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The horror of death and destruction of innocents in New York and Washington, the launching of an indefinite 'war against terrorism', the harassment and worse of those seen as Muslims and Arabs in America, the opportunistic attempts to equate the September disaster with Israeli experience of terror (but not with that of the Palestinians) or alternatively to divert attention altogether from Israel's brutal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by denying it has any connection, the absence of a real debate in our democracy. How to think about such matters?

Some Thoughts on **the WTC Disaster**

TALAL ASAD

Surely several things are needed to deal with terrorism. First of all: compassion for those who have experienced the horror, the comforting of the relatives and friends of victims, a return as quickly as possible to normality, an alert refusal to allow innocents in America – especially Muslim- and Arab-Americans – to suffer fear, harassment and worse. Second: we need greater security at home and the pursuit of the international criminals who have perpetrated this horror, but a pursuit that remains fundamentally within the framework of international law, and that is carried out with a concern that more innocents don't suffer, and that our liberties aren't curtailed. Surely, the international character of the struggle against 'terrorism' consists not merely in its being an alliance of several countries to prevent further anti-American injury from abroad. More than America is at stake here: We need to prevent 'terror' from being a threat to the very conception of a just and secure world.

It has recently been asserted that American intellectuals must not allow any justification of the criminal acts of September 11 to go unchallenged. Of course nothing, absolutely nothing, can excuse let alone justify the massacres in New York and Washington. But should that be the only concern of public intellectuals? Must we not also reject the terms in which the terrorists and their sympathizers would have us discuss this crisis? Whatever its origins, 'terrorism' is an abomination because it acts ruthlessly in a particular cause, it has contempt for the life of innocents, and it is ready to create and countenance chaos in what is believed to be 'the enemy's territory'. We must refuse to encourage the terrorist mindset. Thus while we need to understand the spontaneous anger and desire for revenge of those who have directly lost a relative or friend, public intellectuals themselves must be careful not to fuel such emotions. In other words: All talk of 'war against evil' tends to encourage excess; measure and proportionality require the language of 'law and justice'.

We have repeatedly been told that the September 11 terrorists have attacked 'our values'. But what values are these? Our concern for the loss of innocent human life, our compassion for those who have suffered, our anxiety about innocents who may yet suffer further violence. Our values are the flourishing of life and the measure of law. The terrorist mindset is found not only among those (whether gangs or states) who carry out acts of physical violence but also incipiently among those who employ a particular public discourse – the discourse of self-righteousness and revenge, of disregard for proportionality, of insisting on the immorality of self-criticism. And who are 'we' whose values terrorists violate? Contrary to the assertions emerging frequently from our media, these values do not belong exclusively to 'Western civilization' but to decent, compassionate people who belong to traditions throughout the world: Islamic, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh – or, for that matter, atheist. The talk in our media is of a war against the evil of 'Islamic terrorists'. This already seems to me an ideological concession to terrorists, even if we make the ritual qualification by saying that most Muslims are 'moderate Muslims'. (I am reminded of polite anti-Semites talking about 'good Jews'.) The equation of Islam with terrorism is already made in the popular mind and 'experts' have leapt in by the score to explain or qualify it. We should not be surprised at what is euphemistically called the 'backlash'. The unfortunate consequences of the talk about Islamic terrorism are the promotion of further antagonism against Muslim-Americans and Arab-Americans, as well as further hostility towards Muslims and Arabs worldwide. We are in effect being urged to forget the range of recent non-state terrorisms – in Northern Ireland, Spain, Sri Lanka (even within the US, in Oklahoma and elsewhere) – which have no connection with Muslims. The salience of September 11 is that it was an attack by a group of foreigners against the United States – not against Britain or France or Germany or Japan. That alone makes it an attack 'against humanity', giving it a moral and legal status that none of the other cases of terrorism in our contemporary world has ever been given.

A respected liberal daily carries an informative Special Report that explores wider questions. It is headed 'Why Do They Hate Us?' (*Christian Science Monitor*, 27 September 2001) and accompanied by numerous photographs of Muslims, people from different walks of life, young and old, men and women. The title represents an unfortunate but not atypical elision. Do 'They' (an indeterminate Muslim population) really 'Hate' (not 'criticize' or 'condemn' or 'feel bitterly about') 'Us' (not particular American foreign policies but all Americans)? Intellectuals know the danger of loaded questions that pollsters sometimes employ: 'Why do you hate us?' Speak. Tell us what you feel. We (*all* Americans, government and people alike) are listening. I am sure this was not deliberate on the part of the *Monitor*, which means that it is part of the unconscious media culture.

My own experience is that most people in the Muslim world are not consumed with hatred towards Americans but are deeply critical of the double standards used in foreign policy by US governments. Of course there are many who do express hateful or ignorant views about America and the West. But even among these not many would countenance, let alone do, what the terrorists did on September 11. Not every argued criticism of US policy should be represented as 'hate'. Not every emotional response should be equated with a readiness to commit acts of terrorism. The connection between what people say (or hear) and what they do is often indirect.

Continued on page 38

Image not available online

Banner held by a protestor during a pro-US march organized by the Islamic Mission of America in NewYork, 16September 2001.

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The ISIM solicits your response to the ISIM Newsletter. *If you wish to contribute to the* ISIM Newsletter, *style sheets may be obtained upon request from the ISIM Secretariat or on the ISIM website. In order to offer updated information on activities concerning the study of Islam and Muslim societies, along with news on vacancies, grants, and fellowships, the ISIM relies on its readers. The information will be made available on the ISIM website.*

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Editorial

DICK DOUWES | *Editor*

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the ensuing 'war against terrorism' constitute a dramatic turn in the recent post-colonial conflicts. It is perhaps insensitive, in particular with respect to those who have lost their lives or livelihood, relatives and loved-ones, to point to the fact that the impact of the 9/11 catastrophes can only partly be explained by the number of casualties or the magnitude of material destruction. Symbolic location and modern, high-tech skills have catapulted this latest tragic series of events into the public imagination. The attacks were unique in their cynical use of commercial aviation. The targets were not entirely new, but the images of the fatal impact of the two planes on the WTC constitute a veritable landmark in media coverage of violence. Juxtaposed to the images of destruction and despair in New York and Washington, the depiction of the hideout of the likely mastermind(s) of the attacks strengthened the notion, all too common in the West, that Islam is a fossil of sorts, not having evolved since the Middle Ages. Bearded men in a ruined and barren land; the women veiled, the men armed, except when they pray – but even then the arms are within reach. The well-orchestrated video presentation by Usama bin Laden – the first sight of him following the events – seemed to play with these metaphors in its choice of location, language and dress. The themes of the cave, the call for a holy war and other religious invocations reinforced many in their conviction that this movement was indeed rooted in medieval religious hatred and obscurantism. Of course, the prime target audience of the video messages were not the 'unbelievers' of the West, but the world community of Muslims, the *umma*. Popular imaginaries of the Middle Ages in the Muslim world differ markedly from those in the West. For many in the Muslim world pre-modern times are equivalent to Muslim sovereignty, a time of cultural, religious and political assertion of the *umma*, later to be unjustly suppressed by colonial powers. A number of Western observers and politicians deduce from this favourable reading of the past that Muslims' present-day stances towards the West should be understood as being rooted in a frustration that is several centuries old; the loss of hegemony. Of course, this is an extremely comfortable position to take and dismisses the West from a serious reflection on the modern conditions on which anti-Western feelings feed: the marked and increasingly visible unequal distribution of material and political privileges. The fact that some elites, more than others, in the Muslim world share in the international comforts while at the same time they fervently protect their national privileges by undemocratic means, explains why many in the Muslim world consider their present-day governments as the continuation of colonial regimes. The way the 'war against terrorism' has evolved so far, with, for instance, continuing US bombardments within hearing distance of Kabul and Islamabad long after the Taliban defeat, with the rough treatment of the captured Al-Qa^{c}ida militants excepting the one American from among them, confirm this view of a Western-dominated world in which only the happy few elsewhere have a stake. Very few, however, conclude from this that Muslims should rise in arms.

Some have opted for a hate-campaign that they call 'jihad'. One of the most perplexing features of this campaign is the ability to mobilize resources in the West. The radicals meet, preach, and prepare for their war *in* the West, in particular in the US – and attract youngsters from Arab families who have the means to send their sons to the West. It is not manifest that Afghanistan, as a space with facilities for militant volunteers during the last decade, constituted a vital asset for those who carried out the suicide attacks. Some, if not most, may have visited Al-Qa^{c}ida strongholds, but the required instruction and preparation for the attacks were situated in Europe and, above all, the US. It is difficult to imagine, but the most deadly calls for holy war against the West were uttered in meetings in towns in New Jersey, Kansas and Texas, where Muslim militants from the Middle East convened. This *frontier mysticism* builds upon modern currents directed not only against the West but, more importantly, against – in the words of Khomeyni, one of the main sources of inspiration for militants – '[…] the Islam of compromise and ignobility, the Islam of the pain-free comfort-seekers, […] in one word the American Islam' (Tavakoli-Targhi, p. 13). These currents that, apparently, seek to exclude those who are not like-minded should be addressed in a serious manner, both in the West and the Muslim world.

Media coverage of the events, in particular of the 'war against terrorism', was highly unbalanced, which is common practice in cases of war and conflict. Most Western media allowed very limited space for critical voices, though towards the close of the year doubts about the course of events began to find room for critical reflection. To date, the majority of opinion makers assert that the war is not only appropriate but is also in just proportion to the carnage inflicted by the terrorists, albeit this view may crumble under pressure of the possible failure to establish a more solid political structure in post-Taliban Afghanistan and the fiasco of capturing the Al-Qa^{c}ida leadership, the prime goal of the war. Non-Western media, of course, demonstrate a more critical approach towards the inconsistencies in US policies, but are reluctant to address the sensitive issue of the social and political settings in the Muslim world in which Muslim militancy emerges (Hamzawy, p. 10). The role of Al-Jazeera as both an alternative Arab and international news channel and the angry reactions in the US to some of its coverage constituted the most remarkable development in the field of media politics (Ahmad Kamel, p. 20, and Naomi Sakr, p. 21).

This *ISIM Newsletter* opens with the reflections of a US citizen, Talal Asad, on the earlier phases of events and their potentially lasting detrimental effects. From a prison cell in Cairo, Saad Eddin Ibrahim (p. 11) comments on this latest post-colonial conflict, pointing out that people in the Middle East harbour legitimate grievances towards the West, but that true democrats are needed to settle the accounts. Responses to the events in various other countries, including Yemen (François Burgat, p. 17) and the UK (Jorgen Nielsen, p. 16), show the incredible diversity of reactions, not only in global terms but, as in the British case, also at the national level.

In order to come to a better and less-politicized understanding of the complex processes of inclusion and exclusion that accompany globalization, many articles in this issue shed light on local effects of global developments, ranging from Muslim student activism in California (Nadine Naber, p. 19) to youth activism in urban Java (Yatun Sastramidjaja, p. 15); from migrant networks of financial transfers (Tall, p. 36) to the development of course materials for Muslims in German schools (Irka-Christin Mohr, p. 29).

Of special concern to the ISIM as an institution situated in the West is the Western reception of the events. The suicide attacks and the resulting war caused increased tension between non-Muslims and Muslim communities in various Western countries, igniting existing debates and disputes. Dominant voices urge Muslims to adapt to Western norms in a kind of 'package deal', however unclear and disputed some of these norms may be. Intellectuals, some of them Muslim, call for drastic reforms within Islam and convey the message that reforms should be initiated by Muslims in the West. Such hegemonic views impede a more open examination of the relation between the West and Islam (see for the Dutch case, Van der Veer, p. 7). In its programmes the ISIM, together with its counterparts around the world, endeavours to contribute to more constructive approaches to the current crisis.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ISIM Workshop

'Authority in Contemporary Shiism; Social Relations of Hekmat, Falsafa, Tasavvof, Erfan, Feqh and Kalam in Iran' is an ISIM workshop to be convened by Matthijs van den Bos (ISIM). Participants presenting papers include Mahmoud Alijenad (IIAS), Said Amir Arjomand (State University of New York), Forough Jahanbakhsh (Queen's University), Azadeh Kian-Thiébaut (Université de Paris VIII),Sajjad Rizvi (Institute of Ismaili Studies), and Farzin Vahdat (Tufts University).

The workshop addresses the social relations of the intellectual subtraditions of Shiism: theosophy, philosophy, Sufism, gnosis, jurisprudence, and theology. Intellectuals and clerics in Iran have often framed their arguments through generic conventions within these disciplines. This, in turn, is reflected in their positions vis-à-vis the primary topic of religious debate: spiritual authority in Shiism. In addition, intellectual disciplines of Shiism often have divergent social and political embeddings, which again affects their positions on authority. The scope of the workshop ranges from the beginning of the 20th century to the present, and includes overview analyses that also cover the Pahlavi era in which clerics such as Morteza Motahhari and Mahmoud Taleqani (not to mention Ayatollah Khomeyni) made fundamental contributions to the debate on authority. Building on this, special reference will be made to developments surrounding Iran's 'new religious intellectuals', such as Mohammad Mojtahed-Shabestari, Mohsen Kadivar, and Abdolkarim Soroush. All of these thinkers have, in one way or the other, defined the current directions of Shiite jurisprudence as problematic. Their critical positions, in turn, are often based outside jurisprudence, in gnosis, theology or philosophy. But the non-juristic disciplines are not in themselves, of necessity, vehicles for progressive readings of religion; the uses of gnosis and theosophy in conservative arguments in support of the '(absolute) rule of the jurist' will also be addressed. The workshop aims at an understanding of the discursive and institutional aspects of these developments within the context of Khatami's Iran, but also in the light of older, ongoing debates within Iran's religious sphere.

For further information please contact the ISIM secretariat.

ISIM Annual Lecture

On 23 November 2001, Professor Barbara Metcalf (University of California, Davies) delivered the third ISIM Annual Lecture: 'Piety and Persuasion in the Modern Islamic World'. She critiqued the common notion that Islamic movements in fact invariably seek to implement 'a complete way of life', engaging not only matters of doctrine, worship, and sacred authority, but all aspects of political, social, and economic activities. She explored various movements rooted in the Deoband, including the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam, the Tablighi Jama^{c}at, and the Taliban, demonstrating that Deobandi movements deploy an extraordinary range of strategies for operating in the shifting contexts of modern South Asia. The range is vast: the piety of the apolitical madrasa-based teachers; the piety and persuasion of the itinerant preachers; the politics that range from collaboration with non-Muslims, to opportunistic alliances in the Realpolitik world of contemporary Pakistan, to the militia-enforced Islam of the Taliban, to the withdrawal to an essentially private sphere of correct worship and behaviour as with the Tablighi Jama^{c}at.

The lecture will be published in the ISIM Papers series.

ISIM Fellowships

The ISIM welcomes the following new fellows:
- Dr Christèle-Claude Dedebant: *The Formation of South Asian Civil Society Networks outside South Asia*
- Dr Yoginder Singh Sikand: *Islamic Responses to the Challenge of Religious Pluralism in Post-1947 India*
- Mohammad Amer: *Revivalism as Empowerment: A Comparative Study of the Minhaj Movement among the South Asian Youth in Europe*

The ISIM invites applications and research proposals for various programmes. Applications from candidates in the social sciences, humanities, and religious studies will be considered. Applicants should be competent in academic English. The ISIM fellowships and their respective application deadlines include the following:
- *Ph.D. fellowships* (1 Mar 2002 and 1 Sept 2002)
- *Post-doctoral fellowships* (1 Mar 2002 and 1 Sept 2002)
- *Visiting fellowships* (1 Mar 2002 and 1 Sept 2002)
- *Sabbatical fellowships* (1 Mar 2002 and 1 Sept 2002)

For more information on the various fellowships, please consult the ISIM website: http://www.isim.nl/isim/fellowships/
Application forms may be downloaded from the website or obtained upon request from the ISIM secretariat.

Conference Report

BIRGIT MEYER & ANNELIES MOORS

Religion, Media and the Public Sphere

The international conference, jointly hosted by the ISIM and the Research Centre Religion and Society (ASSR), on 'Religion, Media and the Public Sphere' was held from 6 to 8 December 2001 at the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The theme of the conference evolved out of three prominent debates in the 1990s: the crisis of the post-colonial nation-state, the increasing global proliferation of electronic media, and the rise of religious movements.

Taking as a point of departure that the nation-state no longer features as the privileged space for the imagination of community and identity, the conveners, Birgit Meyer (ASSR) and Annelies Moors (ISIM), proposed to focus on the ways in which religious groups make use of electronic media, thereby creating new intra- and transnational links between people, new expressions of public culture and new forms of publicness and publicity. Bringing together around twenty-five scholars (paper presenters and discussants) working on Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity, and 'indigenous religion', the conference addressed the articulated presence of religion in public on both an empirical and conceptual level. The central focus of debate comprised the transformations in the public sphere and the ways in which these relate to the proliferation of mass media and the liberalization of media policies, the upsurge of religion, and the crisis of the postcolonial state.

Right from the outset it became clear that while there is need for a conceptual space like the public sphere in order to grasp the marked articulation of religion in public, Habermas's notion of the public sphere is unsuited to capture the very complexity that was the theme of our conference. The need for a notion like the public sphere appeared to stem right from what participants encounter in their research practice: new ways of bringing about links between people, of creating notions of self and Other, of imagining community. These are processes in which mass media appear to have crucial importance, because around them evolve alternative notions and possibilities of publicity and being a public or audience. Yet, certainly it is not useful to study, for instance, political Islam or Hindu nationalism from a perspective of Western, normative concepts, that is, from a view which regards the public presence of religion as a sign of the non-modern. Such a theoretical view fails to address the apparent messiness of the public sphere, the emergence of new forms of secrecy, the occurrence of violence, the politics of access and the ways in which this impinges on gender, or the crucial importance of capitalism and commercialization as a condition of the possibility for the public sphere. If anything, Habermas's model of shifting relations between economy, state and society at a certain point in European history is 'good to think with' in that it may help generate useful questions that ultimately lead beyond the model itself.

The conference was organized into seven sessions (publics and publicness; TV, consumption and religion; film, religion and the nation; media and religious authority; religion, politics and spectacle; media, religion and the politics of difference; and media, religion and morality). In order to get beyond existing universes of discourse and broaden discussions, all sessions brought together scholars working on different regions or religious traditions. Some papers looked closely at how religions transform through adopting media, others investigated how media allow for the publication of religion outside the confines of churches, mosques, or cults, how religion merges with the forces of commercialization and is recast in terms of entertainment, or how the state (often vainly) seeks to control both media and religion. An important issue of debate pertained to the nexus of religion and media with respect to the relations between religious authority and believers. How do particular media technologies, such as radio or TV, impinge on the ways in which religions shape believers' bodies and senses? In how far does mediation threaten or change existing forms of religious authority? How do religious constructions of the subject rub against or clash with new ways of being an audience? What does this mean for gender relations? Another important theme concerned the complicated relationship between the state, citizenship and global discourses on human rights and related issues in the field of gender, religion and identity. Central issues of debate here were the politics of mediations and the ways in which processes of inclusion and exclusion work in both secular and religious discourses. As the conference was extremely stimulating, the conveners will work on publishing a selection of the papers in an edited volume.

Conveners:
- Birgit Meyer *(University of Amsterdam)*
- Annelies Moors *(ISIM)*

Participants:
- Rachel Dwyer *(University of London)*
- Walter Armbrust *(Oxford University)*
- David Morgan *(Valparaiso University)*
- Jeremy Stolow *(Cambridge University)*
- Dale F. Eickelman *(Dartmouth College)*
- Faye Ginsburg *(New York University)*
- Patricia Spyer *(Leiden University)*
- Charles Hirschkind *(New York University)*
- Rosalind I. J. Hackett *(University of Tennessee)*
- Ayse Öncü *(Bogazici University)*
- David Lehman *(Cambridge University)*
- Patricia Birman *(State University of Rio de Janeiro)*
- Dorothea Schulz *(University of Chicago)*
- Batia Siebzehner *(Hebrew University)*
- Sudeep Dasgupta *(University of Amsterdam)*
- Brian Larkin *(University of Amsterdam)*
- Meg McLagan *(University of Amsterdam)*
- Rafael Sánchez *(University of Amsterdam)*
- Peter van der Veer *(ISIM/University of Amsterdam)*
- Oskar Verkaaik *(University of Amsterdam)*
- Peter van Rooden *(University of Amsterdam)*
- Michael Gilsenan *(New York University/ ISIM)*
- Mona Abaza *(American University of Cairo/ IIAS)*
- Mattijs van de Port *(University of Amsterdam)*

Human Rights Project

LAILA AL-ZWAINI

Rights at Home

The ISIM commenced the project 'Rights at Home: An Approach to the Internalization of Human Rights in Family Relations in Islamic Communities' on 1 October 2001. This project seeks to promote respect for human rights within the family and community in different parts of the Muslim world, particularly with respect to the rights of women and children.

Focusing on selected communities within the Islamic world, 'Rights at Home' intends to supplement current legalistic approaches to human rights with a broader analysis and action at the societal level in order to mediate the dichotomy between the public and private spheres, and between modernized and traditional segments of society, in favour of greater respect of human rights within an Islamic framework.

This approach is premised on the view that the private domain of the family in its communal context is a primary location for the internalization of human rights norms as a value system, yet is simultaneously a site for their endemic violation. As this intimate sphere is inaccessible to readily available methods for the implementation of rights by the state and other external actors, this project proposes to supplement – not replace – this 'state-centric approach' by informing and supporting *internal*, community-level initiatives for social change through local actors who combine a commitment to human rights with the ability to effectively advocate the underlying values of these rights within their own communities. These actors, referred to as 'advocates of social change', are the primary target group of the project.

The ultimate beneficiaries of 'Rights at Home' are women and children in Islamic societies, whose rights will be addressed under two main themes: the socialization of children at home and the personal autonomy of women. The socialization of children comprises the values and norms instilled and legitimized by the ways children are perceived and treated by all other members of the family and community. The personal autonomy of women is understood here to mean their ability to achieve substantive social mobility by effectively pursuing possibilities of education, employment, and general participation in the public affairs of their communities.

More concretely, the project aims at building capacity for women to demand their rights, especially in the field of economic, social, and cultural rights. This requires critically addressing questions of Islamic family law, which continues to be applied by Islamic communities throughout the world even where it is not formally enforced by the state, as well as customary practices and domestic power relations as the necessary basis to deal with actual human rights issues such as gender equality, domestic violence, restriction of mobility, denial of access to work and political participation.

Children's rights are also closely related to the domestic sphere covered by family law – whether based on state, Islamic, or customary norms – which regulates matters of guardianship, adoption, legitimacy, parenthood, and custody. At the same time, children's rights are also directly related to the social and economic development of the community at large. This induces taking up themes such as child labour and other forms of abuse, and how to socialize boys and girls into equal and fair gender relations.

As it is clear that this approach has to overcome some serious theoretical and practical difficulties, this project will devote a sufficient initial period to identifying significant advocates of social change in selected communities, and finding out about their communal power bases and networks in order to fully appreciate their contextual circumstances. To this purpose, the project will convene three Sounding Board Meetings in the selected regions – Islamic Africa, the Arab world (North Africa and West Asia) and South and Southeast Asia – and conduct local field research, in addition to developing relevant networks of scholars, research institutes, NGOs, human rights activists, and resource persons.

Subsequently, the project will conduct interactive workshops to provide the identified actors with theological, jurisprudential, and other social science resources for developing their own capacity to raise issues important for their respective communities on the basis of the insights gained. These sessions will offer a platform for a combined intellectual-pragmatic dialogue related to the project's themes and approach in which the candidates also have the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences and specific local constraints or commonalities. Furthermore, the project will provide continued support for these human rights advocates in implementing their own plans for cultural transformation upon return to their countries. In addition, workable models will be developed for usage in wider settings, such as training manuals (in written, audio and visual formats), advocacy guidebooks, and media packages. In this way, the need to limit initial implementation of the project's methodology to certain local communities will be compensated for by the subsequent wider use of these materials and skills in other Islamic communities around the world.

The Project Team consists of Abdullahi A. An-Naʿim (Emory University School of Law, USA, and Visiting Professor ISIM), Nasr Abu Zaid (ISIM/Leiden University) and Laila al-Zwaini (ISIM). The faculty of the ISIM serves as academic resource persons for the project as a whole. The duration of the project is three years.

Report

DALE F. EICKELMAN

Local Production of Islamic Knowledge
An Ethnographer's View

The AKMI[1]/ISIM Summer Academy brought together 20 nationalities at the Yildiz Technical University in Istanbul. For eleven days and nights, from early morning until late evening, the core of this group – the invited participants (pre-doctoral candidates and recent Ph.D.s),[2] and tutors, together with several of the locally invited lecturers – listened to and commented on lectures, presented and discussed one another's projects, and visited local research centres.

The Summer Academy blocked out sessions for thematic discussions generated by the participants and tutors. 'Recreation' was also project related: a brilliantly managed walking tour of old Istanbul with Turkish intellectual Murat Belge, a visit to Bursa, and a visit to an Alevi Cem on the outskirts of Istanbul. In the old Soviet Union, the organizers and participants would have been called Stakhanovites, workers who vastly exceeded production quotas. In this case, however, the pace was mostly voluntary.

Forerunners

Today such summer academies are taken for granted, but they are a recent – and significant – contribution to academic globalization. The first one took place in June 1987 in Tangier, Morocco, under the auspices of the now-defunct Joint Committee for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) and the American Council of Learned Societies. Then called a 'dissertation workshop', this first 'summer academy' had the explicit goal of encouraging new scholars to build into their first publications the sort of interdisciplinary perspectives and comparative experiences normally achieved only mid-career. They also acquired a better sense of how to write for wider audiences interested in studies of the Muslim-majority world – and Muslim communities elsewhere – as well as firsthand experience in a Muslim-majority society other than their country or region of direct scholarly concern. In some privileged fields, such as mathematics and physics, seasonal academic gatherings, begun in the late 1940s, took place in such locales as Swiss resorts and attracted mainly scholars at the summit of their careers, together with their chosen graduate protégés. The Tangier venue in 1987 was the Tangier-American Legation Museum, located in the old medina – a down-at-the-heels former diplomatic establishment. Participants stayed at the crumbling Grand Hotel Villa de France, best known for its gardens, already reverting to jungle, and for Room 35, in which Henri Matisse produced many of his paintings. A local journalist was proud to show us everything from the main border smuggling routes near Ceuta, the Spanish enclave, to the homes and quarters of Tangier's rich and famous.

Soon after 1987, other SSRC committees followed the example of the Comparative Muslim Societies committee, creating summer workshops and institutes of their own, and other foundations also soon got into the act. The criss-crossing of workshops and summer academies available since the late 1980s have enabled a succession of doctoral candidates and recent graduates to situate their work in wider contexts and to offer comparisons that might otherwise have not been possible until much later in their careers. It also made communication among peers and faculty from throughout the world as easy (or in some cases perhaps easier) as communication with thesis advisers.

Dale Eickelman on strategies of oral and written scholarly communication.

PHOTO: MOHAMED KASSIM

The Istanbul Summer Academy

The Istanbul Summer Academy was light years away from its predecessor in Tangier. Preparations were considerably more elaborate, including, for example, a 400-page reader containing not only Islam-related readings, but also representative selections from the mainstream sociology of knowledge. Even if not always thoroughly read or assimilated, the document showed a working consensus on the range of relevant readings. The tone and style of the various sessions were collegial, with tutors also making original presentations. There were four types of sessions: lecture presentations by tutors, project presentations in three parallel working groups, thematic discussions (usually divided into three groups), and presentations by outside speakers.

Tutors and participants developed informal mechanisms to share perspectives and information. The working relations developed early in the programme meant that comments and criticisms flowed from the outset and without personal frictions. The 'tutorial' lectures were generally short and informal, leaving lots of time for discussion. The same was the case for project presentations, ranging from dream interpretation in contemporary Muslim contexts (Knut Graw) – interesting to rethink in context of the dreams in the Bin Laden video released on December 13 – to Alevi ideas of tradition in Turkey and Europe (Elise Massicard) and the educational networks of Fethullah Gülen in the different national contexts of Turkey, Albania, and Germany (Bekim Agai). My opening presentation, 'Twenty Years Later: The Study of Islam in Local Contexts', took off from where my 1982 article stopped and was intended to frame changes in intellectual approaches since then.

Because of the parallel working groups, each participant heard only seven other presentations. Our schedule also included working sessions at both Turkish and foreign research centres and meetings with both secular and religious-minded intellectuals in a variety of settings.

The ties that bind

The second week opened with two stunning reminders of how fragile are the bonds of civility and trust, on which we base our work and lives. The first intrusion of the world beyond scholarship occurred on Monday, September 10. Some of us, walking through Taksim Square on our way to the Swedish Research Institute on Istiklal Caddesi, heard a loud explosion on the other side of the square. A suicide bomber – a secular leftist recently released from prison – had blown himself up together with several policemen, and injured many others to protest the treatment of political prisoners. The news of the bombing was rapidly reported on Turkish radio and television and in the next morning's press, but attracted little attention in the mainstream media outside of Turkey. In retrospect, it was a grim prelude to Tuesday's 'September 11' news, which reached us as we returned from Yildiz Technical University to our hotel.

By consensus – not by formal meeting – tutors and participants decided to carry on with our Summer Institute tasks. That evening Orhan Silier, director of the Tarih Vakfi, explained the foundation's work. Later we learned that all commercial US air traffic was grounded, the White House evacuated, and the President removed to an undisclosed location. Then the massive scope of what had happened began to sink in. None of us slept uninterrupted over the remaining days, but we shared our anxieties only at the edges of our scheduled main concern, the discussion of participant projects. On our last working day, Thursday, September 13, we devoted another session to the public responsibilities of scholars. Some French participants expressed their misgivings about *la littérature grise* – government-requested policy reports. Some European participants felt that participation in these should be avoided at all costs, because one never knew the uses to which they would be put. Another view was that such writing and discussions, whether in a time of crisis or in 'normal' times, should be open and never secret – at least for university-based scholars with a commitment to the open communication of scholarship. The issue was not about refraining from contributing to policy discussions and debates, but rather how such communications should occur. Speaking to the press and public might take time, but is an obligation as we engage our various publics in the classroom, in print, and elsewhere. As with any activity, too much of such activities can circumscribe scholarly potential. So can too little. The Summer Academy achieved its primary goals. The main vehicle of communication was peer learning, both for the tutors and the participants. Everyone gained a better sense of how to sustain – and benefit from – international scholarly communication. One of our major challenges in the years ahead will be to maintain the fragile ties of scholarship and intellectual discourse with the Middle East and with Muslim communities elsewhere. The 'public sphere' of international scholarship, like all other 'global' ties, will endure especially harsh challenges in the months and years ahead. The Summer Academy served as a poignant reminder that ties of civility and communication cannot be taken for granted, but must be actively sustained both in our immediate spheres of activity, and in wider and less predictable spaces. The 'local production of Islamic knowledge' is not just the theme of an academic meeting; it addresses immediate and long-term issues vitally affecting the wider societies in which we take part.

Directors:
- Martin van Bruinessen (ISIM) and Altan Gokalp (Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin)

Tutors and Istanbul faculty:
- Fulya Atacan (Yildiz Technical): 'Changing Patterns of Islamic Groupings in Modern Turkey'
- John Bowen (Washington University in St. Louis): 'What is "Local" about Paris Islam?'
- Ayse Çaglar (Freie Universität Berlin): 'The Concept of Hybridity and its Discontents'
- Dale Eickelman (Dartmouth College): 'Twenty Years Later: The Study of Islam in Local Contexts'
- Anke von Kügelgen (Universität Bern): 'The Production of Local History in Bukhara at the Turn of the 19th Century'
- Ayse Öncü (Bogazici University): 'Negotiating the Boundaries between Religious and Secular on Commercial Television in Turkey'
- Jorgen Nielsen (University of Birmingham): 'The Human Rights Discourse and the Religious Rights of Muslims in Europe'
- Kemali Saybasili (Yildiz Technical): 'Nation and Citizenship'
- Günter Seufert (Orient-Institut): 'The National Attribute in the Turkish Republic's Teaching of Islam'

Other lectures and presentations were organized by the Institut Français d'Etudes Anatoliennes, Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Swedish Research Institute, the Tarih Vakfi, and the Türkiye Diyanet Vakfi.

The lecturers included: Meropi Anastassiadou (IFEA), Murat Çizakça, Stoyanka Kenderova (National Library, Sofia), Jean-François Perouse (IFEA), Tord Olsson (Lund University), Leif Stenberg (Lund University), and Johann Strauss (Strassbourg University).

Coordination:
- Georges Khalil (AKMI) and Dick Douwes (ISIM)

Notes

1. Berlin-based Working Group Islam and Modernity, Institute for Advanced Study Berlin.
2. Published in *Istanbuler Almanach* 5 (2001), and also found on the ISIM website (www.isim.nl/isim/activities).

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Conference Report

MUHAMMAD KHALID MASUD

Application of Islamic Law in Courts

From 26 to 28 October 2001, the ISIM, in collaboration with the University of Amsterdam and Cornell University, held an international conference in Leiden on the 'Application of Islamic Law in Courts'. The conference conveners, Muhammad Khalid Masud, Rudolph Peters and David Powers, invited historians, lawyers, anthropologists and sociologists to come to Leiden to engage in a discussion on the manner in which Islamic legal doctrine (*fiqh*) has manifested itself in daily practice as reflected in the activity of the *qadi*, or Muslim judge.

PHOTO: WIM VREEBURG, 2001

Rudolph Peters and Baber Johansen at the conference.

Is the *shari'a* merely a system of ethical rules and recommendations, as many have argued, or is it a legal system properly speaking? What is the nature of the relationship between legal doctrine and actual court practice? Is Islamic law an unchanging essence or has there been diversity in its interpretation and dynamism in its development and application? These are some of the broad questions that were discussed over the course of the three-day conference. The 23 presented papers addressed Islamic law from the 8th century to modern times in areas including Bulgaria, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Libya, North Africa, Syria and Zanzibar. Six general themes emerged: modern judicial systems and Muslim courts, *shari'a* courts in modern Muslim nation-states, historical perspectives, court documents, judicial practice, and legal pluralism.

Historical perspectives

Most of the authors examined the activity of the *qadi* by analysing a specific court document or set of documents. A common theme was the diversity and changing nature of *qadi* courts. One frequently raised question was whether local practices of judges necessarily qualify as 'Islamic law'. As Islamic legal norms were translated into local practices, there emerged a wide range of court structures, procedures, documents and judicial reasoning. As Erin Stiles noted, the Muslim court in Zanzibar constitutes a public space where people negotiate their rights within the framework of *fiqh*. Referring to contemporary Syrian courts, Taima Jayoush observed that the courtroom is a site of negotiation where the judge is guided by both cultural and legal norms. Similarly, Najwa Qattan concluded that the *qadi* judgment constitutes a site where Islamic legal theory finds its embodiment in local practices that vary across time and space.

Drawing on biographical literature, fatwas, and *fiqh* texts, several authors examined *qadi* courts in different periods of Islamic history. Although it is generally held that court records from the period prior to the 16th century are not available, the Mamluk documents analysed by Müller date from the 14th century.

During the Ottoman period, which figured prominently at the conference, *shari'a* courts had jurisdiction over personal status and pious endowments, as well as civil, criminal, and administrative affairs. A tension between central and provincial courts reflected the shifting political framework of the empire. As R. Gradeva observed, Ottoman jurists instructed *qadi*s to disregard the command of the Sultan if it was not in conformity with the *shari'a*. The local court played a crucial role in the transformation of the legal system into an instrument of imperial rule. Writing about Gaziantep, L. Pierce argued that the sovereign and his subjects sometimes had different views on law and society, and that the local *qadi* court was the arena in which their differing claims were negotiated. And as A. Rafeq explained, *fiqh* was sometimes used to serve the interests of influential groups, including the military, notables, and foreign nationals. The systematic recording of court documents and the pluralistic structure of the judicial system added to the complexity of the Ottoman legal system.

During the colonial period, foreign legal concepts were often superimposed upon local laws. Tahir Mahmood noted that in the early colonial period, Indian judges determined facts from the perspective of foreign law and issued their judgments on the basis of local law. Rudolph Peters observed that in Nigeria, colonial rulers allowed *shari'a* criminal law to be applied, thereby creating a dichotomy between federal and area courts; the latter often being called '*shari'a* courts'.

In the early 19th century the jurisdiction of *shari'a* courts was reduced to the law of personal status. In the 20th century, those *shari'a* courts that continued to function had an increasingly narrow jurisdiction. Writing about contemporary Yemen, B. Messick described the *shari'a* courts that operate today as 'hybrids' that combine Islamic legal categories and methods with imported legal forms, as spelled out in codes issued by nation-states. Mahmood noted that in East India *shari'a* courts have operated since 1917 as private institutions that enjoy the respect of the Indian government for their work as alternate institutions of dispute resolution and arbitration.

Shari'a courts also contribute to the political objective of nation building, even if only as a formal constitutional requirement. A. Layish described how *shari'a* courts in modern Libya play an important role in integrating Bedouins, who are undergoing a process of sedentarization, into normative Islam. In Nigeria, Rudolph Peters noted, the constitution calls for the application of a recently enacted *(shari'a)* penal legislation, but many legislators and judges treat this requirement as a legal formality.

Courts

The application of penal law poses problems relating, on the one hand, to the intricacies of Islamic procedural law and, on the other, to restrictions and special rules that govern the criminal process. The testimony of upright witnesses, which is the lynchpin of Islamic court procedure, is closely associated with notions of social integrity. *Qadi*s understood 'proof' in a broad sense. The term *thubut* (literally 'proof'), which in some court records signifies a *qadi*'s certification of a legal act, must be differentiated from a *hukm*, or formal *qadi* judgment, as Müller demonstrated. Although it is often asserted that *fiqh* does not attach any validity to written documents, Powers and Layish drew attention to authorized written documents, known as *rasm istir'a* and *shahadat al-naql*, that were commonly submitted as evidence in North African courts; in fact, these documents are discussed at great length in Maliki legal texts. In some settings *qadi*s and muftis worked closely with one another; in others, *qadi*s seem to have done their work without the assistance of muftis. As A. Christelow explained, a special tribunal known as the *majlis* was established in Algeria in the early 20th century to assist *qadi*s and emirs, but was later abolished.

Several authors explored the manner in which the social and legal perceptions of the *qadi* affect his handling of a litigation (*khusuma*) and issuance of a judgment (*hukm*). In Indonesia, J. Bowen observed, judges invoke broad social norms when issuing their judgments. Similarly, as L. Welchman wrote in her paper, in divorce disputes Palestinian judges balance their knowledge of *fiqh* by exercising judicial discretion on the basis of their perceptions of what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable behaviour on the part of the wife; these perceptions are gendered (*qadi*s invariably being men) and may vary across time and space.

According to Islamic legal doctrine, a *hukm* is 'a text that contains a record of a litigation together with the final ruling by the judge'. It is 'a final judgment that concludes a claim'. As noted, the Mamluk documents demonstrate that 'there is a clear legal distinction between an order (*amr*) or action (*fi'l*) of a *qadi*, on the one hand, and his judgment (*hukm*), on the other. It is possible for a *qadi* to issue a court decision without issuing a binding judgment. A judgment comes into existence and acquires its binding nature only when the *qadi* explicitly states *'hakamtu bi kadha'* (I have issued a *hukm* about this matter). According to Messick, '[t]he Yemeni *hukm* has features that are distinctive with respect to what we know of *shari'a* court judgments elsewhere prior to the advent of modern jurisdiction.'

Court records

Although we possess a wealth of historical and doctrinal sources for the period between the 9th and 16th centuries, we have virtually no court records for this period, with the exception of the Haram al-Sharif documents (14th century) and transcriptions of court decisions in literary sources. *Sijillat* only begin to appear in the 16th century. Several explanations were offered for this puzzling riddle: a *hukm* is only valid for the specific case about which it was issued; it does not create a legal precedent; jurists were critical of the activity of *qadi*s and therefore did not record and transmit their judgments; jurists were concerned with the systematic integrity of the legal system, not with the facts of a particular case; and the judgment of a *qadi* was intimately linked to the legal facts established by witness testimony. Authors used fatwas and biographical literature to reconstruct *qadi* judgments. K. Masud spoke about the early Umayyad *qadi* judgments on alimony payment to the wife in divorce cases.

Conference participants:

- Camilla Adang *(Tel Aviv University)*
- Ahmad Akgündüz *(Islamic University, Rotterdam)*
- John Bowen *(Washington University, St.Louis)*
- Léon Buskens *(Leiden University)*
- Baudouin Dupret *(CNRS/CEDEJ, Cairo)*
- Allan Christelow *(Idaho State University, Pocatello)*
- Rossitsa Gradeva *(Institute of Balkan Studies, Sofia)*
- Taima Jayoush *(Lawyer in Damascus, Syria)*
- Baber Johansen *(EHESS, Paris)*
- Stefan Knost *(Orient Institute, Beirut)*
- Remke Kruk *(Leiden University)*
- Aharon Layish *(Hebrew University of Jerusalem)*
- Tahir Mahmood *(University of Delhi)*
- Muhammad Khalid Masud *(ISIM)*
- Brinkley Messick *(Columbia University, NewYork)*
- Christian Müller *(CNRS – IHRT, Paris)*
- Leslie Peirce *(University of California at Berkeley)*
- Rudolph Peters *(University of Amsterdam)*
- David S. Powers *(Cornell University, Ithaca)*
- Najwa al-Qattan *(Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles)*
- Abdul-Karim Rafeq *(College of William and Mary, Williamsburg)*
- Delfina Serrano Ruano *(Germany)*
- Ron Shaham *(Hebrew University of Jerusalem)*
- Erin Stiles *(Washington University in St. Louis)*
- Frank Vogel *(Harvard)*
- Lynn Welchman *(SOAS, London)*
- Amalia Zomeno *(CSIC, Escuela de Estudios Árabes, Granada)*
- Laila al-Zwaini *(ISIM)*
- Sami Zubaida *(University of London, Birkbeck)*

The conference papers are not available for public distribution at this time. Authors may be contacted through the ISIM. Muhammad Khalid Masud, Rudolph Peters and David Powers will edit the papers as an ISIM publication, which is expected to appear in 2003.

For further information, please contact the ISIM: isim@let.leidenuniv.nl

Conference Report

MARTIN VAN BRUINESSEN

Islam, Women's Rights, and Islamic Feminism

The ISIM workshop on 'Islam, Women's Rights, and Islamic Feminism: Making Connections between Different Perspectives' (9–11 November 2001) took place under the shadow of the looming confrontation between the West and the Muslim world, at a time when public interest was focused on the American offensive in Afghanistan and anti-American responses in countries as diverse as Pakistan, Egypt and Indonesia. Most of the participants felt that precisely at this time one should not allow the agenda of intellectual debate to be completely determined by political issues and that the workshop should take place as planned.

PHOTO: WIM VREEBURG, 2001

▶ **A scene from the conference.**

A few of those invited to the conference were not able to attend because of the international situation: some faced travel restrictions or feared for their security; irrational consular regulations made it impossible for our participant from Pakistan, Professor Arfa Sayeda Zehra, to acquire a visa, and another prospective participant, Dr Lo'lo' Ghazali from Malaysia, went to lead a medical team working among the new wave of Afghan refugees.

Fifteen scholars and activists, representing a broad range of women's engagement with Islamic issues, and coming from eight different Muslim countries, from Indonesia to Nigeria, actually did take part in the workshop. Participants had been invited because of their contributions to public discourse or concrete experience in defending women's rights and women's points of view. It was hoped that a heterogeneous composition in terms of background, experience and concerns might lead to a stimulating exchange of views, and this proved to be the case. The participants presented papers on what they considered as a major issue in their respective situations and in which they had been intensively engaged. The discussions that followed offered up comparative perspectives, contrasting views, and food for reflection.

The contributions

The experience of Iran since the Islamic revolution has been one of the most fascinating developments in the Muslim world, producing some of the most important contributions to contemporary Muslim discourse. Many secular feminists left the country after the revolution, but in due course a strong women's movement emerged precisely in the circles that had supported the revolution. Four of the participants were from Iran; two of them are based in the West but are deeply involved in developments inside Iran. Mahboobeh Abbasgholizadeh, the editor of the women's studies journal *Farzaneh*, exemplifies perhaps most clearly the development of Muslim women's discourse in Iran. She had been actively involved in the revolution, gradually adopted a feminist perspective and was among the first women in Iran to plead for an Islamic feminism. She spoke about the impact of the political reform movement and the 'new religious thought' (of such authors as Soroush and Shabestari) on the women's movement. In her view the movement is entering a new phase in which there is the possibility of a convergence between secular and Islamic feminism and, more importantly, a postmodern acceptance of plurality.

Nahid Motie, a feminist and sociologist affiliated with the Azad University, surveyed the debates around the very term 'Islamic feminism' and gave overviews of the various, often conflicting ideological positions adopted by women thinkers and activists in Iran. Ziba Mir-Hosseini, known for her book on *Islam and Gender: The Religious Debate in Contemporary Iran* and her film *Divorce Iranian Style*, gave a similar overview, focusing on the individual trajectories of leading women's intellectual development. Ziba also showed the participants her new film, *Runaway*, shot in a shelter for runaway girls in Tehran (the film was to win a nomination at the International Documentary Film Festival in Amsterdam, see page 23). Sussan Tahmasebi, a US-trained political scientist and NGO activist, spoke of the various types of women's NGOs existing in Iran. Some of these are modern organizations, established in response to global trends and President Khatami's call for strengthening civil society as a step in democratization. Sussan emphasized the potential of the less publicized, traditional community-based organizations, which are much closer to the grassroots.

The participants from Turkey, Cihan Aktas and Hidayet Tuksal, described conditions that were almost the mirror image of those in Iran. The *hijab* is a major political issue; fighting for women's rights to wear the *hijab* in Turkey is a struggle against men's control of women's bodies and very similar to women's resistance against its imposition by the state in Iran. Cihan Aktas, a popular Islamist essayist and author of short stories, told how for Islamist women it was the veil that has made their participation in public life possible but that its official ban in schools and government offices prevented these women from getting an education and a job.

Hidayet Tuksal, a doctor in Islamic theology and the author of a critical study of the gender bias in *hadith*, sketched the history of the Islamist women's movement in Turkey and the dual struggle of women in the movement for their rights as committed Muslims and as women. In efforts to develop an Islamic discourse that is liberating, they are up against the state as well as Muslim men, conservative or Islamist. There is no convergence between secular and Islamic feminism in Turkey as Abbasgholizadeh claimed was the case in Iran. Secular feminists are rarely interested in their Islamist sisters' struggles for rights, and when they do support a case it is usually presented as proving the essentially oppressive nature of Islam.

Actually working within an Islamist movement, the women's wing of Malaysia's JIM (Jemaah Islah Malaysia), Suriya Osman gave an account of work at the grassroots level – she is a medical practitioner as well as a women's organizer. Faced with the difficult tasks of raising women's gender awareness and confronting conservative *ʿulama*, she found support in the search for more enlightened and woman-friendly interpretations of Islam in a nationwide network of women's activists.

Two of the participants are presently affiliated with Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML), an international organization defending women's rights. Cassandra Balchin, the programme co-ordinator for Asia, who has extensive experience as a journalist and women's rights activist in Pakistan, explained the work of her organization, which addresses secular feminists as well as those working within an Islamic perspective. She called for a renewed debate on secularism and religious pluralism, referring to women's protest movements against the Islamization campaign in Pakistan (under Ziaul Haq) and in Bangladesh. Asma'u Joda, who founded a centre for women's empowerment in northeastern Nigeria and is presently at the WLUML office in London, discussed the impact of *sharīʿa* movements in West Africa on women's lives, focusing especially on the impact of the *sharīʿa* legislation in Nigeria in 1999.

The other activists included Raufah Hasan, who was the director of the Women's Studies Centre in Sanaa until this was closed under pressure from Islamist circles. She spoke on the dynamics of Islam, democracy and women's rights in Yemen, where the North and the South, only recently reunited, are very different with respect to the acceptance of women's public roles. Official endorsement of women's participation, a remnant from the South's socialist past, has regularly been overruled due to pressure from conservatives and Islamists alike.

Debates on women's political participation were also central to the two Indonesian contributions. Lies Mustafsirah Marcoes analysed the positions adopted by major Indonesian Muslim associations on the matter of female political leadership (which became relevant when Suharto appeared to be grooming his eldest daughter Tutut for succession, and again when Megawati became a presidential candidate). Not surprisingly, the 'religious' arguments used for or against female leadership at different points in time appear to vary in accordance with the political situation and with mundane interests.

Chusnul Mar'iyah discussed the situation in Aceh, which had recently been granted a considerable degree of autonomy (in the hope of appeasing the separatist Free Aceh Movement) and where the *sharīʿa* has been proclaimed. Women's groups here are making efforts to take part in drafting the concrete regulations in which the *sharīʿa* will be operationalized. Several of the other participants commented on the importance for women to be actively involved in legal drafting (and therefore the necessity of developing the relevant expertise).

Zainah Anwar of the Malaysian NGO, Sisters in Islam, brought up a number of other themes. One of the objectives of her organization is to give women a more active role in developing Muslim discourse, so that this will not remain a monopoly of men unsympathetic to women's concerns. This raises important questions of authority and legitimization. The standard response of conservatives when women join the debate is to delegitimatize them for not having the 'right' expertise – something that is not demanded from men who support conservative interpretations. The Sisters have, on the one hand, made efforts to strengthen the traditional legitimacy of their arguments in favour of liberal and pluralist understandings through study and consultation with sympathetic theologians and jurists. On the other hand, they have developed an effective lobby pressuring the government with memoranda and keeping a steady presence in the media through letters to the editor.

Special guests

Two special guests added further dimensions to the discussions. Nasr Abu Zaid spoke on Qur'anic hermeneutics and women's rights, giving a sophisticated analysis of key verses in their context and in the light of the non-chronological organization of the entire text of the Qur'an. His work on hermeneutics was felt to be of great importance to the participants' concerns.

Mona Abaza made some critical comments on the search for an Islamic feminism by Western scholars and its emergence as a particular form of middle class discourse in Egypt. She also made a comparison with the emergence of a feminist theology in German Protestantism in the 1960s, which, unlike later liberation theology, never drew much attention in the Muslim world.

Revised versions of the papers and an analytical summary of the discussions of this workshop will be posted on the ISIM website. One can also find there papers and the report of the previous workshop in this series, 'Muslim Intellectuals and Modern Challenges' (http://www.isim.nl/isim/activities/conferences/intellectuals/index.html).

Lecture

PETER VAN DER VEER

The Netherlands and Islam

In the Netherlands and in other Western countries one finds a hostile image of Islam. Only recently we saw this image influencing the panicky reactions to the terrorist attacks on the USA by Arab Muslims. With great speed this attack was connected to statements of a general nature on the essence of Islam and of Muslims. Dutch politicians and Islam scholars spoke in public about the age-old frustration of Muslims that was presumed to be the background of this attack. Almost immediately the question of the loyalty of Muslim immigrants to the Dutch state and to Dutch norms and values emerged in public debate. Opinion polls showed quickly how fickle that loyalty is and how methodologically shaky opinion polls are. This was followed by attacks on mosques and Islamic schools. The urgency of a more sophisticated analysis of the relationship between the Netherlands and Islam is self-evident.

This article is an adapted version of Professor Van der Veer's lecture at the occasion of the Dr Hendrik Müller Award, which he received on 8 October 2001 from the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences for his contribution to the social science study of religion. The Müller Award is the most important prize for social science research in the Netherlands.

The general view is that Islam in the Netherlands is a very recent phenomenon. That is certainly true if one only looks at the Netherlands on the North Sea and at the immigrants from Turkey and Morocco. However, if one takes a historically and geographically more extended perspective, the Dutch state, like other European states such as England and France, can be seen to have been dealing with Muslim subjects already for a long period of time. I am referring to the overseas colonies, Indonesia and Surinam, whose decolonization is as much part of the emergence of a postcolonial world as the new forms of labour migration to Western Europe and to other regions in the world. A nationalist perspective in which the Netherlands on the North Sea forms the frame for the understanding of social cohesion in a multicultural society can never provide an understanding of processes of globalization, the rise of the network-society, or the North-South problematic, which are essential to the problems that the Netherlands is facing. The simple fact that only now does the Dutch government acknowledge that the Netherlands has become an immigration country demonstrates the long-term nationalist denial of global processes. In the English literature on multicultural society is what I state here, expressed in the slogan 'The Empire strikes back'. In the case of England and France this seems more evident, since many immigrants come from former colonies, but in fact this is part of the same historical transition. In short: West European states have colonized peoples and territories overseas and have modernized themselves and their colonies, a process resulting in a world-system of independent nation-states. In the final stages of this process a reversed migration from the South to the North has emerged in which, in principle, independent nation-states attempt to control the flow of people.

The Netherlands is at present a postcolonial society, an immigration country with a relatively large number of immigrants whose religion is Islam. Not so long ago the Netherlands was a colonial society in which a majority of the population was Muslim. In my view the 'question of Islam' in the colonies can, in a number of aspects, fruitfully be compared with the current problematic of the integration of Muslims in the Netherlands. The present postcolonial government, as did the colonial government, tries to make Muslims into modern citizens, but it is hard to combine this policy with the principle of the separation of church and state.

The colonial state

According to influential, liberal policy makers in the early 20th century, such as Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, the task of the colonial state is to make Islam into a modern religion. This means secularization, that is to say a separation of church and state and, furthermore, an opposition to militant Islam. It does not mean that the government should interfere with the religious character of Islam. In the liberal view the principle of freedom of religion is to be maintained. Freedom of religion, however, does not imply cultural relativism. It is seen as the task of the colonial government to effect a change in the backwardness of Muslims, but the government should do so slowly and prudently. On the other hand, however, the state has to repress the mixture of religion and politics in Islam, because it obstructs progress.

In short, Indonesians were allowed to be Muslim, but should not organize themselves on the basis of Islam. Education was seen as the instrument for modernizing Muslim society. Muslims had to be educated in Dutch (secularized) culture in order to get past the political and social significance of religious difference. It is interesting that these policy views were articulated in a period in which the political organization of the metropolis was still largely based on religious difference. In the Indies, however, subjects still had to be educated to become citizens.

We know now that the secularization of the Indies has not been successful. Islamic organizations are crucial in the political constellation of postcolonial Indonesia. As in many societies it is the army that tries to control these organizations and sometimes this is successful for a period, as in Suharto's New Order. These Islamic organizations do not want to connect politics and religion in a medieval fashion, but want to formulate a modern Islam. They do not aim at the establishment of an original *khalifat*, but are inspired by modern ideas about democracy and nationalism. As in Tocqueville's description of Christian organizations as the basis of democratic America, in Indonesia too Islamic organizations can constitute the basis for a democratic nation-state. In Western societies such as the Netherlands and England, religious organization has been foundational in the formation of the nation-state. In contrast to the views of liberal thinkers like John Stuart Mill and Snouck Hurgronje, there is no inherent opposition between religion and democratic freedom. In fact religious mass movements such as the 19th-century anti-slavery movement have played a significant role in the creation of public opinion and a public sphere. The colonial notion that the state has to repress the combination of religion and politics in Islam emerges in fact from the desire to control society without being legitimated by the population. In the liberal view religion has to be transferred from the public domain to the private domain, but the state is not willing to leave the private domain alone. In postcolonial societies such as Indonesia there is a struggle between centralizing state institutions and more localized Islamic organizations to control daily life. Education is the focus of that struggle. In the end the struggle is about conflicting perspectives on civilization and political participation. Such perspectives are not static and cannot be summarized in easy dichotomies. The Indonesian case shows clearly that religious organizations can play an important role in the furthering of political participation of citizens. There is no inherent opposition between Islam and democracy. The concept of democracy, however, is far from simple and has to be understood in a comparative-historical manner. In Indonesia one finds a growing political participation, while in the West one finds a declining participation. Should we now introduce formal, quantifiable criteria to establish whether Indonesia becomes more democratic and the Netherlands less? It is more fruitful to analyse changing power configurations less ideologically and to attempt an interpretation of the effects of growing or declining participation of citizens on regional and global political processes.

Dilemmas of modern states

In my view modern states, colonial and postcolonial, share a number of fundamental objectives. The historical analysis of the colonial period provides some insight into the dilemmas of modern states. In the first place modern states have to make individuals national citizens. That is to say that educated subjects have to be made loyal to the nation-state. Secondly, the state derives its legitimacy from a process of political participation of citizens. A public sphere in which social movements and voluntary organizations operate is essential to that purpose. Thirdly, the modern state needs to protect the liberty and equality of all citizens. At least this is the enlightened ideal, however much historical reality may differ from it.

The first element then is that of citizenship and loyalty to the nation-state. From the Reformation there has been a problem concerning the political loyalty of religious groups that did not belong to the state church. This problem is for a large part solved in the modern nation-state, in which national identity and not religious identity is the basis of political loyalty. Secularization theories have assumed that this would also imply the privatization of religion, but that is not true. Religion remained significant as a foundation for social and political organization. In the Dutch case of 'pillarization' we find a pacification of religious and ideological oppositions, but also a model for participation in a plural society. The first social science theory of plural society, formulated by Furnivall, is based on Indonesia, and indeed the postcolonial *pancasila* concept has been inspired by Dutch pillarization. The idea is that religious identity is the channel through which one arrives at national identity and the two remain connected. The colonial distrust of political Islam was fed by the idea that this kind of religious mobilization might bring an end to colonial domination. In contemporary Dutch society, Muslim citizens are in more ways than one still connected to their countries of origin. Moreover, their religious identity is (not yet) connected to Dutch national identity. Their connection with Mecca can perhaps be compared to the earlier anti-national loyalty to Rome of Dutch Catholics that was assumed by anti-papist groups – with the difference that religious identity is now buttressed by ethnic identity. The state attempts to use education to integrate Muslims in Dutch society, but one must realize that the possibilities of the state to nationalize citizens have declined. In other words, homogeneity cannot be reached as easily as in the 1950s. Like Indonesia, the Netherlands is a plural society in which individualism and group identities make national identity of only relative importance. This is a process that seems inescapable. It has been analysed as the emergence of the network-society or the post–national state. If networks that are based on group mobilization are indeed becoming more important this would mean a bright future for religions like Islam. The little-centralized Islamic forms of organization with their shifting sites and sources of authority are pre-eminently suited for such a society.

The second important element in the development of modern society is political participation. On the basis of race, sex, and class the modern state has long excluded subjects from the democratic process. Slowly general suffrage has emerged, although an age criteria has been maintained. The most important justification for excluding

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Repairs at the Abibakr School in Nijmegen following arson.

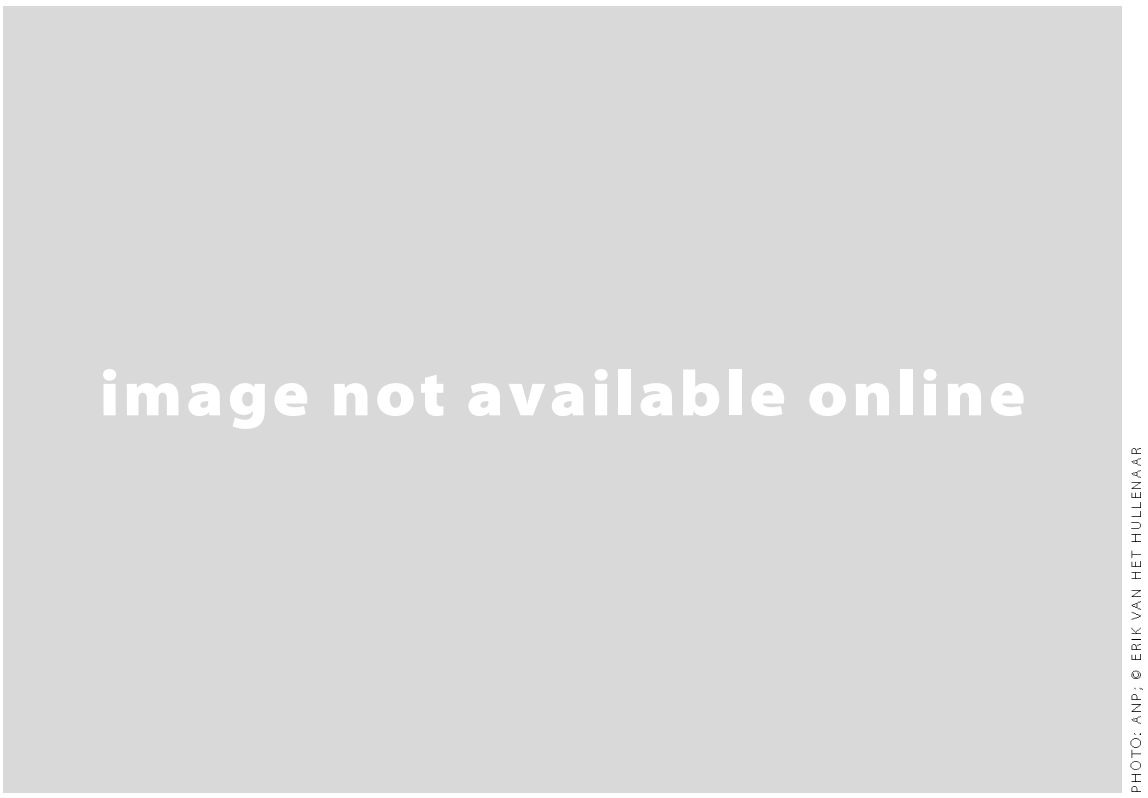

PHOTO: ANP; © ERIK VAN HET HULLENAAR

Continued from front page 7: The Netherlands and Islam / *by Peter van der Veer*

the colonized peoples from the political process can be found in John Stuart Mill's and Snouck Hurgronje's idea that these peoples should be considered as 'children'. This 19th-century liberal notion remained in force until nationalist movements put an end to colonial domination. The Indies were governed through indirect rule. The elite was identified and used as brokers between government and society. The colonial society was prevented from self-organization. This procedure resembles the way in which the postcolonial government tries to find brokers in its dealings with ethnic and religious minorities. As such one can understand the sometimes comical discussion about imams in the Netherlands. The government feels a strong need to speak to Muslims via their leaders. The problem is that these hardly exist, since imams are often poorly educated prayer leaders who have some influence, but one that is not to be over-estimated. Some universities in the Netherlands that have little-attended theological seminaries have proposed that they could give these imams a thorough theological and pastoral education. This is a perfect example of indirect rule, according to which groups do not organize themselves but are represented by leaders created by the government. The latter not only creates leaders, but also forces people to make use of ethnic and religious channels to voice their views vis-à-vis the government. The problem here is that one wants to have people participate in the political process in ways they have not chosen. At present political participation in the Netherlands and in other Western countries has declined considerably and it is not to be expected that newcomers expend much energy in this domain. It is more likely that people will be mobilized around certain issues, such as the environment, traffic and spatial mobility, and education; and that also religious issues will be introduced. When there is a public debate about, for example, headscarves in schools, people are mobilized around the issue and their religious organizations are happy to step in. In this way, Muslims follow the pattern of involvement of their non-Muslim co-citizens.

The neutral state

The last element is that of freedom and equality as the ideals of the modern nation-state. An important element here is the separation of church and state. Neutrality of the state in matters of religious choice has to be guaranteed as a political principle, although one has to observe that there are vast differences between the USA, the Netherlands, France, Turkey, India, Indonesia and other modern nation-states in the implementation of this principle. The US was the first state in which the separation of church and state was rigorously applied with the paradoxical effect that public religion is of great political importance there. In the Netherlands there is, among others, the Free University (which is Protestant) and the Catholic University of Nijmegen, both of which count few Protestant or Catholic students, but nonetheless have religious foundations and full government financing. An old problem is the definition of freedom and the fact that procedures of freedom can be used to promote un-freedom. Everyone will be convinced of the liberating effects of modern science. The biological theory of evolution is science and creationism is a belief. In the USA religious activists try to introduce creationism in the curriculum of public schools, because they are of the opinion that evolutionism and creationism are equal sets of belief. The polemic between these positions exists already since the famous debate between the scientist Thomas Huxley and the Anglican Bishop Wilberforce in Oxford in 1860. The term 'fundamentalism' originates from the important Scopes trial in the US in 1925 where the bible was pitched, as it were, against Darwin. The problem of the modern state is that good education, based on scientific knowledge and a particular form of rationality, is essential to its development, and that the government has to be neutral towards religious opinions in society. The introduction of Hindu, Muslim, and Christian curricula is thus only acceptable when they do not conflict with scientific knowledge. For such conflict-ridden debates there are no simple solutions and, again, people can be mobilized around issues, such as creationism.

Network society

Thus far I have emphasized the role of the nation-state, but can the postcolonial state still be called a national state in the present era? In social science debates about globalization it is sometimes argued that the 19th-century nation-state is on its way out and is succeeded by global actors, such as the UN and the World Bank. Such a position goes too far in my opinion, but what we do see is a transformation of the national state and the rise of what the sociologist Manuel Castells has called 'the Network Society'. In his argument emphasis is given to the declining capacity of the state to satisfy the demands and requirements of citizens, but he forgets that this capacity has only been available to the welfare states of the West. In most other regions of the world welfare has never existed. The decolonized areas that Clifford Geertz in the 1960s called 'new states in old societies' have never seen an effective battle against poverty and illiteracy. In those areas one finds a general disillusionment with respect to the powers that be, which have promised so much and delivered so little. What seems to connect the entire world, from the US to India, is the notion that the state does not offer the solution for problems but is itself the problem. Migrants try to avoid the state in building transnational networks. This is obviously true for large-scale illegal migration, but it is also true for legal migration. An important indication is the fact that money transfers of transnational migrants in 1995 were estimated to exceed 70 billion dollars according to the IMF. National governments try to control these transfers, but are not capable of doing so. It is important to see that this kind of large-scale monetary traffic enables transnational entrepreneurship. Integration in a nation-state is not the aim of these entrepreneurs, although they may well be citizens of the states of immigration. They want to be flexible, to be able to respond quickly to changes in political and financial circumstances. They constitute transnational networks with junctions in a number of nation-states.

In cultural and religious aspects these networks are supported by transnational movements, such as the Pentecostals in Christianity, the World Council of Hindus in the case of Hinduism and the many missionary movements in the case of Islam. These movements are crucial in the creation of transnational identities that connect to the universal message of these religions. While most of them are quietist and expect salvation from the ultimate conversion of all the citizens of the world to the universal Truth, there are also extremist and violent movements among them that aim at more direct political goals. Already in the colonial period these movements were feared by the Western governments. Especially the so-called pan-Islamism was closely watched. For instance, Snouck Hurgronje's stay in Mecca was subsidized by the Ministry for the Colonies since it wanted to have information on the Indonesians who were living in Jeddah and Mecca. With the rise of independent states in Africa and Asia the political mobilization of Muslims seemed to be channelled into nationalist movements and focused on the national arena. In that way the danger of pan-Islamism seemed to have disappeared, but if we ever harboured such an illusion, it will have dissipated after the events of 11 September in the US. That this was indeed an illusion should not surprise us since local, regional, and national conflicts constantly have international and transnational effects. Not only nation-states are crucial in military conflicts but also transnational networks of militant groups. This was true for the Comintern and it is also true for the pan-Islamist groups which have been fighting in several conflicts in Bosnia, Egypt, Afghanistan or the Moluccas. After the collapse of the Soviet Union – partly by their own doing – they are constantly confronted with the US and its allies. When one takes into account the role of the US and the West in supporting the repressive regime of Israel, some anti-Western and anti-American feelings might be expected. The terrorist attack has suddenly made us much more aware of the negative effects of postcolonial globalization on the Western world. One can no longer assume that conflicts in the South, in which the North, particularly the US, is involved will be contained there. Moreover, with the rise of the network-society the possibilities of states to guarantee security within territorial borders have declined. Responses to this situation cannot be limited to conventional military and political options, but have to emerge from clear-minded analyses of the transformation of the national state. To transnational challenges one has to give transnational answers. The demonizing of Muslim immigrants who are perceived as symbols of the large-scale upheavals of today's world is the opposite of such an answer. It brings us back to old nationalist reflexes that want to bring back that which has already disappeared: the homogenous nation-state.

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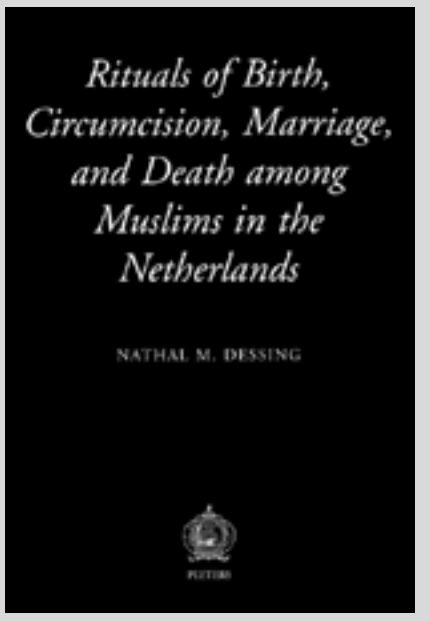
PUBLICATION

Lifecycle rituals of Muslims in the Netherlands

Nathal Dessing, ISIM Educational Coordinator, defended her Ph.D. dissertation entitled *Rituals of Birth, Circumcision, Marriage, and Death among Muslims in the Netherlands* at Leiden University on 19 September 2001. In her dissertation, now published by Uitgeverij Peeters, Dessing examines the effects of migration on the lifecycle rituals of Moroccan, Turkish, and Surinamese Muslims in the Netherlands. She explores how Islamic rituals marking birth, circumcision, marriage, and death have responded and accommodated to the Dutch legal and social context. After setting out the relevant Islamic prescriptions, Dessing draws on her fieldwork in Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht to chart how each ritual has evolved through migration, and compares the ritual practice in the Netherlands and the countries of origin. Dessing thereby sheds light on the meaning, experience, and organization of lifecycle rituals in the migration setting.



Nathal M. Dessing, Rituals of Birth, Circumcision, Marriage, and Death among Muslims in the Netherlands *(Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2001). ISBN 90-429-1059-3*

ANNOUNCEMENT

Call for Applications

AKMI Post-Doctoral Fellowships

For the 2002–2003 academic year, the Working Group Modernity and Islam (AKMI) of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin invites applications for three post-doctoral fellowships for the project entitled 'Jewish and Islamic Hermeneutics as Cultural Critique'. Directed by Almut Sh. Bruckstein (Freie Universität Berlin/Hebrew University Jerusalem) and Navid Kermani (Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin), the project intends to develop formats for the comparative hermeneutics of Muslim and Jewish traditions. Addressed are phenomena and practices in which the script comes alive, such as the recitation of the word, oral and musical traditions, the aesthetics and iconography of texts, and the genres and structures of traditional exegesis.

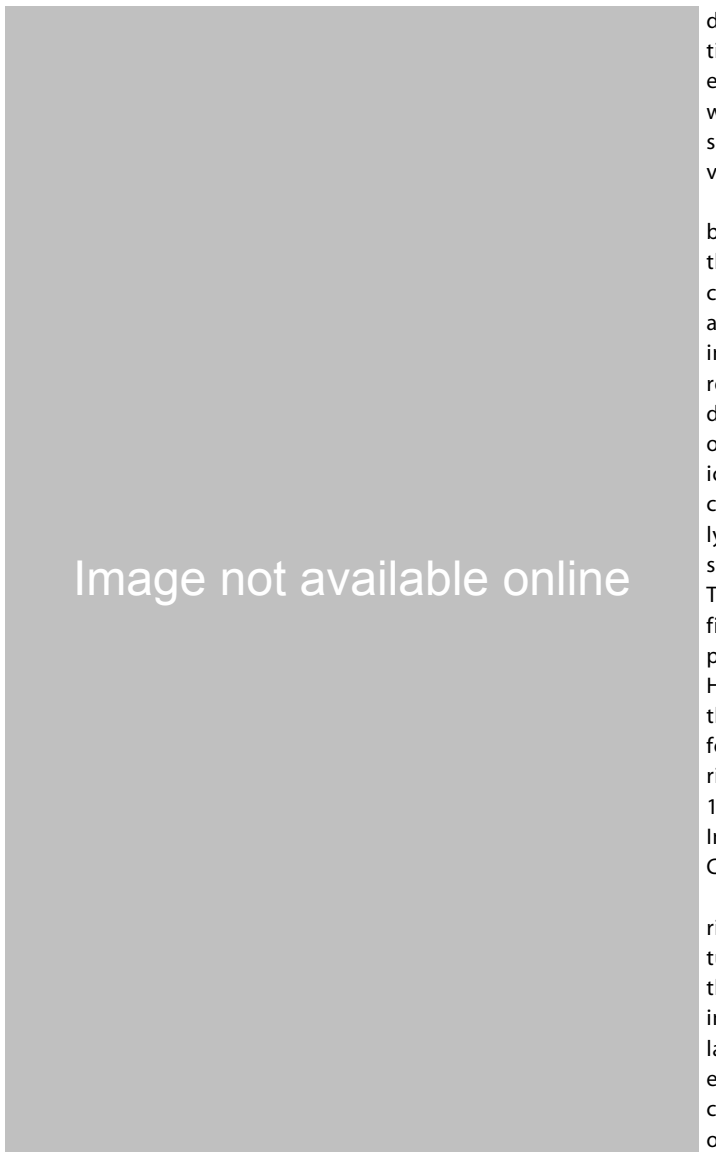
For further information please consult: http://www.wiko-berlin.de/Information/eakmi_i.htm

Rights Activism

ATEF SHAHAT SAID

Homosexuality and Human Rights in Egypt

'The accused persons have practised sodomy. Oriental society criminalizes homosexuality and delinquency, which are condemned by Islam and all divine religions. This practice, if spread, will destroy the whole society.' The state security prosecutor's report contained these words regarding the case of the 52 Egyptians accused of sodomy, who were arrested on 11 May 2001 on the tourist Queen Boat. On 14 November, 23 of them were found guilty. The main two accusations were obscenity (in Egyptian criminal law, obscenity means sodomy) and contempt of religion.



Fifty-two suspected Egyptian homosexuals arrive at a Cairo court.

An analysis of this case file within the context of the human rights movement in Egypt and within the broader political and legal environment indicates three main paradoxes. The case raises the question of the universality and specificity of the human rights agenda; it highlights the controversial area of the rule of law and Egypt's legal structure; and it also emphasizes the effects of the political atmosphere on issues of human rights in Egypt.

Human rights and sexual minorities

Some contradictions within the human rights movement and its agenda in Egypt have arisen from this case and its ramifications. For instance, only one out of 17 human rights organizations – among the six that work in legal aid – has offered legal services to the accused. Since most of these organizations have not explicitly declared their opinion on the case, it can be inferred that they are not willing to take a clear stance on this issue. This reticence stems from the fact that homosexuality is frowned upon in Egyptian society. Supporting those accused of homosexuality would put these already peripheral organizations in an even more delicate position vis-à-vis the rest of society. The fine line between the universal and the relative in human rights standards has come to the fore in this case. The issues that raise the most controversy in this borderline area, even among human rights activists in Egypt, are the limits of freedom of expression when it comes to religion, women's rights, and the rights of minorities, specifically Copts. This case, however, involves a new minority.

Because human rights groups are accused by the state of pursuing a Western agenda, they are sometimes more anxious to take up controversial rights cases.[1] It is true that this agenda may be inspired, practically speaking at least, and because of insufficient local resources, by a generalized 'Western' agenda.[2] For example, political and civil rights often take precedence over social, economic and cultural rights due to these agenda considerations. However, it is not completely true that a 'Western' agenda is used in supporting the rights of sexual minorities. The UN human rights committee issued the first international case that highlighted the protection of sexual minorities in 1994. Human Rights Watch maintains that only by the beginning of the 1980s was protection for homosexuals embodied in a human rights agenda, to the extent that only in 1981 was the so-called AIMGLC (Amnesty International Members for Gay and Lesbian Concerns) established in the USA.[3]

In addition to the controversial human rights scene in Egypt, both the legal structure and the partial rule of law have affected the outcome of the case. The legal structure in Egypt is a complex mixture of modern laws that guarantee human rights, and others which do not. In some cases, the penal code (which is not linked to the foundations of Islamic law) itself is discriminatory. For example, in cases of adultery, the penal code's structure of punishment is very severe and discriminates between the penalties received based on gender. This suppressive nature of the criminal code, in some cases, has forced the Egyptian Supreme Constitutional Court to affirm the unconstitutionality of a particular law (ruling no. 49, for the constitutional year 17, issued on 15 June 1996) and to call for criminal codes to be written more clearly. It has stated that the legislature should not issue laws that can be used to entrap citizens, who should be assured of their security and privacy. The ambiguous definition of obscenity made it easy for the government to accuse the men in this case. Since the definitions of pornography and obscenity have evolved over the years[4] the legislative authority should consider changing the laws that deal with these issues. The Egyptian gays were sentenced according to Egyptian Criminal Law, article 98 (on establishing an illegal association) and in this context more importantly to law no. 10 for the year 1960 which deals with prostitution. In the explanatory regulations of the latter, while prostitution is defined as being committed by females, obscenity is described as committing sodomy with more than one person with the intent of prostitution when it concerns males. Even so, it can be argued that most human rights abuses in Egypt do not exist as a result of the suppressive or ambiguous laws, but because of the partial respect of the rule of law. This disrespect transforms laws into a means within the jurisdiction of the executive authorities at any particular moment.

The political shadow

The political environment has also affected the final outcome of this case. Four issues make it clear that we can not understand the case without linking it to the broader political theatre in Egypt, and in particular the struggle between the government and the Islamists. In this regard, the political game between the government and the Islamists is setting the agenda for intellectual discussion in Egypt.[5] In this case, the government wants to appear as religiously credible to counter the Islamists. There are several examples that prove this argument, among which is the contradictory manner in which the government behaves towards civil freedoms and human rights – in favour or against according to its interests at specific times. One example is its role in defending its publishing of the novel entitled *Walyeema Li A'ashaab Al-Bahr* (A Banquet for Seaweed) in spring 2000, while banning three novels published by the ministry of culture in early 2001.

The government also fears that the election of 17 members of the Muslim Brotherhood in November 2000 to the Peoples Assembly (PA) might generate a more Islamist discourse within the PA. Moreover, there is no reasonable or legal justification for the use of the state security court, which is purely an exceptional court, in this case. The ruling tried to justify the use of a state security court by claiming that contempt of religion is a matter of state security. Finally, according to Ahmed Saif,[6] director of the Hisham Moubarak Law Center, the only human rights organization that offered its legal aid services to the accused, '[t]here are several grave errors that cannot be justified legally in the court's ruling. The ruling, for instance, has no concrete evidence except for medical reports for each of the accused and their confessions. Both are inadequate as evidence: the former is ambiguous and some of the confessions referred to committing sodomy more than 5 years prior to the arrests. The statute of limitations for misdemeanour suits in Egyptian law is only 5 years. An additional grave mistake is that there is no real evidence of sodomy having been committed with several persons.' If there is no evidence of sodomy committed with more than one person, then the judge has criminalized homosexuality per se, as was indeed the case for some of the accused. An additional problem within the state security court is that the accused have no right to appeal. These legal errors and details probably indicate the political shadow over the case. The above-mentioned 'game' forces the government's hand to act sometimes, as it is the paramount protector of Islamic and religious values in general.

If the previous information shows that the legal, political and human rights environment affected the case, societal pressures also played their part. Those accused were not only deprived of their right to privacy, they were portrayed in a very negative light by all the Egyptian media. Just a week after the rulings, the government arrested more homosexuals. Other cases concerning (different) moral issues include that of Shohdy Naguib Sorour, web-designer at the *Ahram Weekly* newspaper. Sorour was arrested by the government on 22 November for having published on the web his father's poetry (Naguib Sorour is a former controversial playwright and poet), considered indecent and even pornographic. In fact, the government has established a new Internet crime unit at the Ministry of Interior, which might be the cause of these recent arrests.

I agree with El Amrani (*Cairo Times*, 22–28 November 2001) when he argues that this was not a criminal and legal case but a case on morality. Sociologists and human rights activists need to study the government's change of heart regarding issues of morality. Taking into consideration Foucault's argument (i.e. the linkage between power, repression and the evolvement of the discourse on sexuality in modern bourgeoisie society),[7] different channels of repression, including economic ones, should be studied with respect to the Egyptian case.

It is clear that human rights activism in Egypt has not developed to the point of being able to defend issues involving several controversial freedoms. This can only occur if the social and political atmosphere in the country begins to change.

Notes

1. Hossam Bahgat, 'Explaining Egypt's Targeting of Gays', *MERIP Press Information*, Note 64 (23 July 2001).
2. David Gillies, Between *Principle and Practice: Human Rights in North-South Relations* (McGill-Queen University Press, 1996).
3. *Human Rights Watch* 57, no. 6 (Nov./Dec. 1997): 38; James D. Wiles, 'The Human Rights of Sexual Minorities', *Human Rights: Journal of the section of Individual Rights & Responsibilities* 22, no. 4 (autumn 1995): 22; Fact Sheet entitled 'Where Having Sex is a Crime', International Gay and Lesbians Human Rights Committee (April 1999).
4. Jonathan Wallace and Mark Mangan, *Sex, Laws, and Cyberspace* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996), 33.
5. Mona Abaza, 'Tanwir and Islamization: Rethinking the Struggle over Intellectual Inclusion in Egypt', *Cairo Papers in Social Science* (AUC, 1999).
6. In a personal interview with the writer (19 November 2001).
7. Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980).

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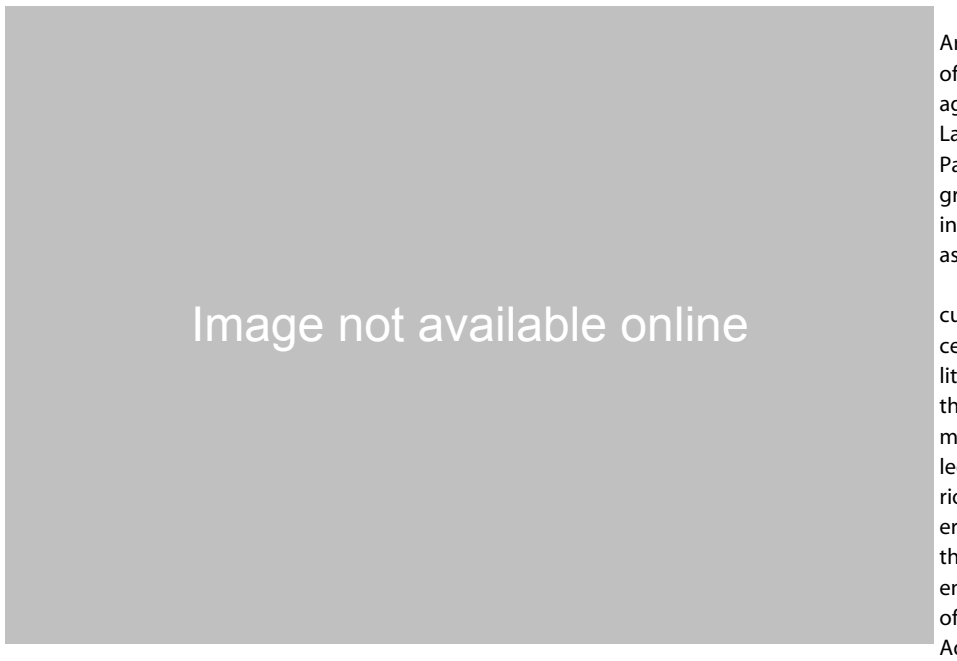
Arab Reactions

AMR HAMZAWY

Arab Intellectuals, Usama bin Laden and the West

The printed Arabic media offer hardly any critical review of the social and political settings in the Arab world that may help to explain the emergence of violent Islamist groups. Standard newspaper articles and comments on the post–September 11 events vary from elaborations of the marked inconsistencies in US foreign policies to the popular conspiracy theories in which 'international Zionism' is blown up to mythical proportions. A few intellectuals, however, opt for a more open and frank approach to the issues involved, including some who had been accused in the past of endorsing militant Islamism.



Usama bin Laden sits with his advisor Ayman al-Zawahiri, an Egyptian linked to the Al-Qaᶜida network.

Just before the American-British retaliation against Afghanistan, the Arab daily *Al-Hayat* published a series of articles on Usama bin Laden and his Al-Qaᶜida network. Based on interviews and statements made by former members of Al-Qaᶜida, the author, Kamil at-Tawil, a Lebanese journalist living in London, offers an in-depth discussion of the development of Al-Qaᶜida in Afghanistan and beyond from 1988 onwards. He explains that the organization did not begin its fight as a jihad against Western influence in the Arab world, but rather as one against the 'unjust Arab rulers'; anti-Americanism was a later consequence of the Second Gulf War. Bin Laden's failure to establish an Islamist network operating from the Gulf region, specifically Saudi Arabia, led him to Afghanistan in 1990, to the Sudan from 1991 to 1996, and then back to Afghanistan where he remained until the September 11 attacks.

At-Tawil argues that the radicalization of the Al-Qaᶜida was the result of a new leadership within the network, headed by two former members of the Egyptian Jihad – Ayman az-Zawahiri and Abu Hifs al-Misri. The goals now included the expulsion of the US troops from the Arab Peninsula and the liberation of Jerusalem. The new direction taken by the Al-Qaᶜida network was illustrated by its official declaration of war against the US in 1996, and the enactment of a fatwa to legitimize the suicide-attacks against the American and Israeli armies and civilians.[1]

Unfortunately, the frankness of these *Al-Hayat* articles is not representative of the Arab press reporting on the September 11 attacks and their underlying causes. Readers of Arab newspapers are either confronted with articles which abound in stereotypes of and ideological remarks on Islamism and the relationship between the Arab world and the West, usually accentuating the US support of radical Islamist groups in the 1980s and 1990s and criticizing Western policy regarding the Arab-Islamic world. Other articles emphasize the peaceful nature of Islam and the faultiness of the Huntington thesis. The internal and regional factors causing the emergence of radical Islamist movements are rarely discussed. Criticism of the West is so frequent and in such obvious disregard of the context that one may conclude that despite the prevailing condemnation of the September 11 attacks, there is an implicit justification. Bin Laden's popularity among the Arab peoples is believed to stem from his willingness to deal with significant problems (e.g. Palestine) and his ability to teach the 'arrogant Americans' a lesson.

The conspiracy

Conspiracy theories, of which there are three basic patterns, comprise another component of common argumentation. The first asserts that American intelligence orchestrated the September 11 attacks, with the intention of justifying an already planned attack on the Arab and Islamic *umma*. The second claims that the Christian Occident orchestrated the attacks to create a pretext for cleansing the West from its Muslim residents. This theory is further supported by the apparent smear campaigns against Islam in parts of the Western media and by the first legal steps taken against Islamist groups in Europe. The third mostly appears in Arab media and is based on the assumption that the West is dominated by international Zionism. It is claimed that the attacks were carried out by Israeli intelligence in order to justify the brutal behaviour of the Israeli administration against Palestinians in the occupied territories. To this effect, a rumour circulated that all Jewish employees of the World Trade Center were mysteriously absent on September 11. This theory represents a return to the Arab public's most frequently used explanation for any crisis situation: 'it's the Jews' fault'. Whether it be the spread of the HIV-virus in the Arab region (allegedly by female Israeli HIV-positive intelligence agents who consciously seduce Arab men in order to infect them), or the poor cotton harvest in Egypt (due to manipulated seeds given by the Israeli government), Israel is always the culprit.

A clear example of how these different conspiracy theories are not mutually exclusive, is demonstrated by Mustafa Mahmud in the Egyptian daily *Al-Ahram* (November 3). In his essay Mahmud accuses the West of having been planning its crusade against Islam already for several decades. The September 11 attacks which, according to Mahmud, were carried out by American groups, served as justification for attacking the Islamic *umma*. In his opinion, the increasing brutality of the Israeli army against Palestinians is not only an expression of the current anti-Islamic attitude of the Jewish state, but also proof of Israel's participation in the attacks. In an apocalyptic manner, the war in Afghanistan is claimed to be the final battle between true Islam and the materialistic civilization of the West. Martyrdom will relieve the Islamic community from its continual anguish, and cause the definite downfall of the West. This line of argumentation does not only elucidate a radical Islamist interpretation of 'the end of history'. It rather completes the last circle of an Islamist variation of messianic thought, in which the good and its hero (in this case Bin Laden) ultimately prevail.[2]

Critical thoughts

Although simplified and ambiguous explanations are clearly predominant in the Arab press, a small number of critical articles represent important, though not necessarily new, ideas. For example, the Lebanese philosopher Ridwan as-Sayyid links his defence of 'true Islam' to a critique of radical Islamism. He condemns the simplified depiction of Islamic politics as merely an implementation of the *sharᶤᶜa* and the readiness to use force as a means of Islamizing contemporary Arab societies. He also refuses to legitimize the terrorist attacks as a response to the American foreign policy of the last decades regarding the Middle East.[3]

The significance of this rather marginal position lies in the fact that As-Sayyid is known as a prominent representative of moderate Islamism whose advocates have been previously accused of quietly supporting the use of violence by radical religious movements. This clear turning away from militant Islamism reflects the recent rediscovery of the moral and peaceful roots of Islamism, as articulated by the founder of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna, in the 1920s and 1930s. The Tunisian thinker Abu Yaᶜrib al-Marzuqi asserts that this turn-away entails a distancing from the politicization of Islam once put forth by the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966).[4]

A number of secular thinkers and authors are shifting their focus within the Arab debate since September 11 and openly discuss internal and regional factors. For example, the Lebanese sociologists Waddah Sharara and Salim Nasar argue that the rise of radical Islamism was not so much a product of anti-Americanism, but of societal crises in the Arab world where ruling elites used religion as an instrument to divert attention from their policy failures and the deficient legitimacy of the political system. Therefore, Arabs should realize the implications of the lack of foundations to support democracy in their own societies, before unilaterally expecting the West to deal with the consequences of Arab politics. Both Sharara and Nasar condemn the use of the Arab-Israeli conflict as sufficient justification of religiously-motivated acts of violence against the West. They both hold that Bin Laden's motive is much less the liberation of Palestine, than it is the establishment of a regressive Islamic state within the Arab world, in which universally accepted principles such as human rights would bear no meaning.[5]

The personage of Usama bin Laden and its current use in the Arab public sphere received some critical review. The Egyptian political scientist Wahid ᶜAbdulmajid interprets the portrayal of Bin Laden's character in the media as a reflection of modern Arab hero-legends. His being depicted as a lonely warrior against the arrogant powers of the Western world is analogous to the construction of the character of Adham as-Sharqawi, a legendary fighter against the British occupation of Egypt at the beginning of the 20th century. Additionally, Bin Laden's hiding in the desolate mountains of Afghanistan reminds one of the prophet Muhammad, who hid in the cave of Hira' when leaving Mecca for Medina. This particular legendary aspect seems to have been consciously adopted by the Al-Qaᶜida, as reflected by their self-portrayal in the video-messages broadcasted following the first retaliation strikes by the US. According to ᶜAbdulmajid, the emphasis on Bin Laden's eloquent yet matter-of-fact style of speaking fulfil a double function: firstly, elating him to the position of sole representative of self-confident Muslims and, secondly, transfiguring the lacking realism contained in his political objectives.[6]

Even though these critical ideas do not occupy a central position in the Arab media's reporting on the September 11 events and their consequences, they bear great potential for the future. The possible intellectual isolation of radical Islamism, on the one hand, and the public discussion of the normative underpinnings of modern Arab societies, on the other, are significant departures from the dominant discourse. It seems to be increasingly difficult to explain crises in the Arab world by pointing to the West as the cause of all harms, and thus divert attention from our own failures. Ironically, this change might be a significant step forward in the dialogue between the Orient and the Occident.

Notes

1. Kamil at-Tawil, 'Usama bin Ladin', *Al-Hayat*, 4–9 October 2001.
2. Mustafa Mahmud, 'Hal huwa intihar!', *Al-Ahram*, 3 November 2001.
3. Radwan as-Sayyid, 'Istiᶜadat al-islam min man khatafuhu', *Al-Hayat*, 11 October 2001.
4. Abu Yaᶜrib al-Marzuqi, 'Munasaba li-tachlis al-ᶜalam', *Al-Hayat*, 11 October 2001.
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September 11

SAAD EDDIN IBRAHIM

A Note from Prison
Legitimate Accounts, Wrong Accountants

The carnage which started with the suicidal bombing of New York's World Trade Center (WTC) on September 11 has resumed with massive American bombing of Afghanistan on the evening of 7 October 2001. It is the first war of the 21st century, pitting the world's strongest, richest, most technologically advanced country against a country that is among the poorest and least developed. It also happens to be between a Western, predominately Christian country and a Muslim, Middle Eastern country; between a secular democracy and an avowed theocracy. The list of contrasts probably contains many more dichotomies – making the Huntingtonians applaud the seeming fulfilment of their 'clash of civilizations' prophecy.

I am writing from my Egyptian prison cell in the fourth week of the American air campaign against Afghanistan. By the time these reflections are published, the present battle may be over, but not the war itself. The next battles of this war are bound to break out and could be anywhere in what Zbignew Brzezinski aptly called the 'arch of crisis'. Just over ten years ago, a similar battle involving the US and another Middle Eastern country – Iraq – broke out and has never been completely ended. Before Iraq and Afghanistan, the US became militarily involved with ground forces and/or air power in Lebanon (1982/83), Iran (1980/81), Libya (1980s), Somalia and the Sudan (1990s). No other world region has experienced as many active American military intentions in the last three decades.

The fact that America is part of 'the West' and that the Middle East is part of 'the Rest' may or may not be a coincidence. Intellectuals are forcefully taking sides, but the empirical evidence is still insufficient for testing Huntington's 'grand theory' of the late 20th century. My reflections here do not address that grand theorizing; not for lack of temptation to do so, but for lack of references at hand and diminished margins of freedom in a Middle Eastern prison.

Instead, I will address far more modest questions. Why does our part of the world generate these frequent battles with the West, specifically the US? And why do the Middle Eastern antagonists keep losing the battles, with no apparent end to the war with the West? The brief answer to the first question is that peoples of the Middle East have truly legitimate accounts to settle with the West; and to the second question is that wrong accountants impose themselves on our people to settle those accounts. Proper accountants are yet to emerge – true Arab-Muslim democrats. But this is another story, for a future set of reflections, hopefully from the freedom beyond this prison.

Grievances

The accounts to be settled, as perceived by the Arab-Muslim world, abound. The list of grievances would vary somewhat from one Arab-Muslim country to another, and from one specific constituency to another within each country. The list would include diverse and even contradictory items – such as restrictive migration measures against Turks and North Africans into Western Europe, American military presence in the Gulf, the frequent US congressional threat of withdrawing American units from the multinational forces in Egyptian Sinai, one-sided support for Israel, MacDonald's, Coca-Cola, decadent Hollywood movies, excessive Western corporate presence, too little Western investment in the Arab-Muslim Middle East, and enforced values like consumerism and family planning. It all depends on who you talk to, in which country, and at which point in time.

But there is a core of common grievances that nearly all Arabs and Muslims deeply hold against 'the West'. These include military humiliation, colonial occupation, pillaging of resources, political domination, cultural subjugation, and territorial fragmentation of the Homeland. Half a century ago, 'the West' was concretely the Dutch to Indonesians at one end of the 'arch of crises', and the French to Algerians and Morocco at the other end of the arch. In the middle, it was the British to peoples and cultures – Malaysians, Bengalis, Urdus, Afghanis, Persians, Mashreq Arabs, and Egyptians. More recently, the West has become condensed and symbolized by America.

Ironically the US was never a colonial power in the classical imperial sense – at least not in the Arab-Muslim world. But there are symbolic and instrumental reasons for this collective perception, and it is more than an implication by kinship with the old colonial powers of Europe. This will become more evident shortly.

At the very epicentre of Arab-Muslim core grievances towards the West is Palestine. It has been an open wound in the most sensitive spot at nearly the exact midpoint. The pains of that open wound may have been felt less by those far away – say, the peoples of Indonesia and Morocco at the two peripheral ends of the arch. But thanks to the electronic media, scenes of brutalization of Palestinians have become daily news on television screens in the most isolated hamlets of Java and Agadir. How else could any fair observer account for the post-September 11 demonstrations witnessed in some of these countries – albeit to the embarrassment of their own official leadership, which dutifully paid homage to the victims of the American tragedy. For sizeable segments, though by no means all of the public opinion in the arch, it was divine justice at work – retribution for all the injustices perpetrated by the West upon 'us' in Palestine, Iraq, and elsewhere for so long. America is perceived to be the permanent supporter of the Zionist Israeli state, while keeping the Arab-Islamic world 'divided, sapped, weak, dominated, exploited and humiliated'. Some may add that all of this is really about protecting oil interests in the Gulf, and now in the Caspian Sea.

Responses to the war

For most Arabs and Muslims, arguments about defeating the terrorists responsible for innocent victims of the WTC and the Pentagon may have been sympathetically listened to between September 11 and October 7, though with the caveat 'and what about the innocent Palestinians and Iraqis?' – in an obvious reference to the fact that they have been killed or bombed by American weapons either directly or at the hands of their 'Israeli clients'. After October 7, the American bombing of targets in Afghanistan was labelled by the leading mainstream *Al-Ahram al-Arabi* weekly (3 November 2001) as outright barbarism. In this view, no excuse or pretext justifies American air raids, which could never avoid victimizing innocent Afghan civilians.

By November 7, one month after the start of the bombing, one could hardly find an Arab columnist of any note who would justify the American war against Afghanistan. It was no longer a 'war against terrorism' as sanctioned by the UN Security Council for legitimate action in self-defence. In the heat of battle all such legalisms are pushed to the margins. By now, the approximately 3,000 innocent American civilians killed by a premeditated act of terrorism seem to have been forgotten or deeply pushed into the Arab-Muslim collective subconscious. Now, it is only the moving picture of Afghanis –starving children in refugee camps on the border with Pakistan – or the mutilated bodies in the aftermath of American bombs, some of which invariably fall on civilian targets. These media images compete with similar ones from Palestine which have been displayed throughout the 13 months of the Al-Aqsa Intifada. A cartoon on the front page of the most secular liberal *Al-Wafd* daily (1 November 2001) summed it up: American President Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Sharon standing in two adjacent, but obviously competing, butcher shops, each busily slaughtering children – 'Afghani flavour' and 'Palestinian flavour' respectively – with a big sign advertising discount prices for Muslim meat.

Combat statistics, in view of images and cartoons like these, lose their relevance over time. Thus to say that the US lost in one hour three times more than the combined losses of Palestinians in one year (700) and Afghanis in one month (2,000) seems irrelevant to an average citizen in Pakistan, Egypt, or Morocco. It is what social psychologists call the 'immediacy effect' – American victims were killed two months earlier, but Afghanis and Palestinians are 'being slaughtered right now, now, as we speak, do something about it!'. It is this immediacy effect, thanks again to satellite communications displaying the maimed and displaced, which accounts for the anti-American demonstrations in Arab-Muslim capitals.

But there are other effects which play in favour of Taliban Afghanistan in fuelling similar demonstrations in other countries far beyond the Arab-Muslim World – e.g. Korea, Japan and several Latin American countries. Among these other effects is a David vs. Goliath syndrome (Bin Laden vs. Bush), or the Taliban as a 'Cinderella hero'. There is no doubt of the presence of a quota of envy among the poor and marginal vis-à-vis US power, wealth, and hegemony in a unipolar world system. Among a limited sample of fellow prison inmates (both political and criminal), I have detected satisfaction, if not outright delight, in observing American humiliation and widespread fear because of the suicide bombings and subsequent Anthrax panic. This degree of spite, coming at a moment of a colossal human tragedy, could only be a function of deep bitterness, un-redressed historical grievances, and contemporary open wounds.

Usama Bin Laden is fast emerging as a folk hero to millions of the angry and frustrated in the Arab-Muslim world. To them, he has eluded and frightened the sole superpower and its other Western allies. He and his modest Taliban allies with minimal weapons, primitive technology, access to one regional television channel (Al-Jazeera) and a tiny resource base have already stood up and resisted the firepower of the strongest country in history for four weeks – i.e. longer than Saddam Hussein with his one million-strong army in the 1991 Gulf War; and five times longer than Egypt, Syria, and Jordan stood up to much less Israeli firepower in the 1967 Six Day War. By these standards, Arab-Muslim youngsters may be justified in their admiration of Bin Laden's defiance. He has largely won the current battle over the hearts, if not the minds, of the Arab-Muslim world.

Legitimate accounts

But will Bin Laden and his Taliban brothers win the war against the West?

From the humble view of an Arab prisoner of conscience, the answer is a big 'NO'. Bin Laden is one in a chain of Arab-Muslim leaders who defied, challenged, and engaged the West in grand battles. But in the end, they have all lost their wars against the West. This all started with Egypt's Nasser half a century ago, and continued with Libya's Qaddafi, Syria's Assad, Iraq's Saddam, and now Saudi-Afghani Bin Laden. The initial battle cry of each one of these challengers resonated deeply and widely with the Arab-Muslim masses. Some cried out under the banner of Arab Nationalism, others under the banner of Islam. All of them invoked the cause of Palestine and specifically the liberation of Jerusalem. These two causes have tremendous emotive power. However, each of the above challengers tagged Palestine and Jerusalem on to his own personal ambitions for power and his ideological hopes for remaking the world.

Initial successes in overpowering local foes or bleeding external enemies, using zealous true believers, whipping up the cheers of spectators – all are tempting, and always deceiving. Sheer grand vision and scores of zealots have never alone been sufficient, in our region or elsewhere in the world, in sustaining a credible challenge, much less in achieving ultimate victory. History is a vast graveyard of the likes of Bin Laden and his pan-Islamic Al-Qaʿida network, the Taliban movement and millions of distant admiring but powerless masses. All we need to anticipate the unfolding of events in this particular drama is to look back to Egypt's Nasser in the 1960s. As then, Bin Laden made a thunderous entrance onto the world stage. He may very well end the same – i.e. withering away after a resounding defeat, or getting

Continued on page 38

Afghanistan

CONRAD SCHETTER

Misunderstanding Ethnicity in the Afghan Conflict

After the conflicts in Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Chechnya, the war in Afghanistan is being explained in terms of the supremacy of ethnicity. The solution, the UN is aspiring, seems plausible: if representatives of all ethnic groups can be brought together into one government, the 23-year war in Afghanistan will end. But such a solution bears the danger that by linking political office and ethnicity the conflict in Afghanistan will be stabilized and even intensified.

Policy-makers and the media tend to narrow the conflict in Afghanistan to the ethnic dimension. They hold that a government in which all ethnic groups are represented would reflect all facets of the Afghan population. They often make the mistake of seeing ethnic groups as uniform bodies acting in accord and equating the ethnic groups with the political movements. What is ignored in the present debate is the fact that, despite the ethnicization of the Afghan masses failed. Most Afghans hate all the parties to the conflict equally. Nor is the problem of ethnicity of much significance to them. Largely forgotten is that, to the Afghans, it is not the ethnic group, but rather family, clan and village which provide the major hallmarks of action and identity. Even the relevance of ethnicity as a factor of military and political cohesion remained limited in the Afghan war: countless commanders and combat units changed their allegiance several times out of political opportunism and economic incentive – independent of their ethnic affiliation.

What is an ethnic group?

The dilemma with raising ethnicity to the basis of conflict-resolution begins with the question of what constitutes an ethnic group. Despite the widely held view that ethnic groups have existed since time immemorial, most of those in Afghanistan were 'created' in the course of the 20th century. Driven by the scientific endeavour to classify people according to cultural customs, ethnologists invented an entire series of ethnic groups: Nuristani, Pashai, Aimaq, Tajik or Farsiwan. The segments of the populace for whom they were invented are often not even familiar with such labels, much less aware of any common identity. In addition there is a lack of viable criteria to determine who is Uzbek, Hazara or Pashtun. For example, those who maintain that Pashtuns speak Pashtu and are Sunni Muslims err, since there are also Shiite Pashtuns in the Qandahar region and Pashtuns from Kabul often do not speak a word of Pashtu. A good example for the aforementioned is the former king, Zahir Shah. The difficulties with differentiating are being aggravated by the fact that many Afghans – if they master the cultural patterns – in different situations claim to be of different ethnicity. The former Afghan president Babrak Karmal used to emphasize his Pashtun origin, whereas many Afghans considered him to be a Tajik or an immigrated Kashmiri. Ismail Khan, one of the most important commanders of the Northern Alliance, is sometimes considered to be a Tadjik, a Pashtun or a Farsiwan. He himself steadily refuses to be assigned to a certain ethnic group.

Because of differing scientific approaches, it is unclear just how many ethnic groups exist in Afghanistan and how large they actually are. A German survey concludes there are about 50,[1] while a Russian study claims there are 200.[2] Also it is impossible to say how many Pashtuns or Tajiks are living in Afghanistan. Thus emerges the problem of which ethnic groups are to be taken (and to what extent) into consideration in an 'ethnical solution', as promoted by the UN.

Nation building of Afghanistan

The question of why ethnic groups rose to political relevance in Afghanistan comes to mind. To answer this question one has to look back into history. The Afghan state was created by the rivalling colonial powers, England and Russia, at the end of the 19th century. The ruling family of the Pashtuns, enthroned by England, favoured Pashtun elements in their concept of the nation-state. That is why 'Afghan' is the Persian synonym for Pashtun, Pashtu was always the Afghan national language, and the Afghan history was written from a Pashtun point of view. The politics of the ruling family employed the ethnic patterns that came into existence in order to regulate access to public goods and offices. Pashtuns were privileged in all areas and dominated the military. Tajiks were left with the economic sector and the educational institutions, whereas the Hazara were marginalized. The differential treatment of people went along with the forming of ethnic stereotypes: Pashtuns were considered 'bellicose', Tajiks were said to be 'thrifty', Uzbeks were known as 'brutal' and the Hazara as 'illiterate' and 'poor'. Despite the politics of the nation-state having created an ethnic hierarchy, there were surprisingly few ethnic conflicts. The main reason for this was the enormous contrast between the rural and urban areas. Politics in Kabul was of little interest to the people in rural Afghanistan. Afghans saw the nation-state as a hostile factor and not as a key to accessing resources (such as offices or land rights) which they should take control of. Accordingly they did not articulate a political will to overcome the ethnic hierarchy stipulated by the state.

Ethnicity in the war

Ethnicity became a political-military force to reckon with when the Afghan war broke out in 1979. Even though the war was dominated by the antagonism of communism vs. Islam regarding the paradigms of the Cold War, the belligerent parties increasingly enhanced the ethnic momentum to strengthen their positions. The communist rulers hoped to bring certain ethnic groups closer by raising them to the status of nationalities. Even more important was the creation of militias that relied on ethnic affiliation; well known is the Uzbek militia of Rashid Dostum. Also Pakistan and Iran used the ethnic potential for conflicts. On the grounds of Shiite loyalties, Iran established the Hizb-i wahdat, which was strong among the Shiite Hazara. During the 1980s the Jamiat-i islami, the oldest resistance movement, developed into a representation for the Tajiks. Pakistan supported the Taliban, which followed a radical Islam but was also Pashtun dominated.

But the ethnicization of the conflict was restricted with regard to one important aspect: the ethnic card was never played openly, but remained covert. Thus one can find very little proof of ethnocentrism among any of the political movements involved. The published speeches of leaders such as Ahmad Shah Massud, Burhanuddin Rabbani or Mullah Omar, are imbued with Islamic rhetoric, but all of them vehemently denied any ethnic dimension of the war. Politicians never tire of declaring their respective parties as being multi-ethnic. The underlying reason is that Afghans refrain from picking ethnicity out as a central theme. There is a wide-ranging consensus among Afghans that to bring forward arguments along ethnic lines will threaten the continued existence of the Afghan nation-state. Whoever claims rights in the name of an ethnic group is quickly considered a traitor. In addition to this, many Afghans consider the accentuation of ethnicity as un-Islamic, as it questions the *umma*, the all-inclusive Islamic community.

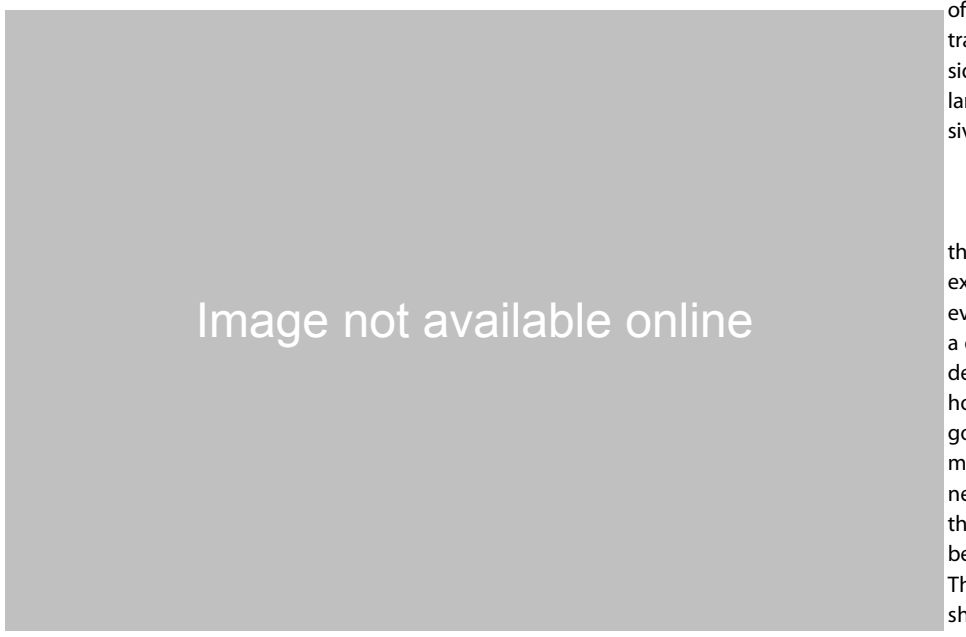
Prospects for the future

If an attempt is being made to implement the UN-sponsored 'ethnical solution', the explosiveness of this proposal will become evident, for it can only be achieved through a quota approach. Recently, Pakistani President Musharaf called for the Pashtuns to hold 60% of the offices in a future Afghan government. But setting quotas for government posts harbours the danger of permanently fixing the importance of ethnicity, thus setting the stage for a juggling of numbers at the filling of every official position. The lessons from Sri Lanka and Malaysia should have taught that setting ethnic quotas is not a suitable formula for settling an 'ethnic' conflict, partly because it prepares the ground for the kind of patronage that is diametrically opposed to the concepts of a civil society propagated by the West.

There has been much discussion of establishing an ethnic federalism as a way of doing justice to ethnic demands. But that approach, too, would prove counterproductive, since Afghanistan is not ethnically homogenous and the various population groups are very difficult to delineate geographically. Often enough there are villages in which a whole range of ethnic groups reside. The implementation of federalism would also harbour the danger of 'ethnic cleansing', since ideas of homogenization could easily be projected onto the territory as highlighted by the example of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Against this background the suggestion to separate Afghanistan into a northern Tajik zone and a southern Pashtun one, does not only seem naïve but highly dangerous.[3]

Also the raising of ethnic representation will have dire consequences. In that case ethnicity could not be neglected in the political context and would turn into the bedrock of all political action. The still minor importance that ethnicity has among the Afghan populace should be harnessed for political reconstruction, rather than being enforced by an 'ethnical solution'. Any new regime must underline that government appointments and political decisions will be guided by professional competence and not by ethnic considerations. A new Afghan constitution should likewise keep clear of ethnic factors as much as possible. It would be devastating to establish Sunni Islam as the state religion, for that would shut the Shiites out. As to language policy, Farsi – Afghanistan's lingua franca – and Pashtu should be given coequal status, while such languages as Uzbeki, Turkmeni or Baluchi could be granted the status of province languages.

In Afghanistan, the international community is once again faced with the challenge of dealing with a conflict that is interpreted as an ethnic one. The architects of a future Afghanistan would be well advised to work against the ethnic polarization of the country. Ethnicity is not the cause of the conflict, but the consequence of political and military mobilization. Hence acceding to ethnic demands will not contribute toward the resolution of conflict, but will only strengthen those who – as has happened before in the Balkans – use ethnicity as an instrument for promoting their own interests.



Haji Zadeer (right), newly elected governor of the Nangarhan province, with Hadi Shinvary, religious leader, at a council of elders, Jalalabad, 17 November 2001.

Notes

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Iran and Beyond

MOHAMAD TAVAKOLI-TARGHI

Frontline Mysticism and Eastern Spirituality

Love mysticism, long viewed as the finest expression of religious experience in Islam, has been displaced in the past two decades with 'frontline/hate mysticism'. This militarized spirituality was nurtured in the 1980s by Iranian theologues, who during the war with Iraq promised prospective teenage martyrs 'ascendance' to heaven. Soon adopted by Islamist activists in other parts of the world, this vengeful modality of piety was an extension of a politicized spirituality that emerged in the aftermath of World War I by redefining the East as spiritual.

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Kazim Chalipa, 'Isar' (Self-Sacrifice)

The first part of the following retrospective essay examines the particularity of hate mysticism; the second identifies the foundational assumptions concerning the Orient and the Occident that allowed for the politicization of spirituality in the 20th century.

Hate mysticism

The tragic events of September 11 were products of a militarized religious subjectivity, a subjectivity that was labelled as 'frontline Gnosticism' *(ʿirfan-i jabhahyi)* by the Iranian-Islamist art ideologue Murtiza Avini.[1] Avini articulated this concept in a commentary on Ayatullah Khumayni's September 1988 letter to Islamic revolutionary artists. In his letter Khumayni radically redefined 'artists' as those 'wise' individuals who shed their 'pure blood' on 'the front-line of love and martyrdom'. Turning to the conventional notion of art, Khumayni asserted that '[b]eautiful and pure art is one that clashes with modern capitalism and with the blood-sucking communism and destroys the Islam of comfort and luxury, the eclectic Islam, the Islam of compromise and ignobility, the Islam of the pain-free comfort-seekers, and in one word the American Islam [*Islam-i Amrikayi*].' Khumayni advised artists 'to engage only in an art that teaches the path of clashing with the globe-mongers of the East and the West who are headed by the [United States of] America and the Soviet [Union].'[2] By denouncing non-combative piety and religiosity as 'American Islam' in the course of the Iran-Iraq War of 1980–1988, Khumayni and other Iranian theologues established a distinctive paradigm of *militarized spirituality*. While claiming to represent 'the pure Muhammadan Islam' *(Islam-i nab-i Muhammadi)*, this modality of piety negated the most cherished aspect of Islamic religious experience that has been historically exemplified by love mysticism.

With the intensification of the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, Iranian war theologues promoted the themes of resistance, self-sacrifice and martyrdom. During that period, 'martyrdom-seeking' was promoted as a fundamental distinction of the Islamic Revolution.[3] By sacrificing oneself for the Islamic nation and the revolution, which were under assault by Iraq, the martyrs were guaranteed ascendance *(ʿuruj)*, a vertical movement toward heaven and God. Replacing the linear and temporal concept of 'progress' as the organizing element of political discourse, the concept of 'ascendance' promoted a directional shift from a horizontal movement towards a desirable future to a vertical movement to a heavenly afterlife. Whereas Iranian revolutionary discourse promoted a collective march towards 'freedom' and the Islamic Republic, the war discourse publicized the individualized heavenward ascendance of the 'avenger of God' and the 'revolutionary guards'.

While this vertical ascendance had affinity with the medieval Gnostic concepts of perfection *(kamal)* and union *(vasl)*, it rested upon a radically different form of subjectivity. In its medieval articulation, ascendance was viewed as attainable only through solitude, asceticism, and the rejection of the material world. But the ascendance that was promised to the martyrs during the Iran-Iraq war was indeed a displacement of the patriotic willingness to die and to kill for one's own homeland. This theological 'insurance' for well being in the afterlife of the martyrs was also deployed by the Afghani Mujahidin, the Pakistani Sipah-i Sahaba, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Lebanese Hizb Allah, and the Palestinian Hamas sodalities. Thus 'martyrdom' and 'ascendance' became significant components of nationalized religious rhetoric. This new military rhetoric was sanctified by resorting to the Qur'an and the tradition of Prophet Muhammad. But the architects of this rhetoric conveniently forget to explain that the Prophet Muhammad and early Muslim warriors never referred to their military endeavours as jihad and did not hail a comrade who died on the warfront as a martyr. By de-historicizing and naturalizing jihad and martyrdom, in the past two decades these variegated concepts have been utilized for the purpose of endowing religious sanctity on combative subjectivity. It was such a combative subjectivity that was hailed as 'frontline mysticism' by the Iranian ideologue Murtiza Avini.

Unlike historical Islamic love mysticism, which has been predominantly apolitical and introspective, frontline mysticism is consciously political and vengeful. Instead of meditation and solitary contemplation for the purpose of annihilating the ego-centred self (an endeavour which was called 'the greater jihad'), frontline religious activists publicly propagate their will through physical self-annihilation. Unlike the love-mystics who encouraged ascetic endeavours for the goal of unity with the Other, contemporary religious activists are impelled to violently eliminate the Other through physical self-annihilation.

In contradistinction to the solitary and privatized subjectivity of medieval mystics who sought to obliterate the Satan within themselves, the religiously inspired activists of our time are informed by a globalized vision of oppression, injustice, inequality and tyranny, all construed as the material manifestations of the Great Satan. Often identified with the United States and its foreign policies, this externalized, politicized, and territorialized Satan is considered as arrogant as the biblical Satan who refused to obey the divine command of bowing down to Adam. The physical identification of Satan with the United States has radically altered the notion of mystical journey. Whereas the mystical journey of the earlier times involved ascetic passages of self-discovery, in the militarized piety of our time 'the journey' is defined as a suicidal mission for the obliteration of the Other through physical self-annihilation.

The approaching self-annihilation was anticipated in a note found in the handbag of Muhammad ʿAtta, a commander of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center: 'The time of judgement has arrived. Hence we need to utilize those few hours to ask God for forgiveness. You have to be convinced that those few hours that are left you in your life are very few. From there you will begin to live the happy life, the infinite paradise.' Prepared for the tragic events of September 11, the suicidal journeymen were admonished to '[k]eep a very open mind, keep a very open heart of what you are to face.' Mentally prepared for the journey, the note promised: 'You will be entering paradise. You will be entering the happiest life, everlasting life.'

Contrary to conventional Islam, here the day of judgement is equated with the successful execution of the hateful mission. Consequently, a revengeful destruction of the Other is conceived as the ultimate judgement of God. 'The day of judgement' and 'eternal afterlife', which are conventionally postponed to the end of time, are viewed as contemporaneous with physical self-annihilation and the destruction of the Satanized Other. This vengeful piety is a radical negation of a conventional view of spirituality as composed of compassionate and merciful acts, the kind of intentional acts that are identified with God in the Qur'anic formula of initiation, 'in the name of God the Compassionate and Merciful'.

The spiritual East

The rhetorical significance of Islam in modern national-political discourses in the Middle East and South Asia is foundationally grounded in an Orientalist epistemological distinction between the East and the West. The architects of 19th- and early 20th-century modern political discourses in these two regions accepted the Orientalist postulate of the non-contemporaneity of Occidental and Oriental societies. In this 'time-distancing' postulate, Europe was viewed as modern and dynamic and the Orient as pre-modern and static. Both Orientalist and nationalist discourses attributed the backwardness of the Muslim Orient to Islam.[4] But this assumption was refigured in the aftermath of WWI. The destructions of WWI prompted the development of vernacular political strategies that defined the national selves in contradistinction to the European Other, which was increasingly defined as materialistic. Thus a new generation of European-educated intellectuals sought to distance themselves from the assumed materiality of the West by turning to the contingently fashioned 'spiritual East'. This counter-European self-recognition as 'spiritual' provided the epistemological foundation for the increased significance of religion in the nationalist political discourses of South Asia and the Middle East.

Informed by German New Romanticism and Oswald Spengler's 'The Decline of the West', for instance, the post-WWI Iranian intelligentsia developed a critical approach to European civilization by articulating a vernacular modernity, a modernity that was grounded in the spiritual rejuvenation of Iran and Islam. In 1924, for instance, Murtiza Mushfiq Kazimi proposed that Iran needed a 'clerical modernity' *(tajadud-i akhund)*.[5] A year later Habib Allah Pur-i Riza suggested that what was needed was a 'sacred revolution' *(inqilab-i muqaddas)* with 'thinkers like Luther and Calvin'. Criticizing westernization as 'borrowed civilization'[6] in 1926, Tuti Maraghah'i instead called for the development of a distinctly Iranian civilization that could harmonize the antagonistic relations of the European-mannered intelligentsia and the Muslim clerisy.[7] Husayn Kazimzadah likewise called for an 'intellectual and religious revolution', a revolution for 'the purging of superstitions and superfluities' from Shiʿism. Kazimzadah argued that the material progress of the West should be synthesized with the spirituality of the East. He thus prescribed a synthetic modernity that sought the concordance of 'science with religion, materiality with spirituality, life with action, and action with nobility'. Reconfiguring the role of Islam in comprehension of modernity, in this scenario '[a] modern person must be religious and religious person must be modern.'[8] These ideas informed Ahmad Kasravi (1890–1946) who viewed the notion of 'European superiority' as a deceptive device for the promotion of colonialism and capitalism.

In his *Ethos (Ayin)*, which was published in 1932, Kasravi offered a comprehensive critique of European civilization and the mimetic project of 'Europism' *(urupayigarayi)*, a futurist project that viewed the present of the West as the future of the Rest. Believing that 'Europe faced a dreadful future', Kasravi called for the purging of the 'malady of Europism' and for returning to the noble values that were trampled upon by the Iranian enthusiasts of European ways. In this counter-European project, religion was to play a pivotal role as the foundation for a compassionate, rational and ethical life, which was viewed as an alternative path of progress and development that could detour the social and economic problems of Europe.[9] With varying degrees of sophistication, similar ideas were articulated by the Indian Muhammad Iqbal (1875–1938) and Abu al-ʿAlaMawdudi (1903–1979) and the Egyptian Rashid Riza (1865–1935) and Hasan al-Banna (1906–1949). By turning to Islam, these and other publicists sought to supply the content of the discursively spirtualized Orient, a turn that hindered the development of a civil and

Continued on page 38

South Asia

YOGINDER SIKAND

Islamist Militancy
The Lashkar-i-Tayyeba

One of the leading Islamist groups active in Pakistan and Kashmir today is the Lashkar-i-Tayyeba, or 'The Army of the Pure'. Founded in 1993 and banned in early 2002, the Lashkar comprises largely Pakistani militants who had immersed themselves in the jihad in Afghanistan. After the expulsion of the Soviets, these *mujahids* turned their attention to fresh pastures, Kashmir being one of them. The Lashkar's ideology bears close resemblance to that of the Al-Qa'ida and preaches a large-scale jihad against the 'enemies of Islam' in order to establish a unified Islamic state.

The Lashkar is affiliated to the Ahl-i-Hadith school of thought, a reformist Islamic movement, which had its origins in early 19th-century India. The founders of the Ahl-i-Hadith believed that they were charged with the divine responsibility of purging popular Muslim practice of what they saw as un-Islamic accretions and borrowings from their Hindu neighbours. They insisted that Muslims return to the original sources of their faith and abandon all beliefs and practices not sanctioned therein. They called for Muslims to abide strictly by the *shari'a* and to abandon 'imitation' *(taqlid)* of the schools of Islamic jurisprudence. Besides, the Ahl-i-Hadith also bitterly critiqued Sufism, which they saw as a *bid'a*, for, they argued, it had no sanction in the practice of the Prophet. Given the immense popularity of the Sufi traditions and the influence of the Hanafi *'ulama* among the Muslims of South Asia, it was hardly surprising that the Ahl-i-Hadith faced stiff opposition, being banned from worship at mosques and condemned as apostates and 'enemies of Islam'. For their part, the Ahl-i-Hadith appeared to have revelled in controversy, not losing any opportunity of attacking their Muslim opponents for what they branded as their 'un-Islamic' ways.

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Expanding its base

Following the creation of Pakistan in 1947, the Ahl-i-Hadith began making gradual progress in the country, establishing mosques and madrasas of its own. It tended to have a more visible presence in urban areas, its strict scripturalist literalism appealing to groups such as urban traders who were not tied down to local Sufi shrines. From the 1980s onwards the Ahl-i-Hadith was able to make considerable inroads in Pakistani society following the rapid expansion in the number of Islamic seminaries in the country, many of which are sponsored by the Saudis and preach a conservative yet militant form of Islam, and the active sponsorship of such madrasas by the Pakistani state, under and after General Zia-ul Haq (d. 1988). Most importantly, however, the Afghan jihad against the Soviets saw a great expansion of resources for groups such as the Ahl-i-Hadith, with massive amounts of aid, in the form of money and arms, pouring in from Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries. Many Ahl-i-Hadith and other Sunni madrasas emerged at this time as training grounds for militants. From being a relatively minor group in Pakistan's Islamic landscape, the Ahl-i-Hadith grew, by the end of the 1980s, into a major force, with scores of madrasas all over the country, and several newspapers and journals articulating its vision of an Islamic revolution. With new 'enemies' to target – the Russians in Afghanistan and the Indians in Kashmir – the Ahl-i-Hadith, hitherto marginalized and shunned by most Hanafi Muslims, now began carefully expanding its own support base in the country.

In 1986 the Ahl-i-Hadith set up the Markaz Da'wat wa'l Irshad, based in a sprawling 160-acre campus at Muridke, a town some 30 kilometres from Lahore, to train *mujahidin* to fight the Soviets. Money for the establishment of the centre is alleged to have been received from among other sources, from the Saudi dissident Usama bin Laden. As the Markaz's activities rapidly grew, it was decided to divide its work into two separate but related sections: the educational and the jihadist. Thus, in 1993, the Markaz established its separate military wing, the Lashkar. The Lashkar later set up four training centres in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Markaz authorities claim that the militants produced at these centres have played a leading role in armed struggles, first in Afghanistan, and then in countries as far afield as Bosnia, Chechenya, Kosovo, the southern Philippines, Kashmir and 'in other areas where Muslims are fighting for freedom'.*

According to one report, in recent years the spread of the Markaz/Lashkar in Pakistan has been phenomenal, and today it has some five hundred offices all over the country, most of them in Punjab, which operate as recruitment centres for would-be *mujahidin*. At its Muridke headquarters, the Markaz runs an Islamic school and university, most of whose students are local Pakistanis, with some Kashmiris from the Indian-ruled part of the state, and several Afghans and Arabs. Established in 1994, several hundred students have already graduated from the school. Scores of smaller schools run on the same lines have been set up in various other parts of Pakistan, and by mid-2001 their number was said to be almost 130, with some 15,000 students and 800 teachers on their rolls.

Lashkar ideology

The Lashkar sees Islam as a perfect, all-embracing system. For establishing an Islamic system, an Islamic state, which will impose the *shari'a* as the law of the land, is necessary. If such a state were to be set up and all Muslims were to live strictly according to 'the laws that Allah has laid down', then, it is believed, 'they would be able to control the whole world and exercise their supremacy'. Since Islam is seen as the very antithesis of nationalism, it demands the establishment of one universal Islamic state, ruled by a single *khalifah*. Thus, the present division of the Muslims into many nation-states must be overcome.

The struggle for the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate can take various forms, peaceful as well as violent. Islam, the Lashkar admits, is 'a religion of peace and harmony', and seeks to 'eliminate mischief and disorder, and to provide peace, not only to Muslims but all of humanity'. However, Muslims are commanded to take to armed struggle, or jihad, to defend their co-religionists suffering from the oppression of others. Such a situation is said to prevail over much of the world today. While jihad in defence of Islam and of Muslims labouring under oppression is presented as a liberation struggle, it is also seen as a means for Islam to 'prevail on this earth', for Islam is seen as the only true religion. Armed jihad must continue 'until Islam, as a way of life, dominates the whole world and until Allah's law is enforced everywhere in the world'. The subject of armed jihad runs right through the writings and pronouncements of the Markaz/Lashkar and is, in fact, the most prominent theme in its discourse. Indeed, its understanding of Islam may be seen as determined almost wholly by this preoccupation, so much so that its reading of Islam seems to be a product of its own political project. 'Sufism', it insists, 'has been designed with no other purpose than to dampen the spirit of jihad'.

India is a special target for the Markaz's *mujahidin*. The Markaz sees the jihad as going far beyond the borders of Kashmir and spreading through all of India. The final goal is to extend Muslim control over what is seen as having once been Muslim land, and, hence, to be brought back under Muslim domination. Thus, at a mammoth congregation of Markaz supporters in November 1999, the *amir* Hafiz Muhammad Sa'eed declared: 'Today I announce the break-up of India, *Inshallah*. We will not rest until the whole of India is dissolved into Pakistan.'

The Lashkar's direct participation in the Kashmir conflict dates back to the end of the Afghan war in 1992 when the Lashkar shifted its attention to Kashmir. In this, it was assisted by the Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Despite the limited support of Ahl-i-Hadith-style Islamic purism in Kashmir, the Lashkar has today emerged as the single most powerful militant group in the region, owing principally to the arms and resources that it commands. In contrast to the earlier Ahl-i-Hadith activists in Kashmir, the Lashkar has consciously refrained from engaging in intra-Muslim disputes or from openly attacking what it sees as 'un-Islamic' beliefs and practices among the Kashmiri Muslims. In this way it has sought to broaden its appeal beyond the narrow and restricted circle of Ahl-i-Hadith followers in the region. The support for the Lashkar in Kashmir must, then, be seen as essentially a result of its stern opposition to Indian 'colonialism', rather than as representing any considerable acceptance of its theological vision.

The current crisis

The American reprisals against the Taliban, following the 11 September attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, have been fiercely opposed by Islamist groups, including the Lashkar. In the wake of the attacks, the Lashkar is said to have despatched several of its armed volunteers to Afghanistan, to supplement the 600 Lashkar special guards who had earlier been specially appointed as personal security for Usama bin Laden. The Lashkar condemned the American assault on Afghanistan as the launching of a new 'crusade' *(salibi jang)* by the 'Christian' West against the Muslim world. The head of the Markaz sternly warned Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf not to cooperate with America, and issued a thinly veiled threat, calling for defiance of the government if it continued to toe the American line. The head Mufti of the Markaz issued a fatwa claiming it a binding duty on all Muslims to help their Afghan co-religionists. If Pakistan's rulers continued to support America this would be treated as a gross violation of Islam, and they would be considered as 'rebels and traitors of Allah and His prophet'. Usama bin Laden, it asserted, had now become 'the symbol of jihad all over the world'. In the on-going 'war between Islam and *kufr* [disbelief]', led by Usama, it laid down, 'it has become obligatory for all the Muslim states in the interest of the dignity of Islam and the Muslims to […] forge unity in their own ranks and send their armies to support *jihad* and the *mujahidin*.'

The implications of the American intervention in Afghanistan and the downfall of the Taliban for the Lashkar are not clear as yet. Pakistan's President General Musharraf, under pressure from the US, has been trying to reign in certain Islamist groups, but it appears that this is proving to be largely unsuccessful. Widespread opposition in Pakistan and Kashmir against the American attacks on Afghanistan are an indication that many resent Musharraf's pro-American stance, but whether this would translate into greater support for Lashkar-style Islamist radicalism is a moot question.

Note

* The quotations are taken the following sites: www.lashkertaiba.net; jammu-kashmir.com; www.dawacenter.com, and markazdawa.org

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Southeast Asia

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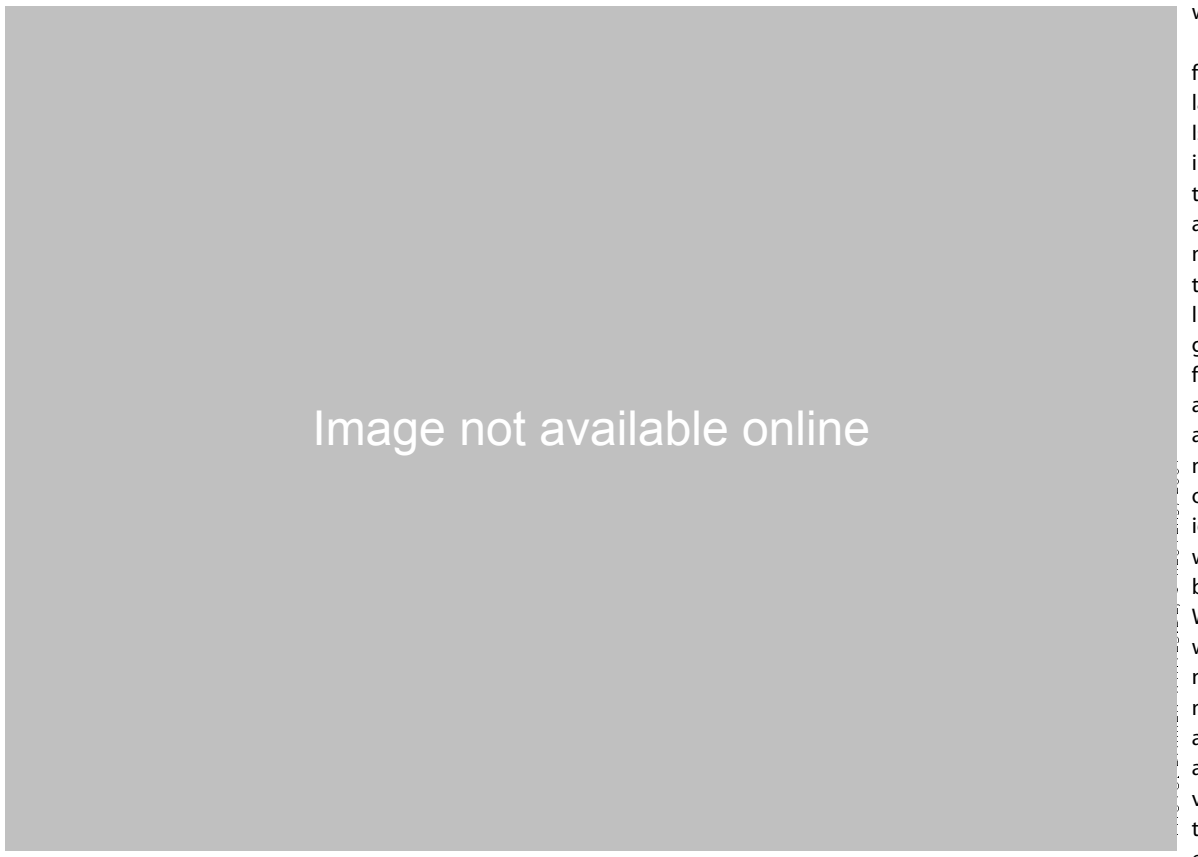
Indonesian Youth and Islamic Revival

In Indonesia the coming out of Islamic radicalism has once more disquieted public life. Since the US assault on Afghanistan following the September 11 terrorist acts, Islamic youth organizations have been staging anti-America protests throughout Indonesia's main cities, showing the world a face of Indonesian Islam different from the moderate one with which it is usually identified. The protests also show a different face of young Indonesian activists. This time they do not appear as the spirited bunch of the student movement that ousted Suharto in 1998, but as fiery campaigners for a jihad.



Indonesian women protesting in Jakarta, 24 November 2001.

The young activists are far less numbered nowadays but the impact of their actions is no less considerable, especially in the context of enduring crisis, with recovery depending on stability. The question is how this affects Indonesia's uplifted image as an open, tolerant civil society, or the image of the youth, fostered by their role in upsetting an aged regime, as progressive harbingers of change and modernity.

Many Indonesians consider the rise of Islamic radicalism harmful to the process of reforms if not a sheer setback to modernity. But in fact it fits the era of reforms and indeed modernity quite well, if only to substantiate its predicament of plurality and conflict. With Suharto's policy of strict control and engineering of the uniform nation-state gone, marginalized voices have resurfaced and are more expressive than ever. In theory, this would give way to the formation of a plural base for a diverse civil society. But among the manifold voices that have been raised in the past three years, those of Muslim interest groups, both 'modernist' and 'traditionalist' (with new alliances being forged the distinction is not always clear) have been among the most vocal. As a result the era of reforms has seen a new Islamic revival. Muslim parties have gained a larger share in power, as confirmed with the recent election of Hamzah Haz, leader of the conservative Muslim party PPP for vice president. Moreover, Islamic disposition has become more prominent in public space. There has been a marked rise in public displays of Islamic practice, idiom and activism, while the mass media further added to the publicity of Islamic discourse with a substantial increase in Islamic teachings appearing in print and on television. Even in the world of show business an Islamic way of life is exalted. Many celebrities have turned devout, appear in Islamic dress as a latest fashion item, or have their marriage ceremonies arranged in Mecca; all of it in great style and well documented by tabloid media.

Yet the broad revival of Islam means more than just a trend. Particularly in this period of national transition with its enduring crises of economic slump, political instability and social breakdown, an Islamic way of life is often taken up as an act of consciousness; a deliberate choice mostly made by urban, educated young people. Considering that the urban youth are reputedly demoralized, inasmuch as many appear to have lost faith in traditional and societal institutions, a reinvigoration of an Islamic disposition among them is remarkable indeed. These days many students prefer to join Islamic rather than university-based, nationalist or leftist student organizations and a growing number of cosmopolitan young women choose to wear a *jilbab*, Islamic head covering, in the public sphere. Besides this being a matter of following one's peers, to be sure, it appears a self-confident expression of a reconstructed identity, as an individual and member of a peer group community that wishes to go beyond traditional orders and contemporary society as it developed under New Order rule. In this regard their choice is distinctly progressive, synthesizing religion with the tenor of liberality, social awareness and enlightenment, characteristic of the spell of reforms.

However, young people's attempts to refashion and present a modern, tolerant Muslim identity are complicated by ambiguity and different opinions on what modernity and tolerance mean and where to put the limits on these. Confusion particularly arises in relation to issues of morality. Adding to the confusion, altered attitudes towards religion and morality are also at stake in the actions of some of their radical peers which, according to several young people spoken to, 'are giving Islam a bad name'. Anyhow, existing tensions are certainly amplified in these radicals' actions.

Moral wars

A striking illustration of such tension (observed by the author Ayu Utami in *Djakarta*, September 2001) is the staining of a billboard advertisement along Jakarta's main roads starring the popular actress and presenter Sophia Latjuba. Her sensually pictured figure had been covered with black paint, leaving bare only the area around her eyes in a meticulous attempt to make it look as if Sophia, Indonesia's leading sex symbol and personification of a cosmopolitan lifestyle, was shrouded under an Islamic veil. This meaningful act did not carry a signature but it was clearly not an act of random vandalism. It rather seemed to fit into a series of 'small wars' that the radical youth have been waging in the name of religion and morality.

Several radical Islamic youth organizations, for instance Gerakan Pemuda Islam (GPI, Islamic Youth Movement) and Front Pembela Islam (FPI, Islamic Defence Front), both based in Jakarta, have lately stepped up public activity. This involved sporadic and seemingly ad hoc actions that nonetheless show remarkable coherence. While borrowing from the repertoire of student activism as established since the protests of 1998 and the global repertoire of political Islam as imitated from mass-mediated images of Palestinian activism, their actions are notably marked by a specific discourse of morality; or rather, immorality, often expressed through an idiom of evil and sin. Radical groups have used such idioms when engaging in political protest, as when they joined the demonstrations at the beginning of this year against then President Wahid (whom they accused of corruption as well as treason of Islam and covert communism). But a discourse of immorality has been most of all pronounced in their actions against social vices. These included violent attacks on discotheques, bars, homosexual venues and other sites of assumed perversity, and also public orations pointing the general public to its sinful habits, such as the consumption of pornography.

In addition, there has been a boost in the campaign against an alleged revival of communism, the historical enemy of Islamic movements. Besides the spread of anti-communism propaganda, for instance using banners in public space that warn the people to watch out for lurking communism (a method reminiscent of New Order tactics), this has also entailed occasional fights with left-wing student organizations. Most shocking to critics, however, has been the act of book burning and threatening to 'sweep' from the market (semi-)leftist publications branded communist, recently conducted by a broad alliance of several Islamic youth organizations. As these publications had only just been relieved from their ban under Suharto's rule, this act was widely condemned for undermining the new freedom and openness of reforms. But criticism has hardly been discouraging. Now, linking with the global mood of war, GPI, FPI and their allies have found the ultimate infidel foe in America, while Bin Laden has become a cult hero whose holy war is seen by many among them as worth dying for. Dozens have already volunteered to join the Taliban fighters in Afghanistan and are currently undergoing military training at secret posts in Indonesia.

But what kind of war and whose war are they actually waging? Regarding them as allies of Bin Laden does not make much sense. Some Islamic youth organizations do have ties with global Muslim affiliations with bases in the Middle East, but this does not account for most of their actions which are related to distinctively local or national concerns. Then assuming them to be pawns of certain off-stage powers – relics of the New Order establishment that wish to upset the sitting government of President Megawati, which has also been much hinted at – may also be misleading. For the radical Islamic youth are not the unitary bloc easily mobilized by third parties. Most seriously, such explanations draw attention away from the moral calls implicit in their actions. Is their cause then, at least of the rank and file of youths that feel urged to join radical movements, essentially a moral cause, impelled by the frustration of witnessing the rampant corruption among the powers that govern them and depravity in the society they live in? Of course it is not that simple. But at least this suggests that their movement does not stand completely apart from the plights of present-day Indonesian society and young people's experiences of them.

Challenges of modernity

The radical Islamic youth will find little support among the mass of their Muslim age-mates, although direct opposition has been notably absent; maybe for fear for violent retaliation, or maybe because young people struggling with their own Muslim identity are unsure of how to deal with the bearing of their radical peers. In any case, to understand what an Islamic revival among the youth in present-day Indonesia means, we should avoid interpretations that disconnect 'radicals' from 'moderates', or for that matter 'political' from 'popular' expressions of religion. It makes more sense to examine how young people are variously responding to the conditions in which radical movements arise – urban environments where the maelstrom of change is most pressingly felt by younger people – and to relate this to their experiences of religion in daily life. Then we may get a better picture of the tensions and dilemmas that face GPI activists, students drawn to Islamic mysticism, or young feminists wearing a *jilbab*, in attempting to reconcile old and new demands and desires of life in an increasingly plural world.

In Indonesia as elsewhere, the crumbling of establishments together with changing conditions of modernity confront young people with new challenges, such as the problem of balancing tolerance and criticism in a world fraught with incongruity and conflict. It should come as no surprise that religion comes to play an important role in taking up these challenges, or that the meaning of religion itself will alter in the process.

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Western Europe

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British Responses to 11 September

Responses to the events of 11 September have been extraordinarily mixed, not to say confused. They have been further complicated by responses to 7 October and after, when the air raids against Afghanistan started. In Britain, the situation is particularly affected by the high proportion of Muslims with strong links to Pakistan, to Pathan and Pushtun origins, and in some cases directly to Afghanistan.

One of the first questions journalists have been asking has been regarding the number of Muslims in Britain today. This is a question no one will answer at the moment because we are expecting the results of the April 2001 Census – to be reported during the next twelve months – which included for the first time since 1851 a question on religion. So we have to work with vague orders of magnitude. But it is obvious and well known that the public profile of British Islam is dominated by Muslims of South Asian origin, a fact of which the public was reminded very directly during the racial disturbances in some northern cities in the early summer of this year.*

HTTP://WWW.UNDERCURRENTS.ORG

Anti-war demonstration in London, 18 November 2001.

In the immediate aftermath of 11 September there were a number of incidents of 'low-level' harassment of Muslim targets. Some Muslim websites closed down after they were flooded by hate mail. Mosques and Muslim buildings were attacked by air guns and stone throwing. Behind the ostensible Muslim targeting has often been traditional racism. Individuals and families have been harassed in public. There have been cases of women having their head scarves ripped of and others being physically attacked. Often such attacks have been directed against Asians regardless of whether they really were Muslim or not – thus a number of Hindu and Sikh individuals and institutions have also been targets.

Covering Muslim responses

Muslim organizations were quick and explicit in their condemnation of the New York and Washington attacks. The Muslim Council of Britain issued a very sharp statement already on 12 September, as did a number of local organizations and leaders as well as Muslim members of Parliament, Lords and Commons. Further statements appeared over the following weeks as events internationally and nationally developed. In many mosques and Muslim schools prayers were said for the victims, and in many towns Muslims, Christian and Jewish leaders met to pray together and to issue joint statements of condemnation and appeals for calm. Public meetings have been held bringing leading Muslims together with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster and the Chief Rabbi. The Interfaith Network for the UK, which brings together leaders of all the main faiths in the country, also issued a measured public statement.

However, much attention was attracted by a small group of mosques and organizations, mostly in London, which expressed support for the attacks and for Usama bin Laden and the Taliban regime. The leader of Supporters of Sharia, Sheikh Abu Hamza al-Masri, based at a mosque in Finchley, declared the attackers to be martyrs and called on young Muslims to join the 'jihad'. Al-Muhajiroun, a splinter group from Hizb al-Tahrir, led by Sheikh Umar Bakri Muhammad, held public demonstrations in several cities in support of the attacks. During October, they alleged that four young British Muslims had died fighting with the Taliban, and that more had travelled to Afghanistan in a programme organized by the Al-Muhajiroun. Relatives and friends of the young men denied the allegations.

These incidents served to illustrate the mixed reactions of the media to events since 11 September. The Al-Muhajiroun demonstrations were widely reported both in print and on radio and television stations. It was usually made clear that they represented only a small minority, but the picture material that accompanied reports often left a sense that the correction was of a token nature. Coming at a time when the concept of 'Islamophobia' had gained a good degree of circulation following the report of the Runnymede Trust two years ago, a number of observers were quick to note a widespread Islamophobia in the press. Runnymede Trust staff have confirmed their view that this has been the case. There have, however, been extensive and often notable exceptions. Perhaps the most surprising has been the public stand which the *Sun* newspaper has taken in its editorial pronouncements against racism and harassment of Muslims. Some commentators have suggested that this has been the result of persistent lobbying by the prime minister's press spokesman. Others have suggested that it reflects the newspaper's well-known sense of where its readers' views are moving (whence its shift from Conservative to Labour in the 1997 elections). A *Guardian* poll on the public's attitude to the war after 7 October also indicated that more than two-thirds of those polled did not see Muslims as a threat in Britain. Other newspapers have commissioned external writers to produce pieces aimed at calming public sentiments.

Politicians have also been busy. Prime Minister Tony Blair has, on a number of occasions, called for civil calm, condemned those who have harassed Muslims, and insisted that the diplomatic and military action has very specific aims which are far from amounting to a 'war against Islam'. He held a widely reported meeting and press conference with Muslim leaders at Downing Street, at which he expressed his support and sympathy for their situation and they repeated their condemnation of the attacks and of terrorism in general. Local members of Parliament have met with local Muslim leaders to express support for their rights. When Lady Thatcher, former Conservative prime minister, said that Muslim leaders had not been strong enough in their condemnation of terrorism, the newly elected leader of the Conservative Party, Ian Duncan Smith, was quick to say that she was not speaking for the party.

From the beginning, the attacks of 11 September have been linked with a number of long-standing issues in the Muslim and developing worlds. Only the *Daily Telegraph* (whose Canadian owner also owns the *Jerusalem Post*) has consistently refused to consider the attacks in a broader context of Western policies towards key issues in the Muslim world, above all the US presence in Saudi Arabia and the question of Palestine. Particularly notable in drawing attention to such links have been Robert Fisk, writing in the *Independent*, and David Hirst in the *Guardian*. But they have not been alone. A number of newspapers have made the point editorially, as did the prime minister by clear implication in a speech to the Labour Party conference.

British specificity

Clearly the various responses outlined above will be recognizable in other European countries in varying degrees, depending on the particular configuration of political, ethnic and cultural balances. The specificity of the British response is related in part to the length of time that Muslim communities have been present – longer than in most of the rest of Western Europe. Since the early 1990s there has been a major demographic shift by which much of the leadership has been taken over by younger people born in Britain, a change that was triggered, at least in part, by the Rushdie affair twelve years ago. The encounter of social marginalization in some parts of the community and some of the radical Islamism present among London-based exiles has, at the opposite end of the scale, offered a route by which a few young men have been lured into violent resistance in parts of the Muslim world. An example of this was the instance in 1999 when a small group of young men, mostly from Birmingham, found themselves facing a Yemeni court on charges of plotting terrorism in Aden. But a significant element in the British context has also been the marked shift towards political inclusion of ethnic and religious minorities instituted by the Labour government since it came to power in 1997. This has increased the value of the organized Muslim leadership's investment in working within the local and national political system.

Another dimension of the British situation, which I suspect is shared with France, is that the two countries had their 'affairs' – Rushdie and headscarves – twelve years ago. I have recently had occasion to observe at close quarters the response in Denmark to the 11 September events. My impression is that there many more issues, tensions and sensitivities are being concentrated into this response than has been the case in Britain. In a sense Denmark appears to be experiencing 11 September and the Rushdie affair all in one. The political and cultural debate bears many similarities to the debates we saw in Britain in 1989, above all the issue of the degree of Muslim integration into and identification with Denmark – and the consequent questions about Muslim 'threats' and 'loyalties'. At the same time the demographic chronography of Muslim immigration and settlement is such that the Danish-born Muslim generation is beginning to become politically active a decade later than in Britain. The result is that Muslim organizations have recently seen a growing generation shift in their leadership, and that young Danish Muslims are also becoming active in the political parties. With the decision to hold a parliamentary election on 20 November, the issues of immigration and refugee policy have been placed firmly into a context of post–11 September public debate about Islam, and Danish Muslim election candidates are being exposed to harder public scrutiny and interrogation about views and backgrounds which previously would have attracted rather less attention. So the Danish response has become dependent on the strength of a democratic and liberal tradition which has already for some years been under threat from the nationalist right expressed in the Danish People's Party. By comparison the British environment has had time to construct the experience and the networks which can provide the resilience necessary to get through the current crisis.

Note

* The following account is drawn from the abstract of British press reporting on Islam in Britain, which my Centre publishes in the *British Muslims Monthly Survey* (www.bmms.net).

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Middle East

FRANÇOIS BURGAT

The Sanaa Chronicle

Days before the American campaign against Afghanistan began, an editorialist of the government journal *Al Thawra* chose, to give an indication of the general mindset of people in Yemeni streets, to publish the words of a corn vendor and some of his clients located on the Sanaa Aden route in the heart of the old country. 'How dare America claim that it is combating terrorism, while it itself terrorizes the entire world?' asked the vendor. 'How dare they accuse us of not being able to protect the "Cole" [destroyer] whereas they themselves were not able to protect their Pentagon?' 'Not a bad analysis', noted the editorialist, 'maybe we should have him appointed to Foreign Affairs in Sanaa.' 'You're not spot on yet', said his travel companion with a note of irony, 'it is in Washington, at the State Department, that he should be appointed!'

The editorialist, ex-president of the University of Sanaa, Abdelaziz Maqaleh, is a man of letters renowned throughout the entire Arab world. He is not particularly 'Islamist'. As an old Baathist, he would have even been inclined to distance himself from that generation.

But it is in an almost unanimous fashion that the Yemenite vox (populi) manifests a double reticence. The news that, for once, the pilots were Arab and the victims American seemed to certain people to exorcise an old evil spell. Few, however, spontaneously identify with the presumed actors in the suicide attacks against the World Trade Center or the Pentagon. Nonetheless, and all political affiliations taken together, no one accepts the categories of the American discourse of war 'against terror'. Depending on whether one launches the bombs or receives them, depending on whether those bombs come from armament factories of the 'big ones' of the world or the backyards of those who combat them, the juridical qualification of terrorism is, as we know, the object of long-standing controversies. 'Give us your aeroplanes and we will give you our cradles' was a phrase already pronounced by Algerian independence fighters to the French colonial forces. In Sanaa, as in the rest of the Arab world, armed resistances to the world order that originated at the end of the 1980s from the breakdown of the USSR are less automatically criminalized. The rhetoric of he who apparently succeeded in administering such a terrible blow to the arrogant United States indeed arouses a certain degree of curiosity. On every street corner, one is offered recordings of his interviews, recent or not so recent. Listening attentively to them can be very instructive for several reasons. Behind the religious rhetoric of legitimation and that nasty habit of, a little like George Bush it is true, dividing the world into two irreconcilable camps, we especially discover very profane and very banal anti-imperialist claims. Usama bin Laden is the son of a Saudi entrepreneur of Yemen origin, who can boast of having restored the three most sacred mosques of Islam: those of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. It is the occupation of the homeland of the former two and the feudalization of a great number of regimes of the Peninsula and of the Arab world that feed the most evident of Bin Laden's frustrations. 'Even a chicken, if an armed man takes some of his territory, will fight the man! And that is just a chicken! […] We do not demand anything more than the right given to every living creature, not to mention humans, not to mention Muslims: the right to defend oneself.'[1] The occupation of the Al-Aqsa mosque, symbol of the age-old Palestinian conflict, although chronologically first, comes in second place, he willingly admits. But Palestine has always been present in his preoccupations, contrary to what those who blocked this invasive filiation seemed to think. The murderous embargo on Iraq is the third great source of exasperation, with the long procession of 'double standard policies' of the West in this region of the world. 'Why are massive arms of destruction reserved for only one of the two camps?' 'Why was Iraq not condemned when it employed its chemical weapons against Khomeyni's Iran?'

We can also come to understand by listening to Al-Jazeera the disquieting distance that is forming between information on Western and Arab-speaking shores. Al-Jazeera is not, as certain people have tried to make us believe, the 'propagandist' channel of the Islamist guerrilla. On the other hand, Al-Jazeera does not forbid allowing its listeners to know – if for nothing else, if they so wish, to better condemn – its motivation and objectives. And this is where the big difference lies. The more or less scholarly calculations by which a former student of the Department of Economy of the University of King Abdelaziz of Jeddah exposes the extent of financial loss of oil countries since the Saudi princes, along with the US administration, have the common cause of bringing down the price of the barrel, do not manage to reach television audiences of the West, despite their fondness of 'information'. It seems preferable to insist on the simplifying and warlike dichotomies (believers vs. non-believers) of the protégé of the (former allies of the USA) archaic Taliban. It is not certain that 'information' will benefit, in terms of quality, from all this. From the all too often unanimist incantations of CNN illustrating the strikes 'against terror' to the contrasted debates of Al-Jazeera, in which the voice of America is never excluded nor even mistreated, it would seem that the old torch of mediatic objectivity is changing camps – an unpleasant defeat for Washington and its allies.

Return to the Arab political norm?

Political Yemen had, for a time, a precious particularity: the Islamists, well implanted in a society in which the religious norm remained very rooted, were less repressed and ostracized than they were integrated into the system, in any case in the now hegemonic North.[2] Due to their participation in the revolutionary struggle against the absolutism of the Zaydite *imamat* (during the 'Constitutional Revolution' of 1948 and the civil war from 1962 to 1970) the Islamist current gained historically important credit in the eyes of President Ali Abdallah Saleh's regime. Until 1994, the latter regularly instrumentalized some of its members, in not always noble combats it is true, to eliminate the 'communists' of the South. This proximity of the political power with the universal (Islamist) enemy at the moment (is the parliament of Sanaa not led by an Islamist sheikh elected with the votes of the party in power!) disturbs a number of Yemen's Western partners. Visiting Sanaa, journalists from the world over, with a touching unanimity, have chosen without exception to interpret this complex political Yemen through the sole prism of those 'Afghans' that the regime is accused of having tolerated for too long on its soil and those Islamists 'that it does not combat vigorously enough'. The old habit of tribes of settling their business, by abducting tourists, with a central state that is rather 'incomplete' facilitates even further all the amalgams. Tribes and beards…!: Bin Laden cannot be too far away.[3]

The present Yemeni formula does not, however, have only bad sides. The relative calm of the country with respect to the American campaign on Kabul and – comparatively speaking – the relative liberalism that prevails is notably due to the fact that the real political forces are integrated into the system. Despite all of its limitations, the Yemeni regime is not merely content with manipulating the puppets of pluralism that, from Egypt to Algeria, passing through Tunis, form the substratum of the current Arab 'democracy'. In the wake of the 11 September events, President Ali Abdallah Saleh managed to conclude a pact of moderation with those who may have been tempted to act against the United States and its allies. An anti-American demonstration did take place, but this was in Amrane, some 50 kilometres north of Sanaa, far from the television cameras. This fragile equilibrium 'that burns the hand of the state leader' as he was keen to say to several foreign visitors, risks being re-questioned under international pressure. The United States in fact demands each day more 'guarantees' in the battle against 'terrorism', the frontiers of which we know increasingly little since it includes henceforth formations of Palestinian or Lebanese resistance. The chief of state could thus at any given moment seize the opportunity of the American injunctions to give in to repressive complaisance. Yemen will perhaps come even closer to the institutional 'Arab' 'norm'. The more or less truncated elections (the president-candidate of the presidential elections of 1999 did not tolerate any adversary other than another member of his own party[4]) already form part of the system. The only thing left is the repression by the regime of half or even more of the political landscape. The country will perhaps then attain the felicity of Western recognition and be qualified (according to the formula that the French chief of state employed in 1996 with respect to the Tunisia of General Bin Ali) as an 'exemplary experiment of modernization'.

A daily scene: boys bathing in a *birkeh*.

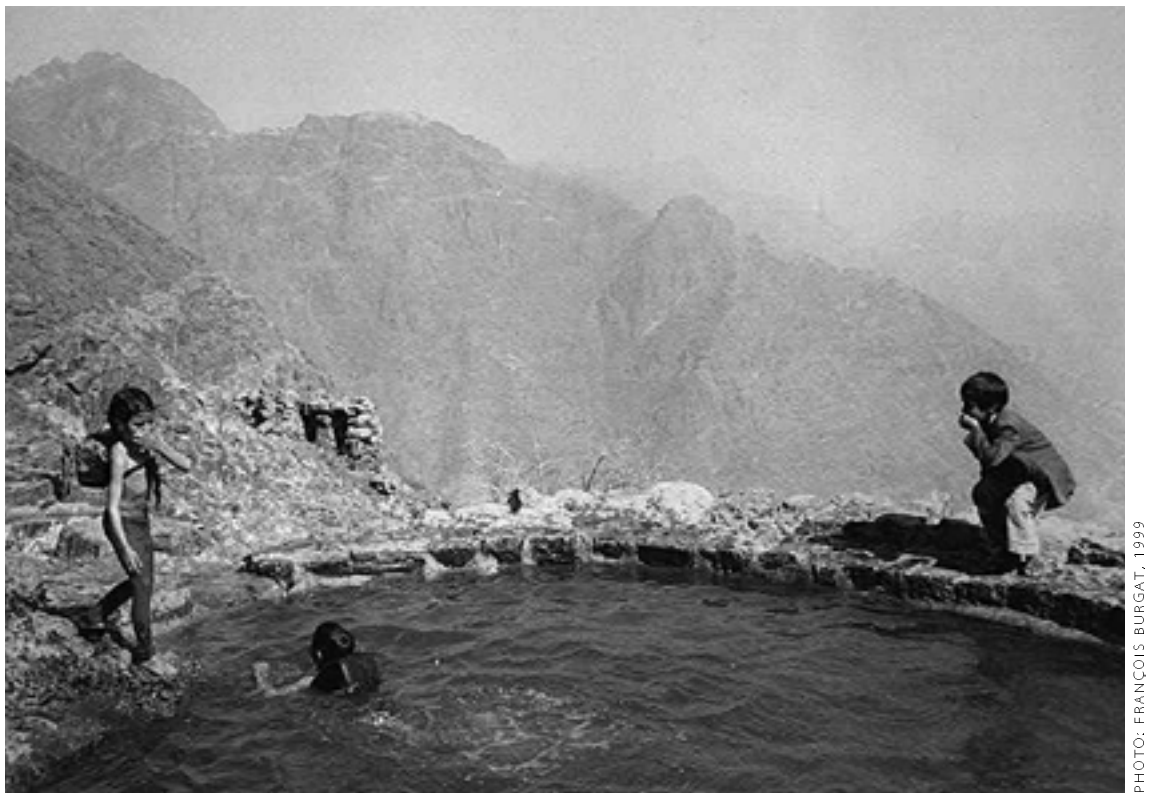

PHOTO: FRANÇOIS BURGAT, 1999

Notes

1. Jamel Abdellatif Ismaʿil, *Bin Laden, al jazira wa ana*, Dar al Huria lil Sahafa wal Tabʿa wal Tarjama (2001).
2. Hegemonic since the end of the civil war of 1994 concludes to the detriment of the ex–socialist South. Cf. Franck Mermier, Udo Steinbach and Rémy Leveau, *Le Yémen contemporain* (Paris: Karthala, 1999).
3. 'Financements, amitiés et complicités: les traces laissées par les terroristes sont nombreuses' as *LeMonde* gave in its subheading, creating a tone which is not bothered with historicizing an episode which we often forget was above all part of the Cold War between the USSR and the USA. 'Le Yémen, Ben Laden et les Afghans', *Le Monde* (12 Octobre 2001).
4. François Burgat, 'Les élections présidentielles de septembre 1999 au Yémen: du "pluralisme armé" au retour "à la norme arabe"', *Maghreb-Machreq Monde Arabe*, April–June (2000): 168.

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The Netherlands
KADIR CANATAN

Required: Muslim Leadership

The discussion about the position of religious leaders was already ongoing in the Netherlands before 11 September. After the attacks on the US, relations between Muslims and non-Muslims came under further pressure. The media, followed by the Dutch government and social organizations, began assiduously looking for *the* representatives and *the* spokespeople of the Muslims. The result was the rolling of Rolodexes with outdated or randomly gathered contacts.

It is remarkable that the Dutch government is interested in Islamic organizations as partners in dialogue primarily in times of crisis. In these difficult times the structural problems of Dutch Islam resurface on the national political scene: the lack of a representative consultative body for both Muslims and the government, the function and position of imams, and the creation of a Dutch training programme for imams (which should provide replacements for the so-called commuter or import imams). Meanwhile, the Dutch government makes management mistakes in times of crisis, placing increased pressure on relations and endangering the integration process of Muslims.

In the public debate on Islam the media plays an important role. Good news, like the unambiguous joint statement of national organizations strongly condemning the attacks, attracts little attention. The interest is focused mainly on more dramatic incidents and views, such as the celebration of the 11 September attacks by Moroccan youths in a rural town and the circulation of a 'hate calendar' among Muslim students. As it appeared, both cases were outright fabrications, but the damage had been done. Moreover, individual Muslims making strong statements came to the fore and some media suggested that the silent majority and its organizations are not very different from these voices. The result was a crisis of confidence between the 'white' Dutch population and Muslims.

How to restore confidence? The most common answer is that Islamic leaders have to fulfil an intermediary role between the Muslim community and the government. They should also act as spokespeople in the media and participate fully in public discussions. This places high demands on their knowledge and skills, and whether the current leaders have these remains to be seen. At the same time, one can honestly ask: Who are the leaders of the Dutch Muslims? Are they the big shots of the Muslim organizations or the imams? Either way, Dutch society approaches Islam and its spiritual leaders from a Christian perspective, and expects the imams to assume the role of spokespersons and fully participate in public debate. The fierce reactions of Dutch politicians and intellectuals to the statements on homosexuality by Imam El-Moumni (see *ISIM Newsletter* 8: 33) and later by a Muslim psychiatric care-worker and part-time imam are not just about the actual content of the statements, but rather about the authority that is unjustly attributed to these people. In the Netherlands imams function mainly within the Muslim communities. Their tasks are closely related to prayer services (leading prayers five times a day, preaching during the weekly Friday meetings) and religious education in mosques. In their countries of origin it would be out of the ordinary for the media to ask their opinion or for them to get mixed up in any kind of social discussion. They are religious leaders more in practical than in theological terms.

El-Moumni made statements about homosexuality without considering the consequences. He has no insight into the relations within a society like that of the Netherlands. He was not 'integrated' – on the contrary, he was an 'imported' imam whose contacts in the Netherlands were by and large limited to a local Moroccan community. But what did the Dutch politicians and intellectuals who lashed out at him (to make it clear to him 'how people relate to each other here in the Netherlands') know about the position and authority of imams within the Muslim community? The hefty reactions went on for months and led to a polarization in society. It showed that the role and authority of the imams are clearly overestimated. The entire matter was a clear example of intercultural miscommunication between both parties, which also means that better integration of the imams will solve only one half of the problem.

Is the imam in charge?

Dutch labour regulations consider imams, like ministers and priests, as holders of a clerical position. Their legal (labour) status is not protected by law. The labour conditions of the imams currently working in the Netherlands are far from meeting current standards; not only are imams' working conditions poor, their status as migrants is weak. When an imam has a conflict with his employer (usually the board of the mosque), he risks being sent back immediately to his country of origin. It is clearly not the imam but rather the board members of the mosque association who are in charge.

Imams in the Netherlands are also confronted with another problem in relation to their tasks. An imam is expected to not only fulfil his primary religious functions within the mosque, but to also take on numerous social functions, such as participating in inter-religious meetings and offering moral support. This second category of functions is hardly fulfilled, if at all, by the current imported imams. As a result, the imam loses authority and prestige. He is seen as not being capable of fulfilling his position properly. Not only is the white Dutch population dissatisfied with the imams; their constituents, in particular the young, are too.

In dealing with this problem, an imam training programme in the Netherlands is often presented as a solution. The most important motivation for such a programme is that future imams would gain knowledge of the Dutch language and society. But that is not all. There are two other motives, which equally imply a more all-encompassing vision of the future of Islam in the Netherlands and can at the very least count on broad support. The first motive is that of the emergence of a 'Dutch Islam', i.e. an interpretation of Islamic religious doctrine and ethics that fit this situation of a religious minority in a strongly secularized society. The second reflects the idea that foreign-trained imams would exert a negative influence on the integration of Muslims in Dutch society and that such an influence should be inhibited by an imam training programme in the country. It also means that, in the long term, admission of imams from the Middle East and North Africa would have to be limited, if not stopped.

The motivations behind the call for Dutch-trained imams imply that the role of the imams must comprise more than that of religious counsellor; an intellectual or *ʿalim* is expected. It would be very difficult to meet the profile of the imam sketched above through an imam training programme within regular Dutch educational settings. This brings two questions to the fore. Firstly, is an imam training programme necessary to meet the needs of the mosque communities? To this end, a practice-oriented training programme at a higher vocational education level would be sufficient. Secondly, is it imperative to introduce theological Islamic studies which will breed the future Muslim elite? This question is more complicated and can not been answered in isolation from conditions in the Muslim world.

The Muslim community in the Netherlands lacks a strong intellectual elite. With respect to the Turkish immigrants, this derives from their social background as they come mainly from the countryside and tend to have low educational levels. Neither a Muslim intellectual discourse nor an interaction between popular and intellectual Islam exists in the Netherlands. The relations of the Muslim organizations with the country of origin should be understood within this perspective. The lack of a strong intellectual leadership creates a relationship of dependency between Turkish Islam in the Netherlands and Islam in Turkey. It is this relationship of dependency that complicates an autonomous development of Turkish Islam in the Netherlands.

In addition, Muslims, coming from different countries, do not form a homogeneous unit that allows for common action. There are ethnic and regional differences as well as religious and cultural ones. These differences, combined with ethnic power struggles and all sorts of miscommunications, have made it impossible up to now for Muslims to establish a representative body.

Modernization and alienation

Modernity has brought about a crisis in Muslim intellectual leadership that is not easily solved. In very broad lines, we can distinguish two types of intellectuals in contemporary Islamic society. The first is the westernized intellectual, who is oriented towards the West and has to a large degree distanced himself from his religious and cultural heritage. Most of these intellectuals stand for the modernization of their societies along Western lines. This puts them, in fact, in line with modern cultural imperialism. The second type comprises the more traditional *ʿulama*, who tend to resist outright westernization and are reluctant to accept religious reforms. Although they have different points of departure and orientation, both *ʿulama* and westernized intellectuals are faced with fundamental problems. The latter are often unable to offer solutions for modern questions from within the Islamic tradition and lack popular support. *ʿUlama* are familiar with the intellectual traditions of Islam but only few seem capable of translating it into the conditions of modernity. Both westernized intellectuals and *ʿulama* find great difficulty in providing leadership in the Muslim world.

In discussions about imam training programmes in the Netherlands, the existence of this crisis affecting the contemporary Muslim world and its relevance to Muslim diasporas are ignored. To solve the intellectual crisis, an increasing number of people place hopes on a new form of leadership that is as yet in its infancy. This new form of leadership is sometimes called the 'enlightened *ʿulama*', comprising persons with extraordinary erudition in the Islamic disciplines in addition to knowledge of the modern sciences and languages. As long as Muslims, in the Netherlands and elsewhere, do not take stock of this alternative profile in the development of their educational model, the current intellectual crisis will persist.

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United States
NADINE NABER

Muslim Student Activism
Americanizing Islam or Islamicizing America?

As 'Bosnia' awakened the dead among Muslims worldwide,[1] new expressions of Muslim identity have emerged on college and university campuses in the US that stress the liberation of Islam from geographic determinism. Among Muslim student activists in California, this trend is often articulated in phrases such as 'there is no colour in Islam', or 'I consider myself Muslim first, Arab second.' Based on research among young Arab and Muslim Americans between 1996 and 2001,[2] this essay traces a particular interplay between the 'local', the 'national', and the 'global' that gives rise to Muslim student activism in the San Francisco Bay Area of California.

Bosnia made people realize that you can be Muslim and white and still be killed on the basis of your Islam. They're blonde, blue-eyed, they live in Europe, and they were still mutilated, slaughtered and thrown into mass graves because they're Muslim. That's when it's not just about Arabs anymore…

Lubna, Palestinian American, San Francisco, California, May 2001[3]

Central to Muslim student activism in California has been a critique of the contradictory position of Muslim Americans within US nationalist discourses and practices in which they are marked simultaneously as US citizens and the 'enemy within'.

Hani, a mentor among Muslim students explains that:

> *Even though these students are born here, nurtured with apple pie, they are viewed as immigrants. The main place students experience rejection is in the classroom – which is full of misrepresentations of who they are. That is where the Muslim student is transformed into a terrorist. Their teachers who say things like, 'Muslims are more inclined to engage in terrorism because when they die they go to paradise and terrorism doesn't have pain for Muslims as it does in other cultures'…or…'Muslim men aren't afraid to die because when they die they believe they will be given 75 virgins in heaven.' That's in a classroom discussion and students ask me how to answer to this.*

Hannan, an undergraduate, articulates that '[w]omen are forced to represent the entire situation of Muslim women. The teacher has an anti-Muslim position, so even if I do not have the tools, it becomes the class vs. me and I have to answer for Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and places I don't know much about.'

As a strategy for resisting the racialization[4] of Muslim men as terrorists and Muslim women as passive and oppressed, some Muslim students consciously assert a visible Muslim identity on their college campus. Nesreen recalls that she and her friends, all of them wearing headscarves, regularly walk into the classroom to ensure seats in the front row as a strategy to 'force the class to deal with us'. Hani explains: 'I see the students feeling comfortable wearing a head cover or Muslim beards. They care less that they might appear to be wearing a bizarre outfit.'

The viability of public displays of Muslim identity is enabled by the demographic make-up of California, the first state to be described in terms of a growing white minority. The historical context of the San Francisco Bay Area in particular, considered the hotbed of US 'multiculturalism' and 'diversity', further empowers students to assert their 'difference' as intensified identity politics encourage the public display of identity symbols on the body. Yet as over 700 hate crimes against Arabs and Muslims or those who have been mistaken for them have been reported in the aftermath of September 11, students have become more cautious when it comes to publicly displaying their identities. That some have chosen to remove their headscarves and shave their beards points to the contradictions of liberal US multiculturalism in which the assumption 'different but equal' is always already inflected with power, inequality, and racism.

Noha explains that the racialization of Islam ranges from 'comments such as "Look, Mohammed the terrorist is coming!" to a spit in the face at the Emeryville Shopping Center, to the statement "Go back home", which was made to someone in the city hall of Berkeley.'

Intensifying the interplay between the local and the national are political struggles that emerge in the interaction between Muslim student activists and neocolonialist capitalism on a global scale. In May 2000, when Madeline Albright was invited as the keynote speaker to the University of California at Berkeley's commencement ceremony, Muslim student activists joined hundreds of protesters with diverse political loyalties in charging Albright with genocide and naming her 'War Criminal'. Central to their critique was that Albright represents the State Department's enforcement of US-led sanctions on Iraq and that she stated that the price of killing half of the population of Iraqi children is worth it on the *Larry King Live* television show.

Contributing to the diverse political ideologies publicly articulated at this campus event, an airplane, funded by a Muslim community organization, flew over the outdoor commencement ceremony with a banner attached to it that read, '1.7 Million Dead. End the Sanctions Now!' The presence of this plane reinforced students' faith in Muslim community organization as a viable framework for asserting their political critiques. Other acts, such as their call and response, 'Takbir – Allahu Akbar', more specifically distinguished Muslim students' message from other protest participants in that it indicated the significance of the ideological force of God in igniting their activism.

The Palestinian cause

Palestine has been another key issue on Muslim student activists' agenda. At a student protest against Israeli occupation at the University of California at Berkeley, Basim, a Muslim student activist, declared: 'We're here to stand against oppression. This Israeli flag stands for killing innocent children who are throwing stones and fighting for their lives. Muslims all over the world are fighting against the oppressors, be it the Zionists, Russia, Uncle Sam, or who ever it may be.'

Student activists' loyalties to the Palestinian cause culminated in October 2000, when they joined millions of Muslims throughout the world in support of the Aqsa Intifada. In teach-ins and protests, and in advertisements, articles and letters sent to editors of campus newspapers, students declared that the purpose of their actions was to expose: Israel's use of aggression; Republican and Democratic candidates' pro-Israeli bias; excessive US military aid to Israel; and the mainstream US media's pro-Israeli bias.

While many student activists of Arab descent are tied to Palestine through diasporic kinship networks, those from various racial/-ethnic backgrounds have become closely linked to Palestine through the global spread of technology (i.e. satellite television and the internet), which has strengthened students' collective sense of an attachment to the Palestinian cause, Palestinian people, and a transnational Muslim community. Maha, a Muslim student activist of Palestinian descent explains that '[w]hat makes this Intifada different from the 1980s is that not just Arabs, but Muslims throughout the world – like Africans and Pakistanis – see the images of murdered children on TV.'

The internet has linked diverse Muslim student activists into further communication with their 'Palestinian brothers and sisters' in the form of daily news reports and updated lists of martyrs including their age, name, type of wound, and date and place of death. That many students have access to the cultural and material capital required to connect to satellite TV and the internet has enabled them to view the disjuncture between mainstream US media representations of Palestine and the images that appear on the internet and satellite television stations and has, in turn, inspired their political participation.

During the first few weeks of the Aqsa Intifada, Muslim student activists joined 5,000 Muslims for a *jumaa* prayer in solidarity with Palestinians on the grass in front of San Francisco's city hall. This prayer became the largest political mobilization of Muslims in San Francisco's history. Satellite TV and community leaders agreed that the internet was essential to the success of this mass mobilization. They have enhanced Muslim student activism, mobilizing ideas, opinions, and social linkages within and between Iraq, Palestine and San Francisco that are re-articulated in the form of localized political projects and expressions.

As some Muslim student activists distinguish themselves in terms of those who are 'Americanizing Islam' as opposed to those who are 'Islamicizing America' they further expose the fact that Islamic 'movement logics'[5] – through which lost histories are retold and silences are transformed into expression – are constantly being contested and are constantly under construction. Despite the ongoing reproduction of these movement logics in light of historically specific intersections between the 'local', the 'national', and the 'global', the post–September 11 political climate has witnessed an increase in portrayals of the category of 'Muslim' as fixed, unchanging and abstracted from history. In the aftermath of September 11, the multiplicity of Muslim voices has been buried under the rubble of New York and Afghanistan, and all the Muslims of the world have been reduced to either 'the good Muslims vs. the bad Muslims', or 'those who are with us vs. those who are against us'. During these difficult times, there exists an ever-growing need for historically situated research on Islam that traces its complexities and its various localities. San Francisco, California, is one cultural location where the increasing global appeal for an Islamic framework to articulate popular political sentiments is empowered by local histories, cultural formations, and power relations as it takes on local form.

Notes

1. Yousef Yousef, Director of Muslims for Global Peace and Justice, Santa Clara, California, personal interview (2000).
2. My research entailed participant observation and intensive interviews with 60 second-generation women and men, 15 of whom identify themselves as Muslim first, Arab second. This research was supported by a fellowship within the University of California, Irvine Humanities Research Institute research cluster, 'Islamic Modernities in an Era of Globalization' (winter, 2000).
3. For confidentiality purposes, my research participants' names have been changed.
4. The term 'racialization' refers to the institutionalized processes by which racial meanings have been attached to persons assumed to belong to the category 'Muslim'.
5. Sonia E. Alvarez, 'Translating the Global: Effects of Transnational Organizing on Latin American Feminist Discourses and Practices', *Meridians: A Journal of Feminisms, Race, Transnationalism* 1, no. 1 (2000): 29–67.

For an exploration of Arab Americans' ambiguous position within – as well as between themselves and – the US racial classification system, see Nadine Naber, 'Ambiguous Insiders: An Investigation of Arab American Invisibility', Journal of Ethnic and Racial Studies *23, no. 1 (2000): 37–61.*

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Satellite Channel

AHMAD KAMEL

Al-Jazeera
An Insider's View

The events of September 11 and their aftermath brought with them the 'discovery' of Al-Jazeera by much of the world, due to its coverage of the war. The Arab-speaking world of course had known of its existence for 5 years. Arab-speakers had already asked the questions that are now being posed in the West: What is Al-Jazeera's role? Who finances the station? What are its working methods and its style of coverage, especially of political events? What is its influence on viewers? What will be its future?

Al-Jazeera is an independent channel, specialized in news, political debates and documentary programmes. Launched in 1996, Al-Jazeera comprised a team of Arab-speaking journalists from 20 countries, the majority being composed of former groups coming from the BBC Arabic TV and radio.

Al-Jazeera was launched with the aid of a government loan of 150 million dollars spread over a five-year period allocated by the Qatar government. On 1 November 2001, the 5-year period came to an end and Al-Jazeera now relies on a number of financial resources to pay back the government loan and to continue to broadcast quality programmes.

Its financial resources come from commercial advertising; income from cable TV in different Arab countries, Europe, and North America (Al-Jazeera is broadcasted via satellites and internet free of charge around the world); technical services offered to other channels and production companies by the Al-Jazeera offices found across the globe; and from the sale of exclusive images and documentary programmes produced by Al-Jazeera, as well as the sale of programmes for the public. Since the outset, its trademark has been its high level of professionalism, objectivity, independence and the importance given by the channel to the intellectuals and politicians regardless of their influences. A weekly survey on the Al-Jazeera website offers the public the opportunity to express itself and to ask questions directly to the intellectuals and politicians. Viewers participate in the debates by phone, fax, internet, or by personal presence on the programmes. The Al-Jazeera correspondents give the parties concerned, but also the public, the chance to comment on events and explain the basic facts.

From a socio-political and media point of view, the creation of Al-Jazeera was an important event in the history of the Arab world. From a media point of view, the Arab public now has an independent Arab source of information. For the past 50 years, Arab citizens have had the choice between media controlled by oppressive regimes, which means information that borders on pure propaganda, or foreign media (English or French) in Arabic. The former being extremely want of information, the latter sources were the only choice for millions of Arab-speaking viewers, who desire non-biased information.

Since the 1950s, the Arab section of the BBC became the primary source of information for the Arab-speaking population, before sharing this position in the 1970s with the Arab section of Radio France Monte Carlo. Al-Jazeera liberated Arab viewers from this monopoly of occidental information.

Social-political issues

Al-Jazeera has managed to abolish the censorship and propaganda reporting that was enforced on the political and social representatives as well as the intellectuals of the Arab world. It has obliged the Arab governments to broaden their views on freedom of expression and in numerous cases has become a source of influence speaking out against oppression and violation of human rights in the Arab world. Other Arab media have had to make an effort to improve their level of professionalism along with their freedom of expression and in some cases Al-Jazeera is seen as a model to follow in the Arab media world. The overwhelming popularity of the channel, the tone of liberty, and the possibility given to all of the intellectuals and politicians has been a thorn in the side of many of the non-democratic countries of the Arab world. It is for these reasons that these countries have attempted to shut down the channel through any means available, by exerting both financial and political pressure on Qatar and Al-Jazeera (four countries have ceased diplomatic relations with Qatar). Surprisingly enough, neither Qatar nor Al-Jazeera has changed the attitude it has adopted, Al-Jazeera staying free and independent giving each individual the right to express him/herself. Qatar continues its politics of non-intervention in the workings of Al-Jazeera, as well as the democratization of the country – a process which will be crowned by the legislative elections next year. Women will have the right to present themselves as candidates and will have the right to vote.

Not only dealing with pressure from hostile governments, Al-Jazeera was faced with hostility from its own audience. It has taken a number of years in order for the public to accept the fact that there will be Israeli politicians and journalists with anti-Arab sentiments that will be allowed on the air to express their views. In addition to the hostility of anti-democratic governments and the misunderstandings of its own viewers, Al-Jazeera has also experienced a great deal of international pressure.

Ex-president Bill Clinton criticized Al-Jazeera's coverage of the Palestinian Intifada and especially the broadcasting of certain violent scenes of the use of excessive force by the Israeli army with respect to Palestinian civilians. In the aftermath of the September 11 events, international pressure has dramatically increased.

Al-Jazeera, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden

Two years ago the Taliban government authorized two television channels in Afghanistan: CNN, being the most viewed channel in the West; and Al-Jazeera, the most viewed by the Arab Muslim population. The two channels started working in the beginning of the year 2000 with offices in Kabul. A few months later, CNN decided to close down its bureau due to a lack of interesting reports in Afghanistan and the cost of operating the bureau in Kabul. Al-Jazeera also had doubts on the usefulness of keeping a bureau in Kabul, but the supporters for this bureau managed to convince the head office and Al-Jazeera remained as the only channel working in a Taliban-controlled area. Al-Jazeera did not remain in Afghanistan due to privileged relations with the Taliban or Ben Laden for that matter, but rather because of its being the most watched and respected channel in the Arab Muslim world. CNN missed a historical opportunity to be at the right place at the right time.

The Taliban and Ben Laden are not the only ones who choose to communicate with the Arab Muslim world via Al-Jazeera; Barak, Perez, Blair, Solana, Robertson, Powell, Ramsfield, Rice, Mayer, Arafat, Khatami, Sadam Hussein, Castro, Kadafi, Heider, Vedrine, Georges Mitchell, and Kofi Annan have also chosen Al-Jazeera.

Certain individuals say that the correspondent in Kabul was pro-Taliban, but his presence in Kabul was necessary. His reports and images were the only ones being transmitted from Afghanistan. Al-Jazeera's camera was the only one relaying images during the bombing by the Americans. The Arab viewers and the viewers around the world are intelligent enough to realize that the journalist in Kabul was not completely 'free'. This is the same situation for any correspondent working in a country where censorship is applied. The viewers would have also seen that after every report coming from Kabul Al-Jazeera gave the American and Northern Alliance points of view, thus creating equilibrium. Some critics hold that Al-Jazeera does not have a correspondent in northern Afghanistan, however Al-Jazeera was in the North via the correspondents from CNN who were working for Al-Jazeera under a special agreement signed with CNN. Al-Jazeera gave ample opportunity to the Northern Alliance to express its views via telephone or during trips outside of Afghanistan.

Faithful to its policy – namely freedom of expression for all – Al-Jazeera did not hesitate to diffuse the videotapes sent to the bureau in Kabul by Ben Laden, since he is one of the major actors in this conflict. Al-Jazeera did not want to get dragged into a dispute with the Americans over good and evil but wanted to keep its independence and objectivity by just reporting the facts. Al-Jazeera has treated this war as any other, a political conflict. It gave ample airtime to the Americans to express their views and broadcasted all of the President's and ministry press conferences voiced over in Arabic. Numerous Americans have been received on daily news broadcasts as well as in live debates. This same opportunity was given to the anti-Taliban and anti–Ben Laden Muslims and politicians of any belief.

Having experienced problems in finding individuals who could explain and defend the ideology behind Al-Qa^{c}ida, it was logical for Al-Jazeera to diffuse Ben Laden's videotapes. Two videotapes of Ben Laden were received and two from his collaborators. The first videotape of Ben Laden was diffused a few hours after the bombing by the Americans had begun. The following three tapes were edited by Al-Jazeera to cut out the repetitive information.

The US government, angered by the showing of the first videotape, applied direct pressure to the Qatar government. Certain American newspapers clearly asked for the bombing of the bureau in Kabul. This intimidation was strongly condemned by the international press and the organizations defending the freedom of expression.

Many questions are being asked on the bombing of the bureau in Kabul by the Americans a few hours after the fall of Kabul into the hands of the Northern Alliance. Al-Jazeera confirms that the office is well known by the Americans and it is difficult to believe that a mere error was committed.

Al-Jazeera has come as a surprise for many, for its journalists are advocating principles that are considered foreign with respect to their countries of origin, namely freedom of speech, liberty and objectivity. Not well endorsed by many Arab countries as well as the American government, Al-Jazeera receives ever-increasing support from both the Arab public and the international media/public.

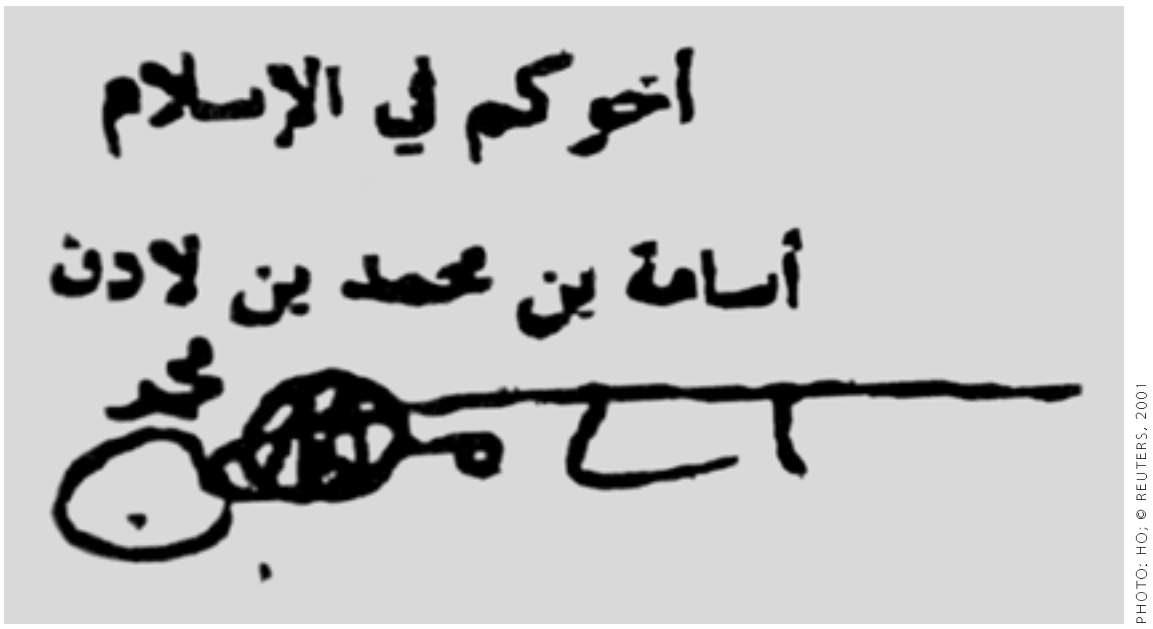

PHOTO: HO, © REUTERS, 2001

Bin Laden's signature from a fax to Al-Jazeera, 24 September 2001.

Ahmad Kamel is Al-Jazeera's Europe correspondent.

Sattelite Channel

NAOMI SAKR

Testing Time for Al-Jazeera

Never has any Arab-owned media venture attracted so much Western attention as Al-Jazeera Satellite Channel, broadcaster of 24-hour news and current affairs from the tiny Gulf emirate of Qatar. Al-Jazeera was just five years old when it soared to international prominence in late 2001 through its presence inside Afghanistan and access to the videotape of Usama bin Laden. Yet media coverage of Al-Jazeera itself, as a newsworthy institution in its own right, long predated the September atrocities and subsequent US air strikes on Afghanistan. Indeed, the very uniqueness of Al-Jazeera's output in Arabic provides an insight into the unusual power relations that have produced such a prolific stream of suicide attackers from Arab countries.

Free, open and constructive dialogue among people of diverse political persuasions is rare on Arab television, because governments impose tight censorship. As most commentators point out, this censorship is self-evidently not imposed on Al-Jazeera. Even those who have never watched the station have grasped why its programme titles – like 'More than One Opinion', 'The Opposite Direction', or 'Without Bounds' – are so significant in a region where television channels are uniformly treated as organs of the ruling elite. In most Arab countries it is the information minister's job to ensure that state television expresses one opinion, follows one direction and stays well within bounds. As for privately owned Lebanese or Palestinian channels, or most pan-Arab satellite stations, these remain subject to legal constraints and political imperatives that prevent them from giving airtime to a full range of political views.[1] The stormy talk shows, viewer comments and critiques of government policy that have become hallmarks of Al-Jazeera have gripped audiences across the region because they are unprecedented on Arabic-language television. While reaction to such programming has been predictably hostile from those with a vested interest in continued censorship, a school of thought is finally growing in the Arab world that draws a link between the censorious and autocratic nature of local rule and the rise of extreme and violent forms of protest. This view, expressed for example by Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak, the UAE minister of higher education, attributes the extremism of suicide bombers to 'the way Arab countries are ruled'.[2] When the minister said a 'giant step' was needed to 'change political life in the Arab world', he seemed to be echoing calls from every quarter for the opening up of political, cultural and media channels through which grievances can be openly articulated and remedies hammered out, without the process ending in a jail sentence or other sanctions for those involved.

Bias or balance?

With conduits for authentic Arab public opinion in very short supply, Al-Jazeera's management and staff have had to find their own way in a lonely part of the institutional landscape. While other television channels conform to the expectation that owners will dictate content (on the grounds that 'he who pays the piper calls the tune'), Al-Jazeera's unusual ownership and funding formula leave viewers confused about whether its content is 'balanced' or 'biased'. Al-Jazeera is not under the thumb of an information ministry because Qatar no longer has one. The station was launched with a five-year loan and set out to become self-financing through sales of advertising airtime, royalties from exclusive film footage and the leasing out of facilities and equipment in its many bureaux around the world. Officials angered by what they perceive to be bias against them consequently have few levers to pull to influence future coverage. There is little to be gained from remonstrating with the Qatari government, which disclaims editorial responsibility for Al-Jazeera. Pressurizing advertisers to stay away merely reduces one source of Al-Jazeera income.

Arab ministers have demonstrated their displeasure over the years by boycotting the station, closing its offices or withdrawing accreditation from its correspondents. Measures like these reinforce existing pro-establishment imbalances, since those in power already have ample access to the production side of media outlets under their control. What they do not have is control over the reception side, since they cannot guarantee to command the attention of viewers. Those who decline to appear on Al-Jazeera forego an opportunity to put their points to an audience recently estimated at 35 million. But the price of making points on Al-Jazeera is a readiness to see them challenged. The station's managing director, Mohammed Jassem al-Ali, believes it is Al-Jazeera's appetite for controversy and clashing perspectives that 'respects viewers' intelligence' and makes for 'interesting television'.[3] Unlike the many perennially loss-making Arab television stations, Al-Jazeera is obliged to make 'interesting' television and diversify its income in order to survive. It has done this in the past by making full commercial use of facilities in Baghdad, especially during the US and UK air strikes on Iraq in 1998, and by providing intensive coverage of the Palestinian uprising that erupted in September 2000. Given the dominant US television channels' euphemistic reporting on Israel, which glosses over Israeli annexation of Arab East Jerusalem, expansion of illegal settlements in occupied territory and assassinations of Palestinian political figures,[4] Al-Jazeera's engagement with the Palestinian experience of occupation could be seen as effectively redressing a long-standing imbalance in international coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

'With us or against us'

For Western politicians and journalists perplexed about the realities of life in the Arab world, Al-Jazeera has offered a small and inevitably misty window onto pent-up anger and alienation. Some observers, however, especially in the US in the wake of September 11, decided that what Al-Jazeera staff regard as professional and compelling programming was not merely unhelpful but inflammatory. George Bush's stark message to players on the world stage, that '[y]ou are either with us or against us', called for Al-Jazeera's output to be judged on criteria that had not previously been applied to supposedly independent news organizations. In accordance with Mr Bush's polarizing message, Al-Jazeera came under sustained US pressure to show whose side it was on. On visiting Washington shortly before the US launched air strikes on Afghanistan, Qatar's ruler, Sheikh Hamad Khalifa al-Thani, told reporters that his hosts had 'advised' him to have the television channel toned down. Apparently embarrassed by the revelation, senior White House figures took the opportunity to be interviewed on Al-Jazeera. But ill will endured. Zev Chafets, writing in the *New York Daily News*, urged the US military to shut down Al-Jazeera, saying it had the power to 'poison the air more efficiently and lethally than anthrax ever could'.[5] When a US bomb struck the station's office in Kabul on November 13, Al-Jazeera staff were not alone in deducing that it had been deliberately hit. If US policy-makers wanted justification for regarding Al-Jazeera as the enemy, Fouad Ajami regaled them with it five days later, in a lengthy article in the *New York Times*. Describing the station as a 'dangerous force' with a 'virulent anti-American bias', Ajami warned America's leaders not to waste their time pressing its backers for more moderate coverage, and not to give what he termed the 'satellite channel of Arab radicalism' a helping hand.[6]

The problem for Al-Jazeera and its audience, be they admirers or critics, is that it remains one of a kind. For as long as the broadcasting of uncensored, free-to-air news and current affairs in Arabic remain the exception rather than the rule, it is certain to arouse strong feelings and surprise. As an Egyptian veteran of both English-language and Arabic-language television once remarked, Arab audiences react differently to controversial television programming depending on the identity of the broadcaster and the language of the broadcast. The novelty of Arab reporters making programmes according to criteria other than political expediency has yet to wear off. Social scientists from the region note the same shock factor in their field. Path-breaking social science research in Arab states risks being considered sensationalist and disloyal if published in Arabic, simply because the body of uncensored, newly released findings that are accessible to local populations is currently rather small.

Survey results

Meanwhile, the problems of Al-Jazeera's singularity are magnified by misconceptions about media effects. These include the widespread but misplaced conviction that viewers are highly susceptible to propaganda whether or not its content accords with their lifetime's accumulation of experience, knowledge and beliefs. Professor Shibley Telhami of the University of Maryland has debunked this notion, using statistical evidence from surveys conducted in five Arab states. Addressing the Middle East Institute's annual conference in Washington on October 19, Telhami said the deep personal preoccupation of so many ordinary Arabs with the treatment of Palestinians had nothing to do with Al-Jazeera. His surveys showed that concern for Palestinians was higher among those who had not watched Al-Jazeera than those who had. What had changed in the last two years, he said, was not Al-Jazeera and the screening of pictures showing 'too much blood'. Radicalization did not result from television. What had changed was the world and, with it, the possibilities for Middle East peace.[7]

For as long as misunderstanding about the shaping of Arab public opinion persists, and with no channel ready to challenge Al-Jazeera on its own terms, the aftermath of September 11 will continue to be a testing time for uncensored television in the Arab world. If, as suggested, Al-Jazeera establishes a presence in Somalia ahead of US action in that country, its distinctive logo and 'Exclusive' label will once again be seen on Western television screens and the royalty component of its revenue base will be further secured. On the other hand, judging from events in Kabul in November, and notwithstanding the US military's insistence that a bona fide news operation would not be seen as a military target, the physical security of an Al-Jazeera operation in Mogadishu or elsewhere may be less assured.

Notes

1. Naomi Sakr, 'Optical Illusions: Television and Censorship in the Arab World', *tbsjournal.com*, no. 5 (fall/winter 2000).
2. Interviewed by Rana Kabbani for a BBC2 documentary in the 'Correspondent' series, 9 December 2001.
3. Quotations reported by *Middle East Times*, 22 November 1998, and *Middle East Broadcast andSatellite* 6, no. 7 (October 1999): 15.
4. See for example Seth Ackerman, 'Al-Aqsa Intifada and the US Media', *Journal of Palestine Studies* XXX, no. 2 (winter 2001): 61–74.
5. As reported by Hatem Anwar, www.middleastwire.com/newswire, 15 October 2001.
6. Fouad Ajami, 'What the Muslim World is Watching', *New York Times*, 18 November 2001.
7. *Middle East Economic Survey*, 5 November 2001, (D)4.

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Turkey
NEŞE IHTIYAR

Televangelism and the Case of Yaşar Nuri Öztürk

Today mass media, especially the audio-visual media, exert an immense influence on nearly every society, and Turkey is no exception. The television appearances of the Turkish Islamic theologian and author Yaşar Nuri Öztürk is striking in this context of rising mediatic hegemony. The development of televangelism in the USA, which has lead to nation-wide religious movements, is not without parallels in Turkey, where the television has virtually become a religious medium – for some, even a 'tele-mosque' of sorts.

With the appearance of private broadcasting stations since the early 1990s Turkish television has experienced a steady increase in importance for Turkish society, not only within the country but also for the Turks living in the diasporas. This is due to the fact that nearly every Turkish household, wherever it may be, receives Turkish programmes via satellite. In some of these households, the television is on almost all of the time. The broadcasting stations are mostly secular and loyal to the state (e.g. Show TV, ATV, Star, BRT, Kanal D, to name but a few) but one can also find broadcasting stations with a more religious touch (Kanal 7, TGRT). All offer millions of viewers innumerable soap operas, and game and music shows. Regarding political programmes, Islam is undoubtedly one of most widely discussed topics. In roundtable discussions popular academics from the theological, sociological and legal fields debate, sometimes in a very emotionally charged manner, about Islam.

A leading and outstanding figure in this context is Yaşar Nuri Öztürk, born in Bayburt in 1945 into a family of the Naqshibandi order. He acquired his deep religious knowledge from his father. Having obtained degrees in Law and Theology, he is currently the dean of the college of Theology at Istanbul University. So far Öztürk has published more than thirty books, some of which are translated into English and German. Since the 1970s he writes articles for the popular press such as *Hürriyet* and *Star Gazetesi* every Friday.

But apart from his books, newspaper articles and conferences around the world, Öztürk attained popularity first and foremost through his continuous presence on television. His aim is to present to the masses his main thesis, namely the return to the Qur'an and the elimination of superstitious beliefs, in other words, *tagdid* – the reconstruction of religious life.

He follows the ideas of ideologues such as Muhammad Iqbal, whom he admires most, Jamal ad-din al-Afghani, and Muhammed Abduh. But he often also mentions Sayyid Qutb and Ali Shariati. He regards them as the intellectuals that the Islamic world with its many conflicts needs today, even if their ideas are quite varied.

As an opponent of *taqlid* (following of a legal school) he considers *ijtihad* (personal reasoning) as an absolute must for Muslim society. He is firmly opposed to the authority of the imams and *hoca*s, accusing them of ignorance. With these approaches he directs himself to a more secular audience, even ironically using the term 'high society *hoca*' (*sosyatikhocasi*).

Secular programmes as a platform

The spectrum of television shows on which Öztürk appears ranges from roundtable discussions to a talk show, and even a one-man show. Öztürk's television debut began with his speeches aired on the official state television programme on religion, prepared and supervised by the Directorate of Religious Affairs. After the flourishing of commercial television stations he began to appear on private television channels and participated in programmes on Islam as an expert and discussant. As mentioned before, the channels are mostly secular in orientation and can be described as mainstream media. It can be said that since the mid-1990s almost every television viewer has become familiar with Öztürk's face and style.

The concept of a roundtable discussion is quite straightforward: Öztürk and other experts are invited for a special occasion to discuss a particular issue. However, Öztürkis not the centre of attention in these discussions. This is contrary to his own talk show, where he personally and directly turns towards the 'masses' which need to 'be awakened', to use Öztürk's own terms.

Every year in the month of Ramadan, Öztürk has his own programme called *Yaşar Nuri ile sohbet* (Talk with Yaşar Nuri). In this programme he talks about a special topic for about ten to fifteen minutes before the breaking of the fast (*iftar*). He is alone, without guests or other discussants. Sufi music plays in the background, thus creating a didactic and sermon-like atmosphere. He gives the impression of being very serious; no emotions are shown. He is presented as an enlightened man giving his beloved viewers, as he calls them, some good advice in this holy month. The topics are quite general. He discusses questions like 'What are good acts?', or 'What is the meaning of Ramadan?' But he also touches upon topics related to Islam and democracy.

Öztürk uses different types of television programmes to spread his mission, and whether he appears on this or that programme he can be sure of reaching a wide audience. Since 1996 Öztürk also appears on the daily talk show *Ayşe Özgün*. The concept of this talk show is an adaptation of those that are common in the West. There is one host, the audience and some guests, not prominent figures but 'normal' people talking about everyday problems, for example the relations between men and women and family. But the host, Ayşe Özgün, has a very rational and scientific approach; she questions everything and can only be persuaded by reason, for example when a guest claims that he or she is a medium.

Öztürk appears on her show every Friday morning. For about one hour he gives speeches and answers the questions of the audience, comprised mostly of women, both veiled and Western-dressed. They pose all sorts of questions, including requests for advice on ritual practices such as: 'Are we allowed to read the Qur'an without covering our heads?' This show offers him a platform for his mission; namely to eliminate what he considers irrational and wrong beliefs. One of the means by which he tries to achieve this is the use of everyday language. When he cites a verse from the Qur'an in Arabic he translates it into very simple Turkish.

Pray TV in the USA as a model?

It is interesting to draw a parallel to the phenomenon of televangelism in the USA. First of all, it should be kept in mind that there are fundamental differences between religion and television in Turkey and in the USA. Of course in the Islamic tradition there is no real equivalent to the church. The 'television churches' in the USA replace, in many cases, church attendance all together. Pray TV started in the 1950s and such televangelists as Pat Robertson even established their own education networks and built up powerful financial empires. Nowadays they are a very common feature – even becoming the subject of satirical songs (for instance, the song by Genesis 'Jesus, he knows me').

In Turkey it is hardly conceivable that the mosque will ever be replaced by television. Nonetheless, some have accused Öztürk of establishing his own school of religious thought by means of his appearances. But he rejects this arguing that he is an opponent of *taqlid*. In spite of the differences, Öztürk does have a great deal in common with the televangelists. Firstly, the US televangelists are predominantly republicans and they have a great influence on republican politics. Their main mission is to restore public morals and to protect young people from violence, drugs and sex. When Öztürk talks about non-political Islam he is in absolute agreement with the Turkish state's idea of religion. Particularly his comments on Ayşe Özgün's talk show demonstrate the typical embodiment of a Kemalist approach to religion. Secondly, in both cases the television preachers are absolute authorities. Their ideas, opinions and solutions are regarded by many as definitive. What they say can be much more important than what is written and more important than the opinions of the *hoca* or any other reverend of the local mosque or church. The following letter from a viewer illustrates the way Öztürk is perceived by – at least – part of his audience. It is addressed to the programme editor of a show on which Öztürk appeared.

Dear Programme Editor,
I am a woman graduated from the Italian High School and educated with Western culture. I have been working for years. My relation with my religion, to be honest, is almost restricted to watching your programme. Because of that I give utmost importance to it and await a lot of things from it. Forgive me, but throughout this year I have not heard anything satisfying me except from DrÖztürk's serial speeches on Islamic thinking. My hope is that the programme and speeches of this high level will be continued and detailed, including every possible topic.

Case in point.

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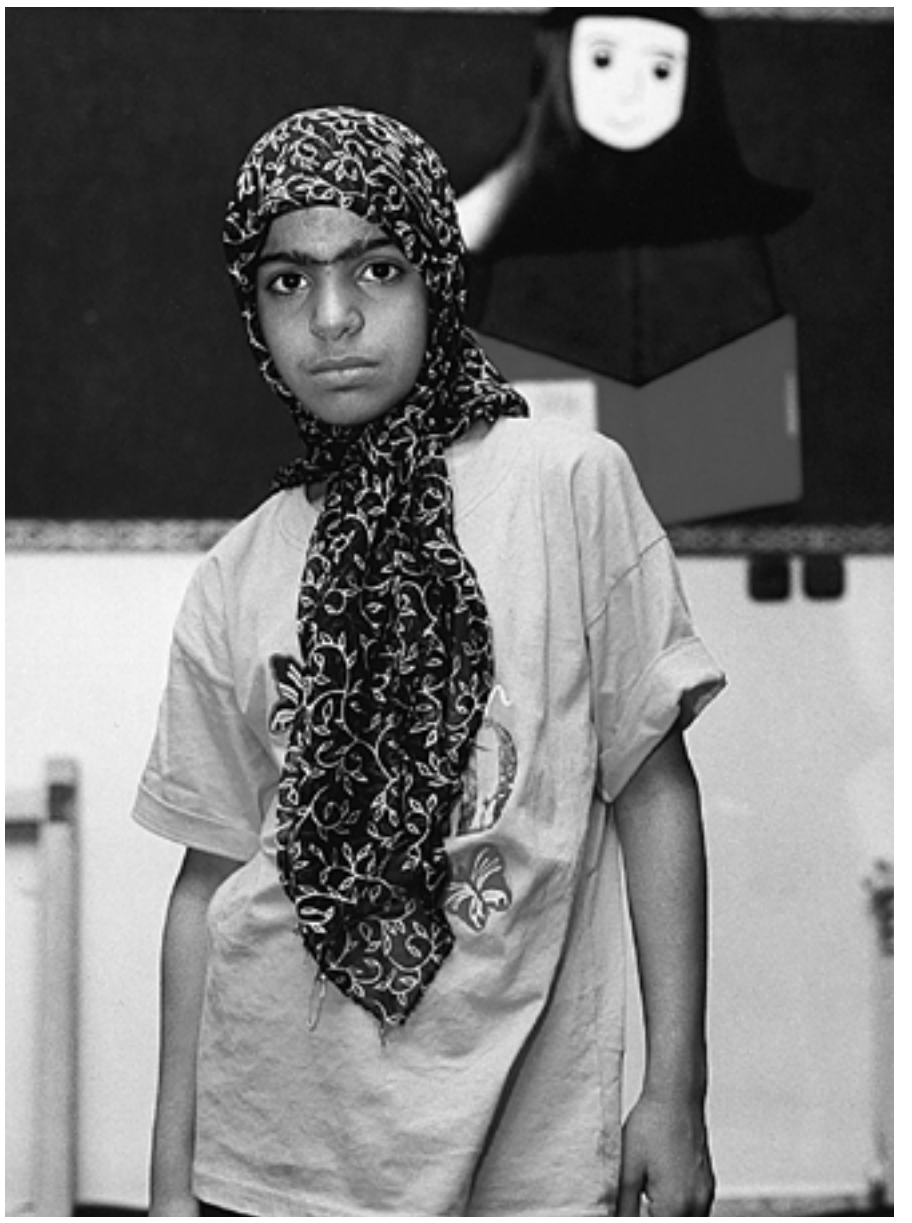
Documentary

ZIBA MIR-HOSSEINI

Iran's Runaway Girls Challenge the Old Rules

Runaway, a documentary film directed by Kim Longinotto and Ziba Mir-Hosseini, was shot in late 2000 in Tehran, and is set in Rayhaneh House, a shelter for runaway girls. Like their earlier _Divorce Iranian Style_, _Runaway_ shows how Iranian women are learning to challenge the old rules, and how rapidly their country is changing. The film follows the stories of five teenagers, exploring their longing for freedom, their hopes for a brighter future, and their experiences of society's double rules and standards when it comes to gender rights. The shelter is run by the dynamic and charismatic Mrs Shirazi and her team of counsellors, who protect the girls from their families and help to renegotiate their relationships.



A scene from _Runaway_.

The film portrays the courage and resourcefulness of the rebellious new generation of Iranian women. It opens with Monireh, a teenage girl who has run away from home. She is not new to Rayhaneh nor are her grievances unique: they are shared by many teenage girls in contemporary Iran who feel that they have little freedom to do what they want in life, that their parents do not understand them.

Then come the stories of the film's five main characters. Maryam, a boisterous 12-year-old, comes from Doroud, a small town in the west, far from Tehran. She ran away from her abusive brother. Setareh's family broke up after her mother's death; her father became a drug dealer and prostituted her to feed his addiction, then disappeared, most likely arrested. Setareh became homeless, was picked up by the police, then after some time in prison was sent to Rayhaneh to rebuild her life. At the shelter, 19-year-old Setareh starts to reinvent herself, and becomes a source of strength and comfort to other girls. A close friendship develops between her and 17-year-old Parisa, who, the counsellors suspect, is not revealing her true identity. Indeed, it turns out that far from being without family as she claimed, Parisa is engaged to be married. She ran away because she failed her exams and was frightened that her father would beat her. Atena, already twice divorced at 18, was first married off at the age of 12 by her mother, who no longer wanted her at home. Her first husband kept her chained up, but Atena managed to get a divorce and returned to her mother. When her stepfather tried to rape her, she escaped. The film ends with a second Parisa, an 18-year-old who ran away from her abusive father and brother – both drug addicts who deprived her of basic rights and took out their anger and frustration on her. After a week on her own in the park – surrounded by 'wolves' – Parisa turns herself in to the police. She is sent to Rayhaneh, where she is offered a chance to continue her studies and start an independent life. But Parisa decides to go back to her family, who desperately need her, despite having abused her.

Facing reality

The problem of girls suffering abuse at home and running away from intolerable situations is neither new in Iran nor confined to particular sections of Iranian society. It is an age-old and deep-rooted phenomenon that until recently was shrouded in secrecy and ignored by the authorities. But the creation of the Rayhaneh House in October 1999 as a temporary shelter for runaway girls, and the media attention this centre has received, are transforming the issue from a taboo subject into a pressing social problem.

Two factors are at the root of this transformation. First, a new generation of girls recognize that they have rights and are no longer prepared to put up with domestic abuse. By running away from home, these girls both register a protest and seek to change their situation. Secondly, the unexpected victory of Mohammad Khatami in the 1997 presidential election, and the birth of a reformist movement, also brought a less ideological approach to social problems, which has gradually opened a space for a public debate on many taboo subjects.

The very existence of Rayhaneh, its philosophy and its strategy for dealing with the problem of runaway girls run parallel to the history of the reformist movement which found a voice in the structure of power after the election of President Mohammed Khatami in 1997. Since then the reformists, who enjoy massive popular support (as shown in the four elections conducted since), have been locked in a fierce political battle with their opponents, who have so far managed to block most of their legislative moves. At the heart of the battle lies one of the main ideological conflicts that is now being fought in Iran – over the very notion of 'rights'. The early discourse of the Islamic Republic, premised on the notion of duty (*taklif*) as understood and constructed in Islamic jurisprudence, is now challenged by a reformist discourse premised on the notion of *haqq* (right) as advocated by modern democratic ideals.

Runaway gives us a glimpse of how this wider ideological struggle is playing itself out in the lives of individuals. It is the story of a struggle for dignity, respect and human rights. As each story unfolds in front of the camera, we learn about the gender biases, contradictions and double standards of the patriarchal culture in which these young girls live. We come to appreciate how strong and resourceful they are, how much they are needed by their families, and yet how, in the name of preserving the 'family honour' and 'fulfilling their duties', they are deprived of basic human rights. We also learn about the centre, its counsellors and their conflicting judgements and decisions about the girls; we learn about the world outside the centre, which both girls and counsellors refer to as 'full of wolves'. It is a world that is changing fast: old rules and boundaries are breaking down and the new ones are hazy and fragile.

Making connections: shooting _Runaway_

By the year 2000 there were 22 centres for runaway girls nationwide. Rayhaneh is the only one that allows media access. The rest, mostly run by the Social Services Organization, impose a strict ban. Aware of the important role of media, Rayhaneh is keen to have its philosophy and the plight of the runaway girls publicized. But it has also had to deal with the harmful impact of media attention on the girls. Concerned about the possibly intrusive effect of a film crew on the girls, the director, Mrs Shirazi, at first agreed to let us film only for a few days. But the girls accepted us almost immediately; as they began to trust us with their stories, we – the three women in the film crew (Kim Longinotto as director and camera, myself as co-director and Mary Milton as sound) – soon became part of the healing process. It was only then that Mrs Shirazi gave us a free hand and let us stay until we had completed our shoot. We tried to be as unobtrusive as possible, but we never filmed without the consent of the girls or their families. We filmed at Rayhaneh over a period of four weeks in November and December 2000. At the time, there were 15 girls who had been in the shelter for some time, but we sought stories structured by arrivals and departures, following the stories in between. Our decision was largely based on the fact that the emotional drama was high; and we wanted our stories to have resolutions. Once we had chosen our characters, we kept close to them and followed what was happening to them as closely as we could. When editing the film, we were concerned to place the focus on the girls and their individual stories, rather than on Rayhaneh as a centre or on the world outside.

As in *Divorce*, we were aware that we were dealing with a universal issue; the problem of runaway girls is not peculiar to Iran. We wanted our film to give a voice to these girls, to let them tell their own stories, and through their stories to show Rayhaneh, the counsellors and the dynamic and powerful director, Mrs Shirazi. We wanted the film to show their consensus approach to the problems, and how they set up delicate 'reconciliations' between the runaway girls and their families. We see these women disagreeing with each other, and giving differing advice to girls; we see them exasperated by the lack of legal support for their organization. At one point, we hear Mrs Shirazi telling Parisa's father that, if he fails to keep to his guarantee and starts to maltreat Parisa or she runs away again, she will take him to the International Court in The Hague. Perhaps it is an empty threat – certainly it is a bluff – but it tells of the extent to which human rights discourse has made its impact in reformist Iran. Similarly, the fact that unlike in the case of *Divorce* we did not have to go through an ordeal to get our permit to film tells something of the ways in which the reformist government of Khatami has been successful in creating a more open society in Iran. This time our main negotiation was with Rayhaneh and Mrs Shirazi, whose principal concern was to protect the girls from the film crew.

Runaway *is distributed in North America by Women Make Movies (http://www.wmm.com) and in Europe and the rest of the world by the Royal Anthropological Institute (http://www.therai.org.uk/film/video_sales.html).*

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Internet

ERMETE MARIANI

Hadith On-Line
Writing Islamic Tradition

With the vastly expanding use and popularity of the world wide web in the closing decade of the 20th century, Muslims began presenting themselves on the web through sacred texts, images and stories. This transmission includes *hadith*, the sayings and acts of the Prophet. Studying the transmission of the *hadith* through the internet and its function in the Islamic on-line discourse helps in understanding the conception of a new discourse of Islamic jurisprudence. Through the description of different formats of *hadith*, it is possible to analyse the complex relation between the texts and the new medium.

The relation between text and medium changes over time and space, because of the varying cultural systems in which messages are produced and the ongoing development of information technologies employed to transmit it. The technical characteristics of a medium determine formats, uses of a text, as well as the competences necessary to transmit it. A comparison between the printed and on-line *hadith* is necessary for understanding in which way the 'real' and 'virtual' traditions differ, but that is not enough. A tradition is also a transmission protocol, so a description of technical characteristics of the internet can be useful for understanding how the information circulates and by whom it is produced and consumed.

Hadith means news, but in this particular case it denotes the news about the Prophet transmitted by way of his companions and later generations of Muslims. As the imitation of Muhammad's example is a moral and legal principle, *taqlid*, the *hadith* constitutes next to the Qur'an one of the most important sources of Islamic jurisprudence and theology.

The oral transmission of the *hadith* was soon replaced by written transmission, being a more efficient means of communicating them over the rapidly expanding Muslim world. In written format it was also easier to control their authenticity and limit the production of apocrypha. The scrutinizing of the *hadith* led to the composition of a number of canonical *hadith* collections, known as the *kutub as-sitta* – the six books – commonly considered as authentic, or *sahih.*

A traditional *hadith* is composed of two parts: the chain of transmitters, *isnad*, which is the guarantee of authenticity, and the message or text, *matn*. But in printed works, as in oral discourses, they are often introduced by 'the Prophet said/did' without citing the chain of authorities. This use makes it difficult to verify whether the *hadith* are actually taken from one of the classical compilations.

Hadith on the web

On the web can be found either complete compilations of *hadith*, the *kutub as-sitta*, or individual or small collections of the Prophet's acts and sayings without the chain of transmitters being given. Bibliographical references are often incomplete or totally lacking. Thus it is not always possible to check their authenticity and to control the production of new apocrypha. The *hadith* are available on the web as images or audio files, and are sometimes used for decorating a web site and electronic postcards (www.jannah.org). They are produced in colourful and animated icons, which is partly in line with more traditional uses; some *hadith* and verses of the Qur'an have been used since early Islamic times for decorating mosques and objects. For centuries they have been used in elaborate calligraphy. More recently, they can be found written on walls as political slogans.

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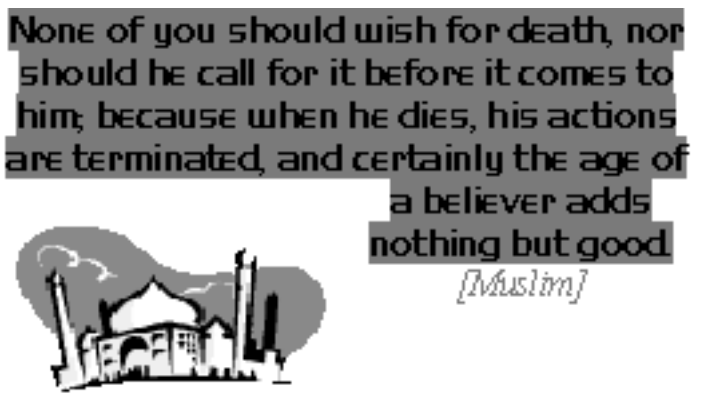
Apart from presenting their CVs, Muslim authors sometimes present themselves on personal homepages with a collection of *hadith*, in particular when they explain the main features of Islam and its civilization. Sometimes even *hadith qudsi* – the holy or divine sayings attributed, albeit indirectly, to God – are presented (see www.ifrance.com/abchir-m). The



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most original aspect of the *hadith* available on the web is that they are published in different formats, simple text and colourful icons, and with different purposes, all through the same medium. Outside of the virtual world each format is realized by a particular means, either through writing, calligraphy, architecture or popular art. On the web a certain level of competence in computer science is sufficient to use and present this religious literature in a variety of ways. A web designer is able to realize what editors, architects or artists in the real world do through different media, but with much less effort and funds. Nonetheless, computer hard- and software should be readily available and that is why most Muslim virtual designers are Muslim students living in the US. They have not only the means, but also a strong motivation to use cyberspace both as a way to re-create and keep up with the Muslim *umma*.

Texts and authors

Before analysing the authors and texts, it is appropriate to give a measure of the presence of on-line *hadith* in the main languages (based on the author's research): in English 212,686 *ahadith* are available on 22 web sites, in Arabic there are 62,078 on 6 sites, and in French 2,487 on 8 sites have been found. Considering the limits of search engines and the instability of the web, these figures indicate the most visible *hadith* and not their totality. The prevalence of *hadith* in English may be due to the fact that the internet was born in the USA, arriving later in Europe and only recently becoming more common in Asia and the Arab world. Considering the sheer magnitude, it is impossible to analyse all the texts and verify the quality of the translations. The same is true for establishing whether the *hadith* concern existing printed collections that have been published on-line without any modifications.

The most common collections on-line comprise, in order of importance, the following:

– The complete Bukhari collection, *As-Sahih,* is to be found on two web sites: Al-Islam, (www.al-islam.com) in Arabic; and the Muslim Student Association (MSA) of the University of South California's site (www.usc.edu/dept/MSA) in English, translated by Muhsin Khan. Fifteen other web sites copied or linked their pages to this address. In French no complete collection was found, even if there are two printed translations of it.
– The complete Abu Muslim collection, *As-Sahih,* is available in Arabic on the Al-Islam site and, translated into English by Siddiqui Abdul Hameed, on the MSA site. Thirteen web sites are linked to the latter. In French there is no full collection as it has not been completely translated.
– There are three web sites that publish the Imam An-Nawawi's *Forty Hadith* in English, translated by Denis Johnson Davies and Ezzeddin Ibrahim. In Arabic there is only one site, Al-Islam, and in French, two (Le Centre Islamique de la Réunion, www.islam.ifrance.fr/islam; and Les Ressources Islamiques, www.chez.com/abuhamza) translated by The International Islamic Federation of Students (Kuwait).

The language-author ratio is similar to that of the printed production of *hadith* in Western languages. Most of the on-line *hadith* are in English and the Imam Bukhari's *As-Sahih* is certainly the most published collection – on the web as well as in print. Most of these web sites are created by Muslim students in the US or are hosted by American servers. The most important centres of production of English books, however, are located in the Indian Subcontinent and managed by professional editors.

It must be noted that a web site can be composed of pages, located at the same address or domain name; or by pages kept together by electronic links, in which case they appear as a one web site but are actually located at different addresses. In the latter case, the webmaster has to check the links periodically because web pages often change contents and address.

These diverse 'statuses' of texts do not exist in printed works. All the pages included in a book have the same 'reality'; the author and publisher have control over the entire text.

Muslims from all around the world are using the internet to communicate, to present their beliefs and their practices. The *hadith* are an important part of their 'virtual image'. A new tradition is taking shape following the technical characteristics of the new medium and its uses. The main difference between printed and on-line *hadith* lies in the medium and not in the texts themselves, because they use basically the same texts. However, centres of production, editors' competences, formats used and means of diffusion are completely different. Cultural and religious changes in the information era are not always voluntarily caused by authors but by the *medium* itself.[1]

The internet is creating another language that is neither written nor oral,[2] it is a 'world wide web' made of images, sounds and written words. Moreover, in cyberspace there is no memory because sites that shut down do not leave a trace of their existence, and all the efforts made to keep track of such a site can suddenly fail.

Some effects of the new media become evident in discussions about the sanctity of the fundamental texts of Islam. The MSA web site (www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/) hesitantly suggests that a digital copy of the Qur'an is as sacred as a printed one. This means that a good Muslim should perform the necessary ablutions before reading a digital copy of the Qur'an. On the contrary, the Dar al-Hadith (www.al-muhaddith.com) refuses to publish the *hadith* and the Qur'an on-line because they do not consider the internet a 'suitable' means for its publication. Thus, considering that a protocol of transmission of religious knowledge, *ʿilm*, is not yet formulated and accepted, it seems to be too early to affirm that a 'virtual Islamic tradition' has been born. However, if one considers how much the increased circulation of the *hadith* and other fundamental texts in printed form contributed to the religious and political developments over the last century, one may wonder what the potential of the spread of these texts in a growing number of languages through the new media will be. It appears, as yet, that changes are not determined so much by new contents, but by the new medium itself.

Notes

1. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extension of Man* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1965).
2. Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London, New York: Meuthen, 1982).

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South Asia

DIEGO ABENANTE

Cultivation and Conversion in Multan

The recent scholarship on the process of Islamization in India has stimulated a debate on the connections between cultivation, sedentarization and conversion in South Asia.[1] Southwestern Punjab, and the Multan region in particular, has become the object of interesting discussions on the issue, given the crucial relationship it shows between ecology, social structure and religious identity.[2] After showing the relevant role of the Sufi *dargah*s (tombs) in the process of conversion, the following aims to emphasize that Islamization in Multan does not seem to be connected with cultivation and sedentarization, which developed only in the late 19th century under the British colonization schemes. The process seemed to take place in an environment which remained largely nomadic or semi-nomadic until the colonial period.

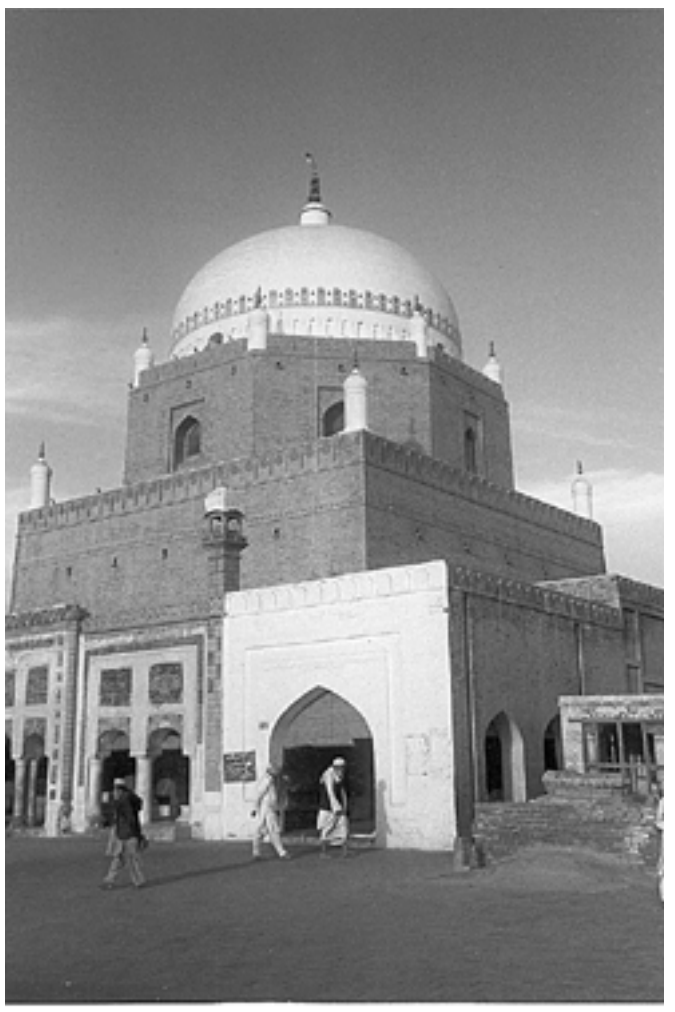

PHOTO: DIEGO ABENANTE, 1997

***Dargah* of Shaikh Bahawal Haq**

Islam and the territory

An urban settlement of considerable antiquity in the lower Indus valley, Multan was originally close to the confluence of the Chenab and Ravi rivers, a fact which could explain the early belief in the sanctity of the place by the Hindu population. The city has been for centuries a centre of Hindu pilgrimage, thanks to the presence of two famous *mandir*s, the Temple of the Sun and the Prhaladpuri temple. Multan was also the centre of a large commercial and agricultural system. During the reign of the Mughal emperor Awrangzeb (1658–1707), it was the capital of one of the main *subah*s (provinces), originally comprising three *sarkar*s (districts) and 88 *paraganah*s (administrative sub-divisions). The Mughal province covered the entire southern Punjab, part of eastern Baluchistan and northern Sind. Annexed by the Sikh state in 1818, Multan was the capital of a largely autonomous province, particularly under the *diwan*s Sawan Mal and Mul Raj. Both belonged to the *khatri* Hindu caste that has played an important political and economic role in southern Punjab. However, the growing rivalry between Multan and Lahore in the 19th century and the British interference in the Punjabi political scene provoked the revolt of the Multan garrison in 1848 and the assassination of the British officers Vans Agnew and Anderson, finally causing the second Sikh war and the annexation of the Punjab to the Raj.

The British district constituted approximately a triangle delimited by the districts of Muzaffargarh, Jhang, Montgomery, and the State of Bahawalpur. The total area of the district in 1881 was about 5,880 square miles. The basic element of the environment was the scarcity of rain, which made irrigation central to the agricultural life of the district. The territory of Multan was traditionally classified on the basis of the availability of water, in terms of riverain areas (*hithar*); the farther lands, which were partially cultivable through artificial irrigation (*utar*); and the central, arid lands, considered uncultivable (*bar*).

Most of the villages and *qasbah*s were situated near the river courses, while the *bar* lands were mainly inhabited by nomadic tribes that lived on pasturage and a limited trade. However, settled and nomadic peoples did not live in separate worlds. The *bar* lands were not only used by the nomadic tribes of the district but also by the people of the settled areas for the pasturage of their cattle. In Multan pasturage and breeding integrated the income of the settled areas. Moreover, given the scarcity of food, traditionally the cattle had to 'wander over wide tracts in search of food',[3] a fact which made a conflict possible between settled and nomadic people.

The relevance of the Sufi *dargah*s in southern Punjab lies exactly in the need for mediation between potentially conflicting interests. As Richard Eaton has noted, the 'potential conflict' between pastoralists and riverine people was mitigated by the fact that the pastoralists needed access to the settled world for water, trade, and for 'providing the rituals and belief structures that made up their religious system.'[4] As in many Muslim societies, in the Punjab the structures of devotional Islam served to integrate the settled and the nomadic-pastoral worlds. This conclusion seems confirmed by the connections between the *dargah*s and the rural population, represented by the traditions of conversion to Islam through the preaching of Muslim saints, often identified with Shaikh Farid-al Din Shakarganj of Pakpattan (d. 1265) or with the Multani saints: Shaikh Bahawal Haq Zakariya (d. 1262), Shaikh Musa Pak Shahid Gilani (d. 1592) and Shah Yussuf Gardezi (d. 1136).

These traditions emphasize the centrality of the myth of the saints for the religious identity of the rural population. This sense of identity was publicly emphasized at occasions such as the *sajjada nashin*s' (the custodians of the tombs') visits to the *murid*s (disciples) at their villages and during the *ᶜurs*, the celebrations in memory of a Muslim saint (literally his 'wedding' with God). The *ᶜurs* were occasions that served to represent the legitimating bases of the *sajjada nashin* and his family. Particularly famous was the *ᶜurs* at the tomb of Shaikh Bahawal Haq in the month of *safar*. In the words of the Commissioner of Multan in 1856, this shrine was 'a celebrated place of pilgrimage for the Scindians'.[5] The connections between the tribes and the holy families were even crystallized in the toponymy of the villages. Between 1885 and 1900, the then settlement officer Edward Maclagan observed that the Sufi saints were frequently recorded in local memory not only as founders but even as purchasers of villages, a fact that seemed to represent spiritual authority rather than actual sale.[6]

Sedentarization

This evidence supports the thesis proposed by Richard Eaton and David Gilmartin, that the *dargah*s in southern Punjab integrated, culturally and politically, the marginal social groups into the orbit of Islam.[7] However, while Eaton proposes a connection between conversion, cultivation and sedentarization of the Jat tribes of southern Punjab, this relationship is problematic in the case of Multan, where Islam proceeded in a context that remained largely nomadic or semi-nomadic until recent years.

Due to the scarcity of rains, apart from the riverain lands, cultivation in the Multan region necessitated artificial irrigation. The use of the 'Persian wheel', a peculiar system which was in use in the Punjab as early as the 16th century, and considered by Prof. Irfan Habib as an important factor of change in the economy of the Punjab, does not seem to have influenced in a significant way the socioeconomic structure of this territory. Even during the Mughal period, which is commonly regarded as the beginning of large-scale cultivation, in the Punjab as in India generally, cultivation did not make any real progress in the *bar* territory. In the early 18th century, after 200 years of Mughal rule, cultivation in Multan was still limited to the fertile *hithar* lands. A partial extension of the cultivation towards the *bar* highlands began many years later under the Nawabs of Multan and Bahawalpur in the mid-18th century. This fact was caused in large part by the greater political autonomy enjoyed by the Nawabs of Multan and Bahawalpur with the passage of the sovereignty from the Mughal to the Afghan kingdom.[8]

Nevertheless, despite the flourishing of irrigation works in the region in the mid-18th century, these projects did not radically change the ecological structure that, at the beginning of colonial rule, was still quite sharply divided into fertile strips of irrigated areas along the rivers, mostly inhabited by settled Jat tribes, and arid, basically uncultivable lands at the centre of the *doab*s. These lands were still in the late 19th century 'a grazing ground for sheep and a browsing ground for goats and camels' as a British observer recorded, and were populated by nomadic tribes – like the Langrial and the Hiraj – that still lived of pastoralism and of a limited trade with the settled world.

Conclusion

Our evidence would suggest that in the Multan area the link between Islamization and agriculture cannot be sustained. Local traditions and colonial sources describe an environment in which nomadic tribes were gradually drawn into the fold of Islam by the interaction with the Sufi tombs, but did not abandon the traditional lifestyle till very recently. In 1881 the Muslim population of the district was recorded in the official census as being slightly less than 79%; still, apart from the riverain, the sedentary lifestyle was not accepted by the population. While confirming the relevance of the *dargah*s and their custodians as mediators between socioeconomic worlds and as vehicles for Islamization, our research suggests that this process be placed in a context where sedentarization and cultivation tended to proceed with greater difficulty than previously suspected.

Of course the situation was to change radically with the beginning of the Canal Colonies' projects that interested the Multan district with the Sidhnai Colony (from 1886 to 1888), the Lower Bari Doab Colony (from 1914 to 1924), and with the Nili Bar Colony (started in 1926 and concluded in the 1940s). By promoting cultivation into the *bar* highlands and, more importantly, by creating colonies of cultivators from different areas of the Punjab, the social and ecological configuration of the district, and the traditional relationship between the pastoral tribes and the environment were ultimately transformed.

Notes

1. Richard Eaton, 'The Political and Religious Authority of the Shrine of Baba Farid in Pakpattan, Punjab', in Barbara Metcalf (ed.), *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Ibid., *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1203–1760* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and David Gilmartin, 'Shrines, Succession, and Sources of Moral Authority', in Metcalf (1984).
2. See, for example, Karin de Vries, 'Pirs and Pastoralists along the Agrarian Frontier of Multan, 1886–1947', *IIAS Newsletter* 24 (2001): 9.
3. James Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual* (1899; reprint Lahore: Government Printing Punjab, 1930), 76.
4. Eaton (1984), 342.
5. W. P. Andrew, *Indus and its Province. Their Political and Commercial Importance Considered in Connexion with Improved Means of Communication* (1858; reprint, Karachi: Indus Publications, 1986), 148.
6. Edward Maclagan, 'Notes on Village Names and History', (manuscript, District Record Room, Multan, 1900).
7. Eaton (1984); Gilmartin (1984).
8. For major details, see *Multan District Gazetteer, 1923–4* (Lahore: Government Printing Punjab), 187–202; Ashiq Muhammad Khan Durrani, *Multan under the Afghans, 1752-1818* (Multan: Bazm-e Saqafat, 1981), 165–168.

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East Africa

HUSSEIN AHMED

19th-Century Islamic Revival in Wallo, Ethiopia

The last three decades of the 20th century witnessed a revival of Islam in Ethiopia, the genesis of which can be traced back to the 19th century. Since the early 1970s Islamic revival has manifested itself in a growing awareness among Ethiopian Muslims of their collective identity, characterized by an intensified struggle to enhance the status of Islam at the national level, to establish a countrywide Islamic organization, and to participate actively in the public sphere. These aspirations were articulated through mass demonstrations, representations and publications, especially after the demise of the military regime that had ruled the country from 1974 to 1991.[1]

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▶ **Stieler's Hand-Atlas (Gotha, 1847);**

One of the sources of inspiration for the resurgence of Islam in Ethiopia today is 19th-century Wallo, where reformist and militant clerics initiated a process of Islamic renewal. They also resisted the policy of religious coercion pursued by the Ethiopian rulers of the second half of the 19th century. This revival was primarily associated with the increased activity of the mystical orders: first the Qadiriyya, soon followed by the Sammaniyya, Shadhiliyya and Tijaniyya. These orders contributed to the further expansion and institutionalization of Islam by giving impetus to the development of literacy and scholarship and by introducing the ritual of *dhikr*. Moreover, they were the source of inspiration for the founding of shrines as local centres of pilgrimage.

Four reformist and militant shaykhs

Four of the most prominent exponents of the revivalist, scholarly, reformist and militant tradition of Islam in Wallo who lived in the 18th and 19th centuries were: Shaykh(s) Muhammad Shafi Muhammad (1743–1806/7), Jaʿfar Bukko b. Siddiq (1793–1860), Bushra Ay Muhammad (d.1862) and Talha b. Jaʿfar(c.1853–1936).

According to a biography written by his son, *Nasihat al-Muridin* (Advice for Novices), Shaykh Muhammad Shafi was a native of Warra Babbo. After his initiation into the Qadiriyya he travelled to Garfa where he befriended a local hereditary ruler, who provided him with men and arms for the propagation of Islam in southeast Wallo. Muhammad Shafi strongly felt that the Islam practised by the local people was heavily influenced by non-Islamic ideas and was therefore in need of reform. He accused the *ʿulama'* of the time of complacency and avarice. His influence gradually spread to other parts of Wallo including Borana, where he established a more orthodox Islam among the Oromo- and Amharic-speaking populations. Later he moved to Albukko, where he set up his centre at Jama Negus which, after his death, became one of the biggest shrines in Wallo.

According to local traditions, Shaykh Muhammad Shafi divided his time between teaching, organizing a jihad (hence his epithet, *mujahid*), and prayer and meditation. This was a reflection of his initiative to develop a concept of a vigorous Islam in perpetual renewal and expansion through a harmonious combination of mystical exercise, education and physical coercion. He composed several religious treatises which still remain unpublished.

The son of the well-known mystic Siddiq Bukko (d.1800/01), Shaykh Jaʿfar was noted for his outspokenness and uncompromising position on questions related to faith and practice. According to a hagiographical account authored by his grandson under the title, *Misk al-Adhfar fi Manaqib Sayf al-Haqq al-Shaykh Jaʿfar* (The Pungent Musk on the Virtues of Sayf al-Haqq Shaykh Jaʿfar), Shaykh Jaʿfar attempted to abolish certain rituals associated with *chat* (Arabic: *qat*). He strongly condemned the belief that traditional leaders of ritual ceremonies had the power of intercession with God and criticized members of the religious establishment, including the judges and those who recited the Qur'an, for their indifference to – or even violation of – Islamic law, especially their uncanonical appropriation of the *zakat* and contributions collected during funeral prayers, which were supposed to be distributed among the poor. Shaykh Jaʿfar also waged a perpetual struggle against the local chiefs and constantly exhorted them to rule according to the *sharīʿa*.

The third Muslim reformer was al-Hajj Bushra Ay Muhammad, who was born in Ifat. He travelled to the Sudan where he was initiated into the Sammani order by Shaykh Ahmad al-Tayyib b. al-Bashir (1824) before he moved on to Mecca for the pilgrimage. There he came into contact with some of the *ʿulama'*, including Shaykh Muhammad ʿUthman al-Mirghani (1793–1853). After his return, he established his teaching centre at Gata (southeast of Kombolcha). He was renowned for his piety, sanctity and strict observance of the *sharīʿa*, as well as for his relentless struggle against all forms of *bidʿa* (innovations). He regarded the neglect of the daily prayers as a relapse into infidelity and condemned the *zar* (spirit possession) cult, the ritual sacrifices offered under big trees, and the beating of drums. He authored a number of treatises, only one of which, *Minhat al-Ilahiyya wa'l-Faydat al-Rabbaniyya* (The Divine Gift and Divine Emanation), has been published.

The brief accounts and traditions about the lives and careers of the reforming and militant mystics and scholars of Wallo offer an insight into the dynamism of regional Islam, the interaction between indigenous Islam and new trends in Islamic thought emanating from the wider Muslim world, and the responses of the *ʿulama'* to those trends. The accounts also reflect the vitality of Islamic scholarship and the local limitations on the implementation of the clerics' aspirations – of which they were keenly aware. Although the intellectual roots of the reformist tradition originated outside Wallo, the credit for introducing the new ideas and adapting them to local conditions belonged to the indigenous scholars who displayed exceptional qualities of leadership, organization and piety. The Muslim uprisings in Wallo in the 1880s were partly inspired by them. Another legacy is the vital role that the mystical orders still play in social and religious life as manifested in the veneration of saints and annual visits to their shrines.

Resistance to the imposition of Christianity

The policy of forced conversion to Christianity proclaimed by Emperor Yohannes IV (r.1872–1889) and implemented by his vassals was a serious, albeit temporary, setback. Its injustice and the ruthlessness with which it was carried out led to stiff resistance organized by militant *ʿulama'*. Three forms of response of the Wallo Muslims to the imperial decree can be identified. Firstly, at the level of both the ordinary people and some of the *ʿulama'*, there was an outward acceptance of Christianity which led to the phenomenon of 'Christians by day and Muslims by night': appearing to be practising Christians while remaining loyal to Islam. This was based on the Islamic concept of *taqiya* (dissimulation). Secondly, the enforcement of the edict by violent means caused an exodus of a large number of people to the Sudan and the Hijaz. Thirdly, there were organized and armed rebellions led by Muslim religious leaders. The first Muslim militant cleric who led an armed opposition against the policy of forced conversion of the Wallo Muslims imposed by Yohannes was Shaykh ʿAli Adam, originally from Jerru in northern Shawa. His militancy was derived from two sources: he was a disciple of Shaykh Muhammad Shafi and his father was renowned for his efforts to spread Islam in Reqqe. Shaykh ʿAli fought a contingent of Yohannes's army at Wahelo (northwest of Lake Hayq), where he and his overzealous followers lost their lives.

In 1884 Shaykh Talha, an innovative teacher and a prolific writer of manuals in Amharic for the teaching of Islam, proclaimed a major revolt against the harshness with which the policy of forced conversion was carried out and against the official prohibition of Islamic worship. His followers included Muslims of Qallu and Reqqe. During the revolt, churches which the local Muslims had been forced to build were demolished and priests who had been sent to instruct the converts expelled. Talha's and other revolts did not constitute a serious military challenge to the Christian rulers of Ethiopia, but they were a matter of concern. According to a local tradition, Ras Mika'el (formerly Muhammad ʿAli) once bragged to Yohannes in Warra Ilu that Talha was only an obscure cleric who, under the influence of a heavy dosage of *chat*, had incited the local Muslims to commit acts of bravado. Shortly after this, news arrived that Talha's men had successfully beaten off Mika'el's contingent. This earned Mika'el a sharp reprimand from Yohannes.

The Wallo Muslim resistance showed that indigenous Islam, given the necessary stimulus, was capable of not only inspiring the Muslim community to organize and mobilize its manpower and material resources for launching an armed opposition against a direct threat to its very existence, but was also capable of sustaining such opposition over a long period of time. That Islam played a crucial role as a unifying factor cutting across ethnic, regional and political loyalties is evident from the fact that the resistance led by Shaykh Talha included the Muslims of Qallu, Reqqe and southeast Tegray, as well as the disaffected members of the Wallo hereditary aristocracy. However, they acted within the context of Ethiopian polity. The mere fact that they shared a common faith with both the Egyptians and the Mahdists did not make them any less sensitive than the Ethiopian Christians to the hidden designs that these external powers had on Ethiopian sovereignty. They were reluctant to seek external help and to ally themselves with foreign elements even at a time when they were unjustly provoked and persecuted by the state and the church for no offence other than following a different religion. It is therefore difficult to accept such statements as: 'Thus the achievement of his [Yohannes's] aims, […] did not *alienate* portions of the population, whether regional or *religious* […].'[2]

Notes

1. See Hussein Ahmed, 'Islamic Literature and Religious Revival in Ethiopia (1991–1994)', *Islam et Sociétés au sud du Sahara*, 12 (1998): 89–108; and 'Islam and Islamic Discourse in Ethiopia (1973–1993)', in Harold G. Marcus (ed.), *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies*, vol. I (1994), 775–801.
2. Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia: A Political Biography* (Oxford, 1975), 251 (emphasis added).

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Middle East
CYRUS SCHAYEGH

Science and the Iranian Middle Class

Roughly a decade after the Constitutional Revolution of 1905/06, many Iranians were of the opinion that constitutionalism had failed to build a sound social and political order in their country, although they understood this situation in different ways in that period of accelerating processes of social diversification. One of several social groups was the nascent modern middle class, emerging since the late 1910s,[1] which reacted to Iran's post-constitutional troubles with a turn of attention away from political revolution to sociocultural reform as the panacea for the creation of a modern individual, society, and state.

The turn of middle-class attention was relative because questions of political organization, while placed on the back-burner, did not quite disappear; and because concern for sociocultural reforms became more urgent than hitherto, but definitely had strong historical roots reaching back into the later 19th century. It was nevertheless a substantial turn as the period from the late 1910s was distinct from the prior period on the grounds of changed contexts – the experiences of the constitutional period, World War I, growing urbanization – as well as of the sheer dimension of proposed sociocultural reforms.

'Insightful and knowledgeable individuals from our midst have repeatedly written books […] with the intention to find a treatment for the ailments of their country. When we sum up these opinions […], we see that in general, there are no more than two methods, one being science [*ʿilm*], the other morality [*akhlaq*].'[2] With these words, the famous Iranian modernist author, M. A. Jamalzadeh, pointed out the core of modernist[3] reformism. For the modern middle class, *ʿilm* meant universal modern science. It was opposed to the pre-modern modes of knowledge of those social groups held responsible for Iran's retardation, and was seen as the fundament of Iran's sociocultural modernization. Judging from modern sciences' overall importance, it is hardly surprising that their formal acquisition (through higher education and work in modern professions) and application (in everyday life and discursive self-understanding) came to constitute the two pillars on which the Iranian modern middle class was founded. The former element became the base for the modern middle-class men's superior social status, while the latter informed a system of ideal cultural behaviour and self-definition by which men as well as women of this class sought to differentiate themselves from the others. *Akhlaq* retained some of its pre-modern connotations, but also assumed a new function. Building upon debates current since the later 19th century, the modern middle class encoded *akhlaq* as a token of Iranian cultural authenticity, most of the principles and objectives of which ultimately obeyed the principles of modern science and were geared to fulfil the rational requirements of modern society. In this modern usage, it served the dual purpose of demarcating the modernists from the colonial West, and providing them with a cultural system that challenged the Shiite *ʿulama*.

Modern science in class formation

The principal pre-modern modes of knowledge, in explicit opposition to which the modern middle class introduced modern science into Iran, ranged from the so-called 'external' knowledge of nature provided by classical literature, to (Aristotelian) non-experimental sciences, to religious metaphysics and superstition. The social agents of these outdated modes of knowledge, who constituted the main targets of the modernists' critique, encompassed those persons and groups most closely associated with central political power, 'the masses', and the Shiite *ʿulama*. For example, the latter were often accused of over-emphasizing metaphysical disciplines and thereby encouraging an otherworldliness, which had 'hampered national progress […] for centuries'.[4] Such critiques, treating traditional religious knowledge as superfluous, vain, or useless, were paralleled by attempts launched in the later 19th century to limit the clergy's fields of action in public life and to 'laicize the concept of knowledge'.[5] A second line of attack against the clergy, commencing in the late 19th century, accused them of advocating – often for personal interest – superstitions and pure ignorance which incapacitated 'the masses' to think and act rationally. With regard to modern science itself, central elements distinguishing it from pre-modern modes of knowledge were a correct experimental methodology, logical thinking, and exactitude. For instance, the German-educated chemist Taqi Arani, killed in 1940 in Reza Shah's prison after being condemned in the famous 1938 process against the communist 'Fifty-three', stated that '[w]ithout logical and mathematical thinking, man cannot undertake investigations in any science, not even regarding the most simple problems. […] In Iran, there is a group of people who are staunchly opposed to mathematics, i.e. who do not think logically. These anti-mathematicians of the 20th century are really a strange curiosity.'[6] Modern science's most distinctive trait, however, resided in its great usefulness, its beneficial reformist impact on social and individual life.

This point was mentioned time and again, in a view which directly linked science with its (technological) applications. 'It is with regard to science, and especially to hard sciences which are of utmost importance in today's life and civilization, that we Iranians are lagging three to four hundred years, if not even more, behind the Europeans.'[7]

Besides the latter factors, it was the insistence on the incorrectness of pre-modern types of knowledge and their association with deficient sociomoral character (corruption of morality, uselessness, self-interest, ignorance) that formed the central condition for the construction of modern science and its attributes (usefulness, rationality, altruism, correct logic) as their absolute and fixed opposite. This ideal juxtaposition became relevant through its insertion into the modern middle class's reading of Iran's social forces. The ignorant masses, a selfish clergy, and a *classe politique* as avaricious as out of touch with a rapidly changing modern world: all main social groups held responsible for Iran's chaotic 'real-constitutionalism' and its stalled sociocultural reforms were criticized for their faulty modes of knowledge and immorality. In other words, modern science was embraced as superior to pre-modern knowledge not simply because it was seen as detached objective truth, but also because it helped the modern middle class to secure concrete social advantages. The belief in modern science's absolute distinction and superiority was vital, first of all because it buttressed the modernists' challenge of the social status and the cultural power of dominant social formations like the *ʿulama*. However, it had other social and material-financial consequences. For instance, it helped to justify the entrance of modern middle-class men into professional areas such as medicine, law, and education, which were already occupied by strong contenders. Within that class itself, it gave men grounds for their superior position vis-à-vis women, and their interest in gendered contests over intellectual and material resources and social positions could be covered in the neutral terms of modern vs. traditional or advanced modern knowledge vs. limited modern knowledge. All in all, modern science and access to it constituted the cultural and social fundament of modern middle class formation because the discourse of science's neutral objectivity was underpinned by that class's sociocultural and financial-material interests.

If the relational nature of the modern middle class's genesis is mirrored by its deployment of modern science in interaction with other social groups, the historical contingency of its formation is illustrated by the way in which it used modern science – and in this instance also *akhlaq* – in view of and in reaction to Iran's complex cultural, economic, social, and political contexts. The lines above have already alluded to the modern middle class's use of *akhlaq* as a marker of cultural authenticity. Iran's entrance into the modern period of mass politics constituted another context: the Constitutional Revolution had, on a formal-legal level, resulted in the enfranchisement of growing segments of men, and on a practical-political level triggered modes and dimensions of political participation hitherto quite unknown. Although the nascent modern middle class was theoretically in favour of male enfranchisement, it was worried that under these new circumstances, 'the masses' ignorance' would help to throw Iran into yet greater havoc, especially as it was being exploited by 'selfish' traditional middle and upper classes, such as the Shiite clergy. The modern age's pressure on nations to boost their economy by developing a large work force was also a challenge since it was linked to the downsides of a principal social problem of the period: the growth of urban centres, such as Tehran, which was seen not only as an opportunity, but also as a potentially degenerative force menacing all urban groups. It was precisely modern sciences' practical applicability to such complex and yet concrete problems of contemporary Iran which caused the modern middle class to embrace them as the key to the country's modernization and to place them at the core of its own social and cultural formation.

Modernity: local and global dimensions

If the formation of the Iranian modern middle class and its deployment of modern sciences occurred in clearly contingent ways betraying its (semi-)colonial position, it also became part of an increasingly homogenized global modernity. While the modernists maintained their capacity to adopt Western models to Iranian contexts and social relations, the country's ultimately inferior position vis-à-vis 'the West' meant that that main elements and underlying goals of modernist reformism structurally resembled originally Western models. For example, Iranian modernists deployed modern sciences not only to engineer macro-social changes, but also to shape informed, self-disciplined individuals through science-based 'technologies of the Self'. Physiological-medical knowledge of oneself was considered vital for individual health; teachers and parents were called to follow certain fundamental psychological laws in the education of their pupils or children; and numerous books and articles sought to teach self-control. Although early 20th-century modernist Iranians did not simply copy the ways in which modern Europeans wanted to shape themselves, certain basic traits of these (bourgeois) 'technologies of the Self' were necessarily reflected in Iranian modernist visions – and this was the case because Iran had become part of a global modern world in which the basic models for, indeed the idea of, 'society' and 'individual' were introduced by Western countries.

Notes

1. Its formation drew on growing state-run higher modern education and on the needs of an expanding state bureaucracy. See E. Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 145.
2. Editorial staff of *Farangestan,* 'Pas az yek sal' (After one year), *Farangestan* 1, no. 11–12 (1925): 507f.
3. In this text, I use the often less awkward term 'modernists' synonymously with 'modern middle class'.
4. M. Nakhosteen, 'The Development of Persian Education and Learning' (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1933), 400.
5. See M. Bayat, *Iran's First Revolution. Shiʿism and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 35.
6. T. Arani, 'Taraqi-ye sari'-e ʿilm va honar az qarn-e nuzdahom be-ba'd' (The rapid progress of sciences and crafts since the 19th century), *ʿIlm va honar* 1:1 (1927/28): 16.
7. Mohammad ʿAli Jamalzadeh, 'Thervat-e melli' (The national wealth), *ʿIlm va honar* 1, no. 2 (1927/28): 1.

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Eastern Europe

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Islamic Institutions and Education in Imperial Russia

The study of Islamic culture in Russia, and especially in imperial Russia, is a newly emerging field in the area of Islamic studies, yet one which promises considerable dividends for illuminating both the field of Inner Asian Islam and for Islamic studies as a whole. When speaking of Islam in Russia, we have in mind a specific region of imperial Russia, namely the Volga-Ural region and western Siberia, where substantial sedentary and nomadic Turkic Muslim communities came under Russian rule at a relatively early stage, in the middle of the 16th century. In the context of Russian colonial expansion in the 19th century we can consider this region 'metropolitan Russia'.

The development of Islam, specifically Islamic intellectual and institutional life, in this region differed in several important ways from the other Muslim regions of the Russian empire, such as Central Asia, Azerbaijan, and the North Caucasus. The Volga-Ural region and Siberia were conquered by Russia in the 16th century and were populated by large settlements of Russian colonists and indigenous Finno-Ugric and Turkic non-Muslims. By the second half of the 18th century Muslims in the Volga-Ural region and Siberia had already experienced two hundred years of Russian rule, and many Muslims figured prominently among the elite of Russia's merchants and gentry. At the same time, only a small proportion of Muslim peasants were serfs, and the vast majority were either state peasants or tribute-paying tribesmen, which placed them in a more privileged position than the vast majority of Russia's non-Muslim peasantry. By the second half of the 18th century, the Volga-Ural region's Muslim communities were firmly integrated into the Russian state's systems of estates and privileges, and overall can be said to have held a generally favourable position in comparison with the empire's Christian majority. Except for localized and largely unsuccessful Christianization campaigns before the second half of the 18th century, Muslim communities in Russia were allowed to practice their faith freely, and this was especially true along the steppe frontier, where Russian officials depended upon Muslim translators, Cossacks and agents to maintain imperial authority over their nomadic co-religionists. In fact, one of the defining features of Islam in Russia from 1552 until 1917 is that the administration of Islam was firmly in the hands of the civil and military authorities, and not in the hands of the Orthodox Church.

Another defining feature of Islam in Russia proper, which separated it intellectually and institutionally from other Muslim communities in the Russian empire, was the existence of state-sponsored and funded imperial-level organizations staffed almost entirely by Muslims. These organizations were founded in the 1780s, during the reign of Empress Catherine the Great, and remained in place up to 1917, into the Soviet era, and to a degree their institutional successors survive in the Russian Federation. The most important and consequential of these organizations was the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly, founded in 1788 and headquartered in the city of Ufa. This organization administered nearly all of the Muslim communities in a vast area, encompassing the Volga-Ural region, southwestern Siberia, and at varying times, the northern Kazakh steppe. In all, by the beginning of the 20th century the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly administered approximately seven million Muslims.

While firmly integrated into the Russian state in political and economic terms, culturally the Volga-Ural Muslims in imperial Russia were for the most part isolated, or rather insulated, from Russian cultural influence. In fact, the establishment of imperial-level Islamic institutions unleashed a highly dynamic Islamic intellectual revival at the grassroots level which paralleled and was dependent upon Russia's general political and economic expansion. To be sure, this very much self-aware revival was the foundation for the emergence of Pan-Turkist, Pan-Islamist and local nationalist movements in Russia after 1905, but the Islamic revival is worthy of study in its own right as an example of the symbiotic relationship between Russian political and economic power on the one hand, and its Muslim communities on the other.

The Islamic revival in Imperial Russia

The Islamic revival that took place in imperial Russia at this time involved the establishment of a massive network of local institutions, including mosques, madrasas, *maktab*s, and Sufi lodges. Before the accession of Catherine II, these institutions existed in Russia but were very poorly developed. Equally important was the revival of Muslim intellectual life. Thousands of *maktab*s, where village children received Islamic primary education, and a network of dozens of madrasas, regional centres of higher education where imams and other Islamic scholars received training in all of the major Islamic sciences, were the institutional engine of the revival. Already by the end of the 18th century the madrasa network was well established, especially in the cities of Orenburg and Kazan, which to a large degree were the centres of Russia's Islamic revival. This network extended throughout the Islamic world, where many Volga-Ural scholars study. The most prominent destinations were Central Asia, especially Bukhara, Daghestan, and Egypt. Intellectual aspects of Russia's Islamic revival have been recently discussed in a pioneering study by the German scholar Michael Kemper, entitled *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien: der islamische Diskurs unter russicher Herrschaft, 1789-1889* (Berlin: Schwarz, 1998). In this study the term 'Islamic Discourse' has a restricted meaning. It implies the debates and discussions of social, political and religious issues expressed through traditional Islamic literary genres and institutions, such as Sufism and Sufi treatises, theology, law, and historiography.

At the foundation of Islamic revival in the Volga-Ural region and Siberia were, however, local Islamic institutions, which were overwhelmingly rural. These consisted of mosques, madrasas and *maktab*s, and were staffed by imams, *mudarris*es, and *mu'adhdhin*s. To these we can also add local Sufi networks, which were closely integrated into this institutional structure. A singular feature of these institutions, which is made obvious in the considerable institutionally focused historiography produced within these communities, is that the growth and the very existence of Islamic institutions was predicated on the institutional framework of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly as well as upon the bureaucratic mechanisms administered by the provincial civil authorities. Such a framework not only formalized the status of these communities as Muslims vis-à-vis the empire's non-Muslim majority, but it also served to distinguish Volga-Ural, Siberian Muslims, and to a limited degree Kazakh Muslims from the empire's newly incorporated Muslims outside of Russia proper. Another important feature characterizing these institutions was that they evolved in the context of rapid empire-wide economic expansion. Specifically, the number of mosques grew at an ever increasing pace, well beyond the natural increase of the Muslim population. Within his own lifetime, an individual could witness the number of mosques, *maktab*s, and scholars multiply several times over in his own community. Momentum carried this growth through the 1917 Revolution and ensuing civil war. New mosques were being built and new Islamic scholars were being trained right up to 1929, when the Soviet authorities began closing mosques and arresting Islamic scholars in earnest.

A detailed examination of Russia's rural Muslim institutions indicates that the flourishing of institutional life was symptomatic of a very dynamic and active cultural life in rural areas. As we have noted, Michael Kemper has examined the major intellectual currents, or Islamic discourse, challenging ill-informed yet commonly encountered stereotypes depicting pre-modern Islamic intellectual life as decadent, derivative and benighted. However, these modernist-inspired depictions of Islamic life in imperial Russia, which seek to emphasize the 'modernization' and 'national' aspirations of Russia's Muslims, have tended to say very little about rural institutions as such, instead assuming that their already doubtful conclusions could simply be applied to rural areas, which they assumed without elaboration were obviously backward. Such nationalist-inspired studies have assumed that by the end of the 19th century traditional Muslim institutions were in serious crisis, unable to meet the needs of a population entering the modern (that is, European) world. These historians argue that *jadid*ist education, that is, European-style education adapted to a Muslim context, simply replaced the decaying and useless traditional modes of education in these communities. Typically these modernist depictions of 'traditional' education are not based on any empirical evidence; the superiority of modernism and European education is simply assumed and stated.

Islamic education in Novouzensk district

Research undertaken on the Islamic institutions of a single district, specifically Novouzensk district in Samara province, demonstrates that dynamic institutions, especially educational institutions, existed at the rural level essentially up to the 1917 Revolution. At the beginning of the 20th century in this district, 'traditional' educational institutions were in no way 'in crisis', but were actually expanding. Both parents and *shagird*s were closely involved in monitoring the curriculum and effective *mudarris*es were actively sought. Furthermore, the system of patronage of institutions and financial support by the community as whole involved close interaction and cooperation between the community and instructors. Local instructors and *ʿalim*s were closely integrated into the regional Islamic network and into larger networks as well.

As a result, the curriculum both in madrasas and *maktab*s was fairly uniform throughout the Volga-Ural region and enabled literate villagers to express themselves in an Islamic discourse that linked them both regionally and to the Islamic world as a whole. Thus, isolation from Russian education, which modernists cite as a failure of the traditional curriculum, was actually seen by these Muslims as desirable, not only because it distinguished them from non-Muslims, but also because it helped link them to the Islamic world. In fact, when modernist (*jadid*) schools opened in Novouzensk district during the first decade of the 20th century, they were forced to close, not out of opposition but out of apathy on the part of the villagers. Clearly they deemed modernist education to be of little value.

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Western Europe

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Self-Positioning and Islamic Instruction in Germany

Muslim institutions in Europe harbour growing expert knowledge. One example of this development comprises the syllabi for religious instruction of Muslim children at public schools that have been developed in different European contexts. Among other things, these instruction programmes aim at positioning their clientele vis-à-vis the religious sources, in a particular community and society. The premises on which these positionings are based, as well as their religious-theological justification and legitimation, form the focus of a thesis project that incorporates syllabus outlines and instruction materials from Germany, Austria and the Netherlands.

In Germany, two proposals for the transmission of Islamic knowledge are currently under discussion: the plan for Islamic instruction developed by the umbrella organization Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland (ZMD), and the programme developed by the pedagogical expert organization Institut für Internationale Pädagogik und Didaktik (IPD), both in Cologne. The latter proposal forms the first practical attempt by Muslims to provide Islamic religious instruction at two elementary schools in Berlin. In the following summary of preliminary results, it is important to remember that Germany is the only country within the sample without 'practical experience'. Compared with the syllabus drafts – as Muslim organizations name their first attempts in the area of syllabus development – the practical experience with religious instruction in Austria and the Netherlands is likely to have impacted the further development and reworking of programmes in those two countries.

Divergent concepts

The key concepts presented in the two German proposals for instruction are interpreted in quite different ways. For example, the planning committee[1] at the IPD considers the concept of *geschöpflichkeit* or 'created-ness' to be the common denominator of all humankind, and as such the starting point for its anthropology and worldview. The Zentralrat, on the other hand, does acknowledge this concept but in its own proposal it has made the *umma* of Muslims – rather than the concept of created-ness – the centre of attention. These two concepts are vital to the respective attempts at self-positioning: the IPD places the Muslim children at the centre of society and of humankind in general, whereas the Zentralrat is concerned with ensuring a protective space for the *umma* as a minority under threat. Orienting the children towards a defensively defined *umma*, which functions as a haven or shelter, is thus the focus of the latter's education programme.[2]

Different from the approach of the IPD, the notion of God remains abstract in the Zentralrat's proposal to the extent that there is a deliberate avoidance of God as a thematic unit. This absence of theologizing is characteristic of the religious attitude of its syllabus planners: God is a self-evident cause of belief and at the same time remains distant. In sharp contrast to this, the instruction programme of the IPD mirrors the conviction that a relationship with God has to grow in every single child in a very special way, and that a personal relationship with the Creator is a basic condition for leading an Islamic life.

The Zentralrat is oriented ultimately toward an ideal *umma*, and thus its proposal is open only at its margins to the non-Muslim world: regardless of where they live, Muslims remain within this *umma*, dealing primarily with and referring to each other. The Zentralrat's planners affirm that religious instruction should seek to combat the disorientation experienced as crisis by the individual in a fragmented lifeworld, by providing a *single* orientation by means of a *single* religious perspective. This lifeworld is not understood in terms of individual learning. Instead, the salvaging perspective is presented inside and through the community. The IPD, on the other hand, encourages children to locate themselves within the context of Islam understood as a universal culture, as a natural perspective on the world. It encourages them to feel connected with others in this context, to positively focus on commonalities, and thus to see themselves as part of a plural society rather than as a minority suffering from discrimination.

Religious sources

Analysis of the German Islamic syllabi reveals that it is the attitude toward the sources – the particular perspective on the nature of the texts – that forms the basis for the planning committees' relationship to the world. This basic attitude toward the religious sources determines which elements the instruction plans consider to be crucial and non-negotiable for Islam and for being Muslim.[3]

Both programmes place different emphasis on the religious sources. In the conception of the IPD, the entire world is accessed through the Qur'anic text, and the text in turn is illuminated by the concrete lifeworld. As a result of the vital relation between text and life, the meaning of the source, its reach and interpretation dominates the IPD's syllabus. The meanings of the Qur'an develop a force and dynamics that enable a continuous expansion of the definition of Islam as well as an incorporation of plural, contemporary ways of and perspectives on life into the understanding of Islam. The Zentralrat, on the other hand, does not posit an integrated relationship between text and world, since it presents religion predominantly as ritual and ethics, which are extracted from the sources and become relatively independent from them. This idea of religious instruction remains focused on the teaching of precepts and prohibitions. However, the latter are limited to the ritual area defined as religious – a strategy to render Muslims compatible with different societies and establish themselves among other religious communities in Europe. In this regard, the syllabus of the Zentralrat has to be termed secular, because it assumes a separation between religion and other subsystems. By presenting religion as a canon of fixed rules and bodies of knowledge, the Zentralrat attempts to protect religion as a distinct subsystem and to situate it as a stable element in the lives of children.

The focus on the individual leads planners of the IPD to emphasize individual answers and paths in the sense of *turuq* (paths), all of which lead to God – thereby separating the concept of *tariqa* from its mystical background. In contrast, the Zentralrat is rather oriented toward the public structure of religion.[4] Whereas *tariqa* refers to the individual path toward certainty and perfection, *shari*ᶜ*a* means the God-given – publicly visible – way of life of the entire community. But the Zentralrat incorporates only that part of the *shari*ᶜ*a* that regulates the relationship to God and reduces the *mu*ᶜ*amalat* from a legal code managing the totality of social life to moral comportment. According to Halstead, it can be said that the Islamic education envisaged by the Zentralrat respects individual freedom regarding the development of spiritual faculties or feelings and does not interfere with it, without however extending this freedom to the public face of religion and the visible commitment to the shared path of life.[5] In turn, the emphasis on the primacy of the individual in the IPD's logic by no means indicates a restriction of religion to one system among others. Instead, religion claims validity for the entire, non-secularized lifeworld of the individual. This is what the syllabus planners call a 'global' perspective.

Neglecting the Islamic tradition

Both instruction plans under discussion tend toward an autonomous approach with regard to the interpretation of Qur'anic texts, and thus toward a neglect of tradition – understood as accumulated knowledge which is the result of centuries of research in various Islamic sciences. Both organizations do not cling to Islamic tradition, but rather circumvent it or draw upon single elements that they deem befitting. As a result, their appropriation of tradition is highly selective, unsystematic and remains unarticulated. Neither the Zentralrat nor the IPD draws explicitly on classical exegesis. This neglect probably has to do with a lack of available experts, and thus may be of a temporary nature. But it is above all due to the modernist tendency to approach the sources independently and not allow tradition to get in the way of addressing contemporary issues. It is not the quoting of authorities and variants of interpretation, their selection and presentation that prove the originality of an author. In the case of the instruction plans under discussion, it is rather the selection and presentation of the sources themselves, that is the Qur'an and *hadith*, which clarify the respective religious-theological approaches. Both syllabi do not problematize the lack of explicit engagement with the Islamic tradition that characterizes them. Instead, direct access to the sources is implicitly offered as a guarantee for a modernist understanding of religion, which the IPD presents as one method among others; whereas the Zentralrat claims it to represent Islam as such. The latter assumes the irrelevance of tradition to such an extent that it does not even see the need to confront it in order to justify its own theological point of view.

Apart from the differences described above regarding the religious-theological positioning in the context of Islamic religious instruction, on the level of phenomenology the plans offer familiar, shared or at least similar definitions of Islam as based on the *tawhid*, the 'five pillars', the six articles of faith and other known elements. It seems obvious that these agreed-upon elements of Islam build a common and formal denominator in inter-Muslim relations. It remains to be seen how the positionings developed in the Netherlands and in Austria differ from those that have emerged in Germany.

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Learning how to pray with all the senses! Scene from the training sample, 2001.

Notes

1. Both plans have been developed exclusively by women. One can thus speak of female expertise in this context.
2. See Stefano Allievi, *Les convertis à l'islam: les nouveaux musulmans d'Europe* (Paris:L'Harmattan, 1998), 293.
3. See Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid, *Islam und Politik. Kritik des religiösen Diskurses* (Frankfurt/M: dipa-Verlag, 1996), 29.
4. On the differentiation between public and private dimensions of the Islamic philosophy of education, see J. Mark Halstead, 'Towards a Unified View of Islamic Education', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 6, no. 1 (1995): 38.
5. Ibid.: 39.

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Africa

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Islamic Education in South Africa

Muslims make up about 2% of the 42 million people in South Africa. They were classified under the Apartheid as 'Malays' and 'Indians' and settled in such major cities as Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg and Pretoria. As the longest surviving religious minority in a predominantly Christian and secular country, the Muslims of South Africa have preserved their cultural and religious identity. This is due, in no small measure, to their Islamic educational institutions.

In 1658 the first Muslims arrived in the Cape. They were the Mardykers from Amboya (in the Indonesian archipelago) and part of the involuntary migration of slaves and political prisoners that lasted until 1834. The Mardykers were the Malay servants of Dutch officials who were returning to the Netherlands from the East but preferred to remain in the Cape. The Dutch East Indian Company, recognizing the Dutch Reformed Church as the only official religious institution, prohibited Muslims from the public practice of Islam. The first most notable exile from Indonesia was the princely Sufi, Shaykh Yusuf (d. 1699) from Maccasar, who was exiled to the Cape in 1694 for his struggle for Bantam independence from the Dutch. As a shaykh of mainly the Khalwatiyyah Sufi order, he was an inspiration to the small Muslim community.

Many slaves came later from the Bengal coast, but large numbers of political exiles came from the Indonesian islands. In all, about 72% of the Muslims came from Asia, particularly India. The first group of Indian Muslims arrived in South Africa from Gujarat and Bombay as indentured labourers from 1860. Indian Muslims are concentrated in Kwazulu Natal, Gauteng and the adjacent areas. Although they respected Arabic as a sacred language, they regarded Urdu as a religious language to be used in sermons and to be taught in madrasas.

The first figure to be associated with Islamic education is an exile from Indonesia, Abdullah Kadi Abdus Salaam (d. 1807), known as Tuan Guru. He became a prisoner on Robben Island until 1793, and after the new ordinance of religious freedom in 1804, he founded the first mosque and madrasa in Dorp Street, Cape Town. He performed the first Friday congregational prayer and paved the pattern for the home- and mosque-based classes in Qur'anic recitation, Islamic beliefs and Islamic law. By 1832 there were about 12 mosque-based schools in Cape Town. These schools attracted a large number of slave and free black children as the colonialists denied them of education.

The foundation of the higher Islamic learning in South Africa dates back to the mid-19th century. In 1860 Shaykh Abu Bakr Effendi (d. 1880), a Turkish scholar who had come to the Cape at the request of the British colonizers, established a school of Higher Islamic Theology. This was different from the mosque-based schools, and judging from Effendi's Arabic-Afrikaans work, *Bayan al-Din* (The Elucidation of Religion), the school provided a more in-depth knowledge of Islam. It was the precursor to the Islamic seminaries and community colleges that followed much later.

Madrasas and schools

The madrasa, whether home-based or mosque-based, remains up till today, an important vehicle for the transmission of a rudimentary Islamic education in South Africa. It is an extension of the home. At home parents set the example of religious practices and children imitate their example; at the madrasa the children learn more about these religious values and practices. But most importantly, they learn to read the Qur'an. However, since the 1960s Muslim parents have become more earnest in having their children pursue a higher secular education, and with the increased pressures of schoolwork, many of these children stop attending the madrasa after primary school.

The development of the madrasa must be understood in the context of the political status of Muslims as 'non-white' and ipso facto part of the second-class citizenry in the land of their birth. This sets them apart from their compatriots who adhered to the dominant Christian culture. Thus Muslim children had to be socialized according to a different set of values; independently of mainstream culture and directed at the acquisition of Islamic knowledge, Qur'anic recitation, and the personal observance of Islamic worship.

Since the Christian mission schools and state secular schools did not accommodate the religious sensibilities of Muslim children, Dr Abdullah Abdurrahman (d. 1940) a medical doctor and popular politician, found an alternative form of education and thus established Rahmaniyah, the first state-aided Muslim mission (primary) school in Aspeling Street, Cape Town. The objective was to provide children with a modern education, but not to neglect the elementary teachings of Islam. By 1957 there were 15 such schools registered with the State Education Department. Recently, one such school, the Habibia primary school, offered Arabic as an examinable subject.

Under Apartheid the schools were segregated, and most Muslim children either went to schools under the Indian Affairs Department (mainly in Gauteng and Kwazulu Natal) or the Coloured Affairs Department (mainly in the Cape). The schools were governed by the Christian National Education Policy, which did not provide for the needs of minority religions. Muslims parents felt that the religious identity of their children was being undermined, and so they demanded that Arabic be offered in the state schools. Arabic was introduced for the first time in 1975 in the Kwazulu Natal and Gauteng regions under the Indian Affairs Department of Education. Parents readily supported Arabic, not merely as a language, but as an important part of Islamic education. The school boycotts of the 1980s disrupted the education of children, obliging many Muslim parents to consider alternative means of education. When the Habibia Girls College was founded in 1985, it gained the support of many parents. The college was inspired by the global trends in the Islamization of knowledge; today there are probably over 40 such private schools in South Africa, known as Islamia Colleges. However, these Islamic private schools have been criticized for being elitist, excluding the poorer segments of society, and for not preparing the Muslim child for integration into the broader society. The madrasa therefore still provides a supplementary Islamic education for the majority of Muslim children in South Africa.

In the 1990s the provisions for Muslims in state schools increased. By 1993, Arabic was offered in 8,921 state primary schools and 1,124 secondary schools, albeit that as a result of the downsizing of schools, Arabic as a subject was also affected. In the Cape it was introduced for the first time at Spine Road Senior Secondary School in 1992. Recently, Islamic studies was introduced as a non-examination subject in the state schools to provide an alternative to biblical studies for Muslim children. Not all schools offer Arabic or Islamic studies, which leaves the madrasa as the one institution which has enduring formative influence on the lives of Muslim children. However, Muslims have now generally acknowledged that madrasas would have to function in tandem with, or parallel to, the secular schools.

More recent educational developments include the establishment of foreign schools, both Egyptian and Turkish. The Egyptian 'Al-Azhar schools' are funded mainly by Al-Azhar University in Cairo. Arabic and Islamic studies are taught in Arabic by Egyptian shaykhs and modern subjects are taught in English by South African teachers. The code of dress is Islamic.

Higher education

The University of South Africa was the first to introduce an Arabic programme in 1955, followed by the University of Durban-Westville (1975) and the University of the Western Cape (1982). The following institutions offered Islamic studies: the University of Durban-Westville (1974), Rand Afrikaans University (1976), and the University of Cape Town (1986). In recent years, due to lack of student numbers, some of these departments have had to close down or merge with other departments. Unlike the Islamic seminaries, the universities have adopted an academic approach to the study of Islam, be it historical (University of the Durban-Westville), social scientific (University of Cape Town) or philological (University of the Western Cape).

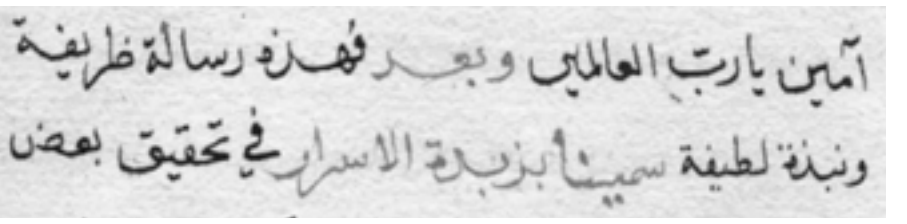
Historically, Muslim religious leaders have graduated in the Middle East or the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent, but opportunities for studies were created locally when in 1971 the first Darul-Ulum was established in Newcastle, Kwazulu Natal. This Darul-Ulum was based on the Darsi-Nizami course from Deoband, India. However, while the Darsi-Nizami course was originally broad and included the rational sciences, the current versions, in India and in South Africa, are confined to the religious sciences only. In Newcastle they offer the following subjects: Islamic history, Islamic creed, jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, *hadith*, principles of *hadith*, Qur'anic exegesis, and Arabic language and literature. A significant difference from Deoband is that all instruction is in English.

Less indigenous to South Africa and more in keeping with the Deobandi spirit is the Azaadville seminary, near Johannesburg, which teaches all subjects in Urdu. Even Arabic was taught in Urdu! Today there are many Islamic seminaries in South Africa that aim at conferring Islamic knowledge and preserving Islamic faith. A shortcoming, however, is that because their curriculum is devoid of the rational sciences, they produce graduates that are unable to confront the challenges of secular modernity.

Community-based colleges

The sole institution that tried to overcome the dichotomy between the secular and the religious, and to combine the academic approach of the university with the religious approach of the Darul-Ulums, is the Islamic College of Southern Africa, which was established in 1991 in Gatesville, Cape Town. This community-based college offers a four-year bachelor's degree in theology, Arabic, and Islamic law. The Islamic College has a wide curriculum, including subjects such as comparative religion and Islamic spirituality. The lecturers' backgrounds vary; some are graduates of universities and others of Islamic seminaries. The Islamic College is a feeder for the honours degrees in Arabic and in Islamic studies at the University of the Western Cape and the University of Cape Town, respectively.

To conclude, the above Islamic educational institutions have evolved over three centuries and have contributed to the preservation of the Islamic faith. In the current post-Apartheid period, Muslims are exposed to an open society with new challenges, making it essential for Islamic educational institutions to prepare their graduates to confront the challenges of secular modernity, or come to terms with it, and by so doing, make a larger contribution to society while still retaining their religious identity.



A fraction of Shaykh Yusuf's manuscript, Zubdat al-Asrar (The Essence of Secrets).

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Central Asia

BAYRAM BALCI

Fethullah Gülen's Missionary Schools

The Nurcu movement founded by Said Nursi (1873–1960) is probably one of the most important religious organizations in Turkey. After Nursi's death in 1960, the Nurcu brotherhood fragmented into several sub-communities with different interpretations of religion, different goals and different positions on political issues.* Nowadays, Fethullah Gülen controls the most powerful of these groups. His followers are also active in Central Asia but, with the possible exception of Turkmenistan, the movement is unable to operate in an open and public manner.

Fethullah Gülen was born in Erzurum in eastern Turkey in 1938. Deeply influenced by his family, his religious environment and by the writings of Nursi, Gülen began his career as an official preacher for the government in 1953. In 1966, he was sent by the direction of religious affairs to Izmir, where he created a brotherhood with a small group of students and disciples. His community, or *cemaat*, is designated as the *Fethullahci* movement, although its members do not appreciate this term. Basically, Fethullah Gülen's ideas serve to accomplish three intellectual goals: the Islamization of the Turkish nationalist ideology; the turkification of Islam; and the Islamization of modernity. And therefore, he wishes to revive the link between the state, religion and society.

Development of an educational network

No one knows exactly the size of Gülen's enormous community of followers and sympathizers, but most agree on an average estimate of 3 million members. The movement obtains much of its support from young urban men, especially doctors, academics and other professionals. The movement has grown in part by sponsoring student dormitories, summer camps, colleges, universities, classrooms and communication organizations. Without any doubt, education is central to the identity of the community and favoured its growth in the Balkans, Central Asia and the Turkic world in general. However, Central Asian Turkic Republics enjoy a special position in Gülen's strategy.

The collapse of the Soviet Union opened opportunities for Turkey. The state and private companies quickly designed special policies to develop their presence and influence in Central Asia. But very soon, Fethullah Gülen took the lead with his businessmen, supporters and his community teachers. Economic and cultural networks were established between the *cemaat* (groups within the movement) and the different social and economic actors. Several Nurcu delegations visited these countries and invited Uzbek, Kazakh, Turkmen and Kyrgyz officials in Turkey to convince them to advocate the replication of Nurcu educational structures in their home countries.

Those early connections helped to inaugurate in each of the Central Asian republics dozens of schools. Statistics show that in January 2001 the movement in Kazakhstan had already 30 high schools and one university, welcoming 5,664 pupils and employing 580 teachers from Turkey. In the same period, 11 high schools and one university were established in Kyrgyzstan, with more than 3,100 pupils and 323 Turkish teachers. In Turkmenistan, the community controls 14 high schools and one university for 3,294 pupils and 353 teachers. Finally, in Uzbekistan (until September 2000, when all were closed because of a diplomatic crisis) 17 high schools and one international school, employing 210 teachers and welcoming 3,334 pupils, had been founded.

These schools can be said to focus on modern and scientific education. Religious matters are completely absent from their curricula. In all these countries, as a consequence of the Soviet legacy and of the local leaders' suspicion, religion has no place in the educational system. The movement's schools are managed by Turkish and national administrators and teachers. Usually scientific matters (e.g. biology, physics, and computer science) are the main courses and are taught in English and Turkish languages. The national language is of course very much present, as is the Russian language, which is still maintained as a language of communication throughout the area.

The Nurcu community is considered elitist in Turkey, and this is also true for Central Asia. Selective competitions are organized every year to identify the best pupils. As a consequence of the conservatism of the *cemaat*, 95% of the schools are restricted to boys, with only one or two schools in each republic for girls, although all three universities accept both male and female students. Thanks to the modern scientific education, the opportunities for learning English and Turkish, and the favourable chances in passing the universities' entry exams, Nurcu schools have a very good reputation among the local populations. The crisis of the national educational systems partly explains the high performance of the Nurcu schools.

The schools' *raison d'être*

Turkish media have very often interviewed Fethullah Gülen and his followers about their intentions for Central Asia. They were always given the same answer: 'We are here to help the sister republics of Turkey.' This supposes the creation of 'cultural bridges' between Turkey and Central Asia. Detailed research on the activities and the project of the community shows that the Nurcu movement in Central Asia is a real missionary movement. Its mission is to re-establish Islam in the region, which has been dominated for the last 70 years by an atheist power persecuting Islam. To that objective, the Nurcu employ methods similar to those of the Jesuits. Indeed, like Jesuits, the Nurcu have developed an elitist method of recruitment; they wish to change society through education; and they perceive education as a global supervision of pupils in and out of school. Also, the missionary movement entertains excellent relations with the target populations to in order to 'convert' them.

Despite similarities, the Nurcu missionary method has its distinctive characteristics. Schools, in spite of allegations in the Turkish media – especially in the Kemalist media, are not a direct instrument of proselytism. Because it is too dangerous for the existence of the community itself in Central Asia, Nurcu missionaries never openly or directly proselytize.

Their *hocaefendi*, or 'respected lord', Gülen advocates two main ways of spreading Islam: *tebligh* and *temsil*. The first, and very classical, *tebligh*, is to profess and teach openly the 'good' mission. But since nowadays *tebligh* activities are developing everywhere, the *temsil* method seems to be preferred. With *temsil*, Gülen expects his followers to represent in their daily activities the proper and exemplary way of life. Through *temsil* the Nurcu will never profess openly the philosophy of Islam, rather they live it. For example, teachers of the movement's schools have to be polite, immaculate, and respectful. These ethics of life demand from the missionaries both hard work and the acceptance of *hizmet insani* ('in service'), or helping others. They must respect the country, its flag, its history, and must prove to be good examples, in particular for the young generation. They are not allowed to pronounce the name of Gülen or Nursi, nor are they permitted to spread Nurcu literature, at least not openly. While in some cases a minority of pupils in some small cities (not very well controlled by the central educational authorities) are subjected to more direct proselytism *(tebligh)*, the most important aim of the *cemaat* is to spread the message without expressing it directly.

The future of the community

The *cemaat* is present everywhere in Central Asia and will definitely contribute to a number of changes in these republics. It already influences the national educational systems. Managed by private companies, the Nurcu schools are perceived as proof of the efficiency of the market economy (90 % of the pupils enter university). For this reason, in countries like Turkmenistan, cooperation in the educational sector with the Nurcu is encouraged and supported by authorities in order to modernize the national structures.

The aim of the community is to educate and influence the future national elites, who should radically differ from the old Soviet apparatchiks. This might take 10 to 15 years, but the Nurcu are ready to invest in this long-term goal: the future elites are expected to speak English and Turkish and it is hoped that they will prove their good intentions towards the Fethullahci and towards Turkey. Therefore, Turkish authorities show an ambivalent attitude towards the movement. If in Turkey the state (especially the army) is sometimes very critical of the *cemaat* for its 'reactionary' projects, Turkish embassies have developed and entertain good relations with the Nurcu in Central Asia. And by reciprocity the Nurcu benefit from Turkish official support, for without it private organizations face great difficulties in terms of functioning in Central Asia. Considering the benefits the Nurcu schools in Central Asia bring to Turkey, Turkish ambassadors always support and encourage cooperation agreements between the local state and Nurcu educational enterprises.

One should, however, realize that the development of the Nurcu movement in Central Asia is still in its infancy. The community is active in Central Asia since 1991, but it is still primarily a Turkish effort, with Turkish teachers and Turkish businessmen and supporters. Though they work at it in a patient manner, the Nurcu still lack strong local rooting among the populations and emerging elites. Moreover, Islamic movements are not welcome in Central Asia by the governments, and that explains why the *cemaat* never officially or openly shows its authentic religious identity and why usually the local communities have no clue as to the schools' real nature. Most people will know that in town there is a 'Turkish school' but will never mention any 'Fethullahci' school, as this term has no signification for them. Almost 95% of the Fethullahci in Central Asia are still Turks from Turkey. That means the movement is an expatriate and migrant phenomenon. Openness on the part of the movement will only be possible should the governments in the area change their attitude towards religion, in particular Islam. The effects of the current crisis in Afghanistan will most likely not lead to liberalization in the Central Asian republics. In fact, it is highly doubtful that activities of foreign religious movements will be tolerated at any point in the near future.

Note

* See Hakan Yavuz, 'Being Modern in the Nurcu Way', *ISIM Newsletter* 6 (2000): 7.

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Southeast Asia
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Ajinomoto Indonesia
Haram or Halal?

On 5 January 2001 the Japanese *Asahi Shinbun* newspaper reported that the Indonesian Department of Health had ordered P.T. Ajinomoto-Indonesia to withdraw its product, Ajinomoto, an artificial seasoning of monosodium glutamate (MSG), from the market because it contained pork. A few days later, the then Indonesian president Abdurrahman Wahid, also an expert on *fiqh*, expressed to the Japanese Minister of Justice that he believed the Ajinomoto seasoning could indeed be consumed by Muslims. This seemingly trivial occurrence nonetheless became intertwined in the religious and political issues of Indonesia under the Wahid government.

KELOMPOK TEMPO MEDIA, 2001

Monosodium Glutamate: Halal or Haram?

Ajinomoto, a multinational corporation based in Japan, has been operating in Indonesia for more than thirty years and has succeeded in establishing itself in the Indonesian market by selling its product in small bags at quite reasonable prices. In Japan itself, nowadays people do not consume this artificial seasoning very often as it is widely known that natural ones are healthier. In Southeast Asia, however, Ajinomoto is regularly consumed despite the availability of various kinds of natural spices.

Halal certificate

In Indonesia, one can find the mark of 'halal' or 'halal 100%' on the wrappings of processed food. This means the product has met the government requirements for *halal* products. The MUI (Majelis Ulama Indonesia; Indonesian Council of Ulama) is authorized to assess the products. The LPPOM-MUI (Lembaga Pnegkajian Pangan, Obat-obat, Kosmetika-MUI; Assessment Institute of Foods, Drugs and Cosmetics of the ICU) is in charge of scientific assessment. The results of field and laboratory examinations are brought to an auditors' meeting of the LPPOM-MUI, after which the Fatwa Committee assesses the data relating to products from the point of view of religion, granting or withholding approval. A *halal* certificate issued by the MUI thus declares the legitimacy of foodstuffs in accordance with the dictates of Islamic law. However, this certification system, which began in 1994, is not obligatory. A producer can apply voluntarily for a *halal* certificate. To date, almost 1300 products have obtained *halal* certification, but that figure constitutes only some 10% of the total of products concerned.

The certificate is valid for two years, but the LPPOM-MUI must be consulted promptly on any change of ingredient, food additive or raw material in order to gain approval for its use. Ajinomoto obtained its latest *halal* certificate in September 1998 and reapplied in July 2000. The application showed that one of Ajinomoto's ingredients had been changed – from Bactopeptone to Bactosoytone – without consulting the LPPOM-MUI.

The main raw material of Ajinomoto is sugarcane molasses, fermented by microbes and made into MSG, which is further separated and purified. Bactosoytone, which is not produced by P.T. Ajinomoto-Indonesia itself but is purchased from the Difco Corporation in the United States, is used as the growth medium for the fermentation microbes. Bactosoytone is made from soybeans out of which the protein is hydrolyzed. The LPPOM-MUI looked for information on this unfamiliar ingredient and they received a letter from the United States informing them that in the process of hydrolysis, an enzyme extracted from a pig pancreas is used as a catalyst in the manufacturing of Bactosoytone. The use of such an enzyme in the production process became an issue even though the final product of Ajinomoto does not contain any pork enzyme.

The LPPOM-MUI reported these findings to the Fatwa Committee, where the matter was hotly debated. In October 2000 the LPPOM-MUI advised P.T. Ajinomoto-Indonesia to stop using Bactosoytone. They heeded this and from 23 November began to replace Bactosoytone with Mameno, which is free from pork enzymes. On 16 December the Fatwa Committee concluded that the Ajinomoto that had been produced by using Bactosoytone was *haram*.

Legal-formalism or multi-dimensional approach

Let us consider briefly the *ijtihad* process of the Fatwa Committee. Naturally the discussion starts with the prohibition of the eating of pork, found in the Qur'an. Next is the *hadith* containing the Prophet Mohammad's utterance concerning the disposal of oil in which a dead mouse has been found. The committee quotes the *ᶜulamas*' long-standing agreement that every part of a pig is *najis ᶜain*, inherently impure. Then, a *kaidah* (legal maxim) is applied, to wit: 'in cases where *halal* things are mixed with *haram* things, then *haram* things are pronounced to be dominant'. Finally the results obtained by the LPPOM-MUI are considered and a decision is taken.[1] Clearly the MUI's deliberations concentrate on the religious domain and scrutinize religious materials.

We may look at how Abdurrahman Wahid justified his opinion. He also began with the Qu'ran, but specified the limitations of the prohibition against the eating of pork. He did not take issue with the use of pork, because it has too wide an application. He received a report that no pork enzyme was extracted from the final product of Ajinomoto. He applied a *kaidah* 'giving priority to the rejection of taking a great risk rather than wishing to gain benefit'.[2] Also he took into consideration the withdrawal of investment and the possibility of mass unemployment.[3]

The first criticism of the MUI's fatwa came from a scientist, Umar Anggoro Jenie, a chemistry professor at Gadjah Mada University: 'Bactosoytone is not an active material. So Ajinomoto is not a *haram* item.'[4] According to some Muslim intellectuals, this case is included in the category of *khilafiyah* (an issue on which different opinions are legitimately possible), which is often found in Islam.

President Wahid was criticized by rival politicians for interfering in the religious administration procedure. Demonstrators also came to the presidential palace to protest. Wahid has earned a reputation as a substantialist Muslim, that is, one who wishes to concentrate on the real substance of Islam. For a long time he has been criticizing stiff legal-formalism, and has been encouraging *ᶜulama* to move out of the narrow framework of religion and pay attention to social problems. He considers how Islam can respond to the demands of modern society. He advocates a multi-dimensional approach to practical problems. And so it is clear that he would still have delivered the same blunt opinion concerning the MUI's fatwa whatever his position in Indonesian society. As a supporter of pluralism, he did not forget to say: 'Both opinions are correct in doing *ijtihad*',[5] again provoking the anger of the conservative *ᶜulama*.

Political conflict

President Wahid stated that he saw this problem as a political one, part of the series of manoeuvres undertaken to damage his government. Many were inclined to agree. Indeed, during those months there was a sequence of attacks on the President, ranging from bomb explosions to the disclosure of a 'sex scandal', all intended to effect a speedy discrediting of Wahid and his government. Indonesians seemed exhausted as a result of all the political conflict – any and all problems were suspected of having a political background. The starting point for all of this, however, remains the issue of P.T. Ajinomoto-Indonesia and its having neglected the obligatory consultation on a change of ingredients. While it may be difficult to establish any political motivation behind the issuing of the MUI's fatwa itself, there are certain political issues that played a role in the evolution of events.

The MUI and P.T. Ajinomoto-Indonesia had initially agreed not to bring the issue into the open, but to settle it secretly by withdrawing products produced before 23 November. However, the *haram* decision was leaked by another Islamic organization and the MUI was forced to announce this publicly. It may well be that about this time political motivation began to play a part. The first media report appeared on 29 December in the newspapers. On 3 January the Ajinomoto case was first reported on television and the events were followed by the media for several days but not to any great extent. Suddenly on 8 January the Ajinomoto case was presented as the most important item and was widely reported. This scale of coverage was maintained for a few days, the President's statement forming the climax.

The internet newsgroup 'Indonesia-L' featured many postings on this issue, including those of critics of the MUI who supported the New Order to legitimize development policy in accordance with the Islamic point of view. Broader distrust of Din Syamsuddin, the general secretary of the MUI, was expressed in that he often appeared in the media as a spokesman of the MUI. It is widely known that Wahid bitterly denounced him for having the intention of politicizing Islam. It can thus be said that the historical background also generated speculation concerning the political motivation of this case.

However, the majority of the public remained calm, although there were some small disturbances. Around the middle of January the news was disappearing rapidly from the television as if the effort expended in making use of this case to hasten political conflict had been in vain. Only in newspapers was related news found from time to time.

P.T. Ajinomoto-Indonesia apologized and withdrew their product from the market, at a cost of six hundred million yen excluding transportation and personnel expenses. Ajinomoto obtained a new *halal* certificate around the middle of February. However, it does not seem so easy to restore Indonesian consumers' confidence in Ajinomoto.

This case demonstrates how in Islam differences of opinion may arise, and some Muslims can accept that while others cannot. Also, in the midst of political conflict as in the present Indonesia, anything can be made into a political issue. However, we should not forget that in such a situation a sound and constructive opinion can still be heard. 'It is regrettable that society, *ᶜulama* and political elites are so responsive to the issue of pork lard, but they seem to turn a blind eye towards various corruption scandals which should be punished more severely in that their destructive power is far more dangerous than is the consuming of Ajinomoto.'[6]

Notes

1. *Mimbar Ulama: Suara Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, no. 269 (January 2001): 18–21.
2. Ibid.: 4.
3. *Kompas*, 11 January 2001.
4. *Panji Masyarakat*, no. 30 Tahun IV (17Januari 2001): 69.
5. *Kompas*, 11 January 2001.
6. Komaruddin Hiadyat, 'Ajinomoto dan "The Low Trust Society"', *Tempo*, no. 46/XXIX (January 2001): 33.

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Down Under

SHAHRAM AKBARZADEH

Muslims in Australia

Assaults on Muslims in Australia in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks have brought the vexed issue of identity in a multicultural society to the fore. Being Muslim in Australia has not been easy, but before the recent events there was a sense among Australian Muslims that the two objects of loyalty could stand side by side. This was clearly evident among a growing number of Australian-born Muslims who knew no other homeland than Australia. That belief is now placed under enormous strain as racist attacks on Mosques and Islamic schools question the 'Australianness' of Muslims.

Muslim settlement in Australia started in earnest in the 1970s after the government of the day lifted the White Australia Policy, allowing non-Europeans to migrate to Australia. Lebanese immigrants comprised the first large Muslim community to arrive on Australian shores, fleeing the Lebanese civil war. They were followed by an influx of Iranian, Iraqi, Somali and Afghan refugees, all fleeing internal and inter-state conflict. In 1996 the census recorded a total population of Muslims in Australia at just over 201,000, or 1.1% of the total population, on par with Hindus. But the actual number is likely to have been higher as the question concerning religious affiliation was optional and many Muslims felt uncomfortable about disclosing their faith for fear of possible persecution by government agencies. The 2001 census has not yet been published, but it is estimated that the Muslim population in Australia exceeds 300,000.

Although they still constitute a very small minority, Australian Muslims have been establishing themselves in this country as permanent residents. This signifies a qualitative shift from the sporadic Muslim presence in the 19th century. Muslims' first contacts with Australia, represented by the arrival of Muslim fishers, convicts and early settlers, were too limited in scope to have any impact on Australia. Muslim presence only became permanent in the second half of the 19th century. This shift had significant implications for self-perception among Muslims.

Phases of identity-formation

It may be argued that the Muslim identity in Australia has gone through three phases. In the first phase, individual Muslims found it extremely difficult to maintain their religious identity. They were often isolated from mainstream Australian society and from their country of origin. As many Muslim men married non-Muslims, their Islamic identity was often diluted, or placed in the background. The adoption of Christian names by freed Muslim convicts and early settlers was indicative of a process of assimilation. Individual Muslims in the 19th century found it extremely difficult to exhibit their religious identity and at the same time be accepted in the larger Australian community – these appeared to be conflicting objectives. The first phase was therefore characterized by the presence of atomized Muslims and the absence of a Muslim community.

The arrival of Afghan camel drivers and the establishment of a community in 'Ghan town' signalled a shift away from atomized identity and the growth of a Muslim community. The Ghan town mosque, constructed in 1889, symbolized the growth of a permanent Muslim community in Australia, although it served a very specific ethnic group. In the early 20th century, Muslims in Australia were still few (3,908 in 1911 and 2,704 in 1947), constituting less than half a per cent of the total population. The small size, however, had significant social implications: Muslims felt the need to band together, emphasizing their commonality and downgrading their differences in order to maintain their Islamic identity and a sense of community. This constituted the second phase.

The emergence of a veritable *umma*, complete with its prayer houses and cemeteries, indicated recognition among Muslims that their existence in Australia was not transitory. They needed to make Australia home and establishing Islamic institutions was a necessary step in that direction.

The third phase of Muslim identity in Australia is characterized by the numerical growth of various ethnic groups, made possible by the revoking of the White Australia Policy. Like many other settlers, newly-arrived migrants and refugees from Muslim societies went through an adaptation phase. As pointed out by many researchers, mosques played a vital social role in this period, providing assistance to newly arrived settlers and acting as a conduit to the larger surroundings. Mosques also provided a congenial environment for socialization and rehabilitation. Iraqi women, for example, tend to treat their mosque as a social club where they can hear the latest news about family and friends, exchange cooking recipes and news of bargains in the shops. All this depends on the ability to communicate in the colloquial language. The growth of Muslim ethnic communities has given rise to the growth of ethnically oriented mosques to serve their needs. Many Muslim ethnic groups are now large enough to sustain their own mosques.

The third phase, therefore, signifies another qualitative shift in identity. Just as ethnically mixed congregations contributed to the ideal of *umma*, the growth of ethnic congregations tends to detract from it. The concept of a unified *umma*, though not rejected by Muslims, is now qualified with reference to ethnicity. This process has led to the increasing relevance of ethnic and sectarian Islam to Muslim settlers in Australia. This is in line with the growing popularity and accessibility of the community of language which serves as the pillar of the national ideal, and the fusion of religious and national identities. This nationalization of Islam has resulted in a de facto fragmentation of the ideal Muslim community.

Islamic associations

Nationalization of Islam and the consolidation of national identities among Muslims in Australia may be a dominant trend but it is not absolute. The alternative ideal of *umma* is represented by many supra-national Islamic associations. The critical question is to what extent such associations are able to mobilize and sustain a truly multi-ethnic community in Australia. The Muslim Students Association (MSA) and the Muslim Community Cooperative of Australia (MCCA) present noteworthy cases for research. These, and other similar associations, purport to serve the imagined Muslim community regardless of ethnic/national divisions. However, these institutions are of different natures and their members are attracted to them for different reasons. MSAs tend to be dominated by overseas students, whose experience in Australia is fleeting and for that reason isolated. MSAs serve an important social function by providing a familiar environment for these short-term residents. The use of English in MSAs helps bridge the language gap and allows the participation of second-generation Muslims, who often feel more comfortable with English, especially at a tertiary level of discourse, than with their parents' mother-tongue. The extent of commitment to the imagined *umma* among these members, however, remains untested. It is unlikely that MSAs could operate on the same level as they do now in the absence of the energy and enthusiasm of overseas Muslim students.

The MCCA, on the other hand, is an indigenous experiment. It relies on the commitment and participation of its Australian-based founders and account-holders. The stated objective of the MCCA is to provide ethically acceptable financial services to its members, avoiding conventional banking practices which are regarded as usurious and illegitimate by Islamic scholars. This is an attractive alternative for some Muslims in Melbourne and Sydney, especially those low-income borrowers who face gruelling interviews in mainstream financial institutions. For a good number of these borrowers, the MCCA is their best chance of securing a loan. Services provided by this institution, therefore, provide tangible benefits to its members, and that is an important factor for its costumer base. The MCCA, by the mere fact of its religious operation, fosters the ideal of *umma*.

It might be a truism to say that the reality of life for Muslims in Australia is contradictory, but it bears repeating as over-generalizing analysis can easily overlook this basic factor. On an intellectual level, very few people from Muslim societies would reject the ideal of Muslim unity. At the same time, Muslims tend to gather in national frameworks because of the immediacy of that community and flow-on benefits such as Sunday language schools and celebration of festive days on the national calendar. This does not mean that they deny their Islamic heritage. The Islamic component of their identity is never far below the surface. But the Islamic component is merely that, a component, significant as it may be, of a larger national identity. It does not dwarf pride in national identity, but feeds it and by doing so detracts from the ideal of Muslim unity. For that reason it is more accurate to talk about many ethnically delineated Muslim communities in Australia, rather than a single Muslim community.

There are occasions, however, when these discrete communities are pulled together. Developments overseas may provide the stimulus for some form of Islamic cohesion. The second Gulf War (1990-91) in which Iraq was punished for invading Kuwait by Western powers under the aegis of the United Nations provided that stimulus. The plight of the Iraqi people inspired sympathy among Muslims in Australia and led to some efforts to provide them with material assistance. In more recent times, street fighting in Jerusalem and the killing of Palestinian youths gave rise to similar feelings of sympathy among Muslims in Australia, who expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian cause in street rallies in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth. These expressions of unity, however, are limited, temporary and transient.

In this context, second and third generation Muslims face incongruent, sometimes conflicting, sets of loyalties. On the one hand they are brought-up by their families to feel proud of their ethnic/religious background, on the other hand they seek recognition and acceptance from their peers and the wider Australian mainstream. It is not surprising that those aspects of their parents' identity which are regarded with scepticism and bias by the Australian mainstream tend to be under-played in favour of less 'alien' characteristics. Second and third generation Muslims in Australia, therefore, tend to express their ethnic/national identity more readily than their Muslim identity. That is in conformity with the secular nature of the Australian society and the official recognition of Australia's multiculturalism.

This sense of inclusion is important for the well-being of the Australian society. It fosters commitment and social responsibility among Muslim residents, facilitating the emergence of an Australian Muslim identity. Just as historical developments have led newly arrived Turkish, Lebanese and Bosnian Muslims to value their national heritage and acknowledge the place of Islam in shaping it, policies of multiculturalism and social inclusion favour the formation of an Australian identity which acknowledges the ethnic and religious diversity of its community members. This acknowledgement facilitates the expression of Islam as a component of Australian identity, giving rise to a nascent community of Australian Muslims. Government policies are instrumental in advancing or hindering this very novel identity, where the primary point of reference is Australia. The emergence of an Australian Islam would add another layer to the already multi-layered identity of Muslim residents, complementing the ethnic points of reference among the existing Muslim communities in Australia.

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Middle East

JULIA DROEBER

Women's Reputation and Harassment in Jordan

Much has been written recently about the so-called 'crimes of honour' in Jordan.[1] By now, the facts and fiction about those heinous crimes have become widely known. According to official statistics, about 25 women on average are killed every year for the sake of their families' 'honour'. The number of deaths that could also be categorized as such crimes but are recorded as suicides or accidents is much higher.

The victims of honour crimes usually do not share a common class background, yet they are mainly unmarried women between fifteen and thirty years of age. The perpetrators are generally male family members, most notably brothers, fathers, and husbands. Owing to Paragraph 340 of the Jordanian Penal Code[2], which continues to be in force despite various proposals of amendment, these perpetrators usually are given very lenient sentences of only a few months, or are completely exempted because they are minors, as is the case when younger brothers kill the victims.

These killings can be considered within various wider frameworks: firstly is that of violence against women in general; secondly, they can be viewed against the backdrop of the notions of 'honour' and 'shame' that are prevalent in Jordanian society. Crimes of honour can also be analysed as a manifestation of power relationships in a patriarchal social system, or can be placed within a religious context. During research conducted among young, highly educated, mainly middle-class women in Jordan between 1997 and 1999, honour crimes were encountered under different circumstances. Furthermore, at the time, they were the subject of heated debates not only in the media, but also among the population. Instead of reiterating facts about those atrocious crimes, the following offers a closer look at how the crimes and the debate about them affected the young women (and men) that were met during the research period.

Reputation and rumours

A very crucial issue became evident during the research period: individual as well as family reputation and rumours play an essential role in the everyday lives of young women. The honour crimes can be related to this. Women, especially during the phase of unmarried adulthood and late adolescence, are thought to carry a great deal of responsibility for the reputation of their kin group within society. While still unmarried, this means they are to safeguard their virginity and behave 'modestly', and once they are married they are expected to remain chaste and modest.

It is important here to show how the so-called 'crimes of honour' are not only a way of actually punishing women for their alleged sexual misconduct, but also a means of social control in their role within the system of rumours and gossip.

Women in Jordan have become increasingly 'visible' outside their homes in recent decades and this increased appearance in 'public' seems to have created a greater need for supervision, control, and restrictions. How have young, unmarried, highly educated, and often working women coped with the tensions inherent in this situation?

Stories about 'crimes of honour' such as that of a young woman who was strangled by her younger brother with a telephone cord because she was talking to a man on the phone, became public knowledge and entered public discourse. Especially after the instigation of the campaign to abolish Paragraph 340 and the ensuing debate about it, stories like these are often used as a threat to enforce 'modest' and 'chaste' behaviour among young women. On a less tragic level, this body of narratives includes stories about assaults and harassment, which have considerable impact on young women, and which make them think carefully about their behaviour in public. By reminding each other about what had happened to other young women, who had transgressed existing societal norms of behaviour, they are reinforcing existing control mechanisms and creating fear of the consequences of misconduct. The creation and repeated evocation of this body of narratives by men and women alike helps to bolster patriarchal hierarchies in society.

Most of the young people met during field research, however, were appalled by these crimes. They generally thought that they were not personally threatened by those killings, since they were, according to one young man, 'only found in rural areas where tribal and social values are highly respected'. One young woman, however, explained that the topic 'has become a cliché, but it is an issue that touches each one of us.' Regarded as just another, albeit atrocious form of violence, she asked whether this 'killing and fighting helps to solve any problem', and whether 'these acts are honourable'. One young man, like many others, could not relate to the notion of 'honour' that supposedly was behind these crimes: 'I would be ashamed of myself, if I even think of killing someone regardless if he or she is guilty. How can an honourable family tolerate the idea of one of its male members killing his sister or wife out of suspicion? Killing is a sin condemned by all religions. And it has never been an honourable thing to kill one's sister out of mere suspicion.' A female university student expressed criticism: 'What's even worse than the "honour crimes" themselves is the Parliament's refusal to throw out the article that allows for lighter sentences for people having committed honour crimes.'

Closer to their own experience, however, were incidents of assaults and harassment. Most of the young women interviewed had personally experienced harassment in public, but were so intimidated by the admonitions concerning their reputation that they often did not dare to bring these incidents into the open, let alone confront the perpetrators. This caution with regard to voicing protest might be due to the widespread notion that the women are generally to blame for such incidents as they are said to provoke men in one way or another, which, again, triggers an assault.

One young woman used to be harassed by a man every time she walked through a certain street on her way home. She told her father about it and, instead of comforting and supporting her, the father started shouting at her, basically telling her that it was her fault: 'It's probably the way you dress that instigates such behaviour!' But she holds that 'it doesn't matter what you wear, or if you're walking alone or with a group of friends. Nothing will stop them!' She observed that Amman's streets have become a 'hazardous territory for females in this country', and that 'harassment of women in public places is becoming a usual thing that is not condemned by society at large.'

Similar to the lenient punishment of the perpetrators of crimes of honour, which is apparently supported by many Jordanians, the – what I would regard as misbehaviour of men – assaults and harassment of women in public is tolerated by many. In both cases, 'aggressors are usually proud of what they do, bragging about it to every soul they happen to know. And the poor victims usually feel guilty thinking they are the ones that instigate such harassment.'

Examples abound. One young woman was sitting next to her brother in a bus. Suddenly she started feeling someone pinching her from behind. The young woman was puzzled, not knowing what to do. She could not just confront the man because her brother was sitting next to her (and would have had the responsibility of confronting the man), and was afraid to tell him what was happening for fear that he might kill the man. She did not say anything for a while but kept moving closer to her brother hoping that the man behind would stop. He did not, and her brother started suspecting that something was going on. He asked her if anything was wrong, but she kept saying no. She thought the situation was fairly obvious. Eventually, the young woman's brother looked behind him and gave the rude man a threatening stare. The rest of the journey home went peacefully.

Change of attitude

Stories of silently bearing harassment is nonetheless not totally indicative of how women are dealing with this issue. In fact, many young women seem to be becoming more self-confident and aware that what happens to them does not have to be endured in silence. They are often advised to confront the harassers audibly, and generally the people around them come to their defence. A young woman told me how she was walking through downtown Amman with her ten-year-old cousin. Suddenly, a young man approached them and pronounced some 'dirty words' directed at the young woman. She was furious and embarrassed, but at the same time thought that she ought to do something about such rude behaviour. She stopped the man and confronted him with what he had just said. People who started crowding up to see what was happening began shouting at the young man asking him if he would like it if someone said the same thing to one of his sisters or mother. The aggressor was speechless.

Another young woman was riding on a minibus, which was half-empty. She sat alone on a double seat with a man sitting behind her. Suddenly she turned around shouting at the top of her voice that he should never do that again, that he should never ever dare to touch her, followed by a tirade of curses and a final: 'Get me?!' Intimidated, he tried to make excuses, explaining that he only wanted to push the curtain aside, but by then the other passengers had turned around with looks of dismay. The young woman turned back again and could terminate her journey in peace. The perpetrator, however, had clearly lost face in this situation.

In these cases, young women discarded the feeling of guilt that they were often made to take on (for their role in provoking men), and by doing so, were also able to protect their reputation. Had anybody witnessed the women being touched and not reacting – and therefore their silence potentially being interpreted as consent – they would have run the risk of being accused of 'immoral behaviour'. The consequences of this need no further explanation.

Notes

1. See, for example, Lama Abu-Odeh, 'Crimes of honour and the construction of gender in Arab societies', in *Feminism and Islam: Legal and Literary Perspectives* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1996). See also: *www.amanjordan.org* – the website of the Arab Centre for Resources and Information on Violence against Women *(al-markaz al-ᶜarabiylil-masadir wal-ma'lumat hawla al-ᶜunf didd al-mar'a)*.
2. 'He who discovers his wife or one of his female relatives committing adultery with another, and he kills, wounds or injures one or both of them is exempt from any penalty.'

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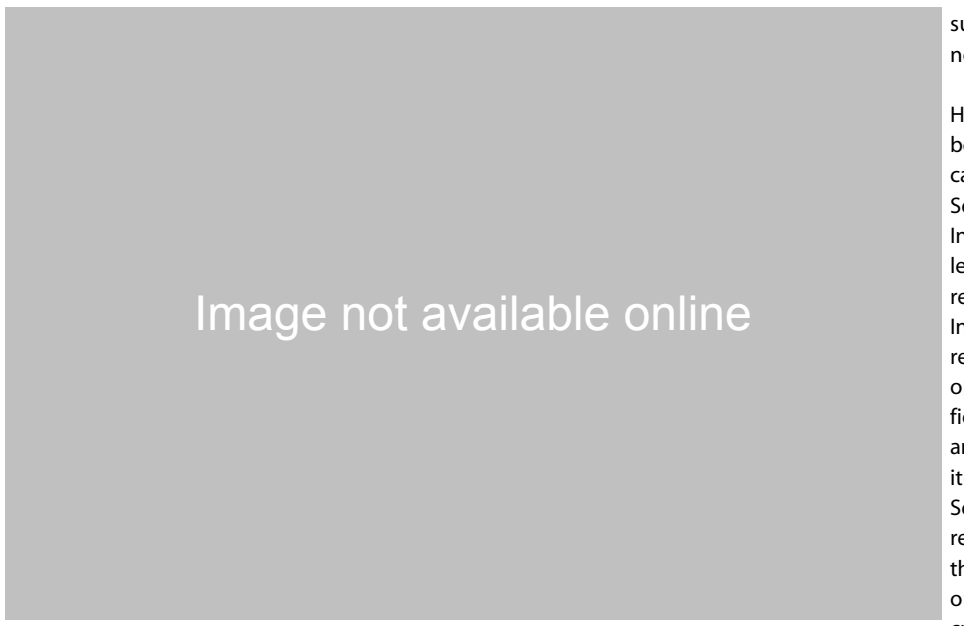
Middle East
JOSEPH ALAGHA

Hizbullah, Iran and the Intifada

'We share the same destiny with the Palestinian Intifada till the liberation of Jerusalem.' With these words Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, the Hizbullah's Secretary General, opened the Solidarity Convention for the Support of the Intifada in Beirut on 22 May 2001. Rooted in the successful resistance against the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, the Hizbullah continues to be very vocal in its support of the Palestinian cause.



Nasrallah delivering a speech in support of the Intifada, 28September 2001.

Twenty-one years ago, Imam Khumayni was the first to inaugurate the last Friday of the month of Ramadan as 'Quds Day' or 'Jerusalem Day', calling for the support of Palestinians in any possible way and the establishment of a Muslim army to liberate Jerusalem. He referred to Israel as the 'rapist entity' *(al-kiyan al-ghasib)*, the 'Zionist entity' *(al-kiyan al-sahyuni)* that is a cancerous gland in the region and should be uprooted at all costs. In Lebanon, on 22 December 2000, the commemoration of 'Quds Day' had a new flavour because it was the first to be held after the Israeli withdrawal, and because it coincided with the second Palestinian Intifada that was characterized by suicide missions causing heavy casualties on the Israeli side. Also, it was the first time that the Lebanese state sent an official representative – along with a minister and a representative of the general of the Lebanese army – to attend 'Quds Day', thus sheltering the Hizbullah with the Lebanese government's legitimacy.[1]

Conferences in support of the Intifada

From 28 to 30 January 2001, the 'First Quds Conference' was held in Beirut to support the Palestinian Intifada. It led to the establishment of the 'Quds Foundation' with temporary headquarters in Beirut, the 'capital of liberation and victory'. The final resolutions included the following: severing any engagements with the Middle East Peace Settlement; calling for jihad and resistance as well as political, economic, diplomatic, and media support for the Intifada; boycotting American goods; using oil as a stick policy; refusing to naturalize the Palestinian refugees in any country; the right of return and self-determination to the Palestinians; stopping all normalization procedures with Israel; affirming that Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine; lobbying in order to revive the UN Resolution 3379 that stipulates that Zionism is a form of racism; filing litigations and preparing the required files concerning Israeli war criminals; extolling the decision of the Palestinians not to take part in the upcoming Israeli elections; total support for Lebanon in the continuation of the Resistance until the Shibᶜa Farms – a 220 square kilometre Lebanese territory still under Israeli occupation – are regained; and the release of all detainees from Israeli prisons. The primary speakers were Nasrallah and Ali Akbar Muhtashami, an Iranian reformist and an ally of Khatami. Muhtashami, the secretary general of the International Committee for the Support of the Intifada, urged everyone to supply the Palestinian people with arms, so that they can defend their legitimate rights. He also reiterated the Islamic Republic's solution to the Palestinian crisis, namely, a general referendum that includes the 'indigenous Palestinian people' composed of adherents to the three Abrahamic religions – who are spread worldwide and inside the Occupied Territories – in order to determine their future and the type of government to which they aspire. On his part, Nasrallah affirmed that the Intifada, resistance, and jihad should go hand in hand in order to achieve victory, rather than futile negotiations. Nasrallah called on the participants to adopt Khumayni's injunction of celebrating the last Friday of the month of Ramadan as 'Quds Day'. Indeed, both his calls were adopted in the final resolutions.[2]

After a lapse of ten years, Tehran hosted the second Intifada Conference (April 2001). Most Palestinian opposition groups attended this International Conference of Support for the Intifada and the Islamic Revolution in Palestine, along with representatives from 37 Arab and Islamic countries. Like the 'First Quds Conference' resolutions, the final resolutions of the second conference contained a clause affirming that the Lebanese victory over the Israeli army in southern Lebanon had opened new horizons with respect to the Palestinian cause. It also legitimized the continuation of the Lebanese resistance until the liberation of the Shibᶜa Farms and the release of all the detainees in Israeli prisons. In the wake of the Conference, while receiving Nasrallah, Imam Khamin'i argued that the Aqsa Intifada is the result of the Hizbullah's struggles and devotion, and that the current Intifada in Palestine is awakening the sense of dignity and strength among Palestinian Muslims through the achievements of the Lebanese Islamic resistance that materialized in liberating Lebanon from the 'small Satan' (Israel) after 22 years of occupation. He hailed the Hizbullah's efforts in Lebanon, which exhorted the Palestinian people to rise up. Khatami affirmed that the 'Zionist entity' is the biggest threat posed to the Islamic and Arab world. Referring to the Hizbullah's victory over the Israeli army in Lebanon, Khatami held that '[s]hould the Zionist entity be defeated once, surely it will be defeated another time.' He added that Muslims should defend the rights of the Palestinians and mobilize their capabilities for the return of the Palestinian refugees and their rights of self-determination. Nasrallah stated: 'In the name of Hizbullah and the Resistance, we shall not stay idle; we shall assume our *moral, religious, and legitimate responsibilities*, and prove to the Zionists that the Palestinians are not alone. We tell the Zionists: "Be prepared to face us in places you expect or do not expect to find us."'[3]

The status quo

The Hizbullah's ideological stance on the continuation of the resistance and the liberation of Palestine after the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon is based on the distinction between the Hizbullah's political ideology *(al-fikr al-siyasi)* and political programme *(al-barnamaj al-siyasi)*. The Hizbullah honoured, and still honours, its ideological programme (commitment to the liberation of Palestine, and no recognition of Israel) and its political programme, namely that 'socioeconomic, intellectual, and cultural work is concomitant with resistance and should go hand in hand with it.' As Nasrallah puts it: 'It is our "legitimate and religious responsibility" [*al-mas'uliyya al-sharᶜiyya wa al-taklif al-sharᶜi al-llahi*][4] to buttress the Palestinian Intifada in any way we find fit.'[5] In actual practice, the Hizbullah's support for the Intifada is limited to political, moral and psychological measures. Nasrallah exhorted the Palestinians to keep the initiative in their own hands and to depend on no one except themselves. Nasrallah said unequivocally that the Hizbullah does not have a branch in Palestine or in any other country: 'There is no Palestinian Hizbullah.' He added that all of the Hizbullah's rank and file are honoured to be soldiers fighting under the banner of Hamas, of the Islamic Jihad, or any Palestinian jihad organization.[6] Thus, liberating Palestine is not an aim; rather, it is a doctrinal-ideological commitment. Since Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon is incomplete because of its refusal to relinquish the Shibᶜa Farms, the Hizbullah's resistance continues because it is not a militia, but rather the Lebanese resistance par excellence; this is one of the main sources of the Hizbullah's political legitimacy. It is important to note that all of the Hizbullah's operations in the Lebanese Shibᶜa Farms were a show of solidarity dedicated to the Palestinian people. By the end of 2001 seven of the Shibᶜa operations were carried out by the 'Battalion of the Aqsa Martyrs' of the Islamic Resistance – the Hizbullah's military wing, and the kidnapping of the three Israeli soldiers was carried out by the 'Battalion of the Martyr Muhammad al-Durra' (one of the most well-known Palestinian child martyrs).

After September 11

In the aftermath of September 11, US policy concerning the Hizbullah remained unchanged. In April 2001, it had been classified by the US State Department as a 'terrorist organization'. After September 11, three additional lists were issued, which either included Hizbullah members or asked the Lebanese government to freeze the Hizbullah's assets. In response, a national consensus emerged expressing that Hizbullah is not a terrorist organization.

No alterations have been made in the Hizbullah's doctrines as a result of September 11, although some manoeuvres and camouflage tactics were modified. On 28 September 2001, the first anniversary of the Intifada, Nasrallah threatened – behind bullet-proof glass (see photo) – that '[w]e are ready for direct military intervention in the Intifada when the benefit of the Palestinian resistance really dictates recourse to this option.' With these words, Nasrallah qualified his threat and rendered his statement ambiguous. On 2 October 2001 Nasrallah reiterated that nothing has changed since September 11: 'Our culture is that of jihad, resistance, and martyrdom.' He added that the Hizbullah still opts for the 'military, jihad option' to liberate Lebanon from Israeli occupation and to support the Palestinian Intifada with all its might.[7] On 22 October 2001, while commemorating the 'Day of the Wounded of the Islamic Resistance' Nasrallah affirmed that '[t]hose who killed Za'ifi [Israeli Minister of Tourism] are the most noble members of this *umma*. Nothing will change at all for us after 11 September 2001; the resistance continues as long as Shibᶜa is occupied, our prisoners of war are detained in Israeli prisons, and the Palestinian people are slaughtered. The Great Satan [the US] that issues terrorist lists is a terrorist state that has no right to classify people as terrorists or not.'[8]

Notes

1. Al-Manar and Al-Nour, 22 December 2000; *DailyStar* and *Al-Safir*, 23 December 2000.
2. *Al-ᶜAhd*, no. 887 (2 February 2001); *Al-Safir*, 31 January and 1 February 2001; *Al-Afkar*, no. 965 (12 February 2001).
3. Al-Manar and Al-Nour, 24–25 April 2001; *Daily Star* and *Al-Safir*, 24–25 April 2001.
4. On 17 May 1995, Imam Khamin'i appointed Nasrallah and Shaykh Muhammad Yazbik, Hizbullah's Shura Council member, as his 'religious deputies' *(wakilayn sharᶜiyyan)*.
5. Al-Manar, 3 April 2001; Al-Manar, 7 June 2001.
6. Nasrallah's speech at the 'Solidarity Convention for the Support of the Palestinian People' on 22 May 2000; reiterated on Al-Manar, 7 June 2001.
7. Al-Manar; Al-Nour; and *Al-Intiqad* no. 921 (5 October 2001) 6–7.
8. Al-Manar ; Al-Nour; and *Al-Intiqad* no. 924 (26 October 2001) 5.

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Senegalese Diaspora

SERIGNE MANSOUR TALL

Mouride Migration and Financing

Islam in Senegal is essentially brotherhood-based. The members of the Senegalese brotherhood of Mourides are known for their dynamism symbolized by their propensity for emigrating abroad and for the colossal size of their capital, Touba. Reinforcing the brotherhood identity and relying on merchant networks, the Mouride diaspora – disseminated in all corners of the world – has developed highly original mechanisms for financial circulation between host countries and Senegal.

With a simple payment order by fax or by telephone, the Mouride emigrants can, with the intermediation of merchants based in Senegal, make available important sums of money to their families or partners. There is an established system of compensation between emigrants and Mouride merchants. The latter are reimbursed when they travel to the host countries, often to procure merchandise.

The Mouride financial circulation evolves within extra-legal spheres and relies on the *dahira*[1] networks and other diverse forms of brotherhood sociability. This informal globalization of capital is supported by the enormous organizational and communication capacities of the Mourides and the high level of solidarity amongst the members of the brotherhood. In return, the brotherhood identity spreads amongst transnational networks of emigrants, contributing to a globalization of religious culture by virtue of relay points constituted by the *dahira*s established in the host countries.

This brotherhood identity provides a new framework for a poorly educated population, allowing it to control entire sections of the economy and to inverse the classic schema of social promotion by the *école française*. An analysis of the emigrants' financial circulation demonstrates a link between commerce and migration, two domains of predilection of the Mourides controlled by increasingly mobile marabouts.

Transfers of 'emigration marabouts'

It would not be exaggerated to speak of 'emigration marabouts' after the 'groundnut marabouts' in view of the great extent and constancy of their presence in the lives of Senegalese migrants. Ranging from prayers to facilitate the obtaining of a visa, to blessings before a voyage, to visits to the host countries and investment in Touba, the Mouride marabout is a key figure in the organization of international Senegalese migration. To an increasing extent, the marabouts are taking up their pilgrim's stick during the summer months to cross the foreign lands of Senegalese migratory presence. Followers entirely finance their marabouts' stay by collecting funds (*adiya*). This contributed to, for example, no less than 50 Mouride marabouts coming one after the other to Tenerife from May to October 1999.

In Spain, the collection of the *adiya* is carried out in different ways, according to the charisma of the marabout, at the places where emigrant Senegalese salesmen work. This strong concentration of emigrants at one workplace facilitates the collection of the *adiya* – neither a tax nor a tribute, but rather a sort of 'pious gift' given to the Mouride marabout.[2] It is the payment of a sum of money as a token of gratitude for religious guidance. It is difficult to pay this 'pious gift' in kind as was formerly the case when a day could be reserved, generally a Wednesday, to work in the fields of the marabout. In Spain, the collection of the *adiya* is organized by the 'host' or *ndiatigué* of the marabout at places of activity in the evening as the emigrants finish up their workday. There is a sort of silent pressure on the donators; the voluntary aspect of the gift is somewhat obscured by the public collection.

In Italy, the emigrants that are made aware of the arrival of a marabout by his *ndiatigué* visit him at his hotel, paying the *adiya* directly to him. The marabouts thus go from one city to the next. The separated and private characteristics of emigrant workplaces do not facilitate a grouped collection as in Tenerife. However, the 'Prealpino' residence in Brescia, a place of heavy concentration of Senegalese emigrants, is a *passage obligé* for emigration marabouts. The form of fund collection in Italy does not favour 'small marabouts', the little-known grandsons of Sheikh Amadou Bamba whose arrival does not incite many disciples to displace themselves for the *ziar* (visit of allegiance). The *ziar* is always accompanied by a pious gift.

In New York, the fundraising is essentially carried out by the *dahira*s, whose members contribute regularly. The money is not completely paid to the marabouts as part of it is used for community investments: repatriating corpses in case of death, organization of religious chants, and construction of a house for Serigne Touba in New York. The collecting of funds by brotherhood associations such as the *dahira*s also exists in other countries. The money of the *dahira* is given to the Mouride authorities during annual visits to Touba. These sums also serve to finance urbanization in the Mouride capital.[3] The money collected by the *dahira*s is greater than that mobilized for the arrival of a marabout since the *dahira* collection is permanent. The marabouts are also the conveyors of enormous sums of money for their *talibé*s (disciples); but this only concerns close *talibé*s, often residing in Touba, who ask such services of the marabout. The sums transferred by the marabouts are rather substantial and are difficult to quantify. Nonetheless, it can be said that they contribute to the diversification of the means of financial transfer.

Short-term financing

Senegal-based 'conveyor' merchants are often linked to migrants in various ways: neighbourhood links in zones where they are lodged during their stay abroad, brotherhood links for those under the authority of a particular marabout, kinship ties and various ties of allegiance. The former travelling merchants of Sandaga collaborate with their Mouride ex-bosses coming to replenish stock in New York. The merchants, by accepting to convey the emigrants' money at no charge, demonstrate a certain degree of altruism but are also driven by their own interests. The money collected by emigrants offers the merchants short-term loans, which allow them to purchase, for example, bags and shoes in Italy, or electronic devises and cosmetics in New York. Furthermore, the conveyor merchants can earn substantial amounts of money by dabbling with different exchange rates before the money is delivered to recipients. Apart from sums earned from variations in exchange rates, which the merchants master better than the migrants, the former increase their capacity to buy merchandise and can rapidly reimburse the collected sums. The amounts are paid to the recipients after the purchased goods are sold. Withdrawing the money takes place in shops in Dakar: souks of Sandaga, shops for detachable parts, telecommunication centres, etc.

The level of sociability is sometimes so high that the Mouride migrant can ask the merchant to advance money to his family. These mandated transfers are multiplying. Without any displacement of financial flux, this system of money transfer is based on a principal of spending. The total is calculated when the migrant returns and pays all that was spent during his absence. This type of transfer presumes frequent returns and a regular and strong insertion in the commercial networks necessary to establish a rapport of confidence. The Mouride brotherhood identity is an element on which this confidence is based.

Altogether, important sums of money comparable to a 'new international aid' are collected by emigrants and transferred to Senegal. The creation of such original transfer methods by emigrants and merchants adheres to a logic of autonomous organization, totally avoiding the constraints of the administration of official transfers, yet not uniquely functioning according to a social or community logic. There is an instrumentalization of the Mouride identity in organizing the complex financial circulation in countries with different legislations and with different currencies.

Hybrid system

Merchants and emigrants are increasingly setting up enterprises typical for financial transfers at the limit of informal, combining modern and traditional mechanisms, official and unofficial circuits. Everything occurs as though there were a conversion of relational capital into a power of financial intermediation.

The first phases of the development of enterprises of hybrid transfers first rely on a small circle of family and commercial relations. It then expands to include members of Mouride *dahira*s. The latter function as an instrument of social protection, re-establishment of patriotic ties, and enlargement of social circles for the emigrants. Solidarity being a must, the *dahira* constitutes a catalyser of activities, offering a new migrant his first information channels, providing his first clients.

The system of transfer is founded on mutual trust between the various users, a simplification of procedures and a rapidity of collecting or withdrawing the transferred money. The collecting of money gives great importance to orality. The operation of the transfer is a simple order of payment by fax. After collecting the sum to be transferred and the commission, the agent in New York will fax his correspondent in Dakar asking him to deliver the sum of money to the recipient as agreed. The safety of the transfer is guarantied by the brotherhood relations.

Withdrawal of sums transferred to Sandaga, more than a simple financial operation, is a fabrication and a reactivation of proximities. New ties are found and old ones re-established. The systems of transfer are the result of informal mechanisms (brotherhood and family networks and trusted relations) and the institutional practices (payment of transactions, professionalization of services, security and rapidity of transfers, utilization of the new communication technologies). There is a strong link between commerce and migration. The emigrant based in New York finances the international Senegalese commerce by according, voluntarily or not, a free short-term credit to merchants by the system of transferring his savings. He compensates for the insufficiencies of formal financing. The diverse proximities are re-utilized in the framework of formal financial relations. Several wholesalers that were met are emigrants reconverted in commerce. The Sandaga market in Dakar is the place where potential migrants polish up their arms while waiting to 'travel'. Sandaga is the bastion of Mouride brotherhood networks, a sort of anteroom for travel abroad. Proximity, the primordial element in the system of establishing trust, is the basis of all transactions. Proximity is geographical and social in the first instance (even village of provenance, kinship). Brotherhood proximity is a unifying element for the dynamism of the Mouride *dahira*s.

At present, some ten transfer bureaux, with or without actual offices, reproduce the exact same system of transfer with various sums of money. The proliferation of exchange bureaux, whose relay points in Senegal are but simple tele-centres or souks, contribute to rendering such international financial transfers commonplace. We are witnessing a mechanism of hybridization of financial transfers, the aim of which is to seize all opportunities, whether traditional or modern, to convey money. In this context, the NTIC (New Technologies of Information and Communication) play an increasingly preponderant role in the financial transfers of Senegalese emigrants.

Notes

1. The *dahira*s are groupings of members of one brotherhood according to residential or professional proximity, or by common allegiance to a marabout.
2. Definition given by C. Gueye.
3. C. Gueye, 'Croissance et organisation urbaine d'une ville religieuse' (Ph.D. diss. in geography, Université Louis Pasteur de Strasbourg, France, 1999).

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Religious Studies

FARHAD DAFTARY

Ismaili Studies
Antecedents and Modern Developments

In the course of their long and complex history dating to the formative period of Islam, the Ismailis have often been accused of various heretical teachings and practices and a multitude of myths and misconceptions circulated about them. This is mainly because the Ismailis were, until the middle of the 20th century, studied and evaluated almost exclusively on the basis of the evidence collected or often fabricated by their enemies. It was only from the mid-20th century onwards that studies based on Ismaili sources came to dominate the field, leading to a much less biased understanding of the Ismailiyya.

As the most revolutionary wing of Shiᶜism with a religio-political agenda that aimed to uproot the Abbasids and restore the caliphate to a line of Alid imams, the Shiᶜi Ismailis aroused, from early on, the hostility of the Sunni Muslim majority. With the foundation of the Fatimid state in 909, the Ismaili challenge to the established order had become actualized, and thereupon the Abbasid caliphs and the Sunni *ulama* launched what amounted to an official anti-Ismaili propaganda campaign. The overall objective of this systematic and prolonged campaign was to discredit the entire Ismaili movement so that the Ismailis could be readily condemned as heretics or deviators from the true religious path. Anti-Ismaili polemical writings provided a major source of information for Sunni heresiographers, such as al-Baghdadi (d. 1037), who produced another important category of writing against the Ismailis.

By spreading a variety of defamations and even forged accounts, the anti-Ismaili authors in fact produced a 'black legend' in the course of the 10th century. Ismailism was now depicted as the arch-heresy of Islam carefully designed by some non-Alid impostors or possibly even a Jewish magician disguised as a Muslim, aiming at destroying Islam from within. By the 11th century, this 'black legend', with its elaborate details and stages of initiation, had been accepted as an accurate and reliable description of Ismaili motives, beliefs and practices, leading to further anti-Ismaili polemics and heresiographical accusations.

Legendary tales – distorted evaluations

The revolt of the Persian Ismailis led by Hasan Sabbah against the Saljuq Turks, the new overlords of the Abbasids, called forth in the 1090s another vigorous Sunni reaction against the Ismailis in general and the Nizari Ismailis in particular. Hasan Sabbah (d. 1124) championed the cause of the Nizari branch of Ismailism and founded a state centred at the fortress of Alamut in northern Iran with a subsidiary in Syria. The Syrian Nizaris attained the peak of their power and fame under Rashid al-Din Sinan, who was their chief leader for some three decades until his death in 1193. It was in the time of Sinan, the original 'Old Man of the Mountain' of the Crusader sources, that occidental chroniclers of the Crusades and a number of European travellers and diplomatic emissaries began to write about the Nizari Ismailis. The Crusader circles and their occidental chroniclers, who were not interested in collecting accurate information about Islam as a religion and its internal divisions despite their proximity to Muslims, remained completely ignorant of Islam. It was under such circumstances that the Crusader circles produced reports about the secret practices of the Nizari Ismailis. Medieval Europeans themselves began to fabricate and put into circulation both in the Latin Orient and in Europe a number of tales about the secret practices of the Nizaris, who were made famous in Europe as the Assassins. These so-called Assassin legends consisted of a number of separate but interconnected tales, including the 'paradise legend', the 'hashish legend', and the 'death-leap legend'. The legends developed in stages, receiving new embellishments at each successive stage, and finally culminated in a synthesis popularized by Marco Polo (see F. Daftary, *The Assassin Legends*, London, 1994). By the beginning of the 19th century, Europeans still perceived the Nizari Ismailis in an utterly confused and fanciful manner.

The orientalists of the 19th century, led by Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838), began their more scholarly study of Islam on the basis of the Arabic manuscripts which were written mainly by Sunni authors. As a result, they studied Islam according to the Sunni viewpoint and, borrowing classifications applicable to Christian contexts, generally treated Shiᶜism as the 'heterodox' interpretation of Islam by contrast to Sunnism which was taken to represent Islamic 'orthodoxy'. It was mainly on this basis, as well as the continued attraction of the seminal Assassin legends, that the orientalists launched their own study of the Ismailis.

Indeed, De Sacy's distorted evaluation of the Ismailis, though unintentional, set the frame within which other orientalists of the 19th century studied the medieval history of the Ismailis. As a result, misrepresentation and plain fiction came to permeate the first Western book on the Persian Nizaris of the Alamut period written by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856). Originally published in German in 1818, von Hammer's book achieved great success in Europe and continued to be treated as the standard history of the Nizari Ismailis until the 1930s. With rare exceptions, notably Charles F. Defrémery (1822–1883), who produced valuable historical studies on the Nizaris of Syria and Iran, and the studies of Michael J. de Goeje (1836–1909) on the dissident Qarmatis, the Ismailis continued to be misrepresented to various degrees by later orientalists. Meanwhile, Westerners had retained the habit of referring to the Nizari Ismailis as the Assassins, a misnomer rooted in a medieval pejorative appellation.

New horizons

The breakthrough in Ismaili studies occurred with the recovery and study of genuine Ismaili texts on a large scale – manuscript sources which had been preserved secretly in numerous private collections. A few Ismaili manuscripts of Syrian provenance had already surfaced in Paris during the 19th century, and some fragments of these works were studied and published there by S. Guyard and others. More Ismaili manuscripts preserved in Yemen and Central Asia were recovered in the opening decades of the 20th century. In particular, a number of Nizari texts were collected from Shughnan and other districts of Badakhshan (now divided by the Oxus River between Tajikistan and Afghanistan) and studied by Aleksandr A. Semenov (1873–1958), the Russian pioneer in Ismaili studies from Tashkent. However, by the 1920s knowledge of European scholarly circles about Ismaili literature was still very limited.

Modern scholarship in Ismaili studies was initiated in the 1930s in India, where significant collections of Ismaili manuscripts have been preserved in the Tayyibi Ismaili Bohra community. This breakthrough resulted mainly from the pioneering efforts of Wladimir Ivanow (1886–1970), and a few Ismaili Bohra scholars, notably Asaf A. A. Fyzee (1899–1981), Husayn F. al-Hamdani (1901–1962) and Zahid Ali (1888–1958), who based their studies on their family collections of manuscripts. Asaf Fyzee, in fact, made modern scholars aware of the existence of an independent medieval Ismaili school of jurisprudence. Ivanow, who eventually settled in Bombay after leaving his native Russia in 1917, collaborated closely with these Bohra scholars and succeeded, through his own connections within the Khoja community, to gain access to Nizari literature as well. Consequently, he compiled the first detailed catalogue of Ismaili works, citing some 700 separate titles which attested to the hitherto unknown richness and diversity of Ismaili literature and intellectual traditions (see W. Ivanow, *A Guide to Ismaili Literature*, London, 1933). This very catalogue provided a scientific frame for further research in the field. Ismaili scholarship received another major impetus through the research programmes of the Ismaili Society of Bombay, established in 1946 under the patronage of Sultan Muhammad Shah, Aga Khan III (1877–1957), the 48th imam of the Nizari Ismailis.

By 1963, when Ivanow published a revised edition of his catalogue *(Ismaili Literature: A Bibliographical Survey)*, many more Ismaili sources had become known and progress in Ismaili studies had been truly astonishing. Numerous Ismaili texts had begun to be critically edited by scholars, preparing the ground for further progress in this new field of Islamic studies. In this connection, particular mention should be made of the Ismaili texts of Fatimid and later times edited together with analytical introductions by Henry Corbin, published simultaneously in Tehran and Paris in his Bibliothèque Iranienne series; and the Fatimid texts edited by the Egyptian scholar Muhammad Kamil Husayn and published in his Silsilat Makhtutat al-Fatimiyyin series in Cairo. At the same time, Arif Tamir edited a number of Ismaili texts of Syrian provenance, and a few European scholars such as Marius Canard and several Egyptian scholars made important contributions to Fatimid studies.

By the mid-1950s, progress in the field had already enabled Marshall G. S. Hodgson to produce the first scholarly and comprehensive study of the Nizari Ismailis of the Alamut period (*The Order of Assassins*, The Hague, 1955). Soon, others representing a new generation of scholars, notably Bernard Lewis, Samuel M. Stern, Wilferd Madelung and Abbas Hamdani produced major studies, especially on the early Ismailis and their relations with the dissident Qarmatis. Progress in Ismaili studies has proceeded at a rapid pace during the last few decades through the efforts of yet another generation of scholars such as Ismail K. Poonawala, Heinz Halm, Paul E. Walker, Azim A. Nanji and Thierry Bianquis. The modern progress in the recovery and study of Ismaili literature is well reflected in Professor Poonawala's monumental *Biobibliography of Ismāᶜīli Literature* (Malibu, Calif., 1977), which identifies some 1300 titles written by more than 200 authors.

Modern scholarship in Ismaili studies promises to continue at an even greater pace as the Ismailis themselves are now becoming widely interested in studying their literary heritage and history – a phenomenon attested by an increasing number of Ismaili-related doctoral dissertations written in recent decades by Ismailis. In this context, a major role will be played by the Institute of Ismaili Studies, established in London in 1977 under the patronage of H. H. Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, the present imam of the Nizari Ismailis. This institution is already serving as the central point of reference for Ismaili studies while making its own contributions through various programmes of research and publications. Amongst these, particular mention should be made of the monographs appearing in the Institute's Ismaili Heritage series which aims to make available to wide audiences the results of modern scholarship on the Ismailis and their intellectual and cultural traditions; and the Ismaili Texts and Translations series in which critical editions of Arabic and Persian texts are published together with English translations. Numerous scholars worldwide participate in these academic programmes, and many more benefit from the accessibility of the Ismaili manuscripts found in the Institute's library, representing the largest collection of its kind in the West. With these modern developments, the scholarly study of the Ismailis, which by the closing decades of the 20th century had already greatly deconstructed the seminal anti-Ismaili legends of medieval times, promises to dissipate the remaining misrepresentations of the Ismailis rooted either in hostility or imaginative ignorance of the earlier generations.

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Continued from front page: Some Thoughts on the WTC Disaster / *by Talal Asad*

An expert's political agenda

Stephen Schwartz, intellectual and journalist, thinks differently. In his widely circulating article entitled 'Ground Zero and the Saudi Connection', first printed in *The Spectator* (22 September 2001), he claims to have discovered the real cause of the crime of September 11: the orthodox tradition of Islam that originated in Arabia called, by outsiders, 'Wahhabism', after the 18th-century Najdi reformer Muhammad bin Abdul-Wahhab. In my view the article is typical of much irresponsible literature about 'fundamentalism' put out by the many 'experts' who eagerly pursue their own political agendas.

Wahhabis have often been likened to Puritans by Europeans for their severity in matters of religion, their insistence on simplicity in worship and the equality of all believers, and their strict legalism. They are also now called 'fundamentalists' by critics. Schwartz grandly concedes that not all Muslims are extremists, that terrorism isn't intrinsically connected to Islam, but insists that 'all Muslim suicide bombers are Wahhabis'. He goes on with MacCarthyite logic to add: 'except, perhaps, for some disciples of atheist leftists posing as Muslims in the interests of personal power, such as Yasser Arafat.' Because all Wahhabis are actual or potential terrorists, all Muslim terrorists are Wahhabis. They are also 'Islamo-fascists' and, puzzlingly, 'have much in common with Bolsheviks.' This kind of logic enables Schwartz to put together a long string of terrorist and militant activists (all Muslims, of course) in different countries and to call them Wahhabis regardless of whether they adhere doctrinally to that tendency or not. He either doesn't know or doesn't care to tell us that Wahhabis belong to the Hanbali school of law that (like all Sunni schools) does not authorize the killing of innocents even in war and certainly not the suicidal criminality committed on September 11. He doesn't know or doesn't care to tell us that theologians very close doctrinally to 'Wahhabis', for example Shaykh Yusif al-Qaradawi who lives in the Gulf, strongly condemned the September 11 terrorists on religious grounds, that Shaykh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah (a 'Wahhabi'), chief religious authority in Saudi Arabia, condemned suicide bombers on Islamic grounds a year before September 11. Instead, Schwartz gleefully reminds us that the ruling family of Saudi Arabia is officially 'Wahhabi'. What worries him is not that they are corrupt and repressive rulers, or that their internal security is guaranteed by the United States on a quid pro quo basis (all of which causes great resentment among ordinary Saudis). His concern is that 'Wahhabi Saudi Arabia' supports actual and potential terrorism throughout the world because it gives money to various Islamic institutions. Hence the danger Saudi Arabia represents – especially in the United States where its religious influence among immigrants is rampant. For here, so he assures us, 80% of the mosques are 'Wahhabi', and they preach extremism. The children of Muslim immigrants who are exposed to 'Wahhabi' influence 'opt for Islamic revolution and commit themselves to their self-destruction, combined with mass murder.' Immigrants committed to mass murder? How many school-shootings in the United States have been carried out by Muslim children?

I attended over 20 mosques in New York during last year, but I cannot claim that this constitutes a representative sample. However, in none of them did I hear preachers urging 'extremism' – although they did vary considerably in liveliness and intelligence. I can't help but conclude that Schwartz's article represents a recognizable kind of public discourse about what is supposed to be going on in the Middle East, a discourse promoted by a range of better-known names. It has mischievous implications for American attitudes to Muslim and Arab immigrants – and for our foreign policy in the Muslim world.

Internally America is, for all its flaws, a democratic society committed to the rule of law and freedom of speech. But externally American military and economic might has not always aimed at democratic outcomes nor always followed international law – especially in the Middle East, where it has too often supported despotic governments and brutal occupiers, and engaged in military interventions and conspiratorial politics. I make this point not in order to 'justify' the atrocity of September 11, to 'blame' America and argue that the murder of several thousand people was 'deserved'. I can only repeat unreservedly that no one deserves to be murdered. My suggestion – in common with that of many other commentators – is that we try to understand the conditions that have made this kind of attack probable. And I point to America's policies in the Middle East as being among those conditions. When we seek to understand the conditions that generate violent gangs among the youth of Los Angeles, no sensible person would think we were justifying murder.

It seems to me in any case that because we now live in a highly interdependent world where the exercise of power must carry commensurate responsibility, the responsibilities of the world's only superpower must be not only towards the safety and prosperity of American citizens but towards a just and secure world.

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Continued from page 11: A Note from Prison / *by Saad Eddin Ibrahim*

killed in battle and going down as a martyr Che Guevera style.

Yes, Bin Laden may have touched on most if not all the Arab-Muslim world's historical grievances. He may have demanded forcefully to settle legitimate accounts. In these respects he is echoing the deep yearning of at least eight generations of Arabs and Muslims – as his fellow desert reformer-warrior Mohamed bin Abul-Wahab had tried at the end of the 18th century. But Bin Laden's medieval language of discourse, his Wahabi austere fundamentalist version of Islam, the oppressive model of society imposed in Afghanistan, and the terrorist methods used to settle legitimate accounts with the outside world, all put him outside the mainstream of history. They make him the wrong accountant. His only remaining value, if any, may be that of shocking mankind into consciousness that there is urgent regional-global business that must be equitably and forcefully addressed, before another Bin Laden – possibly more lethal – forces his way to the world's centre stage again, and takes us all to the brink of apocalypse.

Saad Ibrahim, a prominent political sociologist at the American University in Cairo and founder of the Arab Organization of Human Rights, is currently serving a seven-year prison sentence for his activities at the Ibn Khaldoun Center for Development Studies.
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Continued from front page 13: Frontline Mysticism and Eastern Spirituality / *by Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi*

secular political culture in the Middle East and South Asia.

Viewed as the guardians of fatalism and expectationalism, the early proponents of clerical modernity and spiritual revolution were intensely anti-clerical. In their formative phase, these calls were calls for the transformation of a sedimented notion of religion into a dynamic modern ideology and culture. For instance Kasravi, whose contribution to the emergence of Iranian Islamism has been effectively suppressed, viewed religion as 'humanism' *(adamigari)* and as 'the source of worldly prosperity'.[10] To establish Islam as a counter-Europist 'guide for life', he called for 'the returning of Islam to its foundation by purging it of the irrationalities of Sufi predestanarianism and Shiʿi expectationalism'.[11] As a rational humanist project, Islam was thus set to provide both the content of Eastern spirituality and the perimeters of a modern and progressive political culture. Overburdened by these modern requirements, religiosity and spirituality were increasingly politicized and religious sodalities assumed the role of political parties and civil institutions. Early examples of such associations that contributed to the formation of Islamic public sphere are the Egyptian Ikhwan al-Muslimun, the Indian-Pakistani Jamaʿat-i Islami, and the Iranian Hay'ats, an extensive network of neighbourhood associations that emerged all over Iran between the 1940s and the 1970s.

By claiming authenticity, morality, and spirituality as their own exclusive domain, these and other Islamist formations constituted their secular counterparts as replicas of the materialistic, immoral, inhumane, and decadent West. Consequently Islamist formations, instead of contributing to the invigoration of ethical, humanist, and civil values, have predominantly fostered violence, intolerance, incivility, and religious bigotry. As the Western claim of superiority espoused colonialism and imperialist domination, the Eastern claim of spirituality has likewise produced shameful manifestations that are contrary to basic norms of human decency. The events of September 11 are the latest expression of this degenerated and vengeful spirituality. As postcolonial scholars have critiqued the claims of Western exceptionality, it is now urgent that the foundational assumptions of Eastern spirituality are likewise deconstructed.

Notes

1. Murtiza Avini, 'Manshur-i tajdidi-i ʿahd-Ihunar', *Surah* 1, no. 1 (Farvardin 1368/March 1989): 4–15, particularly 15.
2. For the text of Khumayni's letter, see ibid.: 7.
3. 'Khatt-i Shahadat-talabi istiratizhi-i asasi-i inqilab', *Payam-i Inqilab* 45 (23 Aban 1360): 29–31.
4. Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and Historiography* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), particularly 1–17.
5. Murtaza Mushfiq Kazimi, 'Zindigani-i Urupa'i va zindigani-i Irani', *Iranshahr* 2, no. 8 (April 1924/Urdibihisht 1303): 458–467, quote on 462.
6. Mirza Husayn Tuti Maraghahyi, 'Din ya Asas-i ʿIlm va Tamadun', *Iranshahr* 4, no. 6 (August 1926/Shahrivar 1305): 347–355, quote on 352.
7. Ibid.: quote on 353.
8. Husayn Kazimzadah, *Rahbar-i nizhad-i naw dar justuju-yi khushbakhti* (Berlin: Iranschär, 1928).
9. Ahmad Kasravi, *Ayin* (Tehran: Jar, 2536 [1977]), respectively on 47, 48, 52–57.
10. Ibid., 52.
11. Ahmad Kasravi, *Ma Chah Mikhʷahim* (Tehran: Kitabfurushi-i Paydar, 1319 [1940]), 200.

Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi is associate professor of Historiography and Middle Eastern History at Illinois State University, USA. He is author of Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism and Historiography *(2001).*
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ArchNet
Islamic Architecture on the Web

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture was founded in 1988 and is registered in Geneva, Switzerland, as a private, non-denominational, philanthropic foundation. It is an integral part of the Aga Khan Development Network, a family of institutions created by His Highness the Aga Khan, with distinct yet complementary mandates to improve the welfare and prospects of people in countries in the developing world, particularly in Asia and Africa.

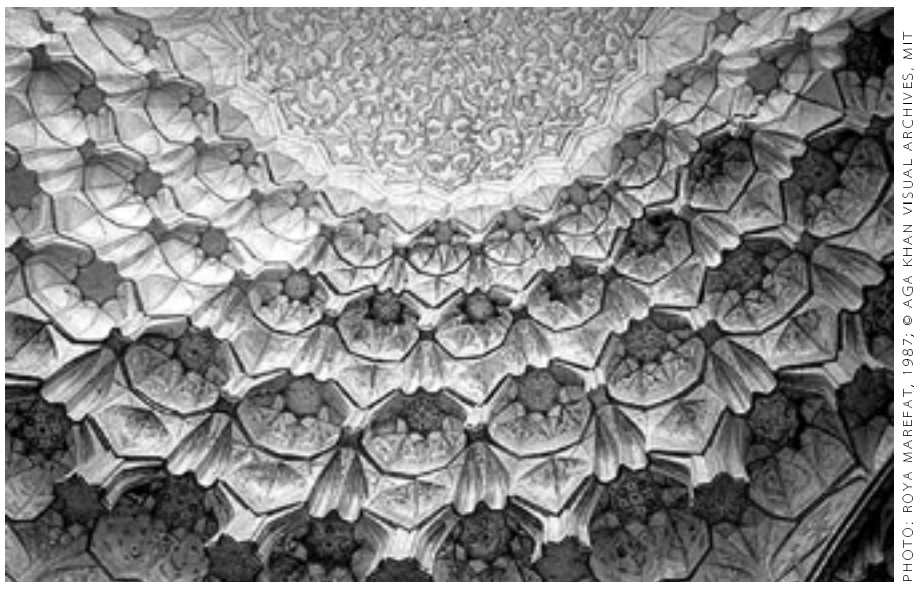

PHOTO: ROYA MAREFAT, 1987, © AGA KHAN VISUAL ARCHIVES, MIT

▶ **Abd al-Aziz Khan Madrasa, Bukhara, Uzbekistan**

One of the aims of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture is to increase cross-cultural understanding of Islamic architecture and the intimate connection between architecture and culture in Islamic civilizations. It also aims to create greater awareness and appreciation of the diversity and pluralism of Muslim cultures – within the Muslim world itself as well as in the West. Architecture creates a space which is less politically charged and where common concerns and values can enter into an exchange amongst peoples of different cultures. This exchange and understanding have never been more important than they are now.

ArchNet (www.archnet.org) is an exciting new project currently being developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), School of Architecture and Planning, with the support of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. The central goal of ArchNet is to provide extensive, high-quality, globally accessible intellectual resources focused on topics of architecture, urban design, urban development, including restoration, conservation, housing, landscape, and concerns related to the Islamic world. It provides, on an accessible server: images, a searchable text library, bibliographical reference databases, on-line lectures, curricular materials, papers, essays, and reviews, discussion forums and statistical information. The structure is designed to offer each user a personal workspace tailored to his or her individual needs. From this space, users are able to contribute their own findings and research to the larger site. The website aims to foster close ties between institutions and between users. Through the use of on-line forums, chat rooms, and debates, it is hoped that the site will encourage and promote discussions amongst participants. The system is designed to promote ready inter-communication and maintenance of an international scholarly community among scholars, practitioners, and interested non-specialists in the field. Furthermore, it is structured to facilitate effective division of scholarly labour and sharing of resources, rather than the traditional pattern of duplicating library holdings, slide collections, and so on at multiple locations.

Currently there are over 8000 images and 1500 publications related to both the contemporary and historical architecture of the Islamic world in the Digital Library. This number will continue to grow as collections from MIT, Harvard University and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture are added. In addition, there is an Institutional Workspace which allows schools of architecture and planning from around the world to share their expertise, knowledge, research, student work, and regional concerns.

ArchNet is envisaged as a borderless network of institutions contributing to, and learning from each other. It is hoped that this will have considerable influence on the way that architects and planners are educated and practise. New computer and telecommunication technologies have great potential for supporting communication and collaboration among architecture and planning students, faculty, scholars, and practitioners throughout the world. ArchNet will provide opportunities for realizing that potential.

For more information, please consult the ArchNet: www.archnet.org

Exhibition

Afghanistan
Tree of Life and Kalashnikov

Afghanistan: Tree of Life and Kalashnikov is an exhibition (14 July 2001 – 27 January 2002) at the Linden-Museum in Stuttgart, Germany. More than 20 years of war, civil war, displacement of people, and the Taliban's iconoclasm have led to immense losses of cultural treasures. At the same time the brutalities of war have inspired a new form of popular art. Baluch and Turkmen tribal women and those from other western Afghan groups weave carpets that depict automatic guns, tanks, helicopters and other motives. The exhibition exemplifies important periods of the region's culture from the Bronze Age to today, and displays a selection of these modern war carpets from a private German collection with photo documents.

Linden-Museum Stuttgart
Hegelplatz 1
70174 Stuttgart
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www.lindenmuseum.de

Refugee Camp in Pakistan

Northwest Afghanistan, Province of Badghis

West Afghanistan

PHOTOS: A. DREYER

Contents

* This issue of the *ISIM Newsletter* does not contain its usual Academic Meetings and the Art and Culture Agenda. These two sections can be found on the ISIM web site together with the digital version of this issue.

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

The International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) promotes and conducts interdisciplinary research on contemporary social and intellectual trends and movements in Muslim societies and communities.

ISIM Events

Workshop: Authority in Contemporary Shiism
Convener: Dr Matthijs van den Bos
URL: http://www.isim.nl/isim/activities
Date: 28 February–1 March 2002
Venue: ISIM, Leiden

Third Family Law Workshop: Family Law, Human Rights, and Political Activism
In cooperation with the Working Group Islam and Modernity (AKMI) and the School for Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).
Date: 21–25 March 2002
Venue: Ifni, Morocco

Lecture Series: Islam, Authority and Leadership
A series of lectures and debates organized in cooperation with Felix Meritis, Amsterdam.
Date: April–June 2002
Venue: Amsterdam

Workshop: Current Research in the Anthropology of Islamic Law
Convener: Prof. Léon Buskens and Prof. M. K. Masud
Date: 19-20 April
Venue: Leiden

For more information on these and other ISIM Events:
ISIM Secretariat
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E-mail: isim@let.leidenuniv.nl
URL: http://www.isim.nl/isim/activities/

ISIM Publications

The ISIM has recently produced the third publication of its ISIM Papers series:
– *Sharicʿa, State, and Social Norms in France and Indonesia*, by John Bowen.

Earlier ISIM Publications include:
– *Islam and the Electoral Principal in the Middle East* (ISIM Paper 1), by James Piscatori;
– *Thinking about Secularism and Law in Egypt* (ISIM Paper 2), by Talal Asad;
– *Muslim Jurists' Quest for the Normative Basis of Sharicʿa* (ISIM Inaugural Lecture), by Muhammad Khalid Masud.

Forthcoming publications include:
– *Piety and Persuasion in the Modern Islamic World* (ISIM Paper 4), by Barbara Metcalf;
– *Six Voices from the Margins: The Modern Muslim Intellectual as the Liminal Figure of Today* (Interviews), by Farish Noor.

These publications are available at the ISIM and can be ordered through the ISIM secretariat.