppresses women, the book narrates a relatively unheard of phenomenon – *Islamist feminism*. This is to be compared to two other dominant streaks – Muslim and secular feminism – within a rife, evolving and diverse feminist discourse. The book brings out the plurality of Islamist praxis, the multiple means through which the Egyptian government has reacted and adapted to Islamist discourse over the years, and the heterogeneity of feminist voices in Egypt. Urging for a politics of difference, the book emphasizes that power is indeed ubiquitous, and that most actors can, and are, shaping the nature, impact, and future of political discourse in the region. ✦

Dr Azza Karam is senior programme officer of the Gender, Middle East, and Applied Research Programmes, International IDEA, Stockholm.

Book presentation

Shattering the Myth
Islam beyond Violence
Princeton University Press
Princeton, New Jersey
1998, xix + 237 pp.
ISBN 0-691-05769-9

BRUCE B. LAWRENCE

Islam is often portrayed, especially in Western media, as an alien, violent, hostile, and monolithic religion, whose adherents resemble Osama bin Laden, the Afghan terrorist, more than Aliya Izetbegovic, the President of Bosnia-Herzegovina. But the realities of contemporary Islam are closer to the latter than the former. Islam, as I argue, is a religion shaped both by its own postulates and ethical demands and by the specific circumstances of Muslim people in the modern world. The last two-hundred years have brought many challenges for Muslims, from colonial subjugation through sporadic revivalism to elitist reform movements and, most recently, pervasive struggles with fundamentalism. During each period, Muslims have had to address internal tensions, as well as external threats. Today's Muslims are mostly Asian and non-Arab, with Muslim women assuming increasingly greater prominence, in Asian countries from Iran to Indonesia. My book calls attention to the region-specific features of Southeast Asia, and to the new developments in Malaysia which put Islam and corporate culture as a higher priority than Islam and cultural combat. Only by looking at the entire spectrum of contemporary Muslim societies can we avoid the pitfalls of stereotyping and falsification, such as beset V.S. Naipaul in his tragic travelogue, 'Beyond Belief'. The realities of Muslim life and the hopes of modern-day Muslims far exceed the slanderous muckraking of headline journalists and falsetto novelists alike. ✦

Dr Bruce B. Lawrence is professor of Islamic Studies and Chair of the Department of Religion at Duke University.

Book presentation

The Challenge of Fundamentalism:
Political Islam and
the New World Disorder

BASSAM TIBI

The process of globalization, mostly addressed in terms of the spread of McWorld, is misleading. There is no globalization when it comes to culture/civilization. On the contrary, the politicization of world religions in an age of crisis, both structural and also a crisis of meaning, is a source of fragmentation. Culture is a production of meaning and not patterns of consumption. The resort to religion for the articulation of dissent results in translating religious beliefs into political convictions. This politicization of religion is addressed in this book as religious fundamentalism. The new ideology poses a challenge to the world order of secular states. With regard to non-Western civilizations, religious fundamentalism becomes a vehicle for the claims of both de-secularization and de-Westernization. Religious fundamentalism is a global political phenomenon that can be observed in all major world religions. However, the very fact that among the existing civilizations only Islam and the West have universal claims, explains the focus on Islam. Giving Islam a political imprint results in a ideology called political Islam. This ideology has little to do with the religion of Islam or with the history of the related civilization, for political Islam is not a religious belief but rather a political ideology which is both anti-Western and anti-secular. It has the claim of establishing a new world order being an alternative to the prevailing one designed by Western norms and values. However, instead of this envisaged world order we are currently encountering de-stabilization effects resulting in disorder. Following the first two chapters that provide the general world-political framework for the rise of fundamentalism, the focus is set on the world of Islam and in particular the Middle East. It is argued that the Gulf War of 1991, in the West, is nothing more than a fading memory, while in the Middle East the confrontation between Saddam Hussein and the West continues to be vital in the anti-Western attitudes of the people in that region. The Gulf War left a 'Saddam Hussein legacy' now mixed with the thriving politicization of religion resulting in political Islam. I attempt to add to the political analysis of the observed anti-Western attitudes of Islamic fundamentalists. In this further background analysis I touch upon the crisis of meaning growing from the exposure of the world of Islam to the socio-cultural set-up of cultural modernity. In concrete political terms, the rise of political Islam leads to an increasing cultural fragmentation in terms of a decline in consensus and also to the diffusion of power in world politics. In the Middle East itself, religious fundamentalism is the greatest destabilizing challenge to the existing order of nation-states in the region. The ideology of the 'Islamic State' is the framework for the de-legitimization of the existing secular states in the Middle East. In my view, a proper interpretation of Islam is compatible with democracy and human rights and thus draws clear lines between Islam, as a religion, and the abuse of this very religion for developing an ideology named political Islam. In rejecting Western universalism I base my plea on cross-cultural grounds for averting a clash of civilizations. This clash is in fact between fundamentalist ideologies, not between the civilizations themselves. The book clearly displays the great diversity and deep strife within the world of Islam, where the major political movements can be identified as an expression of religious fundamentalism. The conclusion is that the claim to establish an alternative world order results in creating only disorder. Thus the challenge of fundamentalism is a challenge of disorder and disarray. ✦

Dr Bassam Tibi is professor of International Relations at the University of Göttingen, Germany, and the 1998 Robert Bosch Fellow at Harvard University.

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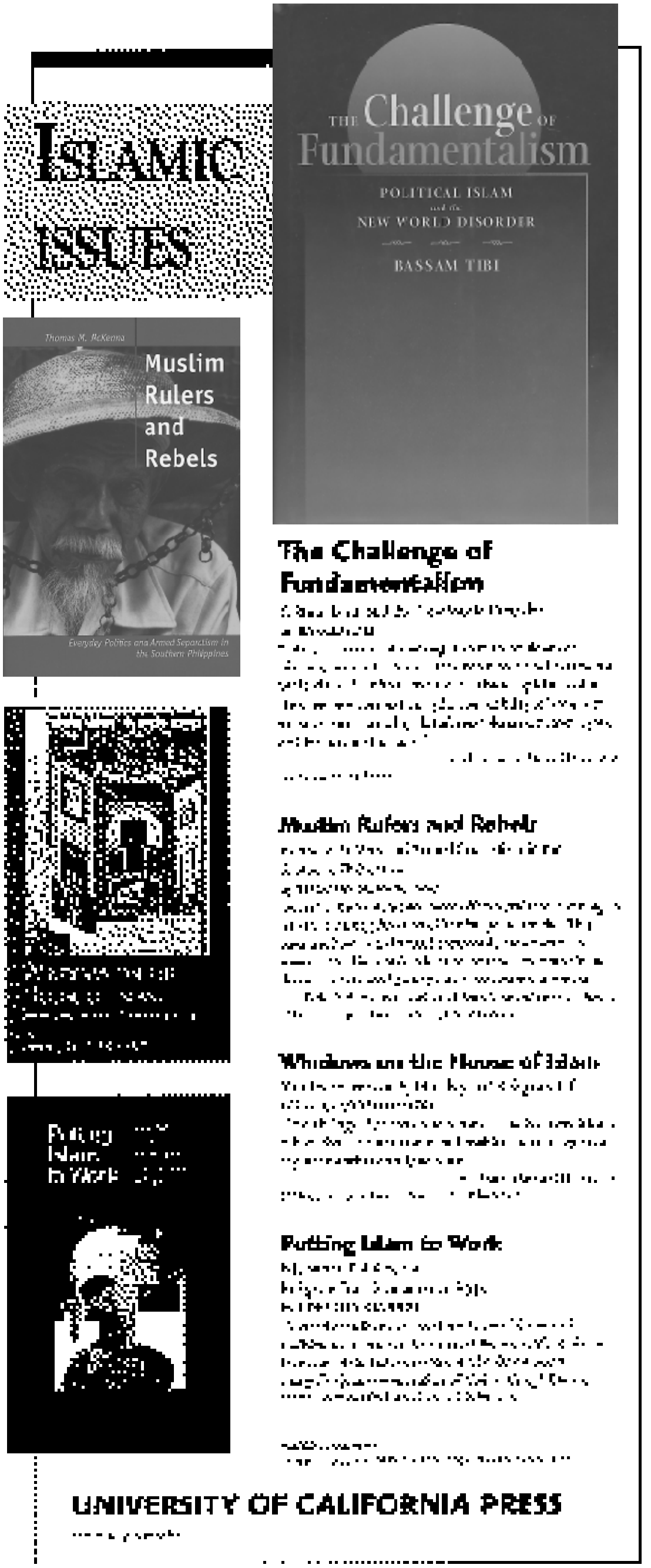

Islamic World / General
University of Tokyo, Japan
SATO TSUGITAKA

Islamic Area Studies Project

The Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture commissioned this area study entitled Islamic Area Studies to collect information and create a computerized information system in order to better our understanding of the Islamic world. Beginning in April 1997, it will continue for five years, until the spring of 2002. Herein, I would like to explain the aims, content and basic plan of action of the project and express my hope that many people will participate actively in it.

Research Aims

This project aims to create a new field which we call 'Islamic Area Studies'. Its specific objectives are threefold.

(a) Development of new methods inIslamic Area Studies

The term 'Islamic World' is often used to refer only to the regions of the Middle East; however, we know well that Islam as a religion and a civilization has spread beyond the Middle East to Central and Southeast Asia in the East and the Balkans and Africa in the West. Furthermore, Muslims now form important social groups within contemporary Western societies, as well as in China and Japan. This means that regions with close ties to Islam now encompass the world.

When examining communities where Muslims reside, we find both symbiotic relationships with other peoples and serious problems, such as ethnic strife, interregional conflict, population explosion, and destruction of the environment. For example, Muslims are today deeply involved in the Bosnian conflict, the civil war in Afghanistan, 'the new ethnic question' in the European Union, and the struggle for human rights in the United States. Therefore, we may say that social, political and economic trends in the Islamic world will definitely determine the development of world civilization in the twenty-first century, making it necessary for non-Muslim peoples to take positive steps towards the better understanding of Islamic history, ideas and contemporary situation.

(b) Development of a computerized information system suitable for Islamic Area Studies

Up until now, Islamic Studies have not always made sufficient use of computers, chiefly because of the many character systems involved and because there was little connection between this kind of research and the applicable technical fields. This Project plans to continue the development of databases in languages which use non-Roman characters such as Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Malay and develop methods to apply computer technology to Area Studies.

(c) Assisting Young Researchers

In recent times the rapid development of Islamic Studies in Japan has been quite remarkable, however on a global scale the shortage of researchers and accumulated research is undeniable. Considering the importance of the Islamic world will have in the twenty-first century, I feel it is necessary to do all we can to assist the next generation of young researchers and support their participation in an international network.

Basic Plan of Implementation

As mentioned before, the areas covered by Islamic Area Studies are not limited to the Middle East and should be flexibly determined based on the character of the themes studied. Although we must remember that there are many ways to view Area Studies, it is generally agreed that it is the synthesis of the results of basic research in various disciplines such as Political Science, Economics, Social Studies, Anthropology, History, Geography, Religious Studies, Literature, Linguistics, International Relations, and Urban Engineering.

While realizing that one of the objectives of Area Studies is the understanding of the contemporary world, I believe that it is better to initially conduct research within the various disciplines and then synthesize them. The notion that the deciphering of one scroll of ancient writing is closely connected to the understanding of the civilization of the area is important. What is demanded of the six research units, of the thirteen smaller groups under them, and of the Project as a whole is the active effort to synthesize research from various disciplines.

Research conducted in this project is open to researchers and specialists both in Japan and all over the world. Each group is made up of five or six members (rotating every few years), but the research will not be carried out by these members alone. The group members are responsible for bringing in researchers other than group members, especially younger researchers to participate in the planning and conducting of research. We are hoping that those with an interest in this project will actively plan, conduct and present the results of their research.

We have the Islamic Area Studies newsletter which is published in both Japanese and English. In the sphere of international conferences and workshops, we recently organized a conference on the 'Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study' at the Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, in October 1998. Details of forthcoming workshops and conferences can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

The success of this project will be closely tied to having a wide range of researchers and specialists freely participate in the project. We hope that those interested will frequently contact the Project Management Unit, the main research units and the research groups by e-mail, fax, letters and so on. The purpose of the Islamic Area Studies Project is, with the cooperation of many researchers from both within the Project and outside of it, to create a substantive body of knowledge for the understanding of the Islamic world. ✦

Sato Tsugitaka is Project Leader of the project

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Sub-Saharan Africa
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Islam Tropical Project

The programme 'Islam Tropical' of the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme (MSH) was set up to facilitate international co-operation and exchange between English and French-speaking African, European and American scholars for the development of research on Islam in the countries south of the Sahara. Conceived of, at an international round table discussion held in Paris in December 1983, by leading specialists on sub-Saharian Islam drawn from the three continents, it was only by the end of the 1980's that the programme was included in the general research programme of the Ministry of Research on what is termed in French as 'Islam périphérique'. Discussed in the journal 'Islam Tropical' published by the MSH, the project received its final go-ahead when its chief French representative, Jean-Louis Triaud was nominated to his post at the University of Provence, Aix I in 1992. This laid the foundation for the collaboration between the MSH and the researchers on this project.

The principal co-ordinators of the Islam Tropical project are Louis Brenner of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) London; Constant Hamès of the Centre national des Recherches Scientifiques (CNRS); Ousmane Kane of the University of Saint-Louis, Senegal; David Robinson of the Department of History, Michigan State University; and Jean-Louis Triaud of the University of Provence, Aix I.

Under the rubrique of this programme, scholars from abroad have been invited, and specialized seminars have been organized around their visits to facilitate research and exchange of ideas.

Research

From 1982-'92, this programme functioned in synergy with the weekly seminar on 'Islam and societies south of the Sahara' of the M.Phil programme on the History of Africa of the Universities of Paris I and II. These were largely conducted by Henri Moniot of the University of Paris VII, Jean-Louis Triaud who at the time was also attached to the University of Paris VII, Constant Hamès of the CNRS and Ousmane Kane of the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques (FNSP).

After the nominations, in 1992, of Jean-Louis Triaud to the University of Provence, Aix I, and Ousmane Kane to the University of Saint-Louis in Senegal, fresh guidelines for conducting workshops and conferences and publications were formulated. Most of the members within the international framework of the project were to participate in a quadrennial programme on Islam under colonial domination in French Africa. This programme was co-convened by David Robinson and Jean-Louis Triaud, and received financial aid from the National Endowment for the Humanities in Washington. A workshop on this was convened in July 1993 at the Maison Suger under the auspices of the MSH. The first of its two international conferences was held in Aix-en-Provence in September 1994, and the second in 1995. The outcome was the publication of 'Le temps des marabouts: Itinéraires et stratégies islamiques en Afrique occidentale (1880-1960)' (Paris, Karthala, 583 pages) in 1997.

As far as publications are concerened, pooling together their international collaborative efforts and research experience, the co-ordinators liaised with the publications division of the CNRS and the MSH, to bring out a bi-lingual (French and English) specialized annual issue on 'Islam et sociétés au sud du Sahara', of which volume 12 is currently under preparation. The journal publishes material on both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries on Islamic trends and phenomena as well as the transmission of Islamic knowledge in the countries south of the Sahara.

It has recently been decided that the journal, which by 1992 had gained a respectable circulation and prestige, henceforth be published under the collaborative aegis of the MSH, Paris; the Institut d'Histoire Comparée des Civilisations (IHCC), Aix-en-Provence and the Institut de Recherche sur le Monde Arabe et Musulman (IREMAM), Aix-en-Provence.

In addition, Ousman Kane and Jean-Louis Triaud have taken the initiative to publish some of the articles dating from the origin of the journal in a new form: with a fresh introductory chapter and incorporating new data. Their aim is to make this publication, with its documentation and analyses on contemporary African Muslims, accessible to a larger audience. The book, jointly published by IREMAM, Aix-en-Provence, and Karthala and MSH, Paris, entitled 'Islam et islamisme au sud du Sahara' is currently in press.

Collaboration

In the beginning, the project was largely characterized by the predominance of historians. With the inclusion of sociologists and political scientists within the framwork, contemporary issues in the study of Islam have also provided new impetus for research.

Many members of the project collaborate with the Programme de Recherches Interdisciplinaires (PRI) of the CNRS-EHESS entitled 'La transmission du savoir dans le monde musulman périphérique'; as well as with a research group, financed by the CNRS, MSH, EHESS and the Institut Français de Recherche Scientifique pour le Développement en Coopération (formerly known as ORSTOM), tracing the life and work of the Senegalese historian Musa Kamara. ✦

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Islamic World / General
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University of California Humanities Research Institute

Multi-year Research Initiative on Islam and Muslims

This initiative stems from a series of individual meetings held in 1995-96 between the Director of the Humanities Research Institute (HRI), Dr Patricia O'Brien, and members of the humanities and social sciences faculties of the nine universities of the University of California system. Professors in different departments often expressed the need for time in which to examine issues that have risen out of movements associated with Islam and with Muslim communities which have taken place during the twentieth century, especially in recent decades. Faculty acknowledged the large body of work that has been done on these topics, but stressed the need for specialists in the different fields intersecting them to examine the given issues together, in a research setting, for an extended period.

Widening the sphere of involvement in these discussions, in the summer of 1996 the Institute contacted faculty at other universities in the nation about a possible research initiative at HRI. The number of responses received and the comments they contained confirmed that there is a real need for such an undertaking. HRI's next step was to hold an interdisciplinary forum on the topic, in November 1996. The attendees recognized that sometimes even on the same campus scholars are isolated from colleagues working on similar issues, so that Middle Eastern scholars may well be ignorant of Africanists or Asian specialists working on Muslim-based research problems. They all agreed that the tendency toward separation and fragmentation which exists on the departmental and disciplinary levels among Islamic specialists should be overcome, particularly for a research initiative. They emphasized the positive effect that interdisciplinary research on the topic would ultimately have on curricula and the classroom. They also stated the need to have disciplinary configurations reflect shifts in student populations that have occurred as a result of Muslim immigrations in recent decades. By the end of the day-long meeting the broad structure and general research themes of the multi-year research initiative were established.

In the spring of 1997, the Institute applied to and received a grant from the Office of the President of the UC system for seed funding in order to launch the multi-year initiative. We are in discussion with several private foundations about possible funding for the projects that will take place next year. Planning discussions for the second project of the initiative took place at HRI last spring, attended by Professors Leonard and O'Brien, several members of the initiative's special Advisory Council, and several other professors (Georges Sabagh, UCLA; Mehdi Borzorgmehr, CUNY) interested in the initiative as a whole.

Mission of the University of California Humanities Research Institute (HRI)

The principal purpose of the UC Humanities Research Institute is to provide a centre for collaborative, interdisciplinary research in the humanities among the scholars of the nine campuses of the University of California system and their national and international colleagues. Research conducted at the Institute usually requires the participation of scholars in humanities and social sciences disciplines, and may often require the participation of specialists in the sciences.

The Challenge of the Topic and the Goals of the Research Initiative on Islam and Muslims

The intellectual goal of this project is to improve our understanding of Islam and Muslims in the United States and throughout the world by examining the religion and its diverse expressions and practices; the global politics of Islamic movements; the ethnic and national identities of Muslims; the importance of gender and citizenship issues, feminism, and family structures in various settings; the relationship between regional expressions and a global market economy, and a particular scrutiny of the development of Muslim communities in North America. The study's pragmatic goals are to produce and disseminate knowledge concerning these questions and issues. This will be accomplished through the publication of research findings, as well as through scholarly conferences, symposia, and colloquia.

Organizational Structure of the Research Initiative

Three core groups of scholars are constructing the studies and, in order to ensure meaningful and objective guidance for the overall project and crucial periodic reviews of progress, an Advisory Council of preeminent Islamicists has been formed. Research will comprise three broad clusters of themes. Each cluster will be addressed by a separate research group in residence at different times at the Institute. A series of workshops for members of all three groups will take place at the Institute during the initiative so that the initiative may be truly comprehensive in its approach and conclusions.

Project Participants

Each of these residencies will include scholars working across a variety of disciplines in the Middle East, Europe, South Asia, the Pacific, and the Americas. Working together in residency is crucial because, although historians, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, literary theorists, religious scholars, historians, art historians, and others have investigated these questions, many have not had the opportunity to draw their findings together in the intensely collaborative and highly focused forum that a residential research group provides. Every indication from our planning an development is that the value added by collaboration will allow for new findings and new contributions to research development and policy formation. Members of Muslim communities will be visiting participants over the course of this initiative.

Residential Research Group I: Academic Year 1998-99. Gender and Citizenship in Muslim Communities

The role of Muslim women in the family and the community will figure prominently in the study. One of the projects will take as its point of departure the question of how women constitute themselves — as subjects and as citizens— in their social and political communities. Citizenship and related legal and property issues will constitute the core concern of this gendered approach. Issues that stem from certain religious concepts and which relate to the traditional roles and civil rights of women will be examined in light of current Islamic feminist activism. Scholars will look into the impact of the globalization of women's movements as well as of human rights and cultural movements. This residency will also examine related NGO movements, and the competitiveness between NGO's and nation states. The roles of women's advisory groups, and how they often work through children's advocacy groups, will figure in this residency. The convener (project director) of this research group is Suad Joseph, Anthropology, UC Davis, and other scholars are drawn from the University of California system. Outside participants will be drawn from the local Muslim community.

Residential Research Group II: Academic Year 1999-2000. Muslim Identities in North America.

This residential group will focus on Muslims in North America, especially the United States and Canada. Islam is a fast-growing religion in the U.S., poised to displace Judaism and become second only to Christianity in the number of its adherents. This study will examine directions that Muslims are taking in North America. Scholars will look at how leaders of Islam conceptualize the new communities in North America, and how do they work towards integration in a democratic system. This proposal recognizes the diversity within this major world religion, particularly the diversity among Muslims in North America as immigrant and indigenous Muslims from many national, racial, class, and cultural backgrounds come together. There are African Americans and other indigenous converts, and immigrants from countries as diverse as Lebanon, Egypt, Iran, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Major topics will be the transmission and reformulation of religious beliefs and behaviours, including gendered practices and the teaching of Islam in families and institutions. The convener (project director) is Karen Leonard, Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, UC Irvine. A call for applications for fellowships has been issued to all humanities and social sciences faculties at the nine universities of the University of California system. Scholars from outside the UC system may also be invited to participate. The group will also benefit from consultations with leaders and members of local Muslim communities.

Residential Research Group III: Academic Year 1999-2000. Islamic Modernities in an Era of Globalization: Discourses, Movements, and Diasporas

This study will be devoted to global economic and political perspectives of Islam. Themes include the Islamic revival, Islam in light of globalization, and the reactions of Islam to modernity. At the same time, the increasing numbers of Muslims in many areas of the globe, including the United States, call for an examination of their communities, their ties to each other and to Islam, and how their presence fits into or is a part of the larger societies in which they are minorities, as well as attention to those areas in the Middle East and South Asia where they are majority populations. The impact of Islam on the global economy is a subject of utmost importance, and scholars have debated for many years whether Islam is consistent with the logic of market economy. In addition, this study will look into Muslim immigrations and the movement of migrant workers back and forth across national boundaries. The electronic connections linking local communities – and, in fact, creating virtual 'cyber communities' which are much larger than the local communities will be studied. This project will also explore challenges to and opportunities for these communities to coexist and to integrate themselves in to the societies in which they find themselves. The convener of this research group is Paul M. Lubeck, Sociology, UC Santa Cruz. The other scholars who will participate in this study will be selected by April, 1999. A call for applications for fellowships has been issued to all humanities and social sciences faculties at the nine universities of the University of California system. Scholars from outside the UC system may also be invited to participate. ✦

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Sub-Saharan Africa

CAROLINE ANGENENT
& ANNEKE BREEDVELD

Power and the Study of Islam South of the Sahara

On Friday 7 August 1998, the world was horrified by two bomb attacks on the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam. Although 250 Kenyan citizens and about ten Tanzanians were killed in these attacks, the attention of the world focused mainly on the distress caused by the deaths of twelve Americans. The perpetrators were immediately sought among Muslims in the Middle East. The past of Osama Bin Laden – the suspected mastermind behind the attacks – was dredged up and a possible Dutch connection with international terrorism was explored in depth. Africa seems to have been no more than an accidental setting for these attacks, possibly selected because airport security leaves so much to be desired.

None of the journalists seemed to be even slightly aware that the coastal regions of these countries in particular have been part of the Islamic world for centuries, with trade contacts dating from pre-Islamic times and a multitude of slave expeditions that made Zanzibar notorious as a transit port. This is why it is remarkable that no one in the media asked whether 'the army for the liberation of Islamic holy places' might not possibly be a local organization – all the more so since at the beginning of this year there were demonstrations in Dar Es Salaam 'against Christianity' organized by groups of radical Muslims. The Tanzanian government reproached the radical groups for their lack of religious tolerance and gave the police permission to use violence to put an end to the demonstrations (Marc de Meij, personal communication). Yet there are two reasons why even radical East African Muslim organizations are an improbable source from which to expect anti-American terrorism. These Muslim organizations are financially supported by countries such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which are pro-American in inclination. Generally speaking, religious tolerance does indeed appear to be an important aspect of religious life in Africa to the south of the Sahara.

In this article, we shall restrict ourselves to Dutch studies of Islam south of the Sahara since for years scientists have treated this desert as a dividing line. However, this geographical boundary is of doubtful value – after all, no one knows where 'North Africa' stops and 'south of the Sahara' begins. Certainly, as far as Islam is concerned, the Sahara cannot be called an absolute boundary. However, because of this self-imposed division, differences in the choice of subject matter in science can be observed between the two areas. Generally, in North Africa, Islam is the primary study theme and 'unorthodox' local forms of expressing Islam (trance dancing, worship of saints, festivals, sufi brotherhoods) are often described. On the other hand, studies of Islam south of the Sahara are often linked to describing an ethnic group. A researcher will only focus attention on Islam if this religion is important to the group studied. In the Netherlands, the religion itself is seldom the primary study theme and here the religious tolerance mentioned above is probably to blame. South of the Sahara it is not uncommon to find followers of a traditional religion, Islam and Christianity within one family. Religious sectarianism seems to be absent, or still in its infancy, and religious organizations also succeed in recruiting large numbers of followers by peaceful means.

With reference to this religious tolerance, Mazrui (1998) has stated that in this part of the world, religious observance only leads to conflict if it coincides with ethnic dividing lines. Within some 'mono-religious' Islamic communities, conflicts also take place along ethnic lines. The violence in Algeria, for example, has partly to do with an enforced process of Arabization aimed against the language and culture of the Berbers. The same process of Arabization in Mauritania has led to the resistance (and an exodus) of non-Arabic-speaking population groups from the south of the country. As early as 1990, Buijtenhuis observed that this Arabic imperialism was a major cause of the hotbeds in the Sahel area and in the Horn of Africa. Arab imperialism from Libya led to problems in Chad; in the Sudan, the Muslim/Arabic cultural domination comes from the north of the country.

Yet it would still be unjust to associate the spread of Islam in Africa only with violence. It is true that a number of jihads took place in the 19th century – particularly in West Africa – but in the vast majority of cases the spread of Islam, which had already crossed the Sahara in the 9th century, took place in a peaceful manner via wandering clerics and trading contacts. Even today, large numbers of people convert to Islam of their own free will. One of the reasons for this conversion put forward in Dutch studies is that, in some areas, trade is entirely in the hands of Muslims. Conversion to Islam makes access to this commercial network easier or is possibly even a precondition (Schilder 1994).

But economic power often goes hand in hand with political power. For example, the Touareg, who have played an important part in the dissemination of Islam in the Sahel, succeeded in monopolizing particular trans-Saharan trading routes at one time. The colonial powers were only too willing to make use of such local Islamic power-brokers. In Senegal, where the marabouts (spiritual leaders) had a great deal of influence on the local population, they were appointed by the French as intermediaries south of the Sahara in their consultations with the traditional leaders. The marabouts then urged the population to go over to cultivating groundnuts, an important export product for the French. The relationship of mutual interdependence between the political leaders and the marabouts to which this gave rise also established the relationship between State and politics in present-day Senegal (Angenent & de Bruijn 1990:8). These religious-political balances of power have been dealt with exhaustively in Dutch studies of Islam south of the Sahara (see also Van der Drift 1986, Hesseling 1985).

The balance of power between man and woman is also dealt with regularly in Dutch studies of Islam. Nowadays, the active role of the woman outside the house in Africa seems to be at odds with her protective, domestic position, as propagated by certain movements within Islam. In many agricultural communities in Africa, the woman is the primary worker of the land and the income derived from the sale of her crops plays an important role in keeping the household going economically. Within nomadic Muslim groups that live from animal husbandry, the grandmothers of today still recall how they used to trek with their animals and go to the villages to trade their milk surplus.

However, particularly in sedentary urban Muslim communities, the Muslim woman's place has become increasingly domestic. Women and men have thus been allocated a different role in the household, in which the position of the woman seems to have changed most and has thus received the more attention in literature. Bartels (1993) associates the introduction of female circumcision among the Balante in Senegal and infibulation in Sudan with a change in the balance of power between the sexes. However, that the precepts of Islam always work out to the disadvantage of the woman is too one-sided. Van Santen (1998) shows that Mafa women certainly become better off when they convert to Islam because this religion assigns a better position to women with regard to rights of inheritance than does the Mafa religion. In the north of Cameroon, town-dwelling Fulbe women, who saw themselves being confined to their home, applied themselves to singing the praises of the Prophet and composing religious poetry (Haafkens 1983). They not only composed, but also learned old texts by heart – by such writers as Usman Dan Fodio, the founder of the Sokoto kingdom – and thus ensured the tradition of their (Islamic) history.

So the literary world of Islam in Africa is not restricted to the reciting of verses from the Arabic Koran. In many Muslim communities, there is a great wealth of spoken and written texts in African languages. These texts often have a religious content but not always. A poem may deal with the building of a dhow – the sailing boat that plays such an important part in the trade-links between East Africa and the south coast of Asia (Miehe & Schadeberg 1979). These texts are not only studied for their literary value; anthropology also draws on texts of a religious nature. Mommersteeg (1996) exhaustively analyses the (secret) techniques of marabouts who, for example, write texts from the Koran on wooden writing boards, after which the text is washed off and the water used to invoke certain blessings – a cure, for instance. This process has also found its way into (anthropological) films (Van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal & Van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal 1974). Another important literary genre is the so-called 'taariki' – the history of the conversion of one's own community. It so happens that many Muslim communities derive status from the fact that they became Muslims before other surrounding groups (Breedveld & Angenent 1997). So people in Africa are often not just nominally Muslim – this religion clearly plays a role in their daily social lives. Various anthropologists have studied how local customs have, or have not, endured the confrontation with comparable Muslim institutionalized social habits, such as the zakat (De Bruijn 1994, Van Hoven 1996).

Perhaps it was the result of coincidence or was due to the extreme tenacity of some passionate researchers that in the Netherlands so much attention has been devoted to the Islamic architecture in Mali, particularly in the city of Djenne (Bedaux & Van der Waals 1994, Maas & Mommersteeg 1992). This study, carried out at various scientific institutes in the Netherlands and abroad, by archaeological, anthropological and architectural researchers, has led to the renowned exhibition about Djenne at the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde (National Museum of Ethnology) in Leiden, which was later exhibited in Bamako, the capital of Mali. Actually, this is a classic example of how science can be spectacular in a small country, namely by not stopping at disciplinary boundaries or at North-South boundaries. Cooperation with researchers from Mali itself has also made a great contribution to the success of this study. Future Dutch research into Islam in Africa will be helped considerably if it endeavours to have the same unbounded, multidisciplinary and global character. ✦

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Islamic World / General
The Netherlands

A Guide to Recent Dutch Research on Islam and Muslim Societies

The aim of this Guide, compiled by Ruud Strijp, is to offer a comprehensive survey of research on Islam and Muslim societies as it has been conducted over the last decade or so by scholars in the Netherlands as well as by Dutch scholars abroad. The initiative was taken by the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) in Leiden.

The Guide contains the names of more than 250 persons, both Dutchmen and foreigners in the Netherlands and Dutchmen abroad. The majority has conducted scientific research on and published about Islam – actually, the main criterion for the inclusion of individuals in the Guide was the existence of publications based on academic research. In addition, a number of persons have been included whose research and writings about Muslim societies and Muslim communities can be considered to be closely influenced by or related to the study of Islam. The Guide begins by presenting an alphabetical list of the persons included. It informs the reader of their disciplinary backgrounds, their positions, and their main topics and regional interests. Besides this some major and/or recent publications are listed if appropriate to the context, their PhD thesis or the subject of their PhD research is mentioned. In addition to the alphabetical list, the Guide contains a Geographical Index and a Subject Index.

The picture emerging from this Guide is that of an expanding and increasingly productive Dutch academic community. Islam and Muslim societies and communities are studied by representatives of various disciplines, such as linguistics, theology, law, history and, increasingly, cultural anthropology. As might be expected, their topical and geographical interests vary widely and cover various historical periods. ✦

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Forthcoming

Survey of Islamic Studies in Germany

Islamic World / General

EKKEHARD RUDOLPH

In 1996 the *Institute for Advanced Study* (Wissenschaftskolleg) in Berlin launched the initiative to survey contemporary German research on Islam and Muslim societies, past and present.

The project emerged from the discussions of the *Working Group Modernity and Islam*, uniting scholars mostly from the two Berlin universities (Freie and Humboldt University), the *German Orient Institute* (Deutsches Orient-Institut) in Hamburg, and fellow researchers from Islamic countries.

The survey is generally intended to analyse the state of the art in all studies on the Middle East and the whole Islamic world at German universities and outside research institutions. Supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science (BMBF) the survey had to identify the crucial problems and lacunae in the content and structure of relevant research. Finally it was to put forward precise recommendations to the responsible bodies of the German Länder (states) and the Federal Government as a means to strengthen its future promotion.

The ambitious study was executed during 1997 as a project of the German Orient Institute in Hamburg. Questionnaires of more than 300 scholars and researchers at about 60 institutions were analysed, forming the nucleus of the survey. In addition, the project coordinator conducted personal interviews with a number of scholars to gain a vivid picture of the current situation.

By summarizing all related topics of research, including both historical and textual studies, as well as sociological contributions (for example on migration and European Islam), the project surpassed former surveys which merely pointed either to historical or contemporary research (cf. Denkschrift Orientalistik, Wiesbaden 1960; Gegenwartsbezogene Orientforschung in Deutschland, Göttingen 1974).

This comprehensive approach pays tribute to the growing mergence of social and cultural sciences in regard to methodology. This tendency can best be illustrated by several multilateral research projects on the transformation of societies in their turn towards modernity in different parts of the Islamic world (cf. Graduate Colleges, Collaborative Research Centres). The relevance of the interdisciplinary research to comparative studies in international and intercultural relations needs to be further emphasized.

The first part of the draft study is an overview of the main subjects of research in the study of languages, literature, history and religion in the Islamic world as well as in regional geography, anthropology, political and economic sciences. The second part in the study is aimed at the institutional structures of research in Germany including the situation and development of academic staff. Subsequent chapters are devoted to a description of German scientific societies, special libraries and documentation services, and last but not least to the funding of research and the perspectives of international cooperation. The annex provides detailed information about relevant institutions, scholars, addresses, special publications and periodicals.

Following a series of consultations and discussions over recent months, the survey will be published before long.

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Islamic World / General

KNUT VIKØR

Research on Islam in the Nordic Countries

While it may seem surprising that the far-off countries of the North have developed research interest in the Islamic world, a region they have had no colonial or similar relations with, such studies have in fact a long tradition in the Nordic countries. While we need not go back to the medieval Viking contact with the inner Mediterranean and the Arab world, both Denmark and Sweden had relations with various Middle Eastern powers from the seventeenth century onwards. Denmark, a maritime power, traded in Moroccan and other ports in North Africa, while Swedish forces in Central Europe came into direct military confrontation with the Ottoman Empire, to which they were allied for a period. Thus, there is little reason to wonder that the universities in the region developed a Middle Eastern interest.

Arabic was studied and taught in Copenhagen, Uppsala and Lund already from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and in 1760, the Danish expedition led by Carsten Niebuhr made a notable contribution to Western knowledge of the Arab peninsula. When the first university in Finland, then under Swedish rule, was established in Turku in 1640, even this distant institution was given a chair in Arabic. Norway, the fourth of the Nordic countries, developed this interest only later but can take pride in the fact that Carl Caspari's *Arabische Grammatik*, still one of the major authorities on Arabic grammar, was completed in Oslo (then Christiania) in 1848.

There is thus no novelty in the study of Middle Eastern societies and cultures in the four countries. (The fifth Nordic country, Iceland, still has to develop this area of research.) In particular over the last two decades, the field has expanded tremendously, through the extension of traditional subjects as philology and religious studies, as well as through the development of Middle Eastern research in history and the social sciences. Thus, most universities in the Nordic countries have some interest in the Middle East. About ten of them offer regular courses on the subject. They include the traditional centres of Uppsala, Lund, Helsinki and Copenhagen, as well as Oslo, Gothenburg, Stockholm and younger centres as Århus, Bergen and Odense. Research interests are varied in all institutions, but there is clearly a tendency for the more established centres to have a continuing tradition in philological and classical studies, while the younger universities have greater emphasis on social sciences and the modern period.

Arabic is currently being taught in nine of these institutions; Oslo and Bergen in Norway, Copenhagen and Odense in Denmark, Helsinki in Finland and four universities, Uppsala, Stockholm, Gothenburg and Lund in Sweden. However, only Uppsala, Copenhagen and Oslo have courses in Iranian languages, and the same three in Turkish. The teaching of Hebrew and other Semitic studies have long traditions, in particular in those universities with a tradition of theology. All institutions teach Islamic or religious studies in some form, while the history of the Middle East is taught as a specific subject only in Bergen; Copenhagen and Lund, among others, also have research in Middle Eastern history.

In terms of research, the same dual pattern can be found. All universities have research in the main areas of Middle Eastern and Islamic studies, but certain fields are stronger in particular milieus. Looking at the four countries one by one, we will find that in Finland, the largest centre is at the University of Helsinki, which has a very strong focus on Ancient Near Eastern studies. In the Islamic and modern area, Helsinki has a long tradition of philological and linguistic research, now being continued by Heikki Palva and his studies of Bedouin dialectology, in particular in Jordan. Among the younger scholars, an interest in both classical and modern Islam is developing, thus Helsinki is planning to hold a conference on Sufi studies in the near future. Helsinki is also developing relations with colleagues in nearby St. Petersburg.

The second large and very dynamic centre in Finland is that of Tampere, which is specializing on the modern political history of the Maghreb. This is constituted by a group of young scholars around Tuomo Melasuo, who is working on Algeria in the late colonial and post-colonial period. This milieu has grown in close collaboration with research centres in Europe and the Maghreb. The same is the case for the smaller group at the University of Joensuu, where M'hammed Sabour is developing very active research in the field of sociology.

Sweden is the largest of the Nordic countries, and also has the largest number of scholars in this field. Uppsala has a long and distinguished history in Semitic and Islamic studies. This approach continues to dominate the Uppsala research environment, which has the most extensive philological studies both in Arabic and other Middle Eastern languages. Another very clear distinction between Sweden and other Nordic countries is the close relation between Islamic studies and the field of theology, which has traditionally been open to the non-partisan study of all religions. This has recently manifested itself in the now-vacated Swedish Church of Alexandria, which has been transformed into a Swedish centre for Middle Eastern studies in Egypt (details are yet to be settled). The dominant figures in Uppsala may be too many to mention, but Tryggve Kronholm holds the chair in Arabic studies and has among other topics been working on Arabic literary history; while Bo Utas is a key figure in studies of Iranian languages and literature, not least in his studies in Persian Sufism.

The University of Lund has a tradition of Middle Eastern scholarship of equal depth to that of Uppsala, and is second to it in size. While it shares Uppsala's interest in philology, an active group of young scholars, organized by Jan Hjärpe, have started to focus on the ideas and social context of modern Islamic movements, both in Sweden and Europe, as well as in various countries of the Middle East.

Gothenburg University seems to have focused more on the contemporary Islamic world, being the Nordic country with the largest number of scholars on Middle Eastern political science as well as contemporary political history. Sune Persson is the dominant figure there. He has written several standard works on the modern history of the Palestine conflict and the Middle East.

Stockholm University has a research interest in Arabic language and literature, the chair in Arabic there was until recently held by Kerstin Eksell. She has, however, recently taken over a post in Copenhagen. Stockholm also has some research in various social sciences of the Middle East. Individual scholars on the Middle East are also employed at other smaller universities in Sweden, such as Linköping and Umeå.

In Denmark, the classical tradition is preserved by the University of Copenhagen, which also has a continuing tradition in philology as well as in ancient Near Eastern studies. Recently, the internal organization of this latter has been modified, in that several units of Near and Middle Eastern studies come under the umbrella of the Carsten Niebuhr institute of the University. This covers the traditional areas, but is also opening up to research more focused on modern Islamic topics, often in cooperation with Lund just across the straits in Sweden. This reorganization is spearheaded by the historian Jørgen Bæk Simonsen, who has worked both on medieval and contemporary Islamic topics.

The University of Århus, the second largest Middle East research milieu in Denmark, has built up a tradition of anthropology at the Moesgaard institute/museum. A number of expeditions to Afghanistan have brought this centre to attention, not least those led by Klaus Ferdinand. Århus also has other research interests in the modern Islamic world, both in anthropology and political science.

The only Danish university with a specific Centre for Middle Eastern Areas Studies is however the third one, Odense. This new centre has focused on contemporary studies, and has also given emphasis to reach beyond the academic world. Research on water issues, contemporary linguistics and political Islam can be noted at this centre, which was selected to be the national coordinating centre for Arabic teaching in Denmark.

It must also be noted that the Danish State has taken an important interest in developing contemporary Middle Eastern studies in Denmark. This has led to the establishment of a Danish Centre in Damascus, as well as the development of a Middle East network project. The latter is to last over five years, with a number of national and international conferences each year on a variety of subjects, including conflict resolution, water politics, and others. The aim of the network, which is run from Copenhagen, is to develop research especially among young scholars from all Danish areas.

In Norway, the 'dividend' from Norway's role in the 'Oslo process' has been some national funding for research on Palestinian/Israeli issues, but not so as to set a determining mark on the research milieu. The University of Oslo carries the national traditions of philological and linguistic research in all three language groups. The Arabic milieu has grown up around Gunvor Mejdell, now supported by the recent arrival of Michael Carter. Recently, a research group on current social and political issues in the Gulf has also developed in Oslo.

The Bergen research environment is, on the other hand, dominated by history and anthropology. Bergen is unique, not just in Scandinavia, but in Europe and beyond, for its very special focus on and relations with one country, the Sudan. This spans not only all arts and social sciences, but even cooperation in medicine, natural sciences and other disciplines as well, which all have tended to focus cooperation on the Sudan. Beyond the history of the Sudan – pioneered by Seán O'Fahey – Bergen has focused on the history of Islamic Africa in general, and in particular on the documentation of its sources. In anthropology, the Sudan interest (started by Fredrik Barth, now in Oslo) has been matched with a recent interest in the Turco-Iranian world, initiated by Reidar Grønhaug, and most recently research on the Indian Ocean is growing. Bergen also has a specific coordinating Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, which i.a. publishes the journal *Sudanic Africa* (on the history of Islamic Africa) and various book series.

It is the custom in non-European studies of this region to organize on a pan-Nordic basis, rather than on a purely national one. This is evidently because the individual national research environments are comparatively small, and only on the Nordic level can one expect the inter-university exchange that larger countries find nationally. Thus, there were, in the 1970s, common Nordic research centres established both for Asian studies (in Copenhagen) and for African studies (in Uppsala). No such pan-Nordic institution was set up for the Middle East, which was thus split between the two. As the two centres developed, both have a formal attachment to the Islamic world. But the Asia centre has decided to focus its attention on East and Southeast Asia, thus de-emphasizing their interest in Asia west of the Indus. The Africa institute is strongly focused on contemporary issues, and while not formally restricted to sub-Saharan Africa, evidently feels a pull in that direction.

To counteract this falling-between-the-centres, Middle Eastern and Islamic scholars have organized themselves in a society of scholars, which has no fixed centre, but is organized from the Bergen Middle East centre. Its main objective is information interchange between scholars in all fields of humanist and social sciences of the Islamic world and the Middle East, and holding regular conferences and academic encounters between scholars in these fields throughout the four countries. Thus, the fourth triennial conference of the Society, on 'Globalization and the Middle East', was held in August 1998 in Oslo (after the earlier ones in Uppsala, Copenhagen and Joensuu). ✦

Dr Knut Vikør is director of the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, University of Bergen, and elected secretary of the Nordic Society for Middle Eastern Studies.

The statistics in this article are based on the Directory of Middle Eastern Studies in the Nordic Countries*, Bergen 1998, which brings more detail of the various research topics and geographic areas covered in the Nordic region. More information on Nordic countries can be found on the Web, at the address http://www.hf.uib.no/smi/nsm/*

Gent, Belgium
HERMAN DE LEY
Director

The Centre for Islam in Europe
CIE

The presence of Muslims in Europe has always been a historical reality. From the 1960's, with postwar decolonization and the massive immigration of labourers from Muslim countries to Europe, Islam is today, a Western European reality more than ever before. Yet, the persistent refusal by a significant number of political parties to grant the right to vote to so-called 'non-EU citizens' proves that European perceptions, even in the closing years of the twentieth century, are still largely dominated by the nationalist ideologies of the nineteenth century.

It is taking into account such sentiments, and the necessity for Islam to regain its historical place as a valuable *European* tradition and worldview, which provided the impetus for our Institute to be set up.

The Centre for Islam in Europe (CIE) in Gent has been established recently as a largely 'voluntarist' initiative: 'voluntarist' being the term I would use for an academic engagement which wishes to respond to pressing social challenges; in this case, the challenges posed by social developments concerned with the embedding of Muslim communities in Western European societies. To that end, the CIE is an academic centre for research, education and interaction. It aims at giving 'European Islam' an academic status while developing tools for combating racism. Pursuing the goals of emancipation, equal rights and pluralism, the CIE is staffed by Muslims and non-Muslims, representing a wide variety and broad spectrum of views, traditions and backgrounds. As an academic centre, the CIE stands for an interdisciplinary and scientific approach. It acts independently of all partisan interests.

Membership is open to individual researchers, experts and members of staff. Institutes and democratic associations are welcome as associated members.

With the collaboration of academics from all over Europe, and in close interaction with Muslim organizations and institutions, the aims of the CIE are:

a. To co-ordinate and disseminate already available knowledge, skills and information (books, journals, data bases, etc.) among university staff and researchers;
b. To mobilize financial resources to conduct policy-oriented research in support of a more harmonious institutionalization of Islam in Western European societies;
c. To build an academic forum for Muslims and non-Muslims, with the help of publications, seminars, conferences, courses, training sessions, etc.;
d. To stimulate the Muslim public to enter academic studies, while demanding public respect for their Islamic identity;
e. To develop and support proposals for creating recognized academic degrees in Islamic sciences and theology.

It is the cherished hope of the CIE that on the basis of equality with other creeds and different world views, once Muslim academic graduates are provided with specific skills and expertise, they will look after not just their fellow believers, but other fellow citizens as well. With collaboration and positive determination, we hope that they will contribute positively and decisively to the realization of a better-integrated and more harmonious European society. ✦

Cairo, Egypt
HAN DEN HEIJER
Director

The Netherlands Institute for Archaeology and Arabic Studies in Cairo
NIAASC/NVIC

The Nederlands Instituut voor Archeologie en Arabische Studiën in Cairo (NIAASC: Netherlands Institute for Archaeology and Arabic Studies in Cairo) was founded in 1971 and has since developed into an academic unit representing the interests of a number of Dutch and Flemish institutions with regard to their scholarly activities in the Middle East, particularly in the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Administration and Staff

The following institutions participate in the funding and governing of the NIAASC: The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Kingdom of the Netherlands; Leiden University; Groningen University; The University of Amsterdam; The Catholic University of Nijmegen; Utrecht University; The Catholic University of Leuven; Gent University.

The participation of the latter two Flemish universities is funded by the Regional Government of Flanders. Locally, the NIAASC is an institution that has legal recognition under Egyptian law. All its financial matters are handled in The Netherlands at Leiden University, whose Office for International Cooperation administers the institute on behalf of the participating institutions.

The NIAASC is governed by a board, which is chaired by the President of Leiden University. The other universities are represented by the Presidents or other members of the respective University Boards. The board of the NIAASC is supported by an Advisory Council consisting of university professors specialized in the various scholarly disciplines related to the institute's activities.

Apart from an office supporting staff, the staff of the NIAASC includes the following permanent positions: director (arabist, Senior Lecturer); assistant director, representing the Flemish participating universities (arabist/islamologist, Lecturer); staff member (egyptologist, Lecturer); librarian (arabist, Lecturer).

Moreover, the NIAASC occasionally employs staff members on a temporary or free-lance basis, mainly for teaching purposes in the fields of archaeology and Arabic language training. Finally, associate research fellows (with external funding) and trainees are increasingly added to the staff.

Because of the significantly increased contribution of the Flemish institutions to the institute's activities, its name will be changed shortly into 'Nederlands-Vlaams Instituut in Cairo' (NVIC: Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo).

Main Activities

The NIAASC's main task is to provide practical assistance to researchers attached to the participating universities, particularly in preparing and carrying out fieldwork in Egypt or elsewhere in the Middle East. This assistance generally includes applications for research permits, site concessions or entrance to libraries and archives. Additionally, books and periodicals are purchased and sent to Dutch, Flemish and other research units and individuals upon request. The NIAASC contains a reference library with sections on Egyptology (focusing on studies related to archaeological fieldwork) and Arabic studies (particularly linguistics, literature, Islamic studies and social and political sciences). In weekly seminars, open to the public, topics related to the fields covered by the institute are presented by resident and visiting scholars of many nationalities. At several occasions, the NIAASC has organized or hosted conferences or symposia related to its profile.

Recently, the NIAASC has evolved into an important instrument in undergraduate teaching of both Arabic language and Egyptian archaeology. Programmes have been developed which allow students from participating universities to pursue their studies in an Arabic-speaking environment or in close proximity of relevant archaeological sites, while fully remaining within their own academic framework of credit points, timetables, etc. The NIAASC staff also supervises more advanced students in their fieldwork for MA papers.

The research programme of the NIAASC has so far been limited to the individual projects carried out by the academic staff, which generally also belong to the research clusters of the participating universities. Recently, however, a development towards a more extensive research programme has been initiated by attracting associated research fellows (mostly doctoral students) whose research funds derive from outside the institute's budget.

Publications

In the past, the NIAASC has issued two series of scholarly publications. The NIAASC has published five works from 1973 to 1988 by E.J. Brill (Leiden). In collaboration with Dar Shuhdy (Cairo), five works were published in Arabic, mostly translations of studies by Dutch scholars. Presently, a new series is being created: the Contributions from the Nederlands-Vlaams Instituut in Cairo will appear within the CNWS Publications, produced by the Research School CNWS of Leiden University.

International Contacts

Besides regular exchange with Egyptian and Arab institutions of research, higher education and culture, the NIAASC has frequent and manifold contacts with similar institutions representing European states, the USA, Canada and other countries, such as the Istituto Italiano di Cultura (I.I.C.) per la R.A.E. (Arabic and archaeological section), the Deutsches Archeologisches Institut Abteilung Kairo, the Institut français d'Archéologie orientale (IFAO), the Institut Français d'Études Arabes à Damas (Damascus, Syria), the Centre Français d'Études Yéménites (Sana'a, Yemen), the Egypt Exploration Society (Cairo Office, at the British Council), the Polish Centre for Mediterranean Archaeology (Cairo), the American Research Center in Egypt, the American University in Cairo, and the Canadian Institute in Egypt. Such contacts consist in mutual practical assistance and attendance of lecture series and seminars, whereas in some cases collaboration is more institutionalized and intensive.

With regard to the study of the contemporary Middle East (and indeed the Muslim world), the NIAASC's most important links are those with several departments of Cairo University (e.g. the International Relations Department), Al Azhar University (which regularly sends junior research fellows to Leiden through the institute's intermediary), as well as with the universities of Damascus and Sana'a. Of the utmost importance are the working contacts with the Centre d'Études et de Documentation Économique, Juridique et Sociale (CEDEJ) in Cairo, which has resulted in a common research project and workshop in the field of sociology and anthropology of Middle Eastern law.

Also worth mentioning on a practical level is the institute's active involvement in a newly created network of international libraries in Cairo.

NIAASC and ISIM

Since the ISIM was established by four of the institutions that also participate in the NIAASC (the Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Universities of Amsterdam, Leiden and Utrecht), it is only logical that the NIAASC acts as its liaison office in Egypt and, whenever relevant, in other Middle Eastern countries. In the past, the institute has always played a significant part in the participating institutions' professional links with counterparts in the region, including working contacts for activities involving large parts of the Muslim world, such as the Indonesian-Netherlands Cooperation in Islamic Studies (INIS) project, and the 1996 Leiden Conference on Islam and the Twenty-first Century. Now that ISIM is operational, the NIAASC will assist it locally through various activities such as contacting scholars from Egypt and other Arab countries, in view of ISIM-related scholarly activities (e.g., conferences, workshops). Furthermore, NIAASC will advise on the identification and selection of students and scholars from the region for study or research at ISIM in Leiden or elsewhere. NIAASC will also assist in the implemention of library and documentation exchange agreements between ISIM and universities in the region. ✦

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Islamabad, Pakistan
MUHAMMAD KHALID MASUD

Islamic Research Institute

The Government of Pakistan formally established the Islamic Research Institute in 1960 in accordance with the provisions of the 1956 Constitution. The Institute symbolizes the desire of the Muslims in South Asia to respond to the challenge of modernity from within the Islamic tradition. Since the nineteenth century there have been two approaches to this challenge. The conservatives opposed modernity and stood for reviving and preserving tradition. The modernists were in favour of accepting the challenge of modernity and aspired to the reconstruction of a modern society on the basis of Islamic principles. In 1930 Allama Iqbal proposed a separate homeland for the Muslims in India and also founded an institute in Lahore for research on Islam.

The need for and relevance of research on Islam was felt more intensely after the creation of Pakistan in 1947. The institutions of the new Muslim State had to be creatively developed primarily out of the Muslims' own intellectual resources rather than copied from others. The need to know and explain Islam in depth and work out its implications for human thought and action in the present-day world was therefore self-evident.

For a proper reconstruction of Muslim society it was considered imperative that Islamic scholarship should engage itself in serious study and research in the fields of Qur'anic sciences, Hadith, Islamic law and jurisprudence, history, culture, philosophy, Tasawwuf and various other Islamic subjects. It was important not only to review their development in the past but also to draw the blueprint for the future development of Muslim thought to meet the requirements of a dynamic Muslim society.

The 1949 Objective Resolution by the Pakistan Constituent Assembly reflected these needs, saying, 'wherein the Muslims will be enabled to lead life in the individual and collective spheres in accord with the teaching and requirements of Islam as set out in the Holy Qur'an and the Sunna'. To achieve this objective, therefore, the Constituent Assembly proposed the establishment of the Islamic Research Institute in 1952.

The first Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in 1956 provided under Article 197-(1) that the President 'shall set up an organization for Islamic Research and instruction in advanced studies to assist in the reconstruction of Muslim Society on a truly Islamic basis'. The Federal Law Minister, accordingly, announced the establishment of the Institute on March 10, 1960.

The objectives of the Institute were defined as follows:

1. To define Islam in terms of its fundamentals in a rational and liberal manner and to emphasize, among others, the basic Islamic ideals of universal brotherhood, tolerance and social justice;
2. To interpret the teachings of Islam in such a way as to bring out its dynamic character in the context of the intellectual and scientific progress of the modern world;
3. To carry out research on the contribution of Islam to thought, science and culture with a view to enabling the Muslims to recapture an eminent position in these fields; and
4. To take appropriate measures for organizing and encouraging research in Islamic history, philosophy, law and jurisprudence, etc.

Quite clearly, the Institute was envisioned as a liberal and rational research organization. The 1962 Constitution (Art. 207) confirmed almost the same position, defining the Function of the Institute 'to undertake Islamic research and instruction in Islam for the purpose of assisting in the construction of Muslim society on a truly Islamic basis'.

This was the period when Dr Fazlur Rahman (1919-1988), a graduate of Oxford University, was invited to join the Institute as Director. He was teaching at McGill University, Montreal, Canada, at the time. The main objective of the Institute was to develop a methodology for scientific research in various fields. To accomplish these goals, Dr Fazlur Rahman gathered together a group of scholars who represented not only various disciplines but also different Islamic orientations. This group represented different Islamic schools of thought and ethnic and provincial diversity in Pakistan. In addition to their training in traditional Islamic learning, all had to have a degree in a modern discipline: for e.g. economy, sociology, political science, etc. These scholars had also advanced degrees from renowned universities in the West. Several were sent to USA and Canada. The general milieu at the Institute, especially at the seminars, deliberately encouraged academic discussion and free exchange of views.

The results of the research work were published in books, monographs and research reports. The Institute also began publishing its own research journals: *Fikr-o Nazar* (Urdu), *Al-Dirasat al-Islamiyyah* (Arabic), *Islamic Studies* (English) and *Sandhan* (Bengali). In addition, two popular periodicals, *Ummah* (English) and *Nida-I Millat* (Urdu) were also published. The first three periodicals have been publishing continuously as quarterly journals.

For research, a Master Plan was prepared in 1965. The Institute also assisted in legislation work. It examined and provided research materials for the drafting of various laws. It assisted the Islamic Advisory Council, which would advise the National Assembly. Pakistan Family Laws, legislated in 1962, represented a liberal interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunna. The conservatives opposed these laws as they restricted polygamy and gave rights to women that traditional Islamic law did not allow. The Institute found itself the target of hostile propaganda. Fazlur Rahman was called Abu'l Fazl, the notorious Vizier of the Mughal emperor Akbar who supposedly instituted a new religion.

Fazlur Rahman's book *Islam, a general introduction*, essentially written as a defence of Islam against Western critics, triggered controversy. A population with 25 % literacy took to the streets protesting against a book that most of them could not and had not read. Political opposition to Ayyub took advantage of the situation. The Ulama declared Rahman a heretic. Agitation began first in Dacca, the constituency of Mawlana Ihtishamul Haq Thanawi who was leading this protest against Rahman and Ayyub Kahn. Countrywide disturbances in 1969 led Ayyub Khan to resign. Rahman was forced to leave the country, and taught at the University of Chicago until his death in 1988.

This was a tragic experience for the Institute. The role of the Institute and its collaboration with the government in the modernization of Pakistani society was criticized widely. The Ulama suspected research on Islam. Consequently, the Institute was relegated to a low profile. The 1973 Constitution excluded the article about the Institute. More research staff with Madrasa training was recruited. The research emphasis also shifted. All these changes could still not earn the approval of the orthodoxy. The Institute was attached to the newly formed Ministry of Religious Affairs. The objectives of the Institute were redefined reflecting a subtle change in its research orientation. Among the new objectives that were notified in 1979 by the Ministry of Religious Affairs are:

1. To undertake and promote research on a continuing basis on the socio-economic, administrative, legal and political aspects of a Muslim society and polity, with particular reference to Pakistan, with a view to their reconstruction on a truly Islamic basis, and to conduct surveys, seminars and symposia for this purpose.
2. To study the contemporary problems of the World of Islam including the causes leading to the decline of Muslim power and influence, to suggest solutions for those problems in the light of injunctions and teachings of Islam and their application to different aspects of a progressive Muslim society and polity.
3. To provide information, advice and consultation to the Council of Islamic Ideology, Ministries and other agencies on matters referred to, and falling within the purview of the Institute.
4. To advise and assist the Shariat Faculty of the Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad, in the planning and formulation of the curriculum of that Faculty and also to provide on request the services of the Institute's scholars and academic staff for part-time teaching and instruction at the Quaid-I- Azam University.

This was the period when the process of Islamization in Pakistan began. The Institute became fully engaged in the process. It translated required materials from Arabic into Urdu, prepared and taught courses for the training of judges and assisted various government departments in this regard. It also served as a part of the Faculty of Shari^{c}ah, recently established in the Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad in 1979 to train judges in the new system. In addition to a publication programme, the Institute has also followed an intensive programme of workshops, seminars, conferences and symposia on various aspects of Islamization.

In 1980, the Government of Pakistan established an Islamic University as a part of the Islamization programme. This establishment coincided with the resolve of the Organization of the Islamic Countries to Islamize knowledge. In 1979, the OIC committees recommended the establishment of Islamic Universities in various parts of the world. An International Islamic University was founded in Malaysia.

In Pakistan, the Faculty of Shari^{c}ah at the Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad was upgraded to Islamic University. The Islamic Research Institute, which was already supporting the Faculty, was merged with the University. The University was redesigned as an International Islamic University in 1985. The position of the Institute was further reduced in 1987 when its affairs were centralized in the University administration.

In recent years, workshops have been held on such topics as technical editing, the preservation of manuscripts, and medical ethics. International seminars on 'Mutual Perceptions of Islam and the West', 'Islamic Thought in the Eighteenth Century' and the forthcoming conference on Imam Abu Hanifah in October 1998, illustrate the vitality and variety of interests in the Institute. In order to supervise and control the administrative and research policies of the Institute, a Board of Governors was constituted from time to time. The members were selected from the judiciary, administration, universities and scholars. Since 1980 the Board has been re-designated as a Council and since 1985 the President of IIUI chairs the Council. The Director General of the Institute provides leadership in research projects. Research staff in the Institute is divided into five units of research. The research positions are divided into the following grades: lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. Most of them hold PhD degrees. Presently the Institute has nineteen scholars on its research staff.

The Institute collaborates with other similar national and international academic institutions in its research projects. The administration of the Institute is divided into the following units: finance, general administration, accounts, audit, press and publication. The Institute has its own printing press with the following facilities: typesetting, filming, plate making, offset printing and binding. The Institute has a library with more than 95,000 volumes of books, 750 periodicals, more than 262 manuscripts, 1,150 reproductions and 564 microfilms. Nearly 25,000 users per year visit the Library. ✦

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Zentrum Moderner Orient

Centre for Modern Oriental Studies

The Centre for Modern Oriental Studies is an interdisciplinary institute dedicated to historical, social and cultural research on the Middle East, South Asia and Africa. Beyond its own research projects it establishes and supports networks between related research programmes and institutions both within and outside the universities, both on a regional and interregional level. Evolving from a section of the Academy of Sciences of the GDR, it was re-established in 1992, initially under the auspices of the Max Planck Society. Since January 1996, the Centre has been part of the newly formed 'Verein Geisteswissenschaftliche Zentren Berlin e.V.' (Reg. Society for Research Centres in the Humanities), whose members are, among others, the three major Berlin universities and several academies of science. Its budget is partially provided by the State of Berlin, while current research projects are mostly funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft).

The current overall research theme of the Centre is *Dissociation and Appropriation in Response to Globalization: Asia, Africa and Europe since the 18th Century*. This programme addresses local or regional perceptions, adaptations and consequences of global processes and discourses in historical and comparative perspective. Its geographical focus is on those regions which have been strongly shaped by the colonial encounter and by the postcolonial experience. The overall programme comprises three group projects, each consisting of several sub-projects. Group Project One, *Islam and Globalization*, examines the Muslims' perceptions of the 'West' and their reactions to heterogeneous rhythms of change in modern history. Group Project Two, on *Agents of Change*, investigates individuals and groups acting at cultural interfaces. The focus is on their own perspectives, their identities as brokers, and their influence on societal change. Group Project Three, *Locality and the State*, analyses the construction of localized social order in the context of the world-wide expansion and current transformation of the territorial state.

Group Project 1: Islam and Globalization. Perceptions and Reactions in the 19th and 20th Century

This multidisciplinary group project analyses the cognitive processing of the experience of globalization in the Islamic world in a comparative perspective. It is focused on the perception of globalizing processes by Muslims and on their responses to the heterogeneous rhythms of change in global history. Of special interest are groups which experienced, in particularly intensive ways, the fragility of boundaries between 'we' and 'them', 'indigenous' and 'alien', 'old' and 'new', 'faith' and 'hypocrisy', 'Islamic World' and 'the West' at turning points of global history (notably travellers, migrants, politicians, the military, and intellectuals).

Group Project 2: Agents of Change: Biographical Studies and Group Portraits of Conflict and Synthesis between Oriental and Occidental Cultures

Combining case studies from Asia and Africa, the project looks at individual and social agents acting at the interfaces of competing cultures and facilitating changes in a variety of ways. They operated under the influence of indigenous tradition, Western modernization, capitalist development and colonial rule. In the different sub-projects, biographical studies and group portraits are undertaken ranging from the eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century. They focus on people who lived and acted between oriental society and occidental influences, where domains of difference overlapped and composite identities were constantly re-negotiated. In the current (second) stage of the project, the contribution of these agents to social and cultural change, the perception and understanding of their own role in this process are highlighted. In a comparative approach, the project intends to study the similarities and variations among the cases examined. The process of cultural mediation resulted in both integration and confrontation, creating new forms of cultural articulation, not traditional in the narrow sense and not necessarily Western. Conceptually, the project seeks to point out how cultural and civilizational influences that were initiated or absorbed by these agents, coexisted and were synthesized rather than confronted and excluded.

Group Project 3: Locality and the State. The Construction of Spatial and Social Order in Modern African and Asian History

The project seeks to advance and substantiate empirically the debate on relations between globalization and localization among social and cultural scientists. Locality is understood here as a changing frame of reference of social actors who define, through practice and cognition, their position and limits in space, and constitute local communities in the process. The project explores the cultural construction and socio-political negotiation of small-scale (sub-national) identities and boundaries in selected areas of Africa and Asia. It addresses these processes in a long-term historical perspective, situating them in the context of the global emergence and recent transformation of the territorial state and of alternative forms of global integration, notably religion. Six case studies are carried out on the basis of empirical fieldwork, archival research and analysis of locally produced texts. The cases refer to areas in Afghanistan, Cameroon, Lebanon, Malawi, Nigeria, North India, Tanzania and Zambia and aim at interregional comparison.

Further research might include projects about the production of historical knowledge and networks within the Islamic World, both in a historical and contemporary perspective. A special emphasis will be laid upon areas of cultural and intercultural encounter.

Beyond the group projects listed above, the Centre hosts numerous research activities and is engaged in academic networks, partly in cooperation with local and international academic institutions.

The Centre also takes part in the activities of the research association Modernity and Islam (head office: c/o Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin) which for example provides post-doctoral grants especially for scholars from the Islamic World and which organizes summer schools.

Within the context of the Zaytouna Programme the Centre will host students from Tunisia planning to graduate in religious studies at one of Berlin's universities.

The Centre's activities are complemented by a regular series of public lectures, conferences and workshops related to the current research topics and the presence of visiting scholars notably from Africa, Southern Asia and the Middle East.

A list of the Centre's publications which are currently available may be requested at the address mentioned above. ✦

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Montreal, Canada
A. UNER TURGAY
Director

Institute of Islamic Studies

McGill University's Institute of Islamic Studies was founded along with the Institute of Islamic Studies Library in 1952. Both have been housed on the main campus in Morrice Hall since 1983.

The Institute is a teaching unit of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research concerned with the disciplined study of Islamic civilization throughout the scope of its history and geographical spread. It pays attention to the origins of Islam, to the rise of the civilization in which Islam was the vivifying factor, to the forces which shaped the civilization, and the changes it had undergone. It is also concerned with the contemporary dynamics of the Islamic world as Muslims seek to relate their heritage from the past to the present. Courses, seminars and research facilities are offered in Islamic languages (Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Urdu); Islamic history; the social and economic institutions of Islam; Islamic thought; and modern developments in various regions in various regions of the Islamic world.

The work of the Institute is carried out as a joint effort, bringing together Muslims and non-Muslims in an attempt to understand Islamic civilization. The teaching staff and students of the Institute include Muslims and non-Muslims from a number of countries. This strongly international atmosphere at the Institute provides an opportunity for face-to-face exchange among scholars at various levels. During the course of the academic year, the Institute frequently invites prominent scholars in the field of Islamic studies to give lectures which are also open to the public.

Throughout its history, the Institute has provided a special outreach service that has brought students to its portals from a number of African, Asian and Middle Eastern countries. An important feature of such efforts has been the exchange of visiting professors, which has helped in establishing firm links with many important Muslim universities. These efforts have been supported, among others, by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Aga Khan Foundation.

The Islamic Studies Library (ISL) has grown from a modest departmental collection to one of the most important in the field, containing over 100,000 volumes. The ISL is a research library, with a reference section as well; and is intended to be of primary use to postgraduate students and faculty. The ISL's collection can be divided into three major categories: printed, manuscript and audio visual material. All three categories consist of material in European and Islamic languages: English, French, German, Dutch, Spanish, Italian and Russian; as well as Arabic, Persian, Turkish (Ottoman and modern), Urdu and Indonesian. The collection is primarily a reflection of the academic interests of the Institute; as well as teaching and research in Qu'ranic Exegesis, Tradition, Jurisprudence, Philosophy, Theology, Sufism, Shi'ite thought, History and Modern Developments in the Muslim world, and instruction in the various Islamic languages. ✦

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Masterclass
Research School CNWS
Leiden

Good Government and Just Order
Traditional Elements in Contemporary Islamic Political Discourse

The Research School CNWS of Leiden University, was established in 1988 through the collaborative efforts of the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Social Sciences of Leiden University. Since its inception, other research institutes and universities have also amalgamated with the Research School CNWS.

Several research projects are carried out under the umbrella of the Research School CNWS. These are grouped into seventeen separate research clusters. All the research clusters are based on one or more academic disciplines. Apart from two mono-disciplinary clusters in the field of lingusitics, the others are inter-disciplinary, and organized either regionally or thematically. The main reason for this is to provide fresh stimuli for research.

In the context of its new advanced master's programme, the research school CNWS, which is host to almost all Ph.D. research on Islamic studies in the universities of Leiden, Utrecht and Nijmegen, organizes a masterclass on the subject of

Good Government and Just Order – Traditional Elements in Contemporary Islamic Political Discourse

The goal of the class is to analyse the way traditional values survive in, or are used (and transformed) by contemporary political movements which purport to be 'Islamic' and to place this in the wider context of the political use of religious concepts as ideological capital. The theme of the class can be described as follows:

The twin processes of modernization (after European and American models) and globalization have generated reactions all over the Islamic world. These reactions in many cases are not simply 'reactionary' – they form a part of the modernization process itself and try to formulate answers to thoroughly modern questions. But nevertheless, in many of these reactive movements a claim is staked that they represent a just, or good, and at the same time traditional and Islamic, order which is different from such 'alien' systems as capitalism or communism. The claim to represent traditional values is reflected in the terminology they use. The Welfare Party in Turkey, which at one time was called 'National Order Party' (*Millî Nizam Partisi*) and then 'National Salvation Party' (*Millî Selamet Partisi*), calls for a 'just order' (*Adil düzen*); the leader of Afghanistan's Taliban claims the title of 'Prince of the Believers' (*Amir al-Mu'minin*); Ayatollah Khomeinî allowed his followers to call him *Imam*, which allowed identification of his person with the hidden Imam who would return as the 'Messiah' (*Mahdî*). Sometimes these movements formulate their demands in opposition to secularist and westernist political regimes (as in Algeria, Egypt or Turkey); sometimes they actually succeed in establishing their own 'just order' (as in Iran or Afghanistan).

The masterclass will try to establish to what extent the discourse and terminology used by Islamic movements of this type really reflects traditional thinking (in the sense of views on government and social order demonstrably current before the introduction of Western ideologies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) and to what extent we are faced by traditional 'packaging' of modern concepts derived from socialism, the 'human rights' discourse or, for instance, 'tièrs mondisme'.

The class will be held on six consecutive mornings from 22 to 27 February 1999. The course convener is Prof. Dr Erik-Jan Zürcher, who holds the chair of Turkish studies at Leiden University. The class will be taught by two eminent specialists, Prof. Serif Mardin of the American University in Washington, DC, who is the leading authority on Islamic movements in modern Turkey and the author of *Religion and social change in modern Turkey. The case of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi* (Albany, 1989) and Prof. Shahrough Akhavi of the University of South Carolina, the eminent specialist on political-religious relations in Iran and the author of *Religion and politics in contemporary Iran: clergy-state relations in the Pahlavi period* (Albany, 1980). Dr Alexander de Groot, who teaches Turkish Islam at Leiden University and Prof. Dr Johan ter Haar, the chair of Iranian studies there, will act as discussants.

The course load is 3 credits (of forty hours). Students will report verbally on the literature they studied for each seminar. In addition they will write a comparative essay of 3000 words on either the use of one concept or term in several movements, or the changing meaning of a particular concept over time in one area. ✦

Information can be obtained either from the CNWS (Luning@rullet.leidenuniv.nl) or from the course convener (zurcher@rullet.leidenuniv.nl).

Leiden, The Netherlands
GILLIAN VOGELSANG
Director

Textile Research Centre
Near Eastern and Iranian Costume

The Stichting Textile Research Centre, Leiden, with the help of the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, and the University of Leiden has the stated aim of supporting academic research into textiles and costume. As part of this work the Centre is building up a collection of Near Eastern and Iranian Costume which will shortly be made available for study purposes.

At present the Centre houses over 500 items of clothing, and includes both traditional and modern Islamic garments for men, women and children.

One of the aims of the Centre is to publish a series of illustrated books about regional costumes from various Islamic countries. The geographical range will be from Morocco to Afghanistan.

The 'fashion parade' from a recent exhibition about Islamic clothing for women (Sluiers Ontsluierd), organized by the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden and the Stichting Textile Research Centre.

The main project at the moment includes the organization of an exhibition and the production of a book about urban and regional costume in Iran. This work is being supported by Shell. In addition the Centre intends to produce at least two other books with an Iranian theme, one on 19th century photographs of Iranians, and one on Qajar costume. It is the intention that these books will be published in Iran and will be available both in Farsi and English.

Other projects being carried out by the Centre include a study of Moroccan bridal traditions in Morocco and the Netherlands; clothing worn by Muslim women in the Netherlands, and the role of clothing in the political life of Pakistan. ✦

For further information about the Centre and its work, please contact
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University Library, Leiden
ARNOUD VROLIJK

Buying Books at the Cairo International Book Fair

More than four centuries ago, the University Library in Leiden started collecting Arabic manuscripts and printed books. Although there are other university libraries in the Netherlands which have collections in the field of Islamic Studies, Leiden has by far the largest collection in this field.

The acquisition of Arabic books and manuscripts has always had its problems. Booksellers in the Netherlands have never been able to supply Arabic titles, except when a local publisher took the trouble to produce them (fortunately, quite a large number of publishers did so, most notably firms like Brill or Elzevier). Direct purchasing from the Middle East has never been anything but difficult, dependent as we were on Dutch merchants residing in the Middle East or consular agents. Fortunately, this situation appeared to change for the better, when, in the 1970's, a bookseller in Beirut started distributing catalogues containing the best of what was available in the Arab World, and who could also conduct his correspondence with our Acquisitions Department in English. The Lebanese civil war put an end to all this: the books kept coming from Beirut (after the local militias had levied their export fees), but the bookseller himself had moved to Cyprus. When, in addition to this, financial transactions became impossible, we were confronted with the awkward situation that we received bills we could not pay, and books we had not ordered but could not return because the mail service to Lebanon had been discontinued. By 1986, we had so much of our assets tied up that it became unworkable.

In 1987, Jan Just Witkam, curator of Oriental Collections at Leiden University Library, paid a visit to the International Arab Book Fair in Cairo. Booksellers and publishers from all over the Arab World participate in this yearly fair, not only putting their books on display but also selling them to the public at attractive discounts. Witkam decided it would be worthwile to send someone over from Leiden to see if direct purchasing would work. If it did, we would have the additional benefit of cutting out all the 'middlemen', an attractive proposition from the point of cost effectiveness. The only thing was that the amount of purchased books would have to be fairly high, in order to reduce overhead costs (travelling expenses etcetera) to a minimum per title.

This was all very well, but how could we get the books out of Egypt? In the oldest bureacracy in the world it often seems that everything is illegal unless expressly permitted, and as far as we knew we needed an export permit. For this we called upon the service of the Netherlands (now Netherlands/Flemish) Institute for Archaeology and Arabic Studies at Cairo. The Institute turned out to be quite willing to help us to obtain the necessary permits and to despatch the books in the mail. The Leiden Library representative could also enjoy the Institute's hospitality in return for a nominal fee (cost effectiveness!).

In 1988, less than six months after I entered the service of the Library, I went to Cairo to visit the Book Fair. Everyday the Institute's chauffeur drove me to the fair grounds in Medinet Nasr, a Cairo suburb. I checked the stands of booksellers and publishers from countries like Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Tunisia and Morocco, and I bought everything that looked new and interesting. When I ran out of money I returned to Leiden, leaving the books in the care of the Institute. Three months later, I received the five hundred titles I had bought via the post.

Until now this procedure has remained basically unaltered. Local purchasing appears to be cheap enough to defray all extra expenses, and I have found the Cairo Book Fair to be a veritable goldmine, especially for titles from smaller publishing houses, or other titles on out-of-the-way subjects that do not usually find their way into the catalogues of the regular booksellers.

Nevertheless, doing business in the Middle East does have its surprises. I was, for instance, in Cairo at the Book Fair when the second Gulf War broke out. Notwithstanding the fact that Cairo is further from Baghdad than Amsterdam from Moscow, most airlines discontinued their services immediately. The first to give up was KLM, our national pride. Eventually, I flew home with Austrian Airlines, almost the only company that was still 'in the air', presumably, as rumour had it, because Austria's excellent relations with Iraq safeguarded Austrian aircraft from being attacked by Iraqi missiles.

A few years later my books took unusually long to arrive. Enquiring at Cairo's General Post Office produced a formal declaration with many brightly coloured official stamps, stating 'that the books in question were already in my possession'. After months of waiting the Egyptian Mail delivered a great number of parcels on my doorstep with 'University of Tokyo' on the labels. Immediately I wrote to Tokyo, informing them of this unusual event and politely enquiring if they had received my books. They had indeed and in the end everybody received their own books (to the detriment of cost effectiveness however). This unfortunate incident has prompted us to engage the services of a private Egyptian courier service, which works excellently. ✦

Drs Arnoud Vrolijk is assistant curator of Oriental Collections at the Leiden University Library.

Qur'anic Studies on the Eve of the 21st Century

Conference Report
Leiden
10 – 12 June 1998
NASR ABU ZAYD

Qur'anic studies, ᶜUlum al-Qur'an, is a multi-disciplinary field of scholarship. Its development is necessarily governed by the progress achieved in social sciences in general and in linguistics, semantics and hermeneutics in particular. The assumption underlying the idea of the symposium is that the long history as well as the well-established tradition of Qur'anic studies in Islamic culture have been under the great influence of modern political and cultural changes in the Muslim world. The twentieth century witnessed the emergence of almost a new world order, which affected all fields of knowledge. As for the Muslim world it has been a century of external as well as internal conflict.

The modern confrontation with Europe, which started at the end of the eighteenth century, created an awareness of an independent identity, and Islam emerged as a protective weapon against European imperialism and cultural Westernization. This confrontation surely affected Qur'anic studies both in the East and the West in different ways. The awareness of Muslim identity, on the other hand, caused some internal political and cultural conflict between Islamism and Modernism, which increased after achieving political independence. This conflict further activated the fever of new interpretation and counter-interpretation of the Qur'an. Modern trends of social sciences, no matter how different they are, are implicitly or explicitly employed in these interpretations.

The purpose of the symposium 'Qur'anic Studies on the Eve of the 21st Century' was twofold: first, to investigate the actual development that occurred in the field of Qur'anic studies in the East and in the West during the twentieth century; and second, to anticipate the possibilities of further development in the coming century.

Twenty-three scholars from all over the world accepted the invitation and submitted outlines of their contributions. Some sent the text of their presentations in due time. Unfortunately, two of the participants, namely Prof. Al-Sharqawi (Egypt) and Dr Nettler (Oxford) were unable to attend though they did send their papers. The former was not present due to sudden illness and the latter for having been appointed Chairman of the Examination Committee.

The five sessions were as follows:

Qur'anic disciplines (ᶜUlum al-Qur'an)

1. Dr H. Motzki (Nijmegen)
2. Professor Jane Dammen McAuliff (Toronto)
3. Prof. Dr Hassan Hanafi (Cairo)
4. Prof. G.R. Puin (Saarbrücken)
5. Dr H.C. Graf von Bothmer (Saarbrüken)

Qur'anic Interpretation in a Modern Context

6. Prof. Dr Stefan Wild (Bonn)
7. Prof. Dr Hussein Nassar (Cairo)
8. Prof. Dr Muhammad Shahrour (Damascus)
9. Dr Enes Karic (Sarajevo)
10. Dr Fred Leemhuis (Groningen)

Textual Analysis

11. Dr Abdulkader I. Tayob (South Africa)
12. Dr Amin Abdullah (Yogyakarta)
13. Prof. M. Shabstari (Iran)

Literary Interpretation

14. Dr Muhammad Mahmud (Sudan/USA)
15. Prof. Dr Andrew Rippen (Calgary)
16. Drs Mohammad Nur Kholis (Yogyakarta)
17. Dr Navid Kirmani (Cologne)
18. Prof. Dr Nasr Abu Zayd (Cairo/Leiden)

Political Interpretation

19. Dr Johannes J.G. Jansen (Leiden)
20. Dr Bari Azmi (New Delhi)
21. Dr Osman Tastan (Ankara)

At the final session a number of interesting observations were made. It was pointed out that in Qur'anic studies, the periphery of the Muslim world (especially South Africa, Indonesia, and Bosnia) does not closely follow the geographical centre, but largely goes its own way, taking in and digesting a broad spectrum of modern cultural and scholarly influences, without neglecting to consider the results and conclusions of traditional Qur'anic scholarship. Also, the very mixed group of scholars that came together for this occasion had no trouble communicating: the old clichés of orientalists versus Muslims seem very much to be a thing of the past. In a way this is not surprising: orientalists, like most other nineteenth century scholars, believed that the end of religion – Islam not excepted – was at hand, and today we know better. Also, looking to the Qur'anic text from a literary and aesthetic point of view seems to be gaining importance amongst modern researchers in this field. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that this approach may be the approach of the future.

The proceedings of the symposium are to be published in the form of a book as soon as the final texts are submitted at the end of September, and the negotiation with publishers is concluded. ✦

Dr Nasr Abu Zayd is visiting professor of Islamic Studies at Leiden University.

Academic Meetings

International Conference on Muslim Identity in the 21st Century: Challenges of Modernity
Date: 31-10-98 to 1-11-98
Location: School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London
Congress Site: http://www.ic-el.org/iis
P.O. Box 8148, London, NW6 7ZS, England, UK, 92 The Avenue, London, NW6 7NN, UK
Tel: +44 181-495 1000
Fax: +44 181-830 4013
lis.uk@virgin.net

The West and the Gulf
Date: 2-11-98 to 5-11-98
Location: Wilton Park, West Sussex, United Kingdom
Congress Site:
http: //www.fco.gov.uk/reference/wilton_park/index.html
Organizer: Wilton Park Conferences
Contact Person: Mrs. Elizabeth Harris
Wiston House, Steyning, West Sussex BN44 3DZ, United Kingdom
wilton@pavilion.co.uk

Earnings Inequality, Unemployment and Poverty in the Middle East and North Africa
Date: 5-11-98 to 7-11-98
Location: School of Business of Lebanese American University, Byblos, Lebanon
Contact Person: Dr. Ghassan Dibeh
Organizing Committee Chair, 475 Riverside Drive, #1846, New York, NY 10115, USA
iceup@byblos.lau.edu.lb

Sufi Psychology Association West Coast Conference: The Science of the Soul
Date: 5-11-98 to 7-11-98
Location: Berkeley, California, USA
Congress Site: http: //www.sufi-psychology.org
Contact Person: Lynn Wilcox
P.O. Box 19922, Sacramento CA 95825
tel: 1 800 338 1467
fax: 1 916 923 1201
sufipsy@pacbell.net

Ottoman Law
Date: 6-11-98 to 7-11-98
Location: Binghamton, NY, USA
keyder@boun.edu.tr
dquataer@binghamton.edu

Landscape Perspectives on Palestine, An International Conference
Date: 12-11-98 to 15-11-98
Faculty of Arts, Birzeit University
Congress Site: http: //www.birzeit.edu/conferences/landscape/
Faculty of Arts, Birzeit University, P.O. Box 14, Birzeit, Palestine (via Israel)
fax: +972 2 9957656
land@arts.birzeit.edu

Peacemaking and Negotiations in the Arab-Israeli Conflict
Date: 17-11-98 to 18-11-98
Location: Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem
Contact Person: Ms. Laura Wharton
The Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations.
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mount Scopus, Jerusalem, Israel
msdavis@mscc.huji.ac.il
http: //atar.mscc.huji.ac.il/~davis

The Middle East Studies Association of Northern America 32nd Annual Meeting
Date: 3-12-98 to 6-12-98
Chicago, USA
Organizer: MESA Office
University of Arizona, 1643 East Helen St. Tucson, Arizona 85721, USA
mesana@u.arizona.edu
http: //www.mesa.arizona.edu

First International Conference on Islamic Development Management
Date: 8-12-98 to 12-12-98
School of Social Science, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang
Idmp@usm.my

Manufacturing Heritage/Consuming Tradition: Development, Preservation, and Tourism in the Age of Globalization
6th Conference of the International Association of TransnationalEnvironments
Date: 15-12-98 to 19-12-98
Location: Cairo, Egypt
iaste@ecd.berkley.edu

The Islamic Marriage Contract
Date: 29-1-99 to 31-1-99
Harvard Law School
Congress Site: http: //www.law.harvard.edu/Programs/ILSP
Pound Hall 501, Harvard Law School, Cambridge MA 02138
tel: +1 617 496 3941
fax: +1 617 496 2707
ilsp@law.harvard.edu

International Congress of Mulla Sadra (Iran)
Date: 23-5-99 to 27-5-99
Congress Site: http: //www.iranpac.net.ir/sadra/index.htm
Mullasadra@www.dci.co.ir
http: //www.iranpac.net.ir /sadra/index.htm

Middle East Encounters with European Enlightenment
Date: 26-7-99 to 31-7-99, Dublin, Republic of Ireland
ekhtiar@oswego.edu

The 11th International Congress of Turkish Art (ICTA-XI)
Date: 30-8-99 to 4-9-99
Location: Utrecht, The Netherlands
Congress Site: http: //www.let.uu.nl/oosters/icta0.ht
ICTA-XI@let.uu.nl

The XIXth Intern. Congress of Historical Sciences in Oslo
Specialized Theme Session: Muslim Societies over the Centuries
Date: 1-8-2000 to 2-8-2000 / *Location:* Oslo, Norway

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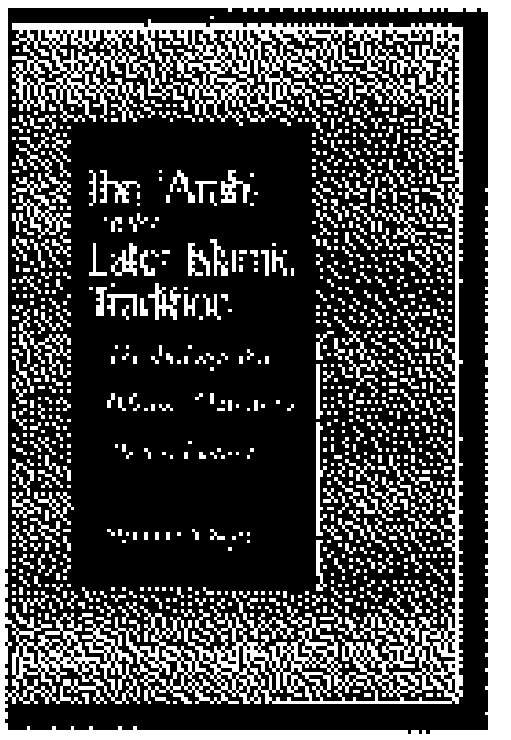

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