

Current Trends in Islamist Ideology

VOLUME 6

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HUDSON INSTITUTE
*Center on Islam, Democracy, and
the Future of the Modern World*

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Edited by
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and Eric Brown

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The History and Unwritten Future of Salafism

by Hillel Fradkin

THIS SPECIAL VOLUME OF *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* IS ADDRESSED to a most important subject—the subject of the organization, or group of organizations, known as the Muslim Brotherhood. The importance of this subject partially derives from the importance of another related subject: the worldwide Islamic phenomenon and movement variously known as Islamism, Salafism, radical Islam, militant Islam, political Islam and the like. Since the events of 9/11, we have all learned that understanding this movement properly—broadly, deeply and accurately—is a very great necessity. It is a necessity if we are to understand the present-day world situation and crisis and if we are to devise sensible policies to address them. To this end, an understanding of the Muslim Brotherhood is absolutely essential and arguably more important than anything else. Nevertheless, over the past few years the Brotherhood has not stood in the foreground of discussion and reflection. The purpose of this volume is to address—or rather, to begin to redress—that oversight or neglect.

Why has the Brotherhood been overlooked, and why is it so important? Let me provide the following preliminary and incomplete answers.

As regards its neglect, there are several reasons that are partially natural and partially accidental. In the first place there have been other parts of the Islamist movement and phenomenon that have, so to speak, hogged the limelight—and naturally so. Since 9/11, for example, al-Qaeda has become a household word for more or less obvious reasons. It is the name of the jihadist and terrorist organization that, not only attacked us on that day, but also has established itself as the symbolic and sometimes organizational head of transglobal Islamic terrorism.

In like fashion most Americans have become familiar with the term “Wahhabi,”

the name given to the specific and especially austere and harsh form of Islam that is institutionally established in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In the first instance this was also a result of 9/11 and, in particular, of the fact that the vast majority of the 9/11 terrorists were Saudis—as is Osama bin Laden, the head of al-Qaeda. But it is also the result of the vast efforts the Saudis have made to promote their form of Islam through their support of a variety of activities in the wider world, including the West. These include the production and distribution of publications informed by the Wahhabi point of view, the establishment of mosques and support of imams, and the establishment of a variety of Muslim organizations. These efforts, which began in the 1960s, were operative for many years and produced massive results, though these results were not exactly in plain view. The events of 9/11 focused a light on these activities sufficient to bring them to public attention.

There is another, more accidental reason that the Brotherhood has escaped much scrutiny: it is not always operative under that name. This is somewhat true in the mostly Muslim world. It is emphatically true in other countries—in Western Europe and the United States, for example—with relatively large Muslim minority communities. In the United States the great majority of prominent Muslim organizations were founded by members of the Brotherhood from a variety of Muslim countries. Such organizations include the Muslim Student Association, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA). But none of them expressly bear the name of the Brotherhood.

The natural and cumulative effect of these circumstances has been to make us al-Qaeda- and Wahhabi-centric and to place the Brotherhood in the shadows. But this is, to repeat, deeply regrettable because there is no other organization more fundamental to understanding the Islamist movement of today. There is no other organization that can match the Brotherhood's length of history, staying power and extent of influence.

The Brotherhood was founded in 1928 and, as such, is the oldest formal and organized expression of Islamism or Salafism. It is certainly the oldest conceived of as a mass and ultimately worldwide movement. In accordance with that conception, it is today an impressively widespread movement, having at this point, many branches in both Muslim countries and Muslim minority communities in other countries. Its accumulated experience forms by far the greatest part of the history of Islamism, and it remains the Islamist organization with the greatest general impact on Muslims overall. This alone would suffice to render it an important subject of study.

But this does not suffice to exhaust its centrality. Because of its long history, it has by now had a substantial impact on almost all other Islamist organizations in a variety of ways. Many have been inspired by it—Maulana Maududi's Jamaat-i-Islami of South Asia, for example. Some, like Saudi Wahhabism, have collaborated with it

and been profoundly influenced by that association. Others have grown out of it, led by defectors who ultimately rejected its approach and set a new and frequently violent course of their own. This includes al-Qaeda, the Brotherhood being one of Osama's first intellectual influences. Indeed, for many Muslims who eventually wind up in the most radical terrain, the Brotherhood and its sister organizations serve as an entry point. Few Islamists have remained unaffected by its existence, therefore, whether in a positive or negative sense—and sometimes in both.

In short, since its founding the Brotherhood has constituted the broad and essential base of the Islamist movement, which in itself is a remarkable achievement. For reasons to be mentioned later, it has also provided the essential framework of the movement.

But lest I be misunderstood, let me immediately say and stress what I just implied—that the Islamist movement today and broadly understood embraces a wide variety of viewpoints, tendencies and organizations that are sometimes at odds with one another. We will have many opportunities to discuss and do justice to these divisions later. But here I want to note the commonalities. All Islamists are joined together by at least three factors: the desire to purify and thus revive Islamic life; the desire to restore the worldly fortunes of Islam; and the conviction that both can be achieved only by reappropriating the model of Islam's seventh-century founders, the Salaf or virtuous ancestors, which include Mohammed and his closest companions or followers.

As a practical matter, the very best way to begin to understand this nexus of factors and concerns is to study the Muslim Brotherhood. But understanding the Muslim Brotherhood is also the best way to understand the entire Islamist or Salafist movement—its past, present and perhaps its future. This is true even where one's greatest concern is with the divisions within the movement and especially with the exponents of jihadi terrorism. For the latter are essentially derivative from the Brotherhood, as they offer variations on themes first widely propounded by the Muslim Brotherhood.

Finally there is the question of the Brotherhood's role today. As noted earlier, discussion of these matters in recent years has tended to be al-Qaeda and Wahhabi-centric. Lately, however, and especially over the past twelve months, public policy discussion and debate has increasingly focused on the Brotherhood. This is largely the result of three ways in which the Brotherhood has distinguished itself from al-Qaeda. The first concerns the difference between the Brotherhood and al-Qaeda with regard to the present efficacy and propriety of jihad. Al-Qaeda and associated groups are clearly positive; the Brotherhood is partially negative, though not absolutely. It supports jihad against American and Coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, for example, and against Israel. The second distinction, a corollary of these attitudes

toward jihad, is the Brotherhood's inclination to participate in electoral politics, while al-Qaeda remains sharply hostile. Lastly, in recent years the Brotherhood's participation in electoral politics has enjoyed some success, particularly in the Indonesian, Egyptian and Palestinian elections—the last through Hamas, which is the Palestinian branch of the Brotherhood. As a result, the Brotherhood has apparently demonstrated considerable popularity.

These three factors have posed a number of important questions: First, is the Brotherhood likely to become the leading voice within Islamism? Is it, in fact, likely to become the leading voice within the Muslim world generally by virtue of its widespread character? Is it, in fact, popular? Is this a good thing or bad thing? Does the difference between the Brotherhood and al-Qaeda mean that it is a force for moderation? Is this true everywhere? This last question arises from the fact that, although the Brotherhood is a worldwide organization, its individual branches often act independently of one another in the light of the countries and places they operate. Finally, how significant are these differences given the generally shared perspective regarding the proper direction of Muslim communities?

It has become increasingly urgent to address these questions. In part this is due to our involvement in the Middle East and the objectives we hope to achieve there. For example, should we take a benign view of the Egyptian Brotherhood and the Syrian Brotherhood, engage in active relations with them and even perhaps foster them? These are questions presently debated within and outside government.

But the urgency is also due, in part, to domestic concerns because of the substantial role that the Brotherhood plays in this country. These concerns were recently underscored in a trial in Texas focusing on the now-defunct charity known as the Holy Land Foundation. Among the evidence that came to light in that trial was a 1991 document describing the Brotherhood's strategy in the United States. An excerpt reads:

The process of settlement of [Islam in the United States] is a “Civilization-jihadist” process with all the word means. The *Ikhwan* [the Brothers] must understand that all their work in America is a kind of grand Jihad in eliminating and destroying Western civilization from within and sabotaging their miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers so that it is eliminated and God's religion is made victorious over all religions. Without this level of understanding we are not up to this challenge and have not prepared ourselves for jihad yet. It is a Muslim's destiny to perform jihad and work wherever he is and wherever he lands until the final hour comes and there is no escape from that destiny except for those who choose to slack.

What exactly does this mean? Is it still operative? What are we to think or do about it? To repeat, the Brotherhood raises urgent questions. As noted earlier, however, we are insufficiently well informed to answer them. For one thing, there has been considerable confusion about the Muslim Brotherhood's history. Indeed, there has also been a considerable amount of nonsense. Our concern with this history is not merely to set the record straight, though that is important. But still more important is the fact that, without a clear understanding of its history, it is difficult if not impossible to judge how important that history may be to the present situation of the Brotherhood and to its future.

As mentioned earlier, the Brotherhood was founded in 1928 and is the oldest organized form of Islamism or Salafism. It was founded by Hassan al-Banna, an Egyptian school teacher, and was directed by him until his murder in 1949 by the Egyptian police.

Its longest continuous operation has been of course in Egypt, though almost from the beginning, al-Banna envisaged expanding it beyond Egypt's borders. This expansion began in earnest in the mid-to-late 1940s and was in keeping with al-Banna's fundamental and founding conception of the Brotherhood's purpose, which I will describe a bit later.

My topic, however, is the course of the Brotherhood's early history in Egypt. In particular, I will focus on the period of its first forty or so years—from its founding until approximately 1971. This period may be divided into two main phases. During the first, founding phase from 1928 to 1949, al-Banna laid down the main guidelines of the Brotherhood, many of which have continued to define it ever since, both within and beyond Egypt's borders.

Its second phase, which one may date from al-Banna's death in 1949 to 1971, is almost equally central to the history of the Brotherhood. During this period the Brotherhood underwent an unprecedented crisis that also had major long-term effects—both on the Brotherhood itself and on the Islamist movement generally.

In my opinion, by the end of this period—at about 1971—the Egyptian branch ceased to be the simple and sole authority for the Brotherhood as a whole. This is why I have limited myself to this period. Thereafter, one must pursue the history of the Brotherhood along somewhat separate lines, as this conference is doing through the organization of the panels.

But before turning back to the Brotherhood's first and founding phase, I need to say a little more about the division I have proposed and the conclusion I have drawn. This is because my suggestion that, after 1971, we are dealing with two or more Brotherhoods has an important bearing on the organization's subsequent history, down to the present, and how we interpret it. The analysis of this history is directly connected to the present controversies about the Brotherhood, for many of the

current arguments over the relative benefits or demerits of the Brotherhood's role focus on the alleged moderation of the Egyptian branch.

To describe and explain this division, I must dwell a bit longer on the second phase and the crisis it entailed. That the death of its founder might bring about a crisis was only to be expected. But it was also precipitated by the revolution that occurred in Egypt in July 1952, which brought to power the Free Officers Movement under the ultimate leadership of Gamal Abd al Nasser. During this period, or at least from 1954 on, the Brotherhood underwent fierce repression and persecution. This naturally affected its concrete operations, but even more significantly—for reasons I will discuss more fully later—this experience obliged its leaders to reconsider the vision, objectives and character of the movement. It was a trauma of immense proportions and, ultimately, produced more than one view. One is most famously represented by Said Qutb, the Brotherhood writer and theoretician who was eventually executed in 1966. Another is most closely associated with the Supreme Guide of the era—Hassan al-Hudaybi.

There is no doubt that this period had a major effect on the trajectory of the wider Islamist movement, largely through the massive impact of Qutb. His views created the groundwork for new and especially violent developments within the Islamist movement—a subject to which I will return.

For the moment, however, I will focus on the meaning it had for the Brotherhood itself. This is a somewhat more controversial issue. It turns on the question of which of the two competing views—that of Qutb or that of Hudaybi—prevailed in the guidance of the movement. There is a strong argument to be made that the Egyptian branch followed more or less in the path of Hudaybi, though this is not altogether clear. (Today, in fact, more people read Qutb than Hudaybi, and have done so for many years.) But even if it is or was absolutely clear, it does not immediately settle the question for the movement as a whole.

The more critical issue is whether the Egyptian branch remained unequivocally authoritative for the entire movement, as it had heretofore been—and I think it did not. The source of the doubt is the fact that, partially as a result of Nasser's repression, the Brotherhood came to have a substantial base outside of Egypt that could operate as an alternative center of the movement.

The circumstances are as follows: a sizable number of the Egyptian Brothers who survived and escaped the repression relocated to other places, especially to Saudi Arabia. This was particularly true of the followers of Qutb, which included his brother. In the Kingdom, the refugees were relatively free to develop their own line of thought and even to affect certain currents within Wahhabism. According to a recent and well-informed study of Wahhabism written by David Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia*, they even managed to do the near-impossible—to radicalize

the already radical Wahhabism. They were also relatively free and able to spread their own views very broadly through the Muslim world, partially through the largesse of oil money. They thus became, de facto, an alternative base for the movement and able to present a serious claim to represent the authentic interpretation of the legacy of al-Banna and the Brotherhood—when and if they so chose.

The net result is that it is now fair to ask who speaks most powerfully for the Brotherhood—the Egyptian branch and its present Supreme Guide Muhammad Akif, or the broader movement whose most visible leader and spokesman is Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, an Egyptian to be sure but one who lives in Qatar and whose writ seems to run more broadly from the Gulf to London? We will necessarily return to this question in the course of the conference.

But let me now return to the Brotherhood's founding phase and, in particular, to the aims, views and activities of Hassan al-Banna. Afterwards I will discuss in more detail the second, crisis phase and to the role of Qutb and Hudaybi. I will conclude with some remarks and reflections about the cumulative legacy of both and, in particular, the relationship of Qutb to al-Banna.

In speaking of the Brotherhood, I have used the phrase “the first organized form of Salafism,” which stresses the fact of its being an organization. I have done so for a reason. Strictly speaking, al-Banna was not the founder of Salafism. That distinction belongs to Muhammad Abduh, another Egyptian who was the Shaykh of al-Azhar, and to some of his colleagues, students and disciples such as Said Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Rashid Rida.

For greater clarity about the Brotherhood, I need to say a few things about Abduh. He was preoccupied with the decline of Islamic vitality and its corollary—the subjugation of Egypt and other parts of the Muslim world to European colonialism. In seeking to revive both the practice of Islam and its fortunes, Abduh argued that the accumulated Islamic tradition stood in the way of this task. It was necessary to prune that tradition, if not clear it away altogether. It was necessary to go back to Islam's founding, to the generation of the Salaf, and rebuild Islamic society on that basis. Thus was the term Salafism coined, at least in its modern sense.

It should be noted and emphasized that Abduh hoped that Islam would not only be purified, but also be able to profitably adapt to modern progress and rationalism. He hoped to achieve his ends by reforming traditional Islamic education and the leadership it produced—a reform of the *ulema* or Muslim jurists. But he did not undertake to found an organization that would advance these objectives, and most of his students and disciples similarly focused on intellectual reform.

Al-Banna was in some ways the heir to Abduh's perspective, especially in regard to taking one's bearings from the Salaf and to resisting the West. But in other respects his career and work represent a major and even radical departure from

Abduh—a departure involving a series of innovations that has come to define the Brotherhood and the Islamist movement more generally ever since.

What was the character of that departure and whence did it arise? Speaking most generally, one may say that al-Banna aimed at and succeeded in founding a utopian mass movement. It wedded a utopian vision to a strategic and tactical program of very considerable complexity designed to implement that vision. This utopianism is summed up in the motto that al-Banna ultimately supplied to the Brotherhood: “Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our Leader. The Quran is our Constitution. Jihad is our way. Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope.”

This remains the motto of the Brotherhood to this day and is well known to any moderately well-informed Islamist. It defines the framework or universe of discourse within which Islamism has operated ever since, especially in regard to three themes. The first is the possibility and desirability of guiding all the worldly affairs of Muslims more-or-less exclusively on the basis of the Quran and the model of the Prophet as set forth in the Hadith. In shorthand and in practice, this means the application of *sharia* to all aspects of life and the political empowerment of Islam in all its dimensions. It is a proposal for what has come to be called the Islamic state.

In one sense this is no more than a restatement of a traditional Muslim perspective. But al-Banna gave it a novel, modern and ideological twist. Another somewhat later Brotherhood formula conveys the same idea: Islam is a *Nizam al Kamil wa Shamil*—a complete and perfect system. One may indeed suggest that al-Banna was the first within an Islamic context to employ ideology in the modern and strict sense of the term. At all events his ideology, as expressed in this motto, certainly was and is the most influential in the history of the Islamist movement.

The second distinctive theme in al-Banna’s original motto is the invocation of jihad. The third is the invocation of the ideal of martyrdom. Though both these themes indeed have a basis in tradition, the motto effectively brings them into the foreground in an ideological fashion and thus gives them somewhat greater weight than other aspects of Islam.

This is not to deny two important, if quite different, contentions made about this ideological formula. The first is that it is exceptionally simple, as are the relatively few works that al-Banna himself wrote elaborating his ideological views. This is especially true when compared with the work of such later Islamist figures as Saïd Qutb. The second is that later Islamists have rung many variations on these themes—especially the jihadists, who have done so by emphasizing jihad and martyrdom almost to the exclusion of everything else.

Though this motto’s significance will be discussed further, it now suffices to say that—despite the simplicity of al-Banna’s formula, or rather because of it—it still manages to define the general contours of the Islamist universe. Most importantly,

it expresses the utopian spirit that informs the Islamist movement down to the present day. And it is this utopian spirit, inspired by the hope of recreating the lost paradise present at the founding of Islam and the time of the Salaf, that gives Islamism its radical character, whether in action or mere thought and speech. Al-Banna is the effective founder of this utopianism, and its radical spirit is a continuing force within the modern Muslim world.

However, al-Banna was not merely interested in elaborating utopian visions and dreams. He wanted to create a movement that would have a concrete impact on the Muslim world, beginning with Egypt and then radiating out from it, and the provision of a utopian vision in an ideological form was arguably a necessary condition for such a movement. A mass movement required a vision that could be readily understood by and inspire large numbers of ordinary Muslims.

Al-Banna's formulations supplied that and, at the same time, entailed a vast simplification of the approach and reflections of the founding fathers of Salafism like Abduh. The founding of the Brotherhood involved other related differences as well. I will discuss some of them.

PERHAPS FIRST WAS THE NOTION OF THE ENGAGEMENT OF THE MASS OF Muslims as such. Historians of the Brotherhood have sometimes linked this with the only ostensible premodern Muslim equivalent—the mass membership of Muslims in Sufi brotherhoods. Though al-Banna's personal biography suggests that the Sufi model may well have influenced him, his focus on a mass movement derived more directly from the somewhat radical implication he drew from the very notion of Salafism. For Salafism was a critique of the whole apparatus of classical and medieval learning and scholarship. By praising the Salaf, it fastened on a period when the sole resources of the most eminent Muslims were the Quran and the example of the Prophet, and a fundamental idea emerged: if this was good enough for the Salaf, there was no reason why it should not be sufficient today. The Quran and Hadith—or, perhaps more properly, selected Hadith—were, moreover, potentially accessible to large numbers of ordinary Muslims. In short, it simplified the intellectual tasks of contemporary Muslims. (Such simplification remains a prominent feature of Islamism.)

A second and important corollary to the idea of a mass movement was the propriety of lay rather than clerical leadership. Although al-Banna received a traditional religious education, he was a layman in Muslim terms rather than a jurist or a cleric. And although he sometimes maintained cordial relations with leading figures of al-Azhar, the most famous Sunni theological institution in Cairo, he did not look to them for leadership. He implicitly upheld the propriety of Muslim laymen to lead the movement for Islamic reform. This has become a key, not to say fundamental,

feature of Islamism ever since. Indeed, it has been carried to such an extreme that today major figures within Salafism—bin Laden, for example—have appropriated the privileges of the traditional jurist to issue legal rulings in the form of *fatwas*.

Both of these features—a mass movement directed by lay leadership—stemmed from al-Banna’s general view of what was required to reform Islam and, in particular, to reform Muslim politics so that it could meet contemporary challenges. The greatest of these, of course, was the challenge of the West. Al-Banna believed that the Muslim states could not be put on the right course and achieve their vocation without the reform of Muslim society as a whole, beginning with its individual members and their families and then moving on to larger social formations.

This led to the so-called “gradualist” approach in which the reform of society was seen to be the necessary condition for the ultimate political empowerment of Islam. Practically speaking, the overall goal was the creation of an alternative society. The expectation was that, when such a society became sufficiently massive, political control and transformation would be easily within reach—both in Egypt and all other places in the Muslim world to which this model might be extended. At that juncture the Quran would truly become the “Constitution” in the full sense.

To accomplish the goal of mass transformation, al-Banna stipulated and organized two general lines of approach. The first was recruitment and education—in Arabic, *dawa* and *tarbiyah*. The second was the creation of alternative social and even economic institutions.

TO ACHIEVE THESE OVERALL GOALS AND UNDERTAKE THE PARTICULAR TASKS they required, al-Banna devised an elaborate organizational structure that included the creation of many local branches of the Brotherhood; membership divisions for adults, youth and women; continuing requirements for educational formation; and specialized groups devoted to particular tasks. He himself stood at its peak as Supreme Guide, which remains the title of the head of the Egyptian Brotherhood to this day and even, in a manner of speaking, of the movement as a whole. In short, he created a fully elaborated modern movement.

And he was remarkably successful. In little more than a decade—that is, by the beginning of World War II—this was indeed a mass movement and, as such, a powerful force in Egyptian society and even politics. It is estimated that its membership grew from about 1000 in the late 1920’s to 200,000 by 1940. It is a testament to his great talents and dedication to his goals.

It would be profitable to look at all this in detail. But in light of the limits of our time, it is more urgent to ask what led al-Banna in these directions. What led him, so to speak, to the “refounding” of Salafism? This will also permit us to address two

additional and important related questions: How has that founding stood the test of time? How does it impact the subsequent history of the Brotherhood?

The simple answer to the first question—the question of al-Banna’s reasons or motives—is to be found in his analysis of the historical circumstances of his time. These were in some important respects different than those of Abduh, but they are not so different from our own. The most massive difference from Abduh’s time was the total collapse of the Ottoman Empire, brought on by its defeat in World War I, and the subsequent abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate under the newly established Republic of Turkey. While Abduh had surely lived in a period of Muslim decline, al-Banna was obliged to face its absolute lowest point. After World War I the vast majority of Muslims found themselves under foreign rule, a totally unprecedented situation in the long history of Islam.

Similarly unprecedented, due to the end of the Ottoman Empire and Caliphate, was the lack of any vestige of an authentic Islamic political tradition. That tradition had been imperial in character and had stretched back to Islam’s very founding in one form or another. For obvious reasons the Muslims who had come under foreign rule—in Egypt and everywhere else—were bound to object to their servitude and to seek their independence. This objective was vigorously pursued in the 1920s and ‘30s, and was largely accomplished after World War II with the establishment of independent nation states.

For al-Banna, however, this response presented additional complications and difficulties. For the pursuit of independence was framed in terms derived from European political history and political thought. Both the creation of nation states and the organization of their politics reflected Western-style institutions and parties. Al-Banna was obliged to ask himself whether this was Islamic, and his answer was no. Though it was of course necessary to secure Egypt’s liberation from Britain, doing so through the medium of Western conceptions was only to deepen the West’s domination over Islam. Indeed, it made matters worse because it led Muslims to internalize Western ways. (The upper classes were particularly enthusiastic about all things Western.)

In light of this analysis, al-Banna opposed himself to nationalism and its various accessories, like political parties. Instead he championed the Umma, the totality of the community of Muslims. It was the Umma to which Muslims owed their primary loyalty, especially since the historical slogan of Islam had been *tawhid*—unity or unification. But to promote this concept and give it force, a novel organization was needed—a movement of the sort I described earlier.

This did not mean that al-Banna was completely averse to involving himself and his movement in politics. But he conceived of that involvement in starkly different terms than did other political forces. In particular, he was opposed to the transformation

of the Brotherhood into a political party. The Brotherhood was to remain a “movement.” Let me quote from al-Banna himself:

We are not a political party although politics in accordance with Islam is deeply rooted in our ideas; and we are not a welfare organization nor a sports team, although welfare and sports are part of our method; we are not any of these because these are all forms, techniques or means designed for specific objectives and for a limited period of time.

We are, however, an idea and a creed, a system and a syllabus, which is why we are not bounded by a place or a group of people and can never be until the Day of Judgment, because we are the system of Allah and the way of His Prophet.

We are the followers of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, and the raisers of his flag as they raised it and like them, popularizers of his way and the memorizers of the Quran as they memorized it and the preachers of his *dawa* as they preached it, which is why we are a mercy for mankind.

How has this definition and program fared over time? In many respects, it has been remarkably long-lived. The Brotherhood remains a system and syllabus—a political, social and educational movement. Above all, it remains a movement, resisting to this day any attempt to call it a political party.

But as I indicated earlier, the Brotherhood has also been affected by major events that occurred after al-Banna’s death, particularly during the period of repression after Egypt’s 1952 revolution. This repression naturally affected the institutional side of the Brotherhood. But in the long term its biggest impact was on the other main element of al-Banna’s legacy—his utopian vision and its implications. I’ll now turn to this phase.

Initially, the July 23 revolution in Egypt seemed promising from the Brotherhood’s point of view. The Brotherhood had been in contact with some of the officers involved from 1940 on, often through the offices of Anwar Sadat. Brotherhood volunteers had fought side by side with the Egyptian armed forces in their invasion of Israel in the 1948 war. Above all, these new rulers were not the Western lackeys that the former ruling elite had been considered to be. They were true members of the Umma, that is, “true” Muslims.

This promising beginning did not last long, however. By 1954 it was over. Nasser undertook to ruthlessly suppress the movement. Its leaders and many members were arrested; some were brutally tortured; most were confined in concentration camps for many years. In the mid-1960s there was a brief amnesty, but very quickly

some who had been released were rearrested and executed, including Said Qutb. As I mentioned earlier, others managed to leave Egypt and reestablish themselves elsewhere. A few like Said Ramadan, al-Banna's son-in-law, managed to settle in Europe; many more emigrated to Saudi Arabia and deepened earlier connections with it.

This period or phase only ended with the death of Nasser and his replacement by Anwar Sadat. Sadat released those still imprisoned and even lent the Brotherhood some support as part of his program to undo the Nasserization of Egypt and to liberate it from effective Soviet control.

It is hardly surprising that the experience of repression would have a major impact on the Brotherhood—its views, strategy and tactics—especially as it no longer had its founder to guide it. But it was not merely the fact of repression that made such a huge difference; it was its source and manner—who the oppressors were, their aims and how they proceeded. It was, as I said earlier, a trauma of enormous proportions.

For these were men in whom the Brotherhood had placed some hope. They were Muslims or had been thought to be. The flip side of their suppression of the Brotherhood, moreover, was their establishment of a single mass party: they undertook to create a mass movement of their own that would govern and inform every aspect of Egyptian life. Partly for that reason, perhaps, their repression of the Brotherhood was far more brutal than anything it had suffered under the previous regime, which had in its own time been so hated and despised.

How was the Brotherhood to understand this new situation and how was it to revive the prospects of Islamism and Islamic reform? One simple question and answer, provided by Said Qutb, has since become famous and with good reason. The question—even if only implicit—was as follows: are these rulers Muslims? Given their ambition to recreate Egyptian society, was Egypt even Muslim? Qutb's answer was no. Indeed, things had reached such a pass that, for Qutb, the most appropriate term for the present situation was *jahillya*, or ignorance. This was the term traditionally used to describe the condition of Arabia and Arabs prior to the mission of Mohammed. It was the period of idolatrous ignorance that Mohammed's mission had come to reform and replace with the founding of Islam.

Using this term was potentially explosive. It effectively declared that the Muslim world had returned to the situation of the seventh century—a situation that combined great danger with great opportunity. One might, in a way, truly walk in the path of the Salaf. But the demands were unusually high.

This analysis had wide-ranging implications, some of which Qutb drew himself. These included a new emphasis on jihad and martyrdom. (Qutb himself suffered this fate.) Another related implication, more fully elaborated by others, was the declaration of Muslim rulers and others as *kufir* (infidels) and liable, as such, to death. Both have informed the views and approaches of later Islamist groups—including,

of course, al-Qaeda. They live under the dispensation provided by the invocation of *jahillya*. As we learned on 9/11, we now do as well.

But this will be elaborated by others; I want to close by assessing the impact of Qutb and this second phase on the Brotherhood itself. As I said earlier, the repression ultimately produced two views—that of Qutb and that of Hudaybi. Each reflected one of the Brotherhood’s two most fundamental elements, which were its utopianism and its creation of a mass movement. For al-Banna these two elements went together as a harmonious and even seamless whole. But the Nasserite repression deprived al-Banna’s successors of that luxury, and they were forced to face painful choices. Most crucial for Hudaybi was the maintenance of the movement’s institutional capital. Qutb, however, believed that fidelity to al-Banna must begin with his utopian vision and its proper intellectual and practical interpretation in vastly changed circumstances.

It is useful to wonder what al-Banna would have thought of these responses. It would no doubt have been difficult for him to put at further risk the institutions he had built. On the other hand it is not difficult to imagine that he would have had sympathy for Qutb’s inclination to submit the new circumstances to a trenchant historical and ideological analysis and even for the answer he provided.

For the question that Qutb raised in his own time was similar to, or a variant of, the one posed by al-Banna in his. Is the current political order Islamic or not? Is nationalism or the nation state Islamic? Al-Banna’s answer was no. And one might say that the fully nationalist regime of Nasser vindicated al-Banna’s rejection of this approach. It is true that al-Banna found a way of working within the pre-Nasser situation, but we will never know how he would have dealt with the new regime.

Some remarks he made on the subject of jihad are revealing and go as follows:

Islam is concerned with the question of jihad and the drafting and the mobilization of the entire Umma into one body to defend the right cause with all its strength (more) than any other ancient or modern system of living, whether religious or civil. The verses of the Quran and the Sunnah of Mohammed ... are overflowing with all these noble ideals and they summon people in general (with the most eloquent expression and the clearest exposition) to jihad, to warfare, to the armed forces, and all means of land and sea fighting. Such was the example set by the early generations of Muslims. My brothers, how do we compare with them?

To repeat, we do not know how al-Banna would have responded to the new situation of the 1950s and ‘60s. What we do know is that, at the end of the 1960s, his general

view of the inadequacy and illegitimacy of nationalism was apparently vindicated by the disgrace of the nationalist regimes, beginning with Nasserism. It was then that the cause of Islamism first enunciated by al-Banna came to be ever more widely appreciated and embraced. It was the true beginning of the reign of al-Banna's utopian vision.

And along with that vision al-Banna bequeathed the question just quoted: "Such was the example set by the early generations of Muslims. My brothers, how do we compare with them?" Salafism or Islamism necessarily revolves around that question. In the discussions that follow, we will see how that question has been answered in the era since Said Qutb.

The Brotherhood in the Salafist Universe

by Gilles Kepel

NINETEEN-SEVENTY-ONE WAS A WATERSHED YEAR IN THE HISTORY of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamist movement at large. The Egyptian ruler Gamal Abdel Nasser had died the year before, and his successor, Anwar Sadat, adopted an altogether more conciliatory approach toward the Muslim Brotherhood. This effectively brought the era of the Nasserist repression of the Islamist movement in the 1950s and '60s to a formal close. Although the Brotherhood had been almost entirely destroyed during Nasser's reign, the era produced several important outcomes that helped to shape the Brotherhood's rebound and the future development of the Islamist movement as a whole.

First of all, Nasser's brutal policies helped to elevate those Brotherhood leaders whom Nasser had imprisoned and hanged to the status of Muslim martyrs. These Brothers became widely revered as the first martyrs of the post-colonial Muslim world, and after 1971, this helped to improve the Brotherhood movement's political prospects as a whole. Said Qutb, who is still often referred to as "the martyr Said Qutb," is especially significant in this regard. His martyrdom automatically conferred upon him enormous respect, and this in turn helped the Brotherhood tremendously in their efforts to reach out to ordinary Muslims and to build political legitimacy.

Nasser's authoritarian policies also helped to de-legitimize the secular Arab regimes that had been formed after the end of the colonial period. The fact that many of the Brothers were sent to prison or concentration camps and then executed came to be seen widely as a metaphor: Arab society was imprisoned by secular Arab rulers, who were betraying all the popular ideals of post-colonial independence.

Qutb, for example, was incarcerated in Nasser's prisons until 1965 and then, after a brief reprieve, jailed yet again and hanged in 1966. This sort of betrayal of a Muslim martyr lent new credibility to the Brotherhood's claims that secular Arab regimes did not deserve popular support.

Another important outcome of the Nasserite era was that it sent many Egyptian Brothers into exile. The Egyptians fled to a number of countries—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and others on the Arabian Peninsula; Pakistan and Afghanistan in Southwest Asia; and countries in North Africa and Europe. This Brotherhood Diaspora facilitated not only the spread of the movement's ideology, but also the establishment of its very strong international networks. In addition to *dawa* or missionary networks, the Brothers built financial, educational and university networks as well. In this way, the era of Nasserite repression actually fostered the growth of the Brotherhood's "world web."

And yet, despite these improvements in the Brotherhood's overall political prospects after Nasser, the Brotherhood also had new challengers to contend with after 1971—including Islamists themselves. From its founding in the late 1920s to the early days of Nasser's regime, the Muslim Brotherhood was the single most prominent Islamist organization. With virtually no organized competition or alternatives, the Brotherhood was seen as the quintessential point of reference among Islamist sympathizers. But as the Brotherhood was being crushed in Egypt, it came under increasing criticism from within its own ranks and from Islamists outside, and was held accountable for its failures. Why had the Brotherhood been unable to resist Nasser's oppression when they were such a strong mass movement in the early 1950s? What kind of mistakes had they made? Wasn't it time for the Islamist movement to find and adopt a new course in order to overcome its shortcomings?

These questions created deep disputes and, ultimately, a schism within the Brotherhood movement itself that came increasingly to the fore after 1971. On the one hand were those who supported the more radical ideas of Said Qutb, and on the other, those who supported the more traditional, politically-oriented views of Hasan Hudaybi, the Brotherhood's Supreme Guide in the 1960s. That ideological schism, combined with the general autonomy that the Brotherhood's international branches gained after its central leadership in Egypt was crushed by Nasser, created even more rifts within the Islamist movement, and led to the formation of a diverse new range of organizations.

Today, the Brotherhood itself can no longer be considered the single, unified entity that it once had been before Nasser's repression. The divergent roles of the Brotherhood's branches in Egypt, Syria, Palestine, and a number of other countries attest to this fact. Several Islamic political movements—the AKP (Justice and Development Party) in Turkey, the Justice and Development Party in Morocco, the Algerian Hamas

movement, among others— are ideologically and politically indebted to the Brotherhood, though they don't necessarily claim the lineage and can not be considered "true green" Brothers. Similarly, the jihadist wing of the Salafist movement, which is today led by al-Qaeda, is clearly an ideological offspring of the Brotherhood, though they have emphatically repudiated their connections to their parent body. To understand this diversification within the Brotherhood and the Islamic movement as a whole, it is important to understand the new political realities and dynamics that emerged in post-Nasserist Arab societies after 1971.

The Islamist Revival

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT EGYPT IN THE EARLY 1970S WAS STILL IN a state of shock from its devastating defeat in the Six Day War of 1967. Among Islamists, it was commonly felt that this humiliation was a punishment visited on Egypt by God for its persecution of Islam and martyrs like Said Qutb. More broadly, reality had put the nationalist and socialist ideas that had held sway in Nasser's era on trial, and those secular ideals had been judged wanting. This produced a sort of ideological vacuum in Egypt that the Brotherhood felt assured that it could fill.

An additional boon to the Brotherhood came from the sweeping policy reforms implemented by Nasser's successor, Anwar Sadat. In 1971, Sadat launched his "rectification revolution"—which is, of course, an oxymoron. At the time, Sadat was intent on weakening Nasser's pro-Soviet entourage so that he could disentangle Egypt from its existing alliances in the Middle East, curry favor with the United States, and seek rapprochement between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Sadat saw the anti-communist Brotherhood as a potential conservative ally in these efforts, and he sought to win their support.

Sadat freed most of the Brothers from prison, and many of them soon wound up on university campuses, where the government granted them relative freedom to organize and propagate their message, as Sadat needed conservative allies to help him break the bones of the left in the academy. Sadat also sent for Omar al-Telmesani, a lawyer who was then the Brothers' Supreme Guide, and offered to give him a license to publish the Brotherhood's long-suppressed monthly bulletin, *Call to Islam*. The Egyptian Mukhabarat, or intelligence organization, also subsequently befriended the Brotherhood, and in addition to receiving support from the state apparatus, they were freed to mobilize new funding channels in the Gulf.

Taken together, these activities helped bring about the spirit of religious conservatism that characterized Egypt in the first half of the 1970s. This popular embrace of Islamic sentiment and sensibilities in the wake of Nasserism's collapse was in fact

due to many factors and dynamics, although the Brotherhood played an important role in spearheading and shaping the tenor of the revival. On university campuses, for instance, the Brotherhood not only opposed the leftists, but also advocated, among other things, for the inclusion of prayers during classes, the wearing of veils by female students, and the segregation of classes by sex.

In this, the Brotherhood's new lease on life unleashed far more than Egypt's new rulers had originally intended. Despite this, Sadat's regime persisted in the belief that it could ultimately outsmart, manipulate and co-opt the Brothers to serve its own, very different interests. That view rubbed off on other regimes as well, and in the early 1970s, pro-Western regimes in the Middle East showed little hostility toward the Muslim Brotherhood. This favorable disposition toward the Brotherhood developed even more strongly in the 1980s, when Gulf countries and the CIA provided the financial fuel for the jihad in Afghanistan. That effort was ideologically led, devised, heralded and championed by Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian from Jenin who became one of the most important exponents of the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology in the late twentieth century, as well as the intellectual father of the contemporary jihadist movement.

The Brotherhood's Standing in Saudi Arabia

AFTER BEING DRIVEN OUT OF EGYPT IN THE 1950S AND '60S, MANY BROTHERS found shelter in Saudi Arabia. The Saud family establishment was extremely hesitant and cautious vis-à-vis the Brotherhood, and they were never permitted access to the core of Saudi society, and to deal openly with religious issues. This was seen as the exclusive domain of the Wahhabis, who had formed an alliance with the ruling family.

But the Saudi elites nonetheless saw the Brothers as useful because—to put it bluntly—they could read and write. While the Wahhabi ulama were ill at ease in dealing with the modern world, the Brothers were well traveled and relatively sophisticated. They knew foreign languages and, unlike the Wahhabi ulama, were aware that the earth was not flat. The Brothers had been in jail, had political experience, and were skilled in modern polemics that resonated widely with ordinary people. Most of all, they had stood courageously against Saudi Arabia's archenemies, the communists and secularists, and were eager to continue the fight. At the behest of the World Muslim League—which Saudi Arabia created in 1962 to counter Nasser's attempts to internationalize Al Azhar University and promote the view that Islam was compatible with socialism—the Brothers argued in a variety of public forums that communism and socialism were totally antithetical to Islam.

As in Egypt, the Brothers became especially active in the field of education, which was considered by Saudi and Gulf rulers to be innocuous at the time. Like many political leaders, the Arabian rulers looked down their noses at academics because they didn't deal with serious people, only with students. But as we know, those students eventually grow up, and some come to power. This is exactly what happened in Saudi Arabia. Most notoriously, the exiled Egyptian Muhammad Qutb, Said Qutb's brother, was a prominent member of the faculty at the University of Medina and also at King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah. He was the supervisor of Safar al-Hawali, who would later emerge as a key leader of the *Sahwa*, or "Awakening," shaykhs, a religious movement known for its open support of rebellion against the Saudi monarchy and support of al-Qaeda.

More broadly speaking, a cross-fertilization of ideas took place between the exiled Brotherhood and the austere teachings of what might be described as the Wahhabi rank and file. That interaction, combined with the new organizational and financial backing of groups like the Muslim World League, would eventually lead to the rise of a new, internationalist form of Salafism. The Brotherhood played a crucial role in shaping this new ideological universe, which is now, in important ways, the dominant cultural force in the Arab Middle East.

The Influence of Said Qutb

IN THIS NEW, POST-NASSER SALAFIST UNIVERSE, BROTHERHOOD THINKERS LIKE Said Qutb became—and remain to this day—extremely important influences, whereas men like Hasan Hidaybi have been nearly completely forgotten. Hidaybi's legacy may perhaps still be seen in some of the more pragmatic aspects and trends of the Brotherhood's political organization, but today, his writings are seldom read and no one cares about them.

In the early 1970s, the Brotherhood's establishment in Egypt by and large responded warmly to Sadat's conciliatory policies and efforts to court them. These Brothers were pursuing a reformist agenda, hoping that access to the regime would allow them to manipulate it from the inside and eventually cause it to fall. But the memory of Nasser's repression was still strong in the minds of many, and many Brothers saw political participation as a foolish strategy that Sadat would ultimately win. These Brothers looked to Qutb for an alternate vision.

Said Qutb was executed before he was able to explain his ideas fully, and because of this, his writings remain open to considerable interpretation. His main contribution was to insist that the contemporary world could rightly be declared *jahilliya*—that is, synonymous with the pre-Islamic world of ignorance in Arabia that was

destroyed by the Prophet Muhammad. Qutb claimed that modern *jahillya* society must also be destroyed so that true Islam could once again be built on its ruins.

Qutb's teachings inspired many of the Islamist groups that emerged in Egypt and elsewhere in the Muslim world in the 1970s, and especially those whose leaders came up through the universities. Among those groups was the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, which was responsible for the assassination of Sadat in 1981. One of the key figures in that group was, of course, Ayman al-Zawahiri, although he did not actually favor Sadat's assassination at the time.

Zawahiri is the Egyptian-born scion of very prominent aristocratic families on both his maternal and paternal sides. On his mother's side, his great uncle was the founder of the Arab League, and members of the family had married into Saudi royalty. On his father's side, several relatives were prominent academics, and a great-uncle had held one of the leading chairs at Al Azhar University. From an early age, Zawahiri himself was very much taken with Qutb's ideas, and one of his uncles was actually Qutb's lawyer. Zawahiri and his young associates believed that Qutb's ideas had to be developed into a worldview—one that would have nothing to do with the Brothers' political activities and purported compromises with the *jahillya* state. After Sadat was assassinated, they spent time in jail, but once freed, they fled to Saudi Arabia where they caught connecting flights to Peshawar.

The Afghan Crucible

IN AFGHANISTAN ALL THE DIFFERENT FACTIONS WITHIN THE ISLAMIST MOVEMENT, which had been smashed open by Nasser's repression and unable to reconcile under Sadat, found common ground under the banner of armed jihad. The ultimate success of the jihad in Afghanistan dealt serious blows not only to the communist world, but also helped to silence Ayatollah Khomeini's claim to hegemony in the Muslim world after the Iranian Islamic revolution of 1979.

By the end of the 1980s, therefore, the Brothers and other Islamist radicals who were in Afghanistan were convinced that the sky was the limit. The Brothers had invested heavily in Afghanistan—sending university students, doctors from their medical associations, money, weapons—and they cherished their part in the victory. The Soviet Union had been defeated and its empire destroyed. As some saw it, it was now even possible to turn against the other enemy: the United States.

But the old questions remained: how should one proceed? Should the success and impetus of the Afghan jihad be used to bring more pressure to bear on the regimes at home from within? Or, in the spirit of Qutb's vision of struggling against *jahillya*, should an effort be made to duplicate the Afghan model and develop guerrilla cells

in Egypt, Algeria, Bosnia, Chechnya, and wherever else there was an opportunity to topple a regime in the name of Islam?

These were open questions at the time, and remain very much so to this day. On the one hand, the radicals insisted that the Brothers had sold out, and that there was no reason to have anything to do with them. Zawahiri, for instance, wrote a long book in the early 1990s entitled *Al-Hasad Al Mur Muslimin (The Bitter Harvest)*, that very strongly criticized the Muslim Brotherhood's participation in politics. This strategy, Zawahiri argued, had led nowhere for sixty years, and it was pointless for the Islamic movement to continue along this path.

Just as the Brotherhood was rejected by the more radical Islamists, they were not embraced by secular Arab rulers and the West as they had been in the past. Whereas during the Cold War the Brothers tried to extend their hands to the Arab regimes and present themselves as the bulwark against both leftists and radicals, a new game had started. The Soviet Union had disappeared, as had Communism and the leftist threat. In the 1990s, the question in the West became how to deal with the Brothers: should they be enlisted to help Arab regimes, as well as the United States and Europe, to contend with the Islamist radicals? Or, on the contrary, should they be perceived as part and parcel of the threat? What, exactly, is the place of the Brotherhood in the Salafist universe that emerged since 1971?

The MB Today and the Lessons of Palestine

HOW, THEN, DOES THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD NOW FUNCTION IN TERMS OF VIOLENCE, politics, and the like? To what extent is it different from more radical groups, and to what extent is it similar? Hamas provides an interesting example. Because of the weakness of the Brotherhood in the wake of Nasser's persecution, most of the local factions gained autonomy. Hamas, for example, while technically the Brotherhood's Palestinian branch, makes its own decisions. Hamas has gained such preeminence within the Islamist world that it no longer needs to take orders from the Egyptians, though it may accept the Egyptian Brothers' financial help.

The Hamas leaders Ismail Haniyeh and Mahmoud Zahar have recently made it clear that their movement in Gaza focuses first and foremost on national Palestinian issues. Despite paying lip service to the problem of Muslim persecution everywhere, Hamas is not at all interested in the global issues of the Muslim Umma that dominate al-Qaeda's ideology.

The strong national agenda of the Brotherhood's Palestinian branch led the organization to clash with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and the two sides struggled to gain hegemony over the Palestinian political field. But before the first

Intifada of 1987, the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine caused Israel no real concern. On the contrary, the Israelis appreciated the Brothers because they offered an alternative to the PLO, and because they seemed to be primarily concerned with missionary activities and social service. They were perceived favorably, as they had been by Sadat early on, as enemies of their enemies. In the case of the Israelis, those enemies were Fatah and the PLO.

When the first Intifada started in December 1987, however, the Brothers created Hamas and took part as an opponent of Israel. This new incarnation of the Palestinian branch of the Brotherhood now advocated violence, but its primary goal remained the ouster of the PLO from power within Palestine. This became a rather long campaign, and it is evident in hindsight that the Oslo peace process was actually an attempt by both the PLO and the Israelis to marginalize Hamas—to keep it from becoming a part of the ruling Palestine establishment. The failure of the Oslo peace process and the second Intifada put this matter on the table again, of course, and ultimately led to the political failure of the PLO and to Hamas's political victory in the elections of late January 2006.

These developments have focused attention on a quintessential contradiction within the Muslim Brotherhood movement: Hamas is a group that has used violence, such as suicide bombings, to gain political clout but has nevertheless successfully fielded candidates in legitimate elections. The effect of Hamas's actions on the Islamist movement as a whole is striking. Illustrative of the reaction are Zawahiri's videos, which convey absolute fury with Hamas for taking part in and winning elections. He and others say that Hamas represents a betrayal of the Islamic cause, and have argued that Hamas's path would lead only to more catastrophes for the Islamic movement.

The Brotherhood in Crisis

WHILE THE BROTHERHOOD FACES BIG QUESTIONS IN THIS NEW ERA, SO DOES the West. It must decide if Hamas is part of the problem in Palestine and Israel, or part of the solution. How should Western countries, which supported the Brothers in the past when they fought against the leftists, now see Hamas? How should they deal with a movement soaked in the blood of so many Israelis and other Palestinians as well? In the wake of the crisis that left the Gaza Strip entirely in the hands of Hamas and the West Bank more or less under the control of the PLO and Israel, these questions will not go away.

During a recent trip to Gaza, I interviewed Mahmoud Zahar and asked him how he saw the future of Palestine. Five years ago, in response to the same question, he

had told me that the whole of Palestine would one day be Islamic; the Jews would either be driven out or be dead. This time around, however, Zahar insisted that he had become more pragmatic. He now recognized that Israel was indeed a fact and had to be dealt with. Hamas wants, he said, to be a part of any negotiations.

No one is obliged to believe him, of course. Some will surely argue that Zahar is insincere and simply compelled to say this because of Hamas's current position of weakness. But I think that such a statement is nonetheless significant because of what it reveals about the Brotherhood, not only in Palestine, but also in Egypt, Turkey and other countries—namely, that the Brothers' own political practice now stands in contradiction to its ideology. The Brothers are torn between radical politics, which have been somewhat discredited by al-Qaeda's failure to move forward, and a mode of dealing with the West and with the democratic system that they fear will destroy them.

In the 1930s and 40s, the Brotherhood was a cohesive movement with a coherent ideology. It had a very clear set of ideas that it sought to implement, and this attracted many followers. I would contend that today the doubts and contradictions arising from the Brothers' loss of a clear message, as well as from the divisions within the larger Islamist movement, have relegated the Brotherhood to a position of political and ideological weakness. In light of the Brothers' apparent strength in electoral terms, this conclusion may seem paradoxical. But a sound analysis of the Brothers' current thinking and activities is necessary to understand fully the reasons for this weakness.

The Crisis of the Arab Brotherhood

by Israel Elad Altman

PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT IN THE RECENT HISTORY of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) movement has been its adoption of participatory politics as a major strategy. The Brotherhood's engagement in the political process has been accompanied by the embrace of a new, pro-democracy narrative in which the movement claims to seek the creation not of a religious state, but of a "civil state with an Islamic source of authority." In some countries, the Brotherhood's embrace of electoral politics has also led to the formation of political parties.

In light of these developments, it has been argued that the Brotherhood will become moderated as it integrates more fully into the political process, and conversely, more radicalized, should it be excluded. But has the MB's own track record provided any evidence to support this hypothesis? Has the Brotherhood's participation in politics brought about a fundamental ideological change in the movement, and led it to alter its radical nature and objectives?

Two cases, both of which will be examined in this paper, shed some light on these questions: that of Egypt, where the Brotherhood is officially outlawed, and that of Jordan, where the Brotherhood is legal and has formed its own political party. In both cases, the Brotherhood's embrace of politics has rewarded it with some considerable electoral successes in the recent past. At the same time, those achievements have also compelled the Egyptian and Jordanian regimes to move firmly to deny the Brotherhood new electoral gains and to try and reduce its political role. The Jordanian Brotherhood has complained that the government rigged recent elections, causing the Brotherhood's party to perform poorly. And yet, despite these claims, Jordanian experts say the Brotherhood's electoral setbacks can not be ascribed entirely to

governmental manipulation alone. Instead, it seems that the Brotherhood has not been able to persuade the masses of its ideological agenda.

Meanwhile, Hamas's victory in the January 2006 legislative elections didn't help the group accomplish its own professed goals of liberating and Islamizing Palestine. Instead, Hamas ended up politically isolated in Gaza. Moreover, in Morocco, the Brotherhood-inspired Justice and Development Party did not perform as well as expected in the legislative elections of September 2007, which were relatively free and fair compared to elections in other Arab countries.

All of this suggests that the Brotherhood's political strategy has recently come up against some genuine limits—including limits imposed not only by states to curb the MB's political ascendancy, but also limits to the Brotherhood's own ability to mobilize voters on the basis of its slogan "Islam is the solution." The more the MB has advanced in the polls, and the more the possibility of its assuming power loomed on the horizon, the more the movement was expected, at home and abroad, to offer pragmatic solutions to people's problems and to make the sort of compromises required of political parties in a pluralistic political order. But the Brotherhood has not met those expectations, and as a result, has suffered in the political arena in recent times.

It appears, then, as the Egyptian analyst Khalil al-Anani has recently put it,¹ that "the Islamist Spring" may well be coming to a close. But if the MB's political strategy has reached a dead end, what will its various branches choose to do now and in the future? Hamas provided one response to this dilemma when it took over Gaza by force. That response may well be a model that other Brotherhood branches will follow in the future. On the other end of the spectrum, however, is the example offered by the Islamic AKP (Justice and Development Party) in Turkey, which won victories in the 2002 and 2007 legislative elections—but only after distancing itself from traditional Brotherhood ideology. This achievement suggests that an Islamic political party can assume power and keep it in a civil state, so long as it is willing to accept the sovereignty of that political order and reject the ideological objectives of establishing an Islamic state. But is the MB at large willing to take this step? On this question, the views of the Brotherhood regarding the AKP's model and success are especially revealing, and will also be examined in this paper.

Between Dawa and Siyasa

THE BROTHERHOOD WAS FOUNDED WITH THE EXPRESSED PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING the sovereignty of *sharia* (Islamic law), uniting Muslim lands, liberating them from all foreign presence, and eventually spreading Islam worldwide. Over the course of its history, the MB has pursued these objectives in a variety of ways—including

through jihad, but primarily, and especially since the period of repression it experienced during Nasser's reign in Egypt, through *dawa*, or missionary and social activities. When the Brotherhood chose to engage in the political and electoral process, it conceived of this new political approach not as replacement for *dawa*, but as a supplement or extension of its established activities, including its efforts to establish the Islamic state. As such, MB organizations as a whole have not abandoned their founding principles and transformed themselves into civil political movements that accept the separation of religion from politics and the sovereignty of the nation state.

It is important to understand the relationship between *dawa* and politics (*siyasah*) in Brotherhood organizations. In politics, the Brotherhood may claim to seek the creation of a civil state. But at the level of *dawa*, the MB doesn't make compromises with its basic ideological objectives, because divine truth, as it see it, cannot be subject to political negotiation. The Brotherhood's political activities are meant to advance the Islamizing objectives of the Brotherhood as a *dawa* movement.

MB political parties in Arab countries are, organizationally speaking, not separate from the *dawa* organization. This is so even in Morocco, where the Brotherhood's political party—the Justice and Development Party (*Hizb al-Adalah wal-Tanmiyah*)—is widely regarded as having gone further than other MB parties in distancing itself from the *dawa* organization and the revivalist movement from which it sprang, the “Monotheism and Reform Movement” (*Harakat al-Tawhid wal-Islah*).²

In many ways, the two strategies of *dawa* and *siyasah* are contradictory and inevitably produce deep ambiguities in the Brotherhood's ideological message. For example, as a *dawa* movement, the Brotherhood calls for the implementation of *sharia* and the establishment of an Islamic state, and cannot accept non-Muslims as citizens fully equal to Muslims, which should be a *sine qua non* for a civil political party. Moreover, engagement in political activity and elections requires dialogue and partnership with other political forces, including with ideological rivals. As such, the Brotherhood's political activities have sometimes found themselves in conflict with the message of the *dawa*. These tensions have given rise to the famous “grey zones”—the ambiguous positions on ideological and political issues that provide key benchmarks for gauging an organization's commitment to democratic and pluralistic values.

A Civil or Sharia State?

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE EGYPTIAN BROTHERHOOD'S INVOLVEMENT IN electoral politics in the 1980s, its public statements have emphasized its commitment to promoting democracy, freedom, justice, human rights, and common citizenship for members of religious minorities. The Brotherhood's participation in politics

has also created a felt need within the movement's ranks to form a political party.

The Egyptian Brothers most in favor of establishing a political party belong to the "second generation" or "middle generation" (*jil al-wasat*). These men, many of whom were activists in Islamist student organizations in the 1970s, are skilled and politically savvy, and more interested in political work than in *dawa*. Some of these activists have advocated setting up a party *alongside* the Brotherhood's *dawa* structure, while others have suggested that the Brotherhood *transform* itself entirely into a political party. Today, the Egyptian Brotherhood's discourse is abuzz with discussion about the future Brotherhood party, which is often described as "a civil party with a religious source of authority" (*marja'iyyah*).

Contemporary Islamist writers ordinarily describe this concept of a "civil state with an Islamic source of authority" as an alternative to the traditional Brotherhood concept of a state operating on the principle of divine rule (*hakimiyyah*), which requires the full implementation of *sharia*. But while the Egyptian Brotherhood gives lip service to the creation of a civil party and a civil state, it continues to adhere as an organization to the principle of *hakimiyyah*. It regards itself as a comprehensive movement that combines religion and the state and seeks to implement *sharia* in all aspects of human activity.

The Brotherhood's mission statement, which is permanently posted on its official Arabic-language website,³ defines the Brotherhood as a Muslim community (*jama'ah*) that preaches for and demands the rule of Allah's law (*tahkim shar' allah*). It recapitulates the Brotherhood creed first formulated at its fifth conference (January 1939) that declares that Islam is a complete and total system and is the final arbiter of life in all its aspects, in all nations and in all times.⁴ The "Reform Initiative," which the Brotherhood launched in March 2004, states clearly that the ultimate goal of Islamic reform is the implementation of *sharia*. It also says:

We have a clear mission—to implement Allah's law, on the basis of our belief that that it is the real, effective way out of all our problems—domestic or external, political, economic, social or cultural. That is to be achieved by forming the Muslim individual, the Muslim home, the Muslim government, and the state which will lead the Islamic states, reunite the scattered Muslims, restore their glory, retrieve for them their lost lands and stolen homelands, and carry the banner of the call to Allah in order to bless the world with Islam's teachings.⁵

In the Egyptian context, even the most ardent advocates of the *siyasah* strategy have neither accepted the separation of religion and state, nor abandoned the principle that Islam is both religion and state (*din wa-dawlah*). These advocates also uphold the

Brotherhood's identity as a religious *dawa* movement that is committed to Islam's total and universal nature. Thus, according to Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh, one of the most outspoken "second generation" advocates of the political strategy, the most important achievement of the Brotherhood has been its success in spreading the concept of a universal and comprehensive Islam and of the inseparability of state and religion.⁶ Issam al-Aryan, another prominent second generation leader and promoter of the *siyasah* strategy, defined the Brotherhood's objective as:

the construction of a total revival on the foundations and principles of Islam, which begins with reforming the Muslim individual, the Muslim home and the Muslim society, continues with reforming government and restoring the international entity [*al-kiyan al-duwali*] of the Islamic nation, and ends with being the masters of the world [*ustadhiyat al-'alam*] through guidance and preaching [*bil-hidayah wal-irshad wal-dawa*].⁷

This concept, that the Brotherhood is a *guide* to society, obviously does not conform to the idea of a civil party, one among many that compete with one another without claiming possession of the absolute truth or pretending to guide the others. Neither is the Islamic concept of the "Guide" as the title of the Brotherhood's leader indicative of a democratic organization. The Brotherhood has, therefore, made it a point to refer to its leader as the "Chairman of the MB group" on its English-language website, to his deputy as the "Deputy Chairman" and so forth. On the Brotherhood's Arabic-language sites and in its publications, however, the leader is still the "General Guide" (*al-Murshid al-'Aamm*), the organization's highest institution is the "Guidance Bureau" (*Maktab al-Irshad*), etc.

Far from regarding itself as one political actor among many, the Brotherhood views itself as speaking for Islam. The Brotherhood's claim to be the true representative of Islam is reflected in its electoral slogan, "Islam is the Solution" (*al-Islam huwa al-hal*). The slogan has been sharply criticized, but the Brotherhood has refused to give it up. The MB believes their movement represents the real and true Islamic community. That is why the Brotherhood would not transform itself into a political party: if Islam is comprehensive, and the MB is Islam, then it cannot be reduced to a political party.

The Egyptian MB Party's Program

IN 2006 THE EGYPTIAN BROTHERHOOD MADE SEVERAL PUBLIC RELATIONS mistakes—including the display of force by MB students performing martial arts in al-Azhar University (10 December 2006)—that hurt its efforts to project itself as a

nonviolent, civil movement. These mistakes, in turn, helped the regime paint the Brotherhood as a violent movement that poses a threat to Egypt's national security. Facing the regime's pressure and wanting to improve its image and acquire legitimacy as a civil movement seeking democratic reform, the MB started in early 2007 to focus public attention on its future political party and its program. The Brotherhood announced that it had decided to establish a party and was on the verge of publishing the party's program. Although this party has not been established and its official program has not been published, unofficial draft texts of its platform—not formally endorsed by the Brotherhood—have been circulated and have aroused public debate.

The unofficial texts not only support the supremacy of *sharia* in the Brotherhood's future state, but also institutionalize it. Thus, the future party seeks to implement "the authority of Islamic Sharia" (*marja'iyat al-shari'ah al-Islamiyyah*) in the following manner:⁸

- The legislative branch should consult an assembly of religious scholars. The president of the state must also consult this assembly of religious scholars whenever he issues decisions that have legal power.
- Whenever there is a definitive *sharia* ruling, backed by a definite holy text (*nass*), the legislative branch has no authority to legislate differently. When a clear holy text is not available, the position of the assembly of scholars can be put to vote in the legislative branch. Rejecting that position requires an absolute majority of the members of the legislative branch.
- The assembly of religious scholars should be elected by religious scholars, and enjoy total freedom from the executive branch.

The Brotherhood thus seeks to institutionalize *sharia* rule by establishing its own version of the radical Shia concept of "rule of the jurist."

The draft program further says that the state has *fundamental religious functions*, as it is responsible for protecting and defending Islam. Those religious functions are represented by the head of state, and consequently *the head of state must be a Muslim*. That is also so because decisions on matters of war are *sharia* decisions, requiring that whoever makes them will be a Muslim. (Other drafts have specifically stated that the president must be a Muslim male.⁹) The draft declared as well, however, that the state will be based on the principle of citizenship (*muwatanah*), that all citizens will have equal rights and obligations, and that "the woman will enjoy all

her rights, to be practiced in conformity with the fundamental values of society.”

How does the MB square the equality of all citizens with the exclusion of non-Muslims and women from the top state position? What are “the fundamental values of society” that govern women rights, and who defines them? Those and similar questions emerged following the appearance of the drafts. First Deputy General Guide Muhammad Habib clarified what he described as the Brotherhood’s “red lines” on these issues: Copts and women, he stressed, cannot be the head of state.¹⁰ Moreover, the Brotherhood’s leadership rejected a proposal to insert wording into the draft that presented the authority of *sharia* as reflecting the people’s, rather than the divine, will. The rejected formulation stated: “The authority of the Islamic *sharia* is a constitutional principle chosen by the nation by its free will.... That authority is not imposed on the nation, and becomes an authority only due to the nation’s choice.”¹¹

On all of these issues, the draft program met with harsh criticism, including from within the MB itself. In defense of the draft, Abd al-Futuh argued that any misunderstanding resulted simply from “mistaken phrasing,” and that the assembly of religious scholars would be a consultative body only and that a woman could be the head of state. He did not say, however, that a non-Muslim could be head of state.¹²

The Brotherhood in Face of a Political Crisis

SINCE THE NOVEMBER 2005 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS, THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT has undertaken a series of measures that have aimed to deny the Brotherhood any political role. Those measures have included large-scale and ongoing arrests that have targeted, among others, top MB leaders; the use of military courts; a crackdown on the Brotherhood’s financial infrastructure; and constitutional amendments, adopted in March 2007, designed to undercut the Brotherhood’s electoral activity. As a consequence of these actions, not one Brotherhood-supported candidate was elected in the Majlis al-Shura (Consultative Council) elections of June 2007.

As the government has imposed these constraints, the Brotherhood’s political strategies have come under increasing criticism from within both the Islamist movement and the Brotherhood itself. In early 2007, Ali Abd al-Hafiz of Asyut University led a group of Brotherhood members out of the organization, and formed what he called “the Alternative Trend” (*al-Tayar al-Badil*). He called on the Brotherhood to separate itself entirely from the political realm, arguing that one cannot claim to be a religious and moral guide to society while, at the same time, competing in elections against those one pretends to guide.¹³

In January 2007, Abdullah al-Nafisi, a former Brotherhood member and renowned Islamist scholar, went even further. He argued that the Brotherhood’s political

strategy had exhausted the movement by involving it in endless skirmishes with the regime, and had few valuable achievements to show for it. By being so immersed in daily political struggles, the Brotherhood had lost strategic direction and long-term systematic thinking, and had become a burden on the Islamist movement itself. It was better for the Brotherhood to dissolve itself, he concluded, and transform itself into a school of thought.¹⁴

In a similar argument, Muhammad Salim al-Awa—a well-known Islamist thinker, former Brotherhood member and close associate of Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi—urged the Brotherhood in June 2007 to leave politics altogether for ten years. He pleaded that the movement should focus instead on educational, cultural and social work. The Brotherhood’s political action had given nothing to the Muslim people of Egypt, he argued, adding that the right way to fight injustice and tyranny is not by running for parliament, but by educating the people and caring for them.¹⁵

So far, the Brotherhood’s leadership has reacted both to the regime’s new constraints and to criticism from Islamists by staying its course. It did not resort to public protests and demonstrations in response to the regime’s crackdown, nor has it shown signs of changing its strategy. In response to its critics, the leadership has told its followers that the movement had seen worse repression in its long history, and that it has survived in the past through patience and perseverance.

Moreover, the MB leadership has rejected ideological and organizational change, asserting that the movement has a course, a set of “constants” or “fixed principles” (*thawabit*), and a historical heritage that must be adhered to. Whoever chooses to follow a different path that is not in harmony with the movement’s course is free to do so—but only *outside* the movement. As such, the fixed and constant principles of the MB must always be respected and followed, lest the movement disintegrate into factions and parties. It is “our belief that Islam is total, comprehensive, and an integrated whole ... it is unimaginable therefore that someone from the ranks should show up, calling for the breaking up of Islam, trying to push the movement into the unknown,” wrote Muhammad Habib.¹⁶ (Those “calling for the breaking up of Islam” are either the advocates of separating *siyasah* from *dawa*, or those that favor abandoning the political strategy altogether.)

The Brotherhood’s rejection of separating the religious and political realms derives from its view of itself as a comprehensive movement that is committed to the application of *sharia* in all realms of human life. But why has the Egyptian Brotherhood chosen to refrain from violent reaction? This is apparently explained by the Brotherhood’s doctrine of pursuing power.

That doctrine is based on the Brotherhood’s long-term *dawa* strategy of Islamizing society from the bottom up. According to this plan, the Brotherhood will be able to take power only at the stage of *tamkin*, when the movement will have won the hearts

and minds of a significant majority, if not all, of the people. At this stage, all the necessary steps to prepare society as whole for the embrace of a fully Islamic order will have been taken. These steps entail, among other things, the penetration and ideological indoctrination of such “influential institutions” as the military, the police, the media, educational institutions like al-Azhar, legal institutions and the parliament. Moreover, the external, international environment also needs to be prepared for the Brotherhood’s ascension to power.¹⁷

The Brotherhood’s reaction to the Mubarak regime’s imposition of constraints on its activities seems to reflect its assessment that the ground is not yet sufficiently prepared for it to attain power. The Brotherhood’s leaders have in fact publicly stated that the organization is not yet ready to assume complete power. The MB’s General Guide Muhammad Mahdi Akif has even characterized all the recent cases in which Islamists have assumed power—in Sudan, Iran, Afghanistan and Somalia—as failures, because those regimes were not raised to power by the people’s will. He added that the Brotherhood will be ready and able to assume power only when the people accept its message and desire its rule.¹⁸ In light of these statements, it appears the Brotherhood leadership has chosen to avoid making any provocative moves, as it does not want to provide the regime with a legitimate reason for taking measures that could put the movement at risk.

Hamas’s election victory in Gaza in 2006 and its subsequent formation of a government did not conform to the Egyptian Brotherhood’s concept of reaching power either. Both the domestic and external environments were unprepared for it. Indeed, in August 2007 Deputy General Guide Muhammad Habib stated that Hamas’s election victory had “negatively affected the political reality in Egypt and in the Arab world”¹⁹ (that is to say, Hamas’s victory has damaged the prospects of the Brotherhood in the region).

It should be clear that the Brotherhood has not ruled out the use of violence in principle. Although Akif did indeed say in March 2007 that violence would not be one of the Brotherhood’s means for reacting to its exclusion from the political system,²⁰ he later qualified that remark in August 2007. At that time, he did not abjure violence, but argued that violence should not be undertaken when the regime is favored in the balance of power and thus, likely to win in a conflict. As Akif said, “It is not in everyone’s interest that violence or a clash take place *now*, and it is not in [our] interest *now* to conduct resistance against the government, because it has millions who have been prepared to confront protests, to repress demonstrators, and to beat and arrest them” (emphasis added).²¹

In light of this, it seems that the Brotherhood’s leadership likely believes that there is little advantage in risking further trouble now. Rather, it apparently opts to prepare for the day after President Hosni Mubarak departs, when the Brotherhood

will have a chance to play a key role in shaping the new order. Patiently waiting for that time seems to be the Egyptian Brotherhood's chosen option—at least for now.

The Jordanian MB

THE JORDANIAN BRANCH OF THE BROTHERHOOD WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1945 TO pursue the Islamization of society, the creation of an Islamic state that would implement *sharia*, the conduct of jihad to liberate occupied Muslim lands, the unification of the Muslim nation, and the liberation of the globe from idols (*tawaghit*).²² In the 1950s and 60s, the Jordanian Brotherhood formed an alliance with the Jordanian state to oppose their common enemy, Nasser's pan-Arabism and socialism. That alliance ended in the 1980s, however, when Islamism became the main ideological rival to the monarchy.

Since then, the Jordanian MB has come under the influence of the radical, *takfiri* ideology of Said Qutb, Abdullah Azzam and others. It has also become increasingly influenced by Hamas. This has led to the Jordanian MB's increasingly confrontational posture toward the state and, in turn, the regime's efforts to contain and reduce the Brotherhood's power.

In 1992, the Jordanian MB formed a political party—the Islamic Action Front (IAF). One reason for the creation of this party was to protect the Jordanian MB's *dawa* activities from any measures the government might adopt against its political activities. The IAF's declared objectives include fostering a return to Islamic life and applying *sharia* in all fields, preparing the Muslim Nation for jihad against Zionist and imperialist enemies, helping the Palestinian cause and seeking to liberate Palestine achieving national unity and liberty, confronting imperialist and foreign influences, and establishing a system of government based on democratic principles and *shura*, or consultation.²³

The party's blueprint for a new Jordan, entitled "The Islamist Movement's Vision of Reform in Jordan," demands the implementation of Islamic law, and states that "*sharia* is the source of the laws and of legislation" (*al-Shari'ah al-Islamiyyah hiya masdar al-qawanin wal-tashri'at*). The document further states that the "Islamic Movement" seeks to establish Allah's *sharia* on earth and to construct life on the basis of justice and liberty, in a civil society whose source of authority is Islamic.²⁴ Far from abandoning the idea of creating an Islamic state that will implement *sharia*, the MB has established a political party committed to advancing that goal.

The Brotherhood and the Political Crisis in Jordan

THE MB AND IAF OPPOSE THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT ON THE MOST CRITICAL strategic issues. Several *fatwas* issued by the IAF's committee of *sharia* scholars denounced Jordan's alliance with the United States and its assistance to American and allied forces in Iraq. They also attacked the Jordanian king directly, stating that a ruler who allies himself with the enemies of his religion and his nation becomes one of them.²⁵ Another IAF fatwa proclaimed that Jordan's relations with Israel contradicted the *sharia* and must be severed. It said that maintaining those relations amounted to a betrayal of Allah, the Prophet and the Muslim Nation.²⁶ The IAF has additionally supported the Iran-Hezbollah-Syria-Hamas axis and maintained close contacts with the Syrian regime, despite that regime's persecution of the Syrian branch of the MB.

The Jordanian Brotherhood's strong ties to Hamas raise the question of whether it still is a truly Jordanian organization. Unlike their Egyptian counterparts, the Jordanian Brothers have stated clearly that their aim is to reach power without delay. Following Hamas's 2006 victory in Gaza, IAF leaders expressed confidence that they, too, would soon win an electoral victory, boasting that the Islamic movement was ready to assume political power.²⁷

As the Jordanian MB has become more radical, however, the government has moved to limit its power and influence. It passed legislation limiting the Brotherhood's *dawa* activities and implemented new measures to control the movement's financial arm and thus reduce its ability to sustain its country-wide network of social, educational and religious institutions. In July 2007 the MB escalated the stand-off with the government by withdrawing from municipal elections while they were in progress, accusing the government of fraud, and threatening to boycott the November 2007 legislative elections. The government responded by signaling that it might ban the Brotherhood from politics.

This confrontation led to an internal dispute within the Brotherhood. Ultimately, more pragmatic voices overcame the opposition of hardliners, and the Brotherhood participated in the legislative elections. But it won only 7 out of the 22 seats that it contested, compared to the 17 it had won in the previous elections.

The Jordanian Brotherhood subsequently claimed that the elections were rigged by the government. But according to reliable observers, the Brotherhood's electoral setbacks can not be ascribed wholly to the government's interference. Observers believe that some voters may not have supported the Brotherhood because of its close association with Hamas, whose popular appeal has been waning somewhat especially since its violent takeover of Gaza. In any case, the disaffection of voters with

the Brotherhood is cited as a major factor in that electoral defeat. As Muhammad Abu Rumman, the Jordanian expert on the MB, has explained:

The organization has totally failed to offer the public a convincing political discourse which would transcend resounding slogans. The people are fed up with those slogans and know for certain that they are unrealistic and incongruous with the citizen's concerns and grave economic conditions. The Brotherhood's electoral campaign was characterized by old, used-up phrases which exposed its candidates as being devoid of any realistic political vision.²⁸

This political failure was only one more demonstration of the Jordanian Brotherhood's crisis. That crisis has produced criticism of the MB leadership and calls for a dramatic change of direction. Even before the elections, Ibrahim Gharaibah, a former senior MB member, proposed sweeping organizational and ideological changes, arguing that the Brotherhood had outlived its original mission and that it had lost its direction. He further said that the Brotherhood must choose between three different courses of action—namely, *dawa*, politics or social work—because it was impossible to combine them. He urged the Brotherhood to become a social movement that would focus on organizing and leading the middle classes in the face of new challenges posed by globalization and privatization. Alternatively, he suggested that the Brotherhood movement could either transform itself completely into a political party or turn its political arm into a party that was truly independent of the wider movement.²⁹

An article on the Jordanian MB's official website offered yet another strategy, urging the Brotherhood to think "creatively" about new ways to confront repressive regimes. It proposed changing the rules of the political game—for example, by organizing large-scale civil disobedience. It called for an end to the "Meccan period" in the Brotherhood's thinking—an allusion to the time when the Prophet Mohammed and his followers were persecuted by the tribes of Mecca, which Mohammed ended abruptly by immigrating to Yathrib. The article further suggested that the MB should react more aggressively to regime repression and follow Hamas's example. "If the Brotherhood's bones are to be broken, why not break the enemy's bones too?," asked the writer.³⁰

MB Views of the "Turkish Model"

THE AKP'S JULY 2007 VICTORY IN THE TURKISH ELECTIONS GENERATED MIXED reactions amongst MB branches throughout the Arab world. Some saw the AKP's success as a vindication of the Brotherhood's strategic decision to participate in

electoral politics. Others expressed strong reservations to the very idea of considering the AKP an Islamist party, and voiced doubts about whether the AKP's victory should rightly be considered a victory for the Islamic movement.

Among the AKP's supporters, Shaykh Faisal Mawlawi, the head of Al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyya, the Lebanese Brotherhood branch, had no problem with the AKP's professed commitment to secularism. The AKP did not abandon its Islamic principles, he said, but only tried to achieve what was possible in difficult conditions. Moreover, he argued that the AKP had succeeded in moving a step closer to an original Islamic solution that could be developed and implemented in the age of materialistic globalization.³¹ Abdelilah Benkirane, a leader of the Moroccan Justice and Development Party, was more skeptical. As he said, the AKP "are far more advanced in politics than us: we are still in the *dawa* phase. And they may be a role model, but they make too many concessions on Islam: they even serve alcohol at their official receptions, it's shameful."³²

For their part, the leaders of the Egyptian Brotherhood rejected any suggestion that their organization was analogous to the AKP. That was probably in reaction to calls for the Egyptian MB to emulate the AKP by shedding the traditional *Ikhwani* ideology, which some have described as unpopular and hence, useless in the political arena. Additionally, the Egyptian Brotherhood's leadership argued forcefully that the AKP was not the right role model for the Islamic movement.³³ Among other things, they claimed that the AKP's goal was merely to wield political power without generating a tangible, substantive Islamic change in society. The Brotherhood, by contrast, seeks political power for the purpose of creating a fully Islamic society. Furthermore, the Egyptian MB leaders pointed out that Turkey's Prime Minister Erdogan adheres to the rules of the Turkish political system, to Turkey's constitution, and to the country's secular identity. This adherence to secularism—or the "AKP's choice," as the Egyptian leaders described it—cannot be the Brotherhood's position in any form. They said that Brotherhood seeks to revive the unified Islamic nation, restore its leading global role, and reestablish the Islamic Caliphate, whereas the AKP has no universal Islamic agenda—and even worse, seeks integration into Europe.

The MB and the United States

NEUTRALIZING AMERICAN OPPOSITION TO THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IS A KEY objective in the Egyptian MB's plan to prepare the way for its future assumption of political power. The Brotherhood's "Reform Initiative," which was launched in March 2004, aimed to persuade outsiders that the Brotherhood was in fact a "moderate Islamist" movement. The MB remains unwilling, however, to pay for dialogue with the United States by making any substantial ideological or political concessions. And as the

self-appointed leader of the Arab Islamic struggle, the Egyptian MB continues to hold firm to the idea that its overall project is in total conflict with that of the United States.

In the view of General Guide Akif, the policies of the United States are particularly hostile toward the Arab and Muslim world.³⁴ He stated in a recent missive that Islam is the only way to save the international community from American tyranny, which is bound to spread a “destructive chaos” (a swipe aimed at what the MB perceives to be the American notion of spreading “constructive chaos” in order to reform the Middle East) and destroy the whole world.

In another recent missive Akif called on young jihadis, like those who committed the suicide attacks in Morocco and Algeria, to direct their efforts, using all possible means, “against the real enemy of the Nation (Umma), the enemy which occupies, kills, desecrates and plunders ... in al-Quds, in Baghdad and in Kabul.”³⁵ Akif’s deputy, Muhammad Habib, said that the role of the Brotherhood was to resist “the American project, which seeks to bring the Nation down to its knees, to weaken its faith, to corrupt its morality, to plunder its resources, and to eradicate its cultural particularity.”³⁶

Second generation MB leaders like Issam al-Aryan have expressed interest in dialogue with the United States. But al-Aryan, too, has held firmly to the position that the Brotherhood’s project is fundamentally opposed to the American one. He welcomed dialogue “as a cultural and human value,” but at the same time pointed to a basic conflict between, on the one hand, “the growing American project of empire and hegemony,” and on the other, the Brotherhood’s project of constructing an Islamic revival, liberating Muslim lands from any foreign influence, unifying the Arabs, and creating an international Islamic order (*kiyan dawli islami*).³⁷

In July 2007 al-Aryan called for opening relations with the West, but he warned that the Muslim Brothers should not submit to Western dictates and unfair preconditions. The purpose of any dialogue with the West, as he saw it, was to demand that the West respect the right of Muslims to choose their way of life and to be ruled by the *sharia* (*wa-shari’atihim allati tahkumuhum*). The West should not impose another system on Muslim countries.³⁸

The Brotherhood and the Shi’a Question

WHILE EGYPTIAN BROTHERHOOD LEADERS HAVE VOICED CRITICISMS ABOUT IRAN’S role in Iraq and the Shi’a resurgence, they also see Iran and Hezbollah as major partners in the struggle against Israel and the U.S. In the past, this has meant that the Egyptian MB has routinely rejected the view that Iran constitutes a strategic threat to Arabs. Moreover, it has generally welcomed Iran’s nuclear program by reiterating the Iranian regime’s claim that the program was for peaceful purposes, while at the same time

adding that any possible military purpose would “create a sort of a balance” between the Arab and Islamic world, on the one hand, and Israel and its allies on the other.³⁹

The Egyptian MB has also tended not to show much concern over Iran’s efforts to spread Shi’a Islam in Arab countries. Akif has repeatedly dismissed the phenomenon of Sunni conversions to Shi’a Islam in Egypt as insignificant, and has rejected the idea of a rising, increasingly powerful “Shi’a crescent” as neither logical nor realistic.⁴⁰ His position has been that the rivalry between Sunnis and Shi’a should be postponed until the day when the Muslim Nation has won its battles with the West and the Muslims have recovered all their rights.

In May 2007, however, the Egyptian Brotherhood’s public pronouncements about Iran and the Shi’a as a whole seemed to change somewhat after meetings between the United States and Iran were announced. Akif, for instance, warned that such negotiations were likely to make Iran the dominant regional actor and thus would threaten the power of Arab Sunni states.⁴¹ More recently, the Deputy General Guide Habib said that Iran’s role in the Middle East was “raising concerns,” and that Iran was seeking to enlarge its sphere of influence into Arab societies. He added, however, that Iran’s strategy was a legitimate response to American policies in the region, and roundly criticized what he called the “Arab moderate axis” for serving American interests. He further urged Arab countries to stand up to the United States and support Islamic “resistance projects” (*mashru’at al-muqawamah*) worldwide.⁴²

Generally speaking, the Jordanian MB’s attitude toward Iran and toward Shiism as a whole appears to be much less coherent than that of the Egyptian branch. In fact, the MB’s Jordanian branch appears to be internally deeply divided on the Shi’a question. The *takfiri*, anti-Shi’a sentiment within its ranks conflicts with its professed solidarity with Hamas, Iran’s ally. Therefore, while the Jordanian MB highly values Iran’s support of the Palestinian cause, it has also been deeply critical of Iran’s role in the destruction, sectarianism, and violence against Sunnis in Iraq, going so far as to allege that Iran actually facilitated the American invasion of that country. It has also been claimed that Iran helped the United States topple the Sunni Taliban regime in Afghanistan.⁴³

Conclusion

IN BOTH EGYPT AND JORDAN, THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD’S PARTICIPATION IN electoral politics has not occasioned any changes in its basic ideology or objectives. The MB remains committed to the creation of an Islamic state. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the Egyptian MB’s draft party program calls for a state ruled by *sharia*. The novelty of the draft program lies in the way the MB seeks to institutionalize

that rule, namely through the assembly of jurists. That may help explain, incidentally, the Egyptian Brotherhood's professed solidarity with Iran, which first implemented the concept of rule of the jurists during its revolution in 1979, in addition to the Brotherhood's identifying with Iran's anti-American and anti-Israeli positions. From the MB's point of view, Islamic parties like Turkey's AKP represent an adjustment to new global realities and a desire to integrate into the global system whereas by contrast, the Iranian regime, like the MB, rejects the current world order, and seeks to construct an alternative, Islamic one.

The crisis in which the MB organizations in both Egypt and Jordan find themselves is very much a product of the MB being both a *dawa* movement, committed to the creation of an Islamic order, and a political actor that is forced to work within the existing framework of nation states and popular politics. Despite the ideological incongruities and incoherence that these dual approaches and roles produce, the MB has shown itself to be unwilling to alter its basic ideological agenda or to modify its organizational structure. Some point to a generation gap inside the Brotherhood and presume that a younger generation is more pragmatic and political and less ideological than the old guard. They argue that this younger generation will ultimately transform the MB into a political organization, which will, in turn, moderate the Brotherhood's radical ideology. In fact, however, the generation gap does *not* correspond to an ideological one. Although they may differ in their choice of tactics, the "second generation" leaders in Egypt share the ideological commitments of their elders regarding the Brotherhood's objectives.

Muhammad Abu Rumman, the Jordanian journalist and expert on the Islamist movements, has suggested that Arab Islamists have tolerated and even justified the ideological stagnation within their movements by the fact that their adherents are too preoccupied with state repression to be able to develop and change. But the Turkish Islamist movement, he remarks, was also besieged and persecuted for decades, but its leaders nonetheless managed to develop, innovate and thus lead the movement out of the constraints imposed on it by the regime.⁴⁴ Neither can regime repression explain the modest electoral gains of the Moroccan Brotherhood's Justice and Development Party. According to the Egyptian analyst Khalil Anani, those electoral gains may indicate that Arab societies as a whole are not deeply convinced of the effectiveness or desirability of "the Islamic solution" offered by the Islamists.⁴⁵

The Muslim Brotherhood's generation-old project is being blocked, and the movement is being called on to reexamine its objectives and strategies. So far the Brotherhood has not opted to make any fundamental change. It survived major crises in the past by being able to exploit opportunities and turn adversities to its advantage. But the question of how the Muslim Brotherhood will emerge from its present crisis remains to be answered.

NOTES

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The Islamization of Arab Culture

by *Hassan Mneimneh*

THE POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD is most noticeable in two countries. In Egypt, the birthplace of the movement, it represents—eight decades after its founding—the main opposition to an authoritarian government. And in Palestine its local incarnation, Hamas, plays the dual role of an elected, albeit contested, government and a “resistance” movement with a self-granted license to engage in homicidal actions against combatants and noncombatants alike. The influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, however, far exceeds such visible manifestations. It has profoundly affected Arab political culture, and the consequences of its activism and ideology on the political evolution of modern Arab nation-states—Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and others—is still unfolding. This essay attempts to describe the nature of the movement’s influence and to examine its particular impact on Syria and Lebanon.

Currently, parties and organizations that stem intellectually and institutionally from the Muslim Brotherhood present themselves as “centrists.” They contend that their embrace of Islamism—the proposition that Islam as a religion encompasses the political realm—sets them apart from *both* secular groups and radical Islamist groups. Secular liberals, nationalists and leftists reject any role for religion in the political realm, they say, while radical Islamists forcefully reject any political system not explicitly rooted in Islamic law and tradition. This claim to centrism has won support from outside the Muslim Brotherhood as well. Some local forces see in the movement positive potential for opposing the authoritarian status quo, and some advocates of democratization highlight its bona fide respect for the ballot as a means of accession to political power. In discussions about how to break the stranglehold

that radical Islamism has over a large span of Arab political culture, the Muslim Brotherhood is even proposed as a suitable ally in efforts to counter the radical expressions of Islamism.

Yet history does not support this benign assessment of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which in its multiple incarnations in the Arab world has clearly contributed to the radicalization of political culture. Virtually all radical Islamist ideas now in circulation in the Arab realm can be traced back, directly or indirectly, to the incubating environment of the Muslim Brotherhood. While Arab governments' repressive measures against Islamists seeking political participation may have helped provoke political radicalization, this process was effectively preordained by the Muslim Brotherhood's own conception of political activity. The Brotherhood understands participatory and electoral politics not as an intrinsic reflection of the democratic character of the political system, but as means to an end—that end being the “Islamization” (*aslamah*) of society and the individual and the “restoration” of the “Islamic State.”¹ The concept of a revolving assumption of political power is noticeably absent from the Muslim Brotherhood political program.

The distinction between the Muslim Brotherhood and its radical rivals is, nonetheless, substantive. Since the end of the Afghan Jihad, two distinct approaches to Islamization—one “top down,” the other “bottom up”—have been in competition within Arab Islamist circles. The top-down approach is promoted by those who hold that the creation of the “Islamic State” is a prerequisite for the “Islamization” of institutions, society, and the individual. Such a state must be established promptly, therefore, and by any means necessary. (This approach is the *modus operandi* of the al-Qaeda network.) The bottom-up approach, by contrast, is favored by those who believe that the creation of the new “Muslim Man” is necessary for the Islamization of society, institutions and state. It is the apparent compatibility of the latter approach—espoused by the mainstream organizations of the Muslim Brotherhood movement—with democratic practice that constitutes the basis for the claim of “moderation” and “centrism,” and the origin of diverse positive assessments of the movement and its local components.²

And yet, what remains common to both approaches, and accepted as an element of virtual consensus in Islamist circles, is the stipulation that Islam, as a comprehensive system, necessitates the underlying Islamization sought by Islamists. The widespread acceptance of this notion—one with such ambiguous content—is, in fact, a considerable achievement that can be largely credited to Muslim Brotherhood activism.

Contrasting Historical Views

THE HISTORICAL RECORD OF MUSLIM SOCIETIES CAN BE READ IN TWO DIFFERENT ways: normative and empirical. The normative reading accepts *a priori* the notion that there is one Muslim global community (*Umma*) endowed with one central authority (*Khilafa* or Caliphate), the legitimacy of which derives solely from its status as successor to the rule of the Prophet. History is, therefore, the account of the fulfillment of, and aberrations from, this ideal. In the maximalist version of this normative reading, the fulfillment begins with the Prophet's flight from Mecca to Medina in 622 and doesn't end until 1924 with the overthrow of the last Ottoman sultan, who held the Caliphate title. The aberration of an *Umma* without a *Khilafa* has lasted, accordingly, just a little over eight decades. In the minimalist version, the fulfillment was a brief period of fewer than four decades, from 622 to the end of the reign of the fourth Rightly-Guided Caliph in 661, and all subsequent history has been a succession of aberrations. Elemental antecedents to these two modern versions of the normative readings are rooted in the scholastic tradition of Islamic jurisprudence, with the understanding that supports the maximalist version being more prominent.³

The philological efforts of Western Orientalists, relying primarily on the output of the scholastic tradition—and corresponding chronologically to the reordering of the political forms of Muslim societies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—provided a textually biased view favoring the normative reading. Islamist thinkers today still productively utilize this work to confirm components of their own ideology. More significantly, the notion that Arab-Islamic civilization had a Golden Age that should be emulated and restored—a view that became prevalent in the nineteenth century *Nahdah*, or Arabian renaissance period—contributed to the idea that the present day is an aberration. This concept has been subsequently modified and amplified by Islamist theoreticians.

An empirical reading of Muslim history reveals a considerably more nuanced reality. Contrary to Islamic scholars' scarce descriptions of—and/or prescriptions for—an Islamic political model that established a template for the rule of the *Khilafah* government, the *Umma* was historically divided into a multiplicity of Islamic states overwhelmingly dominated by dynastic rule. The nature of the relationship between the rulers and the ruled in these states was based on either coercive force or paternalism and quasi-filial loyalism. Even the latter was largely adversarial. While granting obligatory recognition to the autocratic ruling powers, the subjects of the Muslim states were primarily concerned with reducing their dual burden of taxation and conscription. Islam, meanwhile, served to cement the relationship between state and

society through ritualistic practices that fostered pietism and justified the political quietism that dominated much of the Muslim environment.

Dynastic paternalism, in fact—though virtually ignored by the scant political reflections of classical Islamic thinkers—has provided consistent and productive rule in the history of the Muslim state. Only the brief episode of the first four Caliphs partially deviated from this pattern. (The first two Caliphs were the Prophet’s fathers-in-law, the last two his sons-in-law; the Prophet himself had no male heir.) The fourth Caliph, Ali, sought to formalize dynastic paternalism to the advantage of his progeny, and his failure to do so led to the strict dynastic theological paternalism of Twelver Shiism. Among Sunnis, however, the dynastic paternalism model has not been seriously challenged since the advent of the Umayyads in the late seventh century. Even the Mamluk slave-soldier state that emerged in the thirteenth century kept dynastic paternalism as a referential framework, with the Abbasid Caliphs providing the nominal façade. With the Ottoman conquest of the Muslim heartland in the sixteenth century, actual dynastic paternalism was restored.

In the twentieth-century nation-state system, the Arab state emerged in both its monarchic and “republican” versions as a direct continuation of dynastic paternalism, modified—often merely in form—to yield a statist paternalism. In statist paternalism the dynasty is replaced, in some aspects, by the nation-state. The etymology of the word *dawlah* is revealing: in modern Arabic usage it refers to “state;” in pre-modern usage it indicates “dynasty.”⁴

“Islamization”—understood as the application of the Islamic template to state and society—is the foundational base of the political program advocated by the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist groups. And it is, significantly, a distinctly novel concept. It seeks to alter the two main aspects of political and social life historically practiced by Muslim communities: dynastic paternalism (and by extension statist paternalism) and pietism. Dynastic paternalism is to be replaced by an unspecified political system supposedly derived from Islamic ideals, while the traditional, conservative, syncretistic, and diverse manifestations of pietism are to be replaced by prescriptive regimentation and militancy. The inclusive, “total” system that coalesced around Islamic faith and culture is to be superseded by a totalitarian regime having, as its immediate or delayed mission, global expansion.

The Muslim Brotherhood has played a pivotal role in elevating the notion of Islamization to its position as a fundamental tenet of the Islamist political program and as the religious imperative of Muslim societies. Yet the extent to which the Muslim Brotherhood has been a *producer* of the substantive change in the political culture of the Arab world—as opposed to having been a *product* of that change—is not readily discernible. Given the massive transformations of the ideological and political landscapes in the Arab world, the distinction is important. It will help in

determining the agency, and therefore the real power, of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as in evaluating the prospects of its multitude offshoots.

The Contemporary Phenomenon of Islamism

THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD (JAMIYYAT AL-IKHWAN AL-MUSLIMIN) WAS FOUNDED by Hasan al-Banna in Egypt in 1928. Resisting the label of “political party,” it operated as a grass-roots political movement engaged in mass mobilization. The Brotherhood adopted a simple, yet comprehensive plan for the presumably gradual, bottom-up transformation of individuals, families, society, and the state along lines consistent with its understanding of the Muslim faith. While imbued with the ritualistic pietism of pre-Nahdah Muslim religious practice in Arabia, the Brotherhood advanced a plan that—in its thrust and endeavors to create a “New Man”—was more informed by the totalitarian projects of the twentieth century, whether nationalistic or socialistic, than by the traditional lived Islam of yesteryear.

The Muslim Brotherhood rise to prominence in Egypt caused it to clash with the populist “Arab socialist” attempt to reshape Egyptian polity and society, spearheaded by the charismatic leader Gamal Abd al-Nasser in the 1950s. A major byproduct of the ensuing persecution of the Muslim Brotherhood in its birthplace was the flight of many of its members, particularly to Saudi Arabia. There, through cross-fertilization with the native brand of Saudi Islamist ideology and with Islamist-inclined expatriates from other Arab states, these Egyptian Brothers laid the foundations for the amplification of the Brotherhood’s influence on Arab political culture. It is important to emphasize the complex character of this amplification: It was a serendipitous and opportunistic occurrence rather than the result of a deliberate plan; it was, however, almost unavoidable given the transformation that was affecting Arab political culture.

The ideological reformulation of Islamism that has, at the close of the twentieth century, elevated terrorism to the status of a religious obligation resulted primarily from the fusion of previously distinct Egyptian and Saudi Islamist concepts. Despite the underlying universal vision of the two formulations—each stated or implied that Islam was the ultimate truth and posited that all of God’s creation was its eventual realm—parochial concerns of their respective national domains remained the primary focus of both the native Egyptian Islamism of the Muslim Brotherhood and the native Saudi Islamism of the Wahhabi establishment until well into the 1970s. Starting in the 1980s, however, as events would demonstrate, the combined elements of Egyptian and Saudi Islamist localisms engendered a lethal globalist Islamist formulation that transcends nation-state boundaries, not only in principle, but also in its methods of recruitment, action and strategy.

In recent decades both Brotherhood activists, who want to emphasize the power and foresight of their movement, and students of the Islamist phenomena, who often see a Comintern parallel, have portrayed the Saudi incubation of modern Islamism in the 1960s as the implementation of a pre-conceived plan or path to a *sharia* state. Such a portrayal is at best an exaggeration. The actual lack of planning apparent in the later prominence of Islamism testifies to its ideological potency and to the depth of the transformation of Arab political culture, where competing ideologies and narratives had failed. Even if its role was inadvertent, however, the Muslim Brotherhood movement became the primary vector for the normalization, prominence, and later dominance of Islamism in Arab political culture.

Today the notion that Islam is a total system in which religion and politics are intertwined, the sacred and the profane merged, is almost universally accepted. Even those attempting to identify and promote a “moderate” Islam strive to locate hybrid forms in which the presumed fusion between religion and politics has not been completed or, alternatively, to encourage reforms that would help disengage politics from religion. While this understanding does indeed reflect the state of current affairs, it is important to recognize that the empirical reading does not confirm this state as representative of the Islamic historical and social record. It is, instead, a recent phenomenon that can be traced back to the nineteenth-century Nahdah movement, which itself saw modernity as a European import, and attempted to appropriate it for Arab or Muslim purposes.

Since the Nahdah, Islam, as a religious system, has undergone massive changes fueled by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, ranging from the assimilation of the new, globally induced nation-state system to the unexpected wealth generated by oil revenues. The fusion of local Egyptian and Saudi forms of Islamism is itself the result of two intersecting trajectories in Arab political thought—a longer trajectory that approximates a virtual “Reformation” in Islam, and a shorter trajectory that expresses the failure of a second “Renaissance” in Arab culture.

The Roots of Islamism

THE FIRST TRAJECTORY IS IDENTIFIED WITH THE SLOW-PACED EVOLUTION OF AN increasingly essentialistic tradition that emerged at the margins of the Islamic intellectual mainstream in the thought of Ahmad ibn Hanbal in the tenth century, through Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah in the fourteenth century, to Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in the eighteenth century. It is a self-styled “traditionalism,” retrospectively referred to *al nahj al salafi* or *al-salafiyyah* (Salafism). Reactive in its early phase—Hanbal having resisted the Abbasids’ inquisition in defense of their official rationalist

mutazili doctrine—the burgeoning tradition found its most aggressive ideologue in Taymiyya and its political fulfillment in the alliance of Abd al-Wahhab with Muhammad ibn Saud in the late eighteenth century. Arabian tribal rivalries and Ottoman imperial necessities interrupted the new movement’s expansionary impetus and forced it into remission, but it preserved its fervor in its local expression.

The second trajectory starts in the nineteenth century with Muhammad Abduh, the famous Egyptian cleric based at al-Azhar University. The deliberately progressive thought of Abduh, who embraced a forward-oriented doctrine centered on the pristine purity of Islam, helped lay to rest the conventional Islamic view of *history as descent*. His work generated a succession of formulations that promoted individual and collective militancy as a means of achieving political change. These successive ideas displayed numerous departures from the liberalism intended and embedded in Abduh’s thought, however. Abduh’s disciple Muhammad Rashid Rida initiated the intellectual convergence of his mentor’s “reformist traditionalism” (*al-salafiyyah al-islahiyyah*) with the intransigent essentialism of Abd al-Wahhab’s scholastic traditionalism (*al-salafiyyah al-ilmiiyyah*).⁵ And al-Banna, through the creation of the Muslim Brotherhood, worked to realize Abduh’s vision of the feasibility and necessity of progress—though it was a vision informed by Rida’s drastically restrictive definition of progress that he had reconciled with Abd al-Wahhab’s limiting interpretations.

By both introducing new ideological precepts and abdicating its custodianship of the Islamic textual corpus, the intellectual Muslim elite of the “liberal age,” which lasted from the Nahdah to the middle of the twentieth century, oversaw the simplification of the Islamic intellectual tradition. During this period, the restrictive layering that this tradition had superimposed on the religion’s fundamental texts was stripped away and the core issues contained therein left unaddressed. Of particular import was the neglect of the notion of “non-Divine rule” (*hukm al-Taghut*). The advocates of liberalism, nationalism and leftism in subsequent eras saw no need to focus on this issue either. They all relegated religiously derived thought to the status of an atavistic reflex that would soon be swept away by the organic reality of either progress or nation or class. And Islamism in general, and the Muslim Brotherhood in particular, benefited from this omission.

Each of the three grand non-Islamist narratives lost its prominence in conjunction with a momentous “failure” in modern Arab history. The liberal, post-WWI age—which was dominated by an understanding of state and society modeled loosely on the European nation-state system—ended with the loss of Palestine and the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. The era of nationalism, with its promises of liberation, unity, and social justice, was decisively deflated by Israel’s defeat of Arab armies in the June 1967 war. And leftist movements, which embraced revolutionary notions ranging from popular liberation warfare to the complete overhaul of the Arab

political order, and posited the Palestinian resistance as a role-model, were discredited by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

With these consecutive failures, the ideologizing of Islam, as undertaken by “Reformist Traditionalism” was thrust beyond the stated desires of the Muslim Brotherhood. The second trajectory continues with al-Banna engendering Said Qutb, an uncompromising ideologue who affixed the status of “pre-Islamic” on current Muslim states and societies, and Qutb engendering Abdallah Azzam, who put the implications of Qutb’s ideas into practice by withdrawing from society to pursue armed jihad. Osama bin Ladin, Ayman al-Zawahiri and al-Qaeda represent the ultimate intersection of the two trajectories in a lethal ideological militancy that, while building on the Muslim Brotherhood’s concept of Islamization, unequivocally rejects its means and framework.

In virtually every environment where a Brotherhood-inspired organization has taken root, it has produced a process of social, cultural, and ideological radicalization that has helped to incubate new efforts to fuse religion and politics into the “total system” the Brotherhood envisions. Often times, these new efforts may reject the methodic transformation espoused by the Brotherhood. The more radical Islamists’ schematic reading of the complex Muslim heritage to demonstrate its compatibility with their goal of restoring the original community’s supposedly comprehensive belief system is, moreover, often turned against the Muslim Brotherhood itself. Through the radicals’ uncompromising filter, the Brotherhood is usually judged to be wanting in purity in its religion, society and thought. This often hampers our ability to evaluate the Brotherhood’s role, as its form of Islamism is often a transitional Islamism on the way toward further radicalism. The interplay between its role as an *agent* of change—as opposed to its role as a *symptom* of change—can only be assessed as a function of local considerations.

Before the late 1960s, when the Palestinian resistance movement rose to prominence as the center of revolutionary activity, the main vectors of political thought propagated in the Arab world originated in Cairo. Egypt’s well-developed higher education system insured consistent Egyptian soft power in the Arab world. It not only produced legions of Egyptian teachers and other professionals who were needed in and dispatched to other Arabic-speaking countries, but it also attracted the Arab youth of such countries who wanted to acquire university degrees. While this phenomenon long benefited the advocates of Arab nationalism, statist socialism, and the notion that Egypt was the Arab world’s center of gravity, it eventually gave the Muslim Brotherhood an even more lasting advantage by providing the structure through which the movement spread to societies across North Africa and Southwest Asia. Much of this spread was produced by a “pull” factor, in which non-Egyptians imported the Brotherhood’s ideals into their own societies, rather than by the “push” of emissaries exporting those ideals.

The Muslim Brotherhood organization in Syria traces its history back to the 1930s, for instance, when returning Syrian graduates of the Egyptian university system created the loosely structured Shabab Muhammad (Mohammed Youth) organization.⁶ While openly inspired by al-Banna's call for the creation of an Islamic order, Shabab Muhammad was also affected by changes in urban youth activism in the Levant after the establishment of the post-WWI nation-state system. During this period numerous groups influential in the old urban social order—notably the Sufi brotherhoods, the guilds, and the remnants of the *ahdath* youth associations—lost much of their relevance. New groups, particularly political parties, competed to fill the void. And even after being formally transformed into a distinct political entity in the 1950s, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood was unable to oppose effectively the then-greater appeal of both pan-Arab and pan-Syrian nationalist visions.

These nationalist parties came to be increasingly dominated by a newly urbanized population, however, which was largely made up of religious minorities who provided the state with soldiers, bureaucrats, and other civil functionaries. This development contributed to the alienation of the Sunni lower classes in Damascus and other Syrian cities. And the long-established Sunni urban elite suffered as well, its influence severely weakened by a succession of political coups and the failure of the union with Egypt between 1958 and 1961.

The Arab Baath Socialist Party, which has governed the country since 1963, is deeply disliked by the majority of Syrian Sunnis. Founded by Michel Aflaq, a Christian, with a theoretically secular ideology—which characterizes Islam as a mere product of Arab civilization, albeit a historically important one—this party soon degenerated in the Sunni consciousness into a vehicle for sectarian Alawi dominance. While the Alawi community constitutes only a tenth of the total Syrian population, its members have overwhelming hegemony within the Baath Party. With the realm of discourse available for the opposition so restricted, the Muslim Brotherhood has become the principal voice of dissent. This has been Syria's state of affairs for more than four decades, with consecutive ebbs and flows of opposition activity.

In the mid-1960s the Muslim Brotherhood participated in massive civil action across Syria, to which the military responded with considerable force. The grip of the Baath party, and hence the new Alawi elite, on the military has survived despite such acts of repression, coups (1970), and battlefield defeats (1967 and 1973). While these circumstances may support the argument that the radicalization of the Brotherhood's thought and action was essentially reactive, it should be remembered that such thought and action conformed to the movement's social, cultural and religious agenda and its own ideology of bottom-up Islamization. The debates over the use of force in resisting the regime, moreover, also reflected the ideas and practices of numerous offshoots of the Brotherhood's loose international network.

As the Baathist regime's pro-nationalist and pro-leftist rhetoric became increasingly discredited, the Muslim Brotherhood's Islamization project asserted more influence over Syrian culture—though this influence took different forms. The Sururiyyah movement⁷ of the 1960s adopted the Brotherhood concept of Islamization while qualifying its political aspect; the 1980s witnessed the radical reinterpretation of the Quran into a blueprint for social change and justice. But throughout, the effect of the Muslim Brotherhood was to confirm Islam as *the* axis of political and social reflection.

In 1973 Hafez al-Assad, who had seized power in the 1970 military coup, had to back down in the face of widespread protests from supporting a proposed constitution that did not require the president of Syria to be a Muslim. This retreat was accompanied by Assad's ambiguous conversion to Sunni Islam, which thus preserved constitutional decorum. It also hastened the religious transformation of the Alawi community into mainstream Shiism under the auspices of the Iranian-Lebanese religious leader Imam Musa al-Sadr.

Muslim Brotherhood hawks saw this concession as proof of the vulnerability of the regime. With a considerable fraction of the regime's military occupied with its incursion into Lebanon (1976), these hawks succeeded in initiating an underground insurgency that targeted government personnel and institutions. Many of their actions focused on symbols of the socioeconomic changes that had affected Syria, and class grievances, atavistic sectarianism and urban-rural divisions fueled the confrontation—which was launched prior to the rise of jihadism. Still, the role of Islamist mobilization was central. (Later Syrian jihadists, however, in particular Abu Musab al-Suri, one of the most prominent ideologues of Global Jihad, would reflect on the lack of intellectual clarity and preparedness in the Muslim Brotherhood actions of the 1970s and '80s.⁸)

Ostensibly led by the hawks of the Muslim Brotherhood, the insurgency was, in fact, complex in its character and players. Many Syrian local groups, as well as regional forces, participated in instigating and/or executing attacks against regime positions, while some in the Brotherhood's old guard tried to keep their distance from any brutal actions. Atrocities were committed by both the insurgents and the regime. In June 1979 insurgents attacked the University of Aleppo, killing scores of students and one university professor. The regime responded by executing prisoners believed to be members of the Brotherhood.

The confrontation escalated in March 1980 into uprisings in virtually all Syrian cities, with the open participation of numerous opposition groups. Though the Assad regime responded decisively over the next two years with spectacular acts of brutality and collective punishment, the Muslim Brotherhood remained an existential threat to the regime until February 1982, when it took over the city of Hama.

This prompted Assad to dispatch his brother Rifat at the helm of “defense brigades” to squash the rebellion. Rifat accomplished his mission by steadily bombarding the city and killing an estimated 20,000 of its inhabitants.⁹

This was the knock-out punch for the insurgency, as well as for the hawkish members of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood. From 1982 until his death in 2000, Assad’s dictatorial rule was uncontested. His occupation of Lebanon, moreover, made it possible for him to prevent the Muslim Brotherhood from organizing in the midst of Lebanese Islamists, many of whom Assad consecutively persecuted, fragmented, and then nurtured.

Forced into exile in 1982, the leadership of the Syrian Brotherhood advanced progressively more democratic principles in their public discourse over the following two decades. Brotherhood members in Syria, meanwhile, were subjected to a revolving door of incarceration and severely restricted release. As a result, this period produced an extensive “prison literature” (*adab al-sujun*) that provided glimpses into the horrific conditions endured by the multitude of prisoners often forgotten in the Syrian gulag.

The hopes that preceded the accession to power of Hafez al-Assad’s son Bashar in 2000 were short-lived. Dissent in Syria has remained a costly proposition, with even the mildest call for reform yielding years in prison. Over decades of dictatorial rule, the regime has honed its ability to control society and quash dissent. No local opposition has been able to organize. The Assad regime has appeared to be completely invulnerable—at least until the symbolic defeat Bashar and his security apparatus suffered in March 2005, when the “Cedar Revolution” forced the Syrian military to end its open occupation of Lebanon.

Perceived as the sole approximation of an institutionalized opposition, the Muslim Brotherhood is the focal point of the hopes of many, including democrats, for positive change in Syria. Its leadership has asserted that it aspires to a “civil democratic” polity rather than an Islamic state.¹⁰ But in Syrian intellectual circles, both in exile and underground, debate continues as to whether this position signifies a real evolution and re-conceptualization of Islamization—along lines similar to Turkish Islamism—or whether it is merely a temporary tactical posture.

Of greater import, however, is the dramatic divergence between the Muslim Brotherhood’s leadership-in-exile and its rank and file in Assad’s Syria. With their leaders far away, the loosely organized Brotherhood networks in Syria have lost much of the movement’s unifying vision. Some members have succumbed to Salafi and jihadi recruitment efforts, occasionally with the tacit approval of the regime. And there is no indication that the Syrian Brotherhood’s rank and file—which responded to the call of the Brotherhood hawks in the 1970s and ‘80s—will be receptive to the political evolution of its nominal leadership abroad.

Building on its experience with Lebanese Islamism, furthermore, the Syrian regime has become adept at managing hostile Islamist groups on its territory. It allows them to pursue “checked and balanced” operations in ways consistent with regime interests. The government has been selective, for example, in trying to disrupt the Islamist militants’ supply lines to Iraq since 2004, using its efforts as a bargaining chip in its intercourse with the United States. Similarly, the regime has provided recruits of the radical group Fath al-Islam with implicit safe passage in their journey to northern Lebanon, where their agitation has caused severe problems for Lebanon’s anti-Syrian government.

The extent to which the popular base of the Muslim Brotherhood has been penetrated by the regime, as well as by Salafi and jihadi groups, is not quantifiable, but it is believed to be substantial. And the Brotherhood certainly has contributed to preparing fertile ground for radical Islamism in Syria—whether it is now truly moderating or simply employing a tactical maneuver. It is not, however, entirely responsible for this state of affairs. The proponents of nationalist, leftist and liberal alternatives bear equal blame for failing to establish any system capable of resolving the tensions of class and community. With important local variations, the pattern in Lebanon is similar.

Lebanon

THE LOCAL INCARNATION OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN LEBANON, JAMAAH Islamiyah, traces its roots to the Jamiyyat Ibad al-Rahman (Association of the Servants of the Merciful). This social, cultural, and religious charitable organization was founded in 1948 by Muhammad Umar al-Dauk to help educate the Lebanese Muslim community, which Dauk deemed to have strayed from its religious values. Many of the main figures of Jamaah Islamiyah “graduated” from Jamiyyat Ibad al-Rahman, which is still active as an apolitical institution. Dauk’s impulse in establishing his organization was similar to al-Banna’s, but his call for a return to pietism was distinctly milder than al-Banna’s call for Islamization and made no reference to jihad or martyrdom. Years later Jamaah Islamiyah activists would contend that Dauk’s limited mission reflected his assessment that Lebanese Muslim society was not then ready to accept Islamization.¹¹

Indeed, despite making considerable inroads over the last decades, Islamization as a project and Islamism as an ideology have remained at the margins of the Lebanese Muslim sociocultural mainstream. This resistance arises less from the much-touted pluralism and cosmopolitanism of Lebanese society—which are still factors—than from the surviving pattern of traditional dynastic paternalism that is

the primary mode of leadership in all Lebanese communities. Because it is weak by design, the Lebanese state has failed to replace this dynastic paternalism with a statist paternalism that would encroach into the social and economic realms of the community and thereby invite such corrective ideologies as Islamization.

Jamaah Islamiyah was formalized in 1964 as an official political party. Its first and long-time leader was Fathi Yakan, a medical doctor from the northern, predominantly Sunni city of Tripoli. Though limited in its size and impact outside of Tripoli, it was geographically widespread. It also sought—with limited but not insignificant success—to assert its presence by nominating its members, many of whom were professionals, for leadership positions in professional associations. Within the social context that characterizes much of the Levant, Jamaah Islamiyah was naturally Sunni, distinctly urban, and predominantly middle class. It was, therefore, unable to compete either with the dominant dynastic political families at the helm of the various urban communities or with their populist nationalist and leftist rivals who claimed to speak for the masses.

In 1972 Jamaah Islamiyah attempted to expand its base and mission by creating a political action group focused on Muslim demands. This effort was overshadowed, however, by the polarization that Lebanon underwent over the presence of the Palestinian resistance movement on its soil. Many in the Muslim lower classes tended, with others, to support their presence, while segments of the Muslim urban middle class joined others in a muted rejection. Even with the Lebanese civil war, activist Islamism remained on the margins of political life.

In the early 1980s, however, the incubating function of Jamaah Islamiyah manifested itself in the creation in northern Lebanon of Harakat al-Tawhid (the Unitarism Movement) by Said Shaban.¹² Shaban had left Jamaah and adopted the methods and structures of other Lebanese political parties: populist discourse, patronage systems, and active militias. Using the abundant financial resources provided by Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Shaban crushed rival nationalist and leftist militias and established an actual fiefdom in Tripoli, eventually referred to as Imarat al-Tawhid (the Tawhid Emirate). Here he was able to impose on large portions of the city and its surrounding territory an increasingly ruthless version of Islamization. In his emirate Shaban created a base for ecumenical Islamism, inviting and interacting with groups and individuals espousing doctrines that ranged from Shi'a Khomeinism to strict Wahhabi Salafism. It was under the auspices of Harakat al-Tawhid that Dai al-Islam al-Shahhal, the pivotal figure in creating a Salafi movement in Lebanon, established his missionary association targeting the Sunni rural and urban lower classes.

In 1983 the Syrian army entered Tripoli and brutally repressed Shaban's movement, chasing out of Lebanon his ally Arafat and his PLO fighters, who had taken

refuge in Tripoli after a devastating confrontation with the Israeli military. This action ended the emirate's despotic and arbitrary rule of Tripoli society and replaced it with collective punishment dispensed by the heavy hand of the Syrian security apparatus. The Syrian military did not, however, seek to eradicate Tripoli's Islamist groups. It initiated instead a process of enticement and intimidation through which these Islamists were gradually assimilated and/or placed into the Syrian security system imposed on Lebanon. Most of the Islamists eventually joined the matrix of Syria's allies, through which "participation" in the Lebanese political system was bestowed, tolerated, or withheld on the basis of loyalty or utility.

By the mid-1980s the Syrian regime had successfully engaged and defeated two Islamist movements—the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and the Lebanese *Harakat al-Tawhid*. Both these operations, however, were reactive. The regime subsequently introduced a more proactive plan both to neutralize and to exploit Islamist sentiments. The plan employed three approaches: It consolidated the regime's alliances and arrangements with preexisting Islamist groups by nurturing their dependence; it created new, more docile Islamist organizations with slightly altered ideological outlooks to counterbalance the preexisting ones; and it allowed the independent but controlled growth of hostile organizations that could potentially be activated by the selective lifting of restrictions. During its occupation of Lebanon, the Syrian regime productively used all three approaches with the Lebanese Sunni community.

The Syrian managers of the Lebanese dossier established solid links with the leadership of *Jamaah Islamiyah*, notably Fathi Yakan, and were able to penetrate and shape its political stands. In exchange *Jamaah Islamiyah* was able to secure three seats in the 1992 Lebanese Parliament. This Syrian connection created tensions within the organization, however, and ultimately led to a mutiny and to the withdrawal of Fathi Yakan, who went on to create the pro-Syrian *Jabhat al-Amal al-Islami* (Islamic Action Front).

Simultaneously, Syria gave considerable support to the followers of the Beirut-based Ethiopian Sufi mystic and religious scholar Abdallah al-Harari. This group used Syrian aid to help take over *Jamiyyat al-Mashari al-Khayriyyah al-Islamiyah* (Association of Islamic Charitable Projects),¹³ expand it and actively compete with *Jamaah Islamiyah* across Sunni Lebanon. Presenting themselves as a "moderate" response to the essentialism of the Muslim Brotherhood but demonstrating little of the "tolerance" they profess, Harari's followers—commonly known as *al-Ahbash*—have developed an international missionary network that has internalized the Brotherhood's Islamization concept, adopted and centralized its structures and methods, but elaborated an ideology based on virulent polemical attacks against Brotherhood, Salafi, and Sunni elites. In theory the *Ahbash* represent the syncretism of traditional pietism and political populism, but in form and practice they are the

mirror image of their main rivals. The Ahabash provided Lebanon's Syrian overseers with a reliable ally in keeping other Sunni political forces in check. The rivalry between the Ahabash and Jamaah degenerated into mutual assassination plots.

While actively involved with these rivals, the ubiquitous Syrian security apparatus restricted its dealings with Salafi and jihadi groups to surveillance. It allowed them to gain a foothold in Palestinian refugee camps, in the disenfranchised belt of urban misery surrounding Tripoli, and in the Dinniyyih highlands nearby. This hands-off approach—in conjunction with Islamization-induced radicalization—culminated in the confrontation in the spring and summer of 2007 between the Lebanese armed forces and the Fath al-Islam organization in the Nahr al-Barid Palestinian refugee camp.

It was self-evident that the degeneration of Lebanese Islamist politics under Syrian tutelage had left ample room for a new force to capitalize on the dissatisfaction of potential Islamist constituencies. Generic Islamism had become the default ideological identity of both Lebanese and Palestinian segments of Lebanon's Sunni population left behind in the plans of the Second Republic, which had been established in 1990. That year Lebanon officially concluded its fifteen-year civil war by overhauling its political system and promising an even development strategy. The Second Republic, godfathered and overseen by Syria's Hafez al-Assad, consisted of two de facto states—an unofficial one allocated to Hezbollah, and an official one in which Syria tried to manage, control, and benefit from the Lebanese-Saudi businessman-cum-politician Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. The latter state focused largely on urban areas, and though Hariri strove to bridge the rural-urban gap through direct patronage, his influence in the Palestinian camps was curtailed by both Lebanese and Syrian considerations.

The impact of Hariri on the evolution of Lebanon and its Sunni community is yet to be assessed. With regard to the growth of Islamism, his record is mixed. As Syria's foremost nominal ally but actual rival, Hariri lent support to Jamaah Islamiyah, providing a financial counterweight to Syrian influence that contributed to the schism Jamaah underwent in 2000. He also targeted rival political families, ultimately replacing their political patronage and paternalism with his own—despite his professed embrace of a progressive agenda. The established dynastic paternalism, however, had served the country quite well. Its system of allegiance and patronage helped the Lebanese resist the allure of imported Islamist, Salafi, and jihadi ideologies. By weakening other political families, and occasionally seeking to influence and assimilate Islamists, Hariri may have inadvertently set the stage for unwanted developments that could be checked only by his own charisma. It is not clear that, following Hariri's assassination in 2005, his improvised dynasty will be able to perform the same function.

Conclusion

IN BOTH SYRIA AND LEBANON, THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD PROVIDED POLITICALLY marginalized socioeconomic groups with a vehicle for expressing opposition to the state. In both countries, however, the Brotherhood organizations were reactive and unable to articulate a productive political program. The despotic nature of the Syrian regime, and its successful eradication of any opposition, has preserved the status of the Brotherhood as the only credible counter-force to the government. But its actual strength is unknown. In Lebanon the Brotherhood organization never succeeded in breaking out of the margins of political life. Today it belongs, as a junior partner, to a broad coalition of anti-Syrian forces under the dynastic paternalistic Sunni leadership of Saad Hariri, son of the deceased prime minister.

In both Syria and Lebanon, however, the Muslim Brotherhood's Islamization project has affected political culture and paved the way for the emergence of more radical forces. In Syria these forces are now checked and/or controlled by a ruthless regime, and their strength will only be revealed when the regime eventually falls. And in Lebanon traditional patterns continue to dominate the practice of politics. In both locales, however, Islamization has attracted many devoted disciples in the absence of compelling alternatives, and this project may well produce a number of unintended unpleasant consequences.

A review of the Muslim Brotherhood's evolution in Syria and Lebanon reveals both its direct and indirect responsibility for the emergence of radical groups and sentiments in those societies, but gives no indication that the Brotherhood is likely to play a "moderating" role in either. Some argue that the Brotherhood's bottom-up approach to Islamization, by focusing on the agency of the individual and society, works to prepare the way for democratic practice in an environment where top-down Islamization is the norm. This argument, however, ignores the fact that—with the possible exception of Saudi Arabia—it is the Brotherhood's notion of Islamization that has generated and empowered more radical versions throughout the Muslim world. The evidence clearly suggests that the Muslim Brotherhood tends to promote, rather than to dilute, radicalism.

NOTES

1. A relative neologism, even in the literature of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, the concept of *aslamah* (Islamization) has been variably used in reference to the three-stage strategy of Hasan al-Banna—*tarif* (education), *takwin* (formation) and *tanfidh* (implementation)—but also, pejoratively, to forced conversion. The National Honor Covenant, issued by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood in May 2001, reflects in its use of the term the efforts of Islamist scholars to produce an ontological reform of science and knowledge in conformity with Islam. For a secularist critical reading of this Covenant and its use of Islamization, see Uday Abu Jamal, “A Reading in the Civilizational Project of the Muslim Brotherhood,” in *al-Hiwar al-Mutamaddin*, 1244 (30 June 2005), <http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=40273>.
2. The debate between proponents of these two approaches is largely asymmetrical, and is dominated by radical critics of the Muslim Brotherhood. An example of a textual critique of the positions of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood is provided by Abd al-Munim Mustafa Halimah (Abu Basir al-Tar-tusi), a prominent radical Islamist ideologue, at <http://altartosi.com/refutation/refut032.html>.
3. The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, in line with general Muslim Brotherhood literature, adopts the maximalist reading. See “Tarif bi-Jamaat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin fi Suriyah” (http://www.ikhwan-syria.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=19&Itemid=114). An early example of a developed maximalist version, in an activist Islamist framework, is Samih Atif al-Zayn, “Al-Islam, thabit la yataghayyar” in *Dirasat Islamiyyah* 3 (1970): 65-96—developed in *Al-Islam wa-Thaqafat al-Insan* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Lubnani, 1982) into nonsectarian inclusivism. For an example of the minimalist version, see Abd al-Rahman Abu al-Khayr, *Dhikrayati ma Jamaat al-Muslimin, al-Takfir wa-l-Hijrah* (Kuwait, 1980).
4. In his *Neopatriarchy: A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), Hisham Sharabi explores aspects of the sociopolitical dimension of this continuity. However, the dissociation from the normative reading remains unfulfilled.
5. On the pivotal role of Muhammad Rashid Rida in shaping this convergence from an Islamist perspective, see Ibrahim al-Adawi, *Rashid Rida al-Imam al-Mujahid* (Cairo: Al-Muassasah al-Misriyya al-Ammah li al-Talif wa al-Anba wa al-Nashr, 1964).
6. For an overview of the evolution of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood until 1982, see Olivier Carré and Géraud Michaud, *Les Frères Musulmans: Égypte et Syrie (1928-1982)* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983).
7. A Muslim Brotherhood offshoot, founded by Muhammad Surur Zayn al-Din and influenced by Said Qutb’s assessment of current Muslim society as pre-Islamic, focused on strict sociocultural reform and a deference of political action. See the special issue on al-Sururiyyah in *Kitab al-Misbar al-Shahri* (February 2007).
8. See Umar Abd al-Hakim (Abu Musab al-Suri), *Dawat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah al-Alamiyyah* (n.p., 2002).
9. The definitive detailed account of the events, from a Muslim Brotherhood perspective, is provided in *Hamah, Masat al Asr* (Cairo: Dar al-Itisam, 1985).

10. See the political platform of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood: “Al-mashru al-siyasi li-Suriyah al-mustaqbal” (http://www.ikhwansyria.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=35&Itemid=137).
11. For Jamaah Islamiyah’s own account of its history, see http://al-jamaa.org/top_intro.asp.
12. For Harakat al-Tawhid’s own account of this period (with the glaring omission of the role of the Syrian regime in obliterating the Imarat), see <http://www.attawhed.org/Page.aspx?ID=1>.
13. The Association maintains numerous websites; in particular, see <http://www.aicp.org/>.

Something's Rotten in Denmark

by Naser Khader

IN SPRING 2007, I FORMED A NEW CENTRIST-RIGHT POLITICAL PARTY IN Denmark called the New Alliance. It was the first time in 15 years that a new party had been formed in my country. The New Alliance is for all Danish people, and if it hadn't been for the crisis Denmark is facing, our party might not have come into existence. Now, however, according to the latest polls, the New Alliance stands to have the final say as to whether Denmark's Prime Minister will remain in office or not.

My reasons for leaving the Social Liberal Party were many. I had long been frustrated by the naiveté among my fellow party members, especially during the cartoon crisis. A lot of them condemned the *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper for printing the cartoons, but had a hard time condemning the overreaction to the cartoons in the Middle East. My former party represents typical European intellectual cultural relativism and naiveté at its worst. Their general view goes something like this: all views are equal. In the 1980s and '90s, I shared that view, but I don't anymore.

Today I have become averse to cultural relativism. I find it old-fashioned and immature. I call those who hold such views “*halal* hippies,” and no longer believe that all values are equal. Some values are better than others, and democratic values will always stand above the rest. To me, democracy comes before religion, because democracy includes people of all kinds, while religion and culture have a tendency to exclude people who hold a different view or lifestyle.

In Denmark they call me a “democratic fundamentalist,” which I'm actually very proud of. (I even got “Democracy” tattooed in Arabic on my arm!) I am especially proud of it when it comes to fundamental democratic rights such as personal free-

dom and the right to make decisions about your own life, body, and future. My old party minimized the problems with the Muslim Brotherhood in Denmark and in the world. Their view was that if we speak out too loudly about the problems with the Brotherhood, we will instead find ourselves supporting the right wing's point of view. These naïve people did not and will not differentiate between Islam as a religion and the politics of Islamism. They have accepted the Brotherhood's point that there is only one Islam—the Muslim Brotherhood's Islam.

Something that happened in Denmark while I was in the United States last spring was the last straw in my process of leaving the party. At that time, we had a tough debate in Denmark about the Muslim headscarf, especially whether or not it is okay to sexualize little girls and force them to wear a headscarf and other Islamic clothes which limit their freedom of movement. To make the point that all values are equal, one of my then-fellow colleagues of the old party, a former minister of culture in Denmark, put on a headscarf in solidarity with Muslim women who wear the headscarf and *hijab*. It was an expensive designer scarf with the words “speak up” printed on it. She went so far as to be interviewed with one of Copenhagen's tourist attractions, a woman fish seller who also wears a scarf as a part of her work.

When I learned about this I was furious. For me this issue was not about selling fish. Why show solidarity with those who feel that women should cover up, who believe that women are not equal to men? I'm not in favor of banning the headscarf. My mother wears a headscarf—she chose on her own to start wearing it about 10 years ago. Like her, many women choose it freely, and that doesn't bother me. However, there are also many women who are not allowed to decide for themselves. Even little girls, not more than six years old, are forced to wear the headscarf. In making such a statement, my former colleague gave the Brotherhood and other conservatives a legitimacy they do not deserve. Afterwards, they could say to their young daughters, “You see? A former Minister of Culture agrees with us!”

I left the party after that, shaking my head in disbelief that we in Denmark had not learned anything from the cartoon crisis just a year before.

That cartoon crisis was an eye-opener for many Danish people. During that time I said that one of its most positive results was to make it impossible for the Danish people to see Muslims as one group. The crisis demonstrated that there are different kinds of Muslims. Our founding of the Democratic Muslims organization, in Denmark and other countries, was a cornerstone in that process. Forming that movement was an essential step for Muslims who do not agree with the Muslim Brotherhood. I do not believe that religion should be mixed with politics, and I do not believe that political parties should be organized on the basis of ethnic or religious background. And, since so many mainstream Muslims think our religion has

been hijacked by the Brotherhood, it was a necessary step for us to create the Democratic Muslims organization.

In Denmark—as in other European countries—there is a tendency in public opinion towards those who exaggerate elements of Islam, giving them authority over the whole religion. Consequently, people like me who don't flaunt their religion are not thought of as real Muslims. It is important that democratic Muslims organize all over the world, because the Brotherhood is good at organizing all over the world, including in Denmark.

I do, however, think that the Muslim Brotherhood may be relatively stronger in Western Europe than in Muslim countries. In a recent meeting with the Moroccan ambassador to Denmark, I asked her why so many Moroccans were involved in terror actions in the West—bombings in Madrid, Spain; in the killing of Theo van Gogh in Holland; and through such instigators as Said Monsour, a Moroccan who was sentenced in Denmark for influencing young people to commit terrorist acts. (In fact, three times in the last three years, Denmark has sentenced young people who were influenced by Said Mansour and others like him.) She responded: “We haven't any more left from the Brotherhood in Morocco. We captured some of them and put them in the prison. The rest fled to the West.”

UNTIL A FEW YEARS AGO VERY LIBERAL IMMIGRATION RULES IN WESTERN Europe created a back door for the Brotherhood to organize themselves in Europe. Meanwhile, Western Europe has been hopelessly oblivious to the Brotherhood. It is only recently that we in Denmark suggested a bill allowing convicted terrorists with foreign background to be expelled from our country.

Given all of these issues, what characterizes the Brotherhood in Denmark and the Scandinavian countries? They are troublemakers, but some more so than others. It is interesting to note that during the cartoon affair in Denmark only 10 imams out of 120 in the entire country were active during the crisis. These activists included people like Ahmed Abu Laban, who is very well-connected with the Brotherhood in Egypt; Mohammad Fouad Barazi, highly-connected with the Brotherhood in Syria; and Abu Bashir, who is well-connected with the Brotherhood in Lebanon. Raed Hlayhel, who has now returned to Lebanon, has been promoted by the Brotherhood there because of his role in the cartoon crisis. What very few know is that the imams who went to the Middle East to show the cartoons also went there to collect money for their schools and mosques from donors in the Middle East. The Muslim Brotherhood's aim in Denmark, as it is everywhere else, is to monopolize Islam, to gain the monopoly on teaching materials and books, to build the most schools and mosques, and, all in all, to become as strong and influential as possible.

Sadly, the Brotherhood in the West is being helped by some “useful idiots.” We

have a few of those in Denmark. A useful idiot in this case is someone who, with the best but totally misunderstood intentions, gives legitimacy to the Brotherhood by consulting with them, inviting them to important meetings and events, and treating them as if they represent all the Muslims in Denmark, which they do not. Yet until the cartoon crisis, the Danish government utilized the Brotherhood's imams as advisors on integration. But it's not only the Danish government that serves as useful idiots.

Recently, I was sad to learn that the United States Ambassador to Denmark, James P. Cain, joined the corps of useful idiots in Denmark. He invited several Danish members of the Muslim Brotherhood to his Ambassador's residence. One of the invitees, Safia Aoude, is a well-known Holocaust-denier who is known to be connected with the Brotherhood. She was excluded from the Conservative People's Party in Denmark for those very reasons. Cain also invited Mohamed al-Barazi, one of the most active imams during the cartoon crisis who falsely claimed on the Arabic television network Al Jazeera that the Danish threatened to burn the Quran, which led to even more riots in the Middle East. Al-Barazi thus had his cake and ate it, too: he gained legitimacy by having been invited to the residence of the U.S. Ambassador, while simultaneously inciting further violence in the Middle East.

The U.S. Ambassador did not invite the Democratic Muslims, as if we do not celebrate the Ramadan because we are democratic. Afterwards, when criticism of the event appeared, the U.S. Embassy told the press, "We are in dialogue." Correct me if I'm wrong, but I have never heard George Bush inviting Holocaust deniers, or even Ku Klux Klan members, to dinner in the White House for dialogue.

Do I think that we shouldn't have any dialogue with these people? No. We can listen to what they have to say. But I cannot understand how people in the media, governments, even ambassadors, can have such a short memory. How can they forget? I remember watching every inch of the Danish flag being burned in the Middle East. I remember every image of terrorists burning down the Danish embassy in Damascus. I remember the Danish imams traveling to the Middle East, telling lies about the cartoons and about how the Danish mistreat Muslims in Denmark. And I remember that more than 100 people died as a consequence of the crisis.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE BIGGEST CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS ISN'T between Islam and the West; it is between democratic-oriented Muslims and the Muslim Brotherhood. It is a battle about conquering Muslim souls, and it is fought with harsh means by the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood's main enemy is not the Jews or the Christians, but Muslims who want democracy, modernity, and reformation. That is where the real battle is, and the Brotherhood will win if the rest of the society keeps suffering amnesia attacks. The greatest challenge

for democratic Muslims in Denmark—and all over the world—is to cure the amnesia by constantly taking a stand in the debate, by constantly letting their voices be heard. If they don't, the only thing we will hear in the future is the voice of the Muslim Brotherhood. And the useful idiots will be applauding.

The Brotherhood's Westward Expansion

by Ian Johnson

THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD EXERTS ONE OF THE GREATEST INFLUENCES on Islam in the West, both in terms of how Islam is practiced and how governments and the public perceive Islam. Despite the Brotherhood's important influence, the history of the Brotherhood's spread to the West has never been written. This article is an effort to help fill that gap by looking at some key aspects and people involved with its rapid rise over the past half-century.

While there is some evidence that the Brotherhood was active in Europe before World War II,¹ this seems to have been just a one-man operation that left no long-lasting traces. It was Egypt's persecution of the group that sent its organizers abroad in the 1950s. The Brotherhood's European presence was later strengthened by the arrival of economic migrants from Turkey, the Middle East and South Asia who subsequently became affiliated with the Brotherhood. These immigrants, however, did not bring the Brotherhood with them to the West. Instead, the Brotherhood had preceded them, carefully planted by activists intent on creating a safe haven away from the turbulent Muslim world.

The Munich Mosque

CENTRAL TO THE HISTORY OF THE BROTHERHOOD IN THE WEST IS THE BUILDING of a particular mosque in Munich. Though I have previously described the history of this mosque journalistically and will do so more fully in a forthcoming book,² I must briefly summarize it here in order to establish the context of subsequent events.

The Islamic Center of Munich was founded in 1958 by a group of former German Muslim soldiers. These soldiers had served in the Red Army, but were captured by the

Germans and eventually fought for them. After the war, they stayed on in Munich and formed the largest concentration of Muslims in pre-*Gastarbeiter* West Germany. Hoping to advance certain foreign policy goals, the West German government sought to control this group. The idea was that these émigrés would someday return home to run their countries and, out of thanks, support a united Germany's territorial claims east of the Oder-Neisse line.³

At the same time, however, U.S. intelligence viewed the Muslims in Munich as an important reservoir of talent to be used in covert intelligence operations in the developing world. It recruited these Muslims and sent them, for example, to distribute leaflets on the Hajj.⁴ To counter these American encroachments on “its” Muslims, the West Germans recruited one of the soldiers’ wartime imams who had moved to Turkey, brought him to Germany and installed him as head of a Bonn-created office known as the Ecclesiastical Administration of Moslem Refugees in the Federal Republic of Germany (Geistliche Verwaltung der mohammedanischen Flüchtlinge in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland). This office then founded a Mosque Construction Commission (Moscheebau-Kommission e.V.) to unite Munich’s Muslims in building a mosque.

Also invited to participate in the mosque project—and here we get to the Muslim Brotherhood—were young Arab students studying in Germany. They, in turn, invited a prominent refugee from Nasser’s Egypt to become involved. This was the Muslim Brotherhood’s Said Ramadan, who was living in Geneva. Under Ramadan’s guidance, the students essentially kicked out the soldiers and took over the project, making it a Muslim Brotherhood center.

When the new Islamic Center of Munich was completed in 1973, it became easily the most important Muslim Brotherhood mosque in Europe. For example, the current head of the *Ikhwan* (Brotherhood) in Cairo, Muhammad Mahdi Akif, served as its chief imam for several years in the 1980s. The Mosque Construction Commission eventually became the Islamic Community of Germany (Islamische Gemeinschaft in Deutschland e.V.), a founding member of several key Muslim Brotherhood groups in Europe.

But how did this happen? The summary above could lead to several erroneous conclusions. It could, for example, create a simplistic, linear history: Egypt-Munich-Europe via Said Ramadan. By focusing on a few individuals, we can correct these misperceptions and draw some conclusions about the Muslim Brotherhood’s *modus operandi* in the West. Let’s start with Said Ramadan.

Said Ramadan

IN THE 1940S AND ‘50S, SAID RAMADAN WAS ONE OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD’S most important leaders. He married one of Hassan al-Banna’s daughters and was a

gifted speaker—he is often referred to as the “little Banna,” and could reportedly recite the master’s speeches word for word. When Egypt banned the group in 1954, Ramadan fled—first to Syria, then to Pakistan. Finally, in the late 1950s, he settled in Geneva.

When Ramadan came to help out the students in Munich, therefore, he was something of a celebrity. His reputation and charisma galvanized the students, prompting them to take over the mosque project. In addition, his standing in the Muslim world and his strong opposition to communism caused CIA operatives in Munich to back him. They sponsored his participation in conferences, for example, and generally helped him keep up his profile in exile.

All these facts help explain Ramadan’s significance at the very beginning of the Muslim Brotherhood’s penetration into Europe. But it is important to recognize that he did *not* represent the particular ideological strand of the Brotherhood that eventually spread across the continent. That strand was advanced by another group within the Brotherhood, one we will meet shortly. So what happened to Ramadan? And what does his downfall tell us about the Brotherhood in Europe?

Ramadan’s pinnacle of influence was probably in 1962, when he helped found the Muslim World League. He had worked tirelessly over the previous decade and a half to unite Muslims in a common cause. Few had as widespread contacts as he—besides the Muslim Brotherhood, he was at home with such old-style clerics as the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, with Pakistani groups like Jamaat-i-Islami and with the rising power in the Muslim world, oil-rich Saudi Arabia. According to one account, it was Ramadan who personally handed King Saud the official proposal to establish the league.⁵

But as that act showed, the Saudis dominated the league from the start. The kingdom controlled all the top posts and funded the group. Ramadan, by contrast, sought to end national divisions within the league, but the Saudis turned the league into their own instrument, and many others in the Brotherhood made their peace with the Saudis. The kingdom, after all, was the site of Islam’s holiest places. It was rich and could support almost any endeavor, from libraries and schools to training centers and an international missionary movement. The Saudi ruling house, moreover, supported a conservative strain of Islam that in some ways was similar to the Brotherhood’s. Many Brotherhood members who were in trouble at home found refuge in Saudi Arabia, and almost all accepted Saudi money.

With the league at their disposal, the Saudis pushed to bring Ramadan into the fold. In 1963 the league wanted to make Ramadan’s Islamic Center in Geneva its first overseas office.⁶ Ramadan refused, also rejecting league efforts to turn his magazine, *al-Muslimoon*,⁷ into an official league organ. He noted on his written rejection of the league’s offer of money that he was sending the letter from “Islamistan,” a fictive place name indicating that he did not want any country to control him or his work.⁸

The Saudis did not cut ties with Ramadan right away. He still held a Saudi diplomatic passport⁹ with the title “Ambassador at large for Muslim World League.” But Ramadan himself would later cut ties with the Saudis, traveling on a Pakistani passport.¹⁰

For Ramadan developments in Munich must have been a personal blow. While he continued his quest to unite Muslims, the students there were going with the Saudi flow. They were no longer interested in their former mentor, and Ramadan’s protégé Ghaleb Himmat played the role of Brutus. Some of their colleagues speculate that national identity might have been a factor—Himmat was a Syrian and Ramadan an Egyptian. Syria had the second-most vibrant branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, and its chief, Issam el-Attar, arrived in the early 1960s to Europe in exile. Himmat might have wanted to bring Attar to Munich instead of Ramadan. (He would later marry his daughter.) Attar, however, either refused or had no interest. He eventually settled in the German city of Aachen and founded an Islamic center there.

“Later, differences came up between Ramadan and Ghaleb Himmat,” observed Obeidullah Mogaddedi, one of Ramadan’s early followers in Germany who stayed active in the mosque after Ramadan left. “They [the students] drove him out, and he said, ‘I won’t have anything more to do with you.’”¹¹

Himmat disagrees. In an interview he said that nationalism or different ambitions were not involved at all. Ramadan, he said, had never played much of a role in the project and later was too busy for it: “He was in a few meetings. After a while he apologized and said he couldn’t go on any longer. I don’t know why. It was a burden for him to struggle for us in Munich.”¹²

In any case, by the mid-1960s Ramadan had made his last commute from Geneva to Munich. He remained a respected figure in the international Islamist movement, later cultivating ties with the new Islamic republic in Iran. But he faded from view, being considered something of an eccentric. As his son Tariq wrote, he spent many years able to follow world events only from afar, prone to “long silences sunk in memory and thoughts and, often, in bitterness.”¹³

The Arrival of Youssef Nada

AFTER THE INTERNATIONALIST SAID RAMADAN LEFT THE MUNICH MOSQUE, IT became increasingly Arab. A Pakistani chairman was shunted aside. Even Turkish guest workers were unwelcome. The group voted against allowing the Turks to join, saying they would hurt “harmonious cooperation.”¹⁴

One person who was allowed in was the Egyptian Youssef Nada, another key person in the Brotherhood’s spread to the West. Perhaps more than any other name associated with the mosque, he symbolizes how the Brotherhood has been misunderstood in

the West. Now accused of being a terrorist financier, he is probably better seen as a master organizer—and a link between Europe and the United States.

Nada joined the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1940s and was arrested as a 23-year-old student in the giant 1954 sweep that followed the failed assassination attempt of Nasser. He was released and worked in his family dairy business. In 1960 he obtained an exit visa and went to Austria to study cheese-making technology, which he hoped to bring back to Egypt. He saw a market opening in Egypt for Emmentaler and went to Graz to study its manufacture.¹⁵

Though not the most gripping start to the career of a future Islamic activist charged with being a terrorist financier, this period demonstrated Nada's doggedness. When his cheese plans failed, he started dealing with Tripoli, became close to the court and got a concession exporting building materials from Austria. Like most of Nada's successful ventures, it was a quasi-monopoly, one that required good contacts but little real business savvy. In the mid-1960s he met Himmat—when, he said, he went to Munich from Graz to participate in a Ramadan fast-breaking dinner—and introduced Himmat to the Libyan court, which promised to fund the mosque.

During the 1969 coup in Libya, Nada's contacts there evaporated, and he said that he had to be smuggled out of the country. His business in ruins, Nada said he had a nervous breakdown and went to a clinic in the German spa town of Wiesbaden. He decided he needed a safe haven to operate and moved to Campione d'Italia, an Italian enclave in Switzerland near Lake Lugano.

Nada and Himmat became inseparable. Himmat asked Nada to join the Islamic Society of Southern Germany (the new name for Munich's Mosque Construction Commission), and in 1971 he did so.¹⁶ Soon Himmat was living in Campione, just a few doors down from Nada. When the mosque governing council met again, it was 1973. At that meeting Ramadan was officially dismissed due to unexcused absences, with Nada voting in support of the action.¹⁷

Himmat and Others on the Move

THE DECISION BY HIMMAT AND HIS NEAREST ASSOCIATES TO KEEP CLOSE CONTROL over the leadership makes sense in hindsight. The 1970s were a fertile period for the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist groups. They were able to reorganize after years of banishment and imprisonment, and the West—with its freedoms and strong financial and legal systems—was an ideal place to put the movement back together. Millions of Muslims, moreover, had been moving to the West; Europe and North America were no longer fringe places in the Muslim world. They were becoming legitimate parts of the Umma.

A few months before taking control of the Munich mosque in 1973, Himmat attended a key meeting in London. It was probably the first Europe-wide meeting of Muslim leaders sympathetic to the goals of political Islam. Held in London's theater district, the meeting of the Islamic Cultural Centers and Bodies in Europe was designed to establish a network for like-minded groups.¹⁸ Reflecting Saudi Arabia's efforts to dominate organized Islam, the chairman was Saudi. Himmat was elected to the governing council. Also elected was Khurshid Ahmad, a Pakistani activist with Jamaat-i-Islami. (Ahmad had founded the Islamic Foundation in London, which later moved to the village of Markfield outside Leicester.)

The 1973 London meeting's primary significance was symbolic. It served as a signpost on the road—a marker for the future. And though it does not seem to have resulted in a real network, it is important because, like other similar meetings, it illustrates a key point: the network of political Islam in the West was created through determination and persistence. It almost certainly did not happen overnight and was not due to a “master plan.”¹⁹ It was a vision that was vigorously pursued over decades.

These meetings also show another important trend in the West: the blurring of ethnic lines. This trend manifested itself when Ahmad joined the governing council of the Munich mosque in 1982.²⁰ The mosque's statutes, which had been carefully tweaked a few years earlier to keep out ordinary Turkish guest workers, were now amended again to allow the illustrious Pakistani Islamist onto its governing body. (Another key addition to the council was Issam al-Attar, the charismatic head of the Muslim Brotherhood's Syrian branch whom Himmat had allegedly tried to recruit to the mosque in the 1960s.)

That same 1982 meeting saw the Islamic Center of Munich change its name once again. From the Mosque Construction Commission in 1960, it had become the Islamic Community of Southern Germany in 1963 and now became the Islamic Community of Germany. These changes were not arcane exercises or delusions of grandeur. The body really had transformed itself from a group dedicated to building one mosque to a regional and now national organization that oversaw a chain of mosques and cultural centers. As usual, however, the group's tenuous connection to German Islam—and its role as a political group—was highlighted by Himmat. He sent the minutes of the 1982 meeting to Munich by registered mail from his home in Lugano, 250 miles away. Two years later, the Munich mosque achieved its crowning recognition: Akif's arrival in 1984.

Akif's Influence

AKIF REPRESENTS A STRAND OF THE BROTHERHOOD THAT HAS TRIED TO MAKE peace with authorities. Unlike Said Ramadan or such theorists as Said Qutb, Akif was eager to be accepted by the government.

Like many veterans of the movement, Akif had spent years in jail. In his case it was a staggering 23 years—from 1954 after the initial crackdown until 1974, when President Anwar Sadat announced an amnesty for all members of the Brotherhood. He was subsequently jailed again from 1996 to 1999 when Sadat’s successor, Hosni Mubarak, initiated one of his periodic crackdowns.²¹

After being released in 1974, Akif quickly linked up with other pragmatists from the movement, such as Yusuf Qaradawi. He also became identified with the journal *Al-Dawa*, which Sadat allowed to be published. It commented on news events from four basic perspectives: anti-Semitism, anti-“Crusaders” (i.e. Christianity), anti-communism and anti-secularism. *Al-Dawa* did not challenge the government, however, and many of its backers were fabulously wealthy, having escaped Nasser’s and Sadat’s prisons for Saudi Arabia. The new, more pragmatic Muslim Brotherhood would make itself acceptable to authorities by toning down its violent rhetoric against the state.

In short, Akif’s group in Egypt was now very similar to the group of people, like Himmat and Nada, who had wrested control of the Munich mosque—first from the former German soldiers, and then from the CIA’s idealistic but ineffective Said Ramadan. They were what Gilles Kepel calls the “neo-Muslim Brotherhood.”²²

One of Akif’s goals was to reconstruct the Brotherhood’s shattered organizational apparatus. But instead of doing so by firing up activists from below, he wanted to establish a carefully wrought international network of organizations that would be impervious to any single tyrant like Nasser. That took him to Himmat and Nada in Munich. From 1984 to 1987, Akif lived in Munich as head imam of the mosque. The timing was not an accident. The years following Sadat’s assassination were particularly harsh in Egypt. The Islamic Center of Munich was Akif’s refuge. He was its spiritual head, while Himmat ran the formal, legal organization out of Campione d’Italia. Ambassadors from Muslim countries regularly paid visits. Munich was on most Muslim countries’ list of places for visiting dignitaries to visit.

The Growing Network

THE EUROPEAN WORK OF AKEF AND OTHERS IN THE 1970S ALSO CONTRIBUTED to the Brotherhood’s spread in the United States. In 1977 Nada and Himmat welcomed a group of Muslim activists to Lugano, the resort just up the street from their homes. The meeting was a who’s who of Islamist leaders, including the ubiquitous Yusuf Qaradawi. The Lugano meeting has long been a rumor, but a list of participants has recently come to light, showing its scope and intentions.²³ A key goal was to set up a structure to guide the growth of political Islam in Europe and the United States. The group started out by setting up think tanks to give the movement

ideological firepower. Its most important creation was the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT).

In addition to Qaradawi, the meeting was attended by two Iraqi Muslims living in the United States: Jamal Barzinji and Ahmad Totonji. In 1963 Totonji had helped set up in United States the Muslim Students Association,²⁴ which became part of the Saudi-run International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations (IIFSO). Totonji became the Saudi group's secretary general.²⁵ A year after the Lugano meeting, the group decided to establish the headquarters of the IIIT in the United States, largely because of the presence there of Ismail Faruqi, a leading Islamist thinker who had also been at the Lugano meeting. He was instructed to open the center in Pennsylvania, near his teaching post at Temple University, and when he did so in 1980, the papers registering the IIIT were signed by Barzinji.²⁶

There were other links to Munich as well. Besides attending the meeting in Lugano, in Himmat and Nada's backyard, Barzinji joined one of Nada's companies the next year—just as he was setting up key North American institutions.²⁷ While the events might have been coincidental, the work sent Barzinji to Saudi Arabia, which would eventually fund many key projects in North America. And it put him in close contact with Nada, who had experience in setting up Islamic institutions in the West.

Nada also nurtured another stalwart of the political Islamic scene in the United States, Hisham Altalib, who worked for his companies.²⁸ Nada eventually sponsored Altalib for membership in the Islamic Community of Germany (the new name of the group that had been formed to build the mosque in Munich).²⁹

Nada and Himmat even lived in the United States for a short while, and some of their children were born there, according to an Italian intelligence report.³⁰ Nada lived in Indianapolis, where Barzinji, Totonji and others were in the process of turning their student group into a national movement—duplicating the process that Nada and Himmat had pioneered in Germany. Nada later moved to Silver Spring, Maryland. In another direct parallel to Nada and Himmat's experience in Munich, Nada helped arrange financing for the new national group's headquarters in Indianapolis.³¹

The Brotherhood's U.S. operation can thus be viewed as a clone of its European effort—with even the same people (Nada, Himmat and their protégés) setting up the American structures. This process began soon after the Lugano meeting, when Barzinji held a meeting in Plainfield, Indiana. In Plainfield, a task force was set up that recommended establishing a “broader umbrella organization” to be known as the Islamic Society of North America.³²

In 1977, the same year as Lugano, Barzinji said he had plans to construct a mosque.³³ It would be funded, he said, by the North America Islamic Trust, a fund headed by Altalib that used Saudi money to buy land and build mosques in North America that would promote Brotherhood-style Islam. The 42-acre site in Indianapolis

soon boasted a mosque, classrooms, residences, a gymnasium and an 80,000-volume library. By the 1980s it was the headquarters of the Islamic Trust, the Muslim Students Association and the Islamic Society of North America.³⁴

The Brothers in America

LIKE NADA AND HIMMAT, THE MEN PUSHING THE BROTHERHOOD IN THE UNITED States were typical neo-Muslim Brotherhood activists—that is, influenced by such classic *Ikhwan* writers as Ramadan and Qutb but more pragmatic and willing to accept Saudi money. Totonji, Barzinji and Altalib were born in northern Iraq, and all three first went to study engineering in Great Britain.³⁵ They later came to the United States. Totonji and Barzinji set up the Muslim Students Association, winning praise from Qaradawi for coming to the West to “fight the seculars and the Westernized.”³⁶

Altalib followed Totonji as head of the IIFSO,³⁷ the Saudi-Muslim Brotherhood group that, among its activities, translated the works of such classic Muslim Brotherhood theorists as Qutb and al-Banna into Western languages.³⁸ The IIFSO was also the predecessor of one of today’s most important Muslim groups, the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY). Headquartered in Saudi Arabia, WAMY aimed to instill in young Muslims the ideology of the Saudi-Muslim Brotherhood. As the IIFSO website explains:

It was out of the IIFSO’s experience of success that the WAMY was born. WAMY was founded in 1972 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, at an international meeting of Islamic workers involved in youth activities and representatives of youth organizations. It was established to help youth organizations around the world implement their planned projects.³⁹

Totonji and Barzinji were both key players in WAMY.⁴⁰ Totonji served as deputy to its first secretary general, while Barzinji was listed as a board member with an address in Saudi Arabia. This was the time that Barzinji and Altalib worked for Nada, serving on the boards of his companies.

WAMY’s reach extended full circle back to Munich. Until recently, Ibrahim el-Zayat, the current head of the Islamic Community of Germany (the group that grew out of the Munich mosque project), was the western European representative for WAMY.⁴¹ Zayat has said that he only served in WAMY to limit the group’s activities, as he believed that WAMY represented Saudi Arabia’s Wahhabist strain of Islam and wasn’t suitable for Europe. Zayat, however, channeled WAMY money to Bosnian groups that local authorities have identified as fundamentalist.⁴²

The overall effect of this Brotherhood campaign on American Muslim life has been—just as in Europe—to narrow what it means to be a Muslim. In 2004 four Muslim groups, including the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), surveyed U.S. mosques. The findings were telling:

The most comprehensive study, a survey of the 1,200 U.S. mosques undertaken in 2000 by four Muslim organizations, found that 2 million Muslims were “associated” with a mosque and that 70 percent of mosque leaders were generally favorable toward fundamentalist teachings, while 21 percent followed the stricter Wahhabi practices. The survey also found that the segregation of women for prayers was spreading, from half of the mosques in 1994 to two-thirds six years later.⁴³

According to John L. Esposito, a Georgetown University scholar with close ties to Islamist thinkers,⁴⁴ these Saudi-backed efforts have fostered “the export of a very exclusive brand of Islam into the Muslim community in the United States” that tends to make American Muslims “more isolationist in the society in which they live.”⁴⁵

Beyond Terrorism

AS WITH THE HIMMAT-NADA STRUCTURE IN EUROPE, IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT THE Brotherhood’s organization in the United States has been involved in terrorism. Totonji apparently had meetings with Sami al-Arian, a convicted member of the terrorist group Islamic Jihad. In a letter seized by U.S. investigators, Arian wrote that he had met with Totonji and Totonji had promised him \$20,000. But searching for such tangential links to terrorism may distract us from seeing a more important point. The 9/11 attacks have focused attention on Islamist links to terrorism—a natural development but one that overlooks the real achievement of these activists: the creation of a robust legal framework for the Islamist cause despite years of setbacks.

Time and time again, activists established bodies that did not fulfill their goals. In the 1960s, for example, Said Ramadan and CIA money set up a pan-German conference of Muslim organizations that never gained traction and fell by the wayside. In the 1970s Himmat attended the pan-European conference held in London. It, too, never fulfilled its promise. But each effort pushed the ball forward a bit—just as the Muslim World League was created only after numerous failures.

In Europe the proponents of political Islam finally succeeded in creating a viable structure to unite the forces of radical Islam on that continent. By 1989 the group that founded the Munich mosque had become a German-wide body of mosques and

cultural centers renamed the Islamic Community of Germany. It, in turn, helped found the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe (FIOE). Together with influential groups in France and Britain, it organized FIOE in classic Muslim Brotherhood fashion: as an umbrella group that would set up more bodies dedicated to the movement's long-term goals.⁴⁶ Sure enough, in 1990, FIOE established the Institute for the Study of Human Sciences, which was designed to train imams and Muslim elites, as well as a trust company to raise money for the movement's activities.⁴⁷ And in 1997 FIOE set up one of its most influential organizations, the European Council for Fatwa and Research.

As for FIOE itself, it has represented European Muslims in meetings with the Vatican and the European Union. Today it has branches in two dozen European countries and is the only pan-European Muslim organization able to lobby effectively across the continent. This success is the true fulfillment of the Muslim Brotherhood's tentative steps in Munich in the 1950s and '60s.

The Brotherhood's legacy in the West is not so much terrorism—although the Brotherhood has endorsed it over the years and continues to do so in the Middle East—as it is the spread of a narrow version of Islam. The Brotherhood's emphasis on Islam as the one true religion and its embrace of anti-Semitism has hindered, rather than helped, Muslim integration in Western societies. Though it may not be a terrorist group, the Brotherhood arguably creates a milieu that is a perfect breeding ground for terrorists—the us-versus-them mentality, the sense of victimization that is the bedrock of extremism and violence.

Western authorities have been slow to understand this distinction, however. After the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington in 2001, the U.S. government swung hard against the Brotherhood, calling it a terrorist organization. Nada and Himmat were put on a list of “terrorist financiers,” and the list was endorsed by the United Nations.⁴⁸ Both men's bank accounts were frozen and remain so today, even though Swiss prosecutors—despite extensive help from the United States—have been unable to pin any charge on them.⁴⁹ The allegations and frozen funds have indeed disrupted the Nada-Himmat axis; Himmat resigned from the head of the Islamic Community of Germany, 29 years after taking control.⁵⁰

But these draconian measures have ended up actually helping the movement. With terrorism charges so far unproven in a court of law, the Brotherhood in the West has been—for some public officials and for many western Muslims—exonerated. As in the 1950s, Western officials are once again becoming infatuated with the Brotherhood. No longer viewed as terrorists, the Brothers are now seen as savvy organizers who might be used as a new secret weapon to control Islam. In this sense, the West has come full circle in dealing with the Brotherhood, from fascination in the '50s, to neglect, and now to a reawakened—and wholly naïve—interest.

NOTES

1. Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brother of Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement 1928-1942* (Reading: Ithaca, 1998), p. 155.
2. The mosque's history is sketched in Ian Johnson, "The Beachhead," *Wall Street Journal* (12 July 2005): A1. The book will describe the mosque's history in full and include some elements of this paper. It will be published by Harcourt in 2008. Its tentative title is *A Mosque for the Taking*.
3. Bavarian Central State Archives. BayHStA Laflü 1894, 6 August 1956, "Grundsätze für die Betreuung nichtdeutscher Flüchtlinge." Thanks to Stefan Meining for pointing out this document.
4. Georgetown University Special Collections: Diplomacy, International Affairs, Intelligence. Robert. F. Kelley papers, Box 5, Folder 5, 1 December 1959 "Memorandum for the Record."
5. Yusuf al-Qaradawi memoirs, according to 27 December 2005 "History of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood Part One," <http://www.aawsat.com/english/news.asp?section=3&id=3204>.
6. Reinhard Schulze, *Islamischer Internationalismus im 20. Jahrhundert*. (Leiden: Brill, 1990), pp. 247-8.
7. This is the English transliteration of the Arabic on the magazine's masthead.
8. Schulze, p. 248.
9. Swiss Federal Archives, Bern. BAR E 4320(C) 1994/120, Bd. 220, Dossier (4183:0) 420/36 Ramadan, Said, 1960-1988; 23 September 1970, untitled interview with Ramadan.
10. Swiss police records show he began using a Pakistani pass no later than 1980. BAR 21 February 1980, "Rapport de Wanner—inspecteur."
11. 1 February 2005 interview with Obeidullah Mogaddedi. Mogaddedi also believes Himmat wanted to bring Attar to Munich.
12. 1 June 2005 telephone interview with Ghaleb Himmat.
13. Tariq Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity* (The Islamic Foundation, 2001), p. vii.
14. Registerakten, 18 January 1975, "Protokoll," p. 3.
15. This and other details of his life from 2 June 2004 interview with Youssef Nada.
16. Registerakten, 11 April 1971, "Protokoll."
17. Registerakten, 3 November 1973, "Protokoll."
18. *Impact International* (25 May-7 June 1973): 3.
19. An example of the master-plan theory is Sylvain Besson, *La Conquete de L'Occident: Le Projet Secret des Islamistes* (Seuil, 2005). This book relies on documents found at Nada's home that point to a general plan to spread the Brotherhood's ideology to the West. However, the paper is anonymous and no concrete evidence exists that the plan was ever implemented. Such documents are probably illustrative of the general desire to push the Brotherhood's ideology, but not of an actionable plan to do so.
20. Registerakten, 4 December 1982, "Protokoll."

21. 14 September 2004 interview; all prison dates and biographical information are from this interview.
22. Gilles Kepel, *The Prophet & Pharaoh: Muslim Extremism in Egypt* (London: Al Saqi Books, 1985), especially chapter 4.
23. Muhammad Shafiq, *Growth of Islamic Thought in North America: Focus on Ism'ail Raji al Faruqi* (Brentwood, MA: Amana Publications, 1994), pp. 27-28 for complete list of participants. Thanks to Steve Merley for pointing out this book. There is some speculation that this meeting took place in Nada's home, but Nada denies this (2 June 2004 interview) and Shafiq does not mention it taking place there.
24. Muslim Students Association of U.S. and Canada, "A Little Taste of History," <http://web.archive.org/web/20030217143532/http://msa-natl.org/about/history.html>.
25. United Nations Security Council, Letter dated 12 September 1969 from the permanent representative of Jordan addressed to the president of the security council, <http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/2aa9c8845de74ebb05256562005c2813?OpenDocument>.
26. Shafiq, p. 28.
27. Nada International Anstalt. Liechtenstein corporate registration, Asat Trust, "Zeichnungerklaerung" and 30 January 1978 "Beschluss;" Barzinji left the company in 1983.
28. Ibid. Barzinji and Altalib joined and left the company at the same time.
29. Registerakten, 3 April 1978, "Protokoll," p. 4. It is not clear if Altalib joined.
30. Italian Intelligence report, The Intelligence and Democratic Security Service SISDE Counterterrorism Division 96ter. 6396 -187-A. Re: "B.J." Operation Rome, 6 April 1996. Nada confirmed that his children were born in the United States in 2 June 2004 interview, saying he had "business interests there."
31. SISDE report; also John Mintz and Douglas Farah, "In Search Of Friends Among the Foes," *Washington Post* (11 September 2004): A01.
32. Antar Ibn-Stanford, "A history of Muslim Student Organizations in America and a model constitution," <http://www.angelfire.com/in/muslimscholars/three.html>.
33. "Islamic Trust to Build Mosque," *Indianapolis Star* (5 May 1977).
34. "Islamic Society of North America" in *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*.
35. Totonji: PhD Thesis Dept: Petroleum and natural gas engineering thesis, Pennsylvania State University, "Displacement efficiency in alcohol flooding in relation to ternary system phase behavior" (1970); shelving location: aa 900000009624 Thesis 1970 Toton,A. . Altalib: The Fairfax Institue, Dr. Hisham Y. Altalib's Biography, http://www.fairfaxi.org/_mgxroot/page_10806.html. Barzinji: *Indianapolis Star* "Trust to Build Mosque," *Indianapolis Star* (5 May 1977).
36. John Mintz and Douglas Farah, "In Search of Friends Among the Foes, U.S. Hopes to Work With Diverse Group" *The Washington Post*, September 11, 2004, Page A01, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A12823-2004Sep10.html>.
37. Hisham Altalib, *Training Guide for Islamic Workers*, International Institute for Islamic Thought.
38. Gilles Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 173.
39. International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations, <http://web.archive.org/web/19990202092801/www.iifso.org/>

40. See, for example, Totonji: <http://web.archive.org/web/20030314125221/http://www.wamy.org/english/conferences/speech6.htm>.
41. BAO-USA “Underground Banking” report from German federal police, the BKA, makes this allegation; Zayat confirmed it in a 19 April 2005 interview.
42. Such as Taibah International (BAO report).
- ¹43. David B. Ottaway, “U.S. Eyes Money Trails of Saudi-Backed Charities,” *Washington Post* (19 August 2004): A01, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A13266-2004Aug18.html>.
44. Esposito studied under Ismail Faruqi, one of the most influential Islamists in the United States; see previous discussion on Faruqi’s role.
45. David B. Ottaway, “U.S. Eyes Money Trails of Saudi-Backed Charities,” *Washington Post*.
46. For a more complete description of the group’s foundation, see Ian Johnson “How Islamic Group’s Ties Reveal Europe’s Challenge,” *Wall Street Journal* (29 December 2005): A1.
47. Ibid.
48. United States Department of the Treasury, <http://www.ustreas.gov/press/releases/po3380.html>.
49. See 31 May 2005 press release by Swiss prosecutor’s office: “Ordonnance de suspension des recherches.”
50. Registerakten, 13 January 2002, no title. In the 1 June 2005 interview, Himmat said he resigned because the U.N. designation meant he was unable to sign checks and unable, therefore, to keep the Islamic Center of Munich open.

The Politicization of American Islam

by Husain Haqqani

SINCE ITS INCEPTION, THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD HAS DEFINED ITSELF AS the vanguard of a global Islamic revival. After starting out in Egypt in 1928, the Brotherhood had set up branches in Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Morocco, Hyderabad (India), Hadramawt (Yemen) and Paris by 1937.¹ The universality of the Brotherhood's ideology and organization was described by its founder, Hassan al-Banna when he said:

A Muslim individual, Muslim family, Muslim nation, Muslim government and Muslim state should be able to lead Islamic governments, should be able to unite the dispersed Muslims, should be able to regain their honor and superiority, and should be able to recover their lost lands, their usurped regions and their occupied territories. Then it should be able to raise the flag of Jihad and the call towards Allah until the entire world is benefited by the teachings of Islam.²

In al-Banna's vision, the Brotherhood was not to be restricted to a single country or region. Its members had the responsibility of organizing themselves and carrying its message throughout the world. Since the objective of this organization was not merely to expand Islamic piety but rather to create an Islamic political entity, the Brotherhood could not ignore the major actors in its global power play. Within the Muslim world, the Brotherhood sought members who would struggle to create and lead what they construed as the Islamic State. In countries with non-Muslim majorities, the purpose was to advance the Brotherhood's political agenda by all means possible. In a message addressed to members of the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Banna stated:

Always remember that you have two basic objectives: number one, that the Islamic country should be free from all foreign control, for freedom is the natural right of every man which can be denied only by an oppressive dictator; second, in this free land [the concept of freedom in this context is very different from a Western understanding], a free Islamic government should be established which should act on the Islamic commands, should enforce its collective system, should declare its right principles as operative, and should popularize among the people its message which is based on wisdom. As long as the government is not established, all Muslims will be guilty, and for any slackness and carelessness in this connection will have to be accountable before Allah.³

The Muslim Brothers' mission is defined in a seven-point pledge of allegiance, which emphasizes the connection between being personally religious and creating an Islamic polity.

The Oath of Allegiance

FIRST, A PERSON WHO TAKES THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE BROTHERHOOD acknowledges that he will build up “an Islamic personality: his body should be strong; his character should be firm; his thinking should be mature and balanced; he should be capable of earning his living and be resourceful; his belief should be on the right lines and his prayers should be selfless; he should be keen for his progress as an individual, and mindful of his time; all his affairs should be organized; and his existence should be beneficial for others to the best possible extent. These are the duties of every Muslim Brother individually.”⁴

Second, he should establish a Muslim family. Each Brother should win the loyalty of his own family members; he should prepare them to be respectful of Islamic etiquette in their private lives and to follow it. He should give to his sons and his servants the best available training and should instruct them, bringing them up on Islamic teachings. This is the duty of a Muslim Brother in relation to his family.

Third, the Brother should work to reform society. He should popularize righteous living; he should encourage the prohibition of evil deeds, and should encourage performance of good acts that exalt virtue, and a competitive spirit in performing good deeds. Importantly, he should induce the people to “color their whole living in the Islamic hue.”⁵ This is the duty of the Muslim Brotherhood, of every Brother individually, and it is also the responsibility, as a whole, of the entire *Jamaah* of the Brotherhood.

Fourth, a Muslim Brother should free his country from every foreign, non-Islamic

control. He should not allow any other political, spiritual or economic power to step into authority.

Fifth, he should reform his government until it is, in the true sense of the word, converted into an Islamic type of government, able to perform its duty and responsibility as a servant of the entire Muslim community of believers, or *Umma*.

Sixth, the Muslim Brotherhood should collectively work to restore the international position of the *Umma*. To this end, it will be necessary to liberate occupied Muslim regions. The Brotherhood should restore Muslim honor and superiority; it should promote its civilization and re-establish its culture. A new spirit of oneness should be instilled until the entire *Umma* becomes a heartwarming unity. In this way the crown and throne of the caliphate of the world can be regained.

Seventh, the Muslim Brotherhood should perform the duties of the *teacher*, serving as the “guide to the whole world.”⁶

Beginning with the individual, the focus then expands to the family, then the Muslim society, then the Muslim states and governments, and then to the whole world. The Muslim Brotherhood stipulates spreading its politicized version of Islam “to every nook and cranny of the world in a way that there will not remain any trace of polytheism on this earth, and everywhere the invigorating sight of obedience to Allah may be seen everywhere. Indeed, Allah cannot but make his light supreme.”⁷ This casting of Islam as an ideology, as opposed to a religion that serves as the means of spiritual salvation to its followers, sets the Muslim Brotherhood apart from purely religious groups. Assertions about the universality of a religion can be found in the writings and pronouncements of preachers of other faiths. Statements such as eliminating polytheism might have been read differently, perhaps as pious objectives of a puritanical group, if the political agenda of foisting an Islamic State did not accompany these declarations.

The objectives, the method, and the outline of the Muslim Brotherhood’s message as defined by its founder in the 1930s—shortly after the founding of the Brotherhood—has been consistently followed by successive generations of Muslim Brotherhood members. Since then, the Muslim Brotherhood and its fellow travelers have expanded their presence to almost all continents. In the United States, the Brotherhood’s expansion has been particularly significant.

Taking Root in American Soil

THERE WAS AN INDIGENOUS MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN AMERICA, ESPECIALLY AMONG African-Americans, long before significant numbers of immigrant Muslims started arriving in the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1950s, Muslim immigrants came either as

students at American colleges and universities, or as young men and women who, after completing their education, decided to pursue the American dream. They did not come to Islamize the United States or to pursue the agenda of political Islam. But they did have religious needs. They needed a mosque to pray in, *halal* food to eat, proper religious and cultural education for their children, and they needed to arrange and organize marriages and burials according to Islamic rituals. Muslim immigrants to the United States also discovered that certain economic practices common in the U.S.—for example, mortgage financing and bank interest—were being questioned by theologians in the Muslim world, and thus they started worrying about how to have banking arrangements that were not interest-based.

Members of the Muslim Brotherhood rose as leaders of the burgeoning American Muslim community ostensibly to address the Muslim community's concerns and needs. In the process, they were also able to lay the foundation of political as well as potentially radical networks that would advance the ideological agenda laid out by Hassan al-Banna. Thanks to them, four things happened simultaneously in the 1950s.

First, the Muslim Brotherhood needed cadres worldwide, since it was propounding a universal message. The Muslim Brotherhood initially comprised people who could read and write, but now they were looking for people with higher education to fill out a more robust talent pool. Since many young Muslims had come to the United States to receive an education, the Muslim Brotherhood recognized that they could get better quality cadres by drawing from Muslims studying in the United States.

Second, for Muslims who came to the United States as students, or as young professionals starting out in pursuit of the American dream, there was a need for services in relation to prayer, religious obligations, and the Muslim equivalent of a Sunday school for their children. The Brotherhood astutely recognized that the Muslim community's needs could dovetail nicely with its own. The immigrants had come to the United States to pursue a home and a car, a good job and an education for their children. Most of them sought an Islamic tradition—including a house of worship and a relationship to God—but were not necessarily motivated to change the world or to wage Jihad. However, if the Islamists were the only providers of religious services, those young and ambitious Muslims, who were not very clear about their own religious beliefs, would embrace political Islam as their ideology in an attempt to protect their Islamic identity and heritage.

The third key development in the 1950s was Saudi Arabia's emergence on the global scene and its desire for influence among the world's Muslims. Hermann Eilts, who served as U.S. ambassador to Egypt and Saudi Arabia reports that, in the late 1940s, Hassan al-Banna and some of his closest associates used to travel to Saudi Arabia—not the Saudi Arabia of today, but a kingdom that was still just coming out

the shadows of its early Wahhabi, non-modernist beginnings. The Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, in particular, had ties with the Saudis. According to Eilts, Sheikh Mohammed Suroor Sabhan, a Sudanese, was Saudi deputy finance minister at the time and bore responsibility for providing money for the Muslim Brotherhood's influence-building program.⁸ Now that Saudi funding was available, this collusion coincided nicely with the international agenda of the Muslim Brotherhood. All al-Banna and his associates had to do was persuade the Saudis that expanding into Europe and America was a significant opportunity and a worthwhile investment.

The fourth issue that worked to the Brotherhood's advantage during the 1950s was the Cold War. The U.S. was still trying to find its way in a very complex new world, and American policymakers were not necessarily aware of the complexities they were facing. They took a binary approach: the U.S. needed to contain communism, which also meant it needed to stop newly-independent Muslim countries from becoming friends of the Soviets. Thus, anybody the Americans could find to help in that process became a useful partner. This approach positioned the Saudis as key allies of the United States, and the Muslim Brotherhood was allied to the Saudis. Therefore, in the context of the Cold War, the U.S. and the Muslim Brotherhood seemed to be potential partners. The level of sophistication regarding the Middle East in the United States was very limited at this time (some would argue that it still is). For example, there was an education initiative called the "Red Pig" campaign. "Pig" is the symbol of dirt—and hence forbidden by Islam. Propagandists combined it with "red," meaning communist, to create the phrase "Red Pig," a simplistic term meant to convince Muslims that the communists were bad.⁹

Another idea conceived by the Americans was to try to find a "Muslim Billy Graham." The person most likely to be identified as a Muslim Billy Graham could only be someone who himself wanted to be identified as such; somebody eager for the funding and support needed to carry out his own crusade. Not surprisingly, one of the people who showed up to fill that role was a man by the name of Said Ramadan. He was the husband of Wafa al-Banna, who was the daughter of Hassan al-Banna. By 1953, Hassan al-Banna's son-in-law was privileged to have a meeting in the Oval Office with Dwight Eisenhower, the President of the United States. In his role as a potential Muslim Billy Graham, some in Washington expected him to mobilize the Muslims of the world against the evil and atheism of communism.¹⁰

Building a Global Network

THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION IN 1952 LED BY GAMAL ABDEL NASSER MARKED THE beginning of the rise of Arab nationalism. Within a few years, Iraq fell to the

Baathists and, later on, came under communist influence. These developments made the Cold War paradigm of seeking allies opposed to Soviet influence all the more urgent. The Muslim Brotherhood was looked upon with renewed interest and favor, especially by the U.S. intelligence community, which envisioned it as a major source of resistance against Arab nationalism and Nasserism. Said Ramadan recognized a golden opportunity when he saw one, and quickly and strategically positioned himself. Western-educated, and with exceptional access, he started building up the Brotherhood's international institutional mechanism. Although the Muslim Brotherhood was restricted to Arabic-speaking countries at this time, Said forged an alliance with the fledgling Muslim state in Pakistan, and especially with *Jamaat-e-Islami* led by Abul A'la Maududi. In fact, Ramadan gained enough influence in Pakistan by the time of the first World Muslim Congress held in Karachi in 1949 that Pakistan's prime minister—a Westernized man very much in President Truman's favor—wrote the preface to one of Ramadan's first books. In essence, a secular national leader was writing the preface to an Islamist scholar's book, thus implying that radical Islam could be the west's ally within the greater framework of the Cold War.

Said Ramadan set up the Islamic center in Geneva in 1961, and then in 1962, Saudi Crown Prince Faisal Abdul Aziz helped create the Muslim World League, also known as *Rabita al-Alam al-Islami*. Radical Islam has noticeably flourished in places where people linked to the *Rabita* originated: Ramadan himself was Egyptian; Abul A'la Maududi, Pakistani; Haj Amin al-Husseini, of Palestine; Sibghatullah Mujaddedi of Afghanistan; Mohammed ibn Ibrahim al-Shehr, the Saudi Grand Mufti; and Abdul Rahman and Yahya al-Iryani of Yemen. The *Rabita* became a major funding source for radical Islamic projects all over the world. Given the fact that the American Muslim population comprised either of young professionals or students, one of the first organizational structures to emerge in the United States was the Muslim Students Association (MSA), founded by an Iraqi Kurd, Jamal Barzanji and his family network, all of whom were associated with the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood-linked students who grew out of the student format then created other institutions such as the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY). At the same time, the Muslims Students Association of America became the pivot of an International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations (IIFSO).

Another important Brotherhood achievement took place in the publishing world. Noting that fewer books had been translated from western languages into Arabic in the last 100 years than were translated into Spanish every year, the MSA sought and acquired funding to do a massive translation project of all the major texts of radical Islam: the works of Said Qutb, Abul A'la Maududi, al-Banna, and everyone else in the Brotherhood's ideological network were widely published and distributed. These texts were translated into 70 languages, thus making them available to every Muslim

center or mosque. When American Muslim college students visited their school's Muslim prayer room, they could choose any of these Islamist books to take home. All of these were edited, published, and/or printed in either Saudi Arabia or Kuwait, and to this day remain available free of charge.

Traditionalist Islamic texts do not enjoy the benefit of such broad and free circulation, nor do modernist writings that seek to bridge the divide between Islam and the West. Instead, the translated books have helped bring an entire generation of young Muslims closer to the Brotherhood's politicized view of Islam than, for instance, the Sufi version emphasizing piety. A young Muslim engineering student, say in Oklahoma or Michigan who wants to learn about his faith can simply visit the school's prayer hall and take whatever Islamist literature he wants: if he is a Turk, it's available in Turkish, if he is from India, it's available in Hindi, if he is Pakistani it's available in Urdu, and it's certainly available in English. He embraces the Brotherhood's notion of Islam as political ideology and is inadvertently influenced by Jihadist ideas, often with little awareness of the pluralist traditions within Islam.

The Muslim Students Association also started inviting speakers to the United States from the Muslim world, including Abul A'la Maududi, Abul Hassan Ali Nadvi, and Yusuf al-Qaradawi. While the American government facilitated these trips because they perceived the speakers to be devoutly anti-communist (which they in fact were), most of the lectures were actually about the impending clash between Islam and the West. In essence, as far back as the 1970s, the Muslim Brotherhood was fighting communism while at the same time preparing its followers for a confrontation with the West. Maududi's speeches in America, each one subsequently published in book form, are very strong on this subject—as are Nadvi's and Qaradawi's. Their cumulative message focuses on how the Westernized way of life is not going to be Islam's salvation. Instead of modernizing the Muslim world, the Muslim Brothers' agenda, then and now, is to Islamize the modern world.

An Islamist Success Story

AFTER THE MASSIVE PUBLICATION PROGRAM OF THE 1960S AND 1970S, THE 1980S saw the Muslim Brotherhood's America Project become a major source of fundraising in the Gulf region. This became possible thanks to the rise in oil prices after 1973. The anti-Soviet Jihad in Afghanistan enabled the Brotherhood to create networks for raising funds and even for providing ammunition for the *mujahadeen*; those networks included charities. Following the Iranian revolution of 1979, the Saudis began competing with the Iranians for influence over radical Islamists. The U.S. saw Iran as the enemy and Saudi Arabia as an ally in this struggle for regional

leadership. Once again, the Brotherhood benefited from the perception that they were on the right side of the U.S. strategic agenda.

U.S. intelligence officials have often believed that there is no inherent clash of interest between radical Islam and the United States. As a State Department official said about the Taliban in 1995, “the Taliban will probably develop like the Saudis did. There will be Aramco, there will be pipelines and there will be an emir, no parliament, and lots of Sharia law. We can live with that.”¹¹ This attitude of ignoring the consequences of Jihadist ideology and attitudes towards the West has allowed the Muslim Brotherhood to dramatically expand its networks, and those networks have emerged as the most influential face of Islam within the Muslim communities in the United States, even though they do not necessarily represent the Muslim majority.

The Muslim Brotherhood’s successful expansion in the United States had four effects on the Muslim community in the country. First, many of the leading figures in the U.S. Muslim community ended up being people from, or influenced by, the Muslim Brotherhood. They had the money, resources, and the connections to organize and claim to represent America’s Muslims.

Second, many mosques and organizations in North America are influenced or controlled by associates of the Muslim Brotherhood. The American Muslim community as a whole is very diverse and includes Sufis, Shias, Sunnis, and people with backgrounds in syncretism. Although an overwhelming majority of American Muslims would prefer that their imams be American *and* Muslim—rather than radical Muslims aiming to change the American way of life—the Muslim Brotherhood has identified itself as their leaders.

Third, the Muslim agenda in the U.S. has been defined by the Muslim Brotherhood. Matters of religious interpretation and inter-faith dialogue have taken a back seat to the Brotherhood’s political issues and priorities. Instead of accepting the diversity among Muslims who consider Islam simply as their religious faith, Muslim Brotherhood leaders describe Islam as a political and social ideology. Islam is therefore defined as ideology *and* faith, and any distinctions between the two become blurred.

Fourth, the Muslim Brotherhood’s dominance has marginalized traditional Islam within the American Muslim community. The kind of people who want to say their prayers but otherwise want to get on with the business of life; who want to have a relationship with God through saintly intermediaries, but do not want to think in terms of political agendas, have found themselves on the outside of the organized U.S. Muslim structures.

The Muslim Brotherhood also has had an impact on the American mainstream. As the American media and academia sought to understand Islam, because of the way the Brotherhood has organized itself, journalists and scholars found it most convenient to approach Islam through the Brotherhood’s politicized version. Only recently

have some academics begun doing research on Sufi traditions or non-radical versions of Islam. Otherwise, one often hears that Muslims divide the world between *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb*, the land of Islam and the land of war, even though that is one particular version of Islam, not its universal view.

This tendency to adopt the Brotherhood's point of view is also related to the fact that distinctions within Islam are complex and can be difficult to discern. When people with very little background knowledge and historic understanding of Islam get into the business of trying to understand the contemporary Islamic world, the temptation is great to go and pick up a copy of the Koran, locate a specific verse, and then read some of the debates within the Islamic theological tradition. However, the more the layperson gets into it, the more confusing it becomes, because any spiritual understanding of Islam is quickly over-taken by current politics. For instance, Islam has existed for fourteen centuries, but it is only now that suicide bombings are taking place in Islam's name. In fact there is no long historic Islamic tradition of suicide killing in the same manner. The explanation for this phenomenon cannot be easily provided through direct references to original sacred texts of Islam. That is because today's Islamist activism does not come directly from the Koran, even though the Koran is invoked by its defenders.

Islamism is essentially a recent movement, reflecting a particular response within the Muslim world to Muslim decline, based on the types of arguments forwarded by the Brotherhood. Along similar lines, consider the question of violent jihad, which has long been debated, just as the concept of Holy War was debated among Christians throughout the Middle Ages and well into modern times. There's a famous ruling going back to the thirteenth century by certain scholars, such as Ibn Taymiyyah, who argued that jihad is the sixth pillar of Islam. But throughout Islamic history there have been others who have argued that military jihad is only meant to be a response to an attack.

Allowing radicals to define Islam may be, in some respects, like having Christian Evangelicals define Christianity without allowing Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox or other denominations to offer alternative definitions. Islam's historic religious tradition is equally diverse and there is scope for further diversity, especially in the free environment of the United States. But for many Americans, the Muslim Brotherhood's version is now the "official" and mainstream version of Islam. If a news organization is looking for a spokesman for the Muslims, they usually go to one of the Brotherhood-linked organizations, marginalizing the opinions of traditionalist but non-radical Muslims. Ironically, commentators then turn around and wonder what has happened to the moderate Muslims. The point is that moderate Muslims do not control the organizational structures from which Muslim spokespeople in the U.S. are selected.

As Islam continues to win converts in the United States, these new converts are more likely to be influenced by radical Islam than by traditional Islam. Whether it's a Muslim prison ministry, a chaplaincy in the military, or some other U.S. outreach, all of its teachings have been influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood sufficiently for the Brotherhood's views to be the prism through which new converts view Islam. Even critics of radical Islam are affected by the Muslim Brotherhood's notion that there is only one Islam. As a result, the plurality of Islam and the pluralism within Islam are totally ignored. Creating the illusion of homogeneity for a diverse community might be the Muslim Brotherhood's most effective and profound accomplishment. It has achieved this through its well-planned takeover of Muslim leadership in the United States.

NOTES

1. Brynjar Lia, 'The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt,' (Reading, Ithaca Press, 1998) p 155, citing *Jareedat al Ikhwan al Muslimeen (JIM)*, No 4, 1356/1937, p 4.
2. Saeed Hawwa, 'The Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan al Muslimeen)', (Kuwait, International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations, 1985) p 43.
3. *Ibid.* p 43-44.
4. *Ibid.* p 44.
5. *Ibid.* p 44.
6. *Ibid.* p 47.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Robert Dreyfuss, 'Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam', (New York, Metropolitan Books, 2005) p 65.
9. *Ibid.* p 86.
10. *Ibid.* 72.
11. *Ibid.* 328.

The Muslim Brotherhood's U.S. Network

by Zeyno Baran

WASHINGTON D.C. HAS SUDDENLY BECOME VERY INTERESTED IN the Muslim Brotherhood. American policymakers are debating whether to engage non-violent elements of the Muslim Brotherhood network, both inside and outside the United States, in the hope that such engagement will empower these “moderates” against violent Wahhabi and Salafi groups such as al-Qaeda. Unfortunately, this strategy is based on a false assumption: that “moderate” Islamist groups will confront and weaken their violent co-religionists, robbing them of their support base.

This lesser-of-two-evils strategy is reminiscent of the rationale behind the Cold War-era decision to support the Afghan mujahideen against the Soviet army. In the short term, the U.S. alliance with the mujahideen did indeed aid America in its struggle against the Soviet Union. In the long term, however, U.S. support led to the empowerment of a dangerous and potent adversary. In choosing its allies, the U.S. cannot afford to elevate short-term tactical considerations above longer-term strategic ones. Most importantly, the U.S. must consider the *ideology* of any potential partners. Although various Islamist groups do quarrel over tactics and often bear considerable animosity towards one another, they all agree on the endgame: a world dictated by political Islam. A “divide and conquer” strategy by the United States will only push them closer together.

Even though the Muslim Brotherhood (in Arabic, *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*) does not openly call for violence or terrorism, it still does little to oppose it. In fact, it may provide an ideological springboard for future violence. This is not to say that all Salafis will one day become terrorists; the vast majority will never engage in violence and likely abhor terrorist acts. Nevertheless, the first step on the road to jihadi terrorism

is instruction in Islamist ideology. Nearly all individuals involved in terrorism—whether as a foot soldiers executing the attack or an upper level mastermind, financier, or recruiter—start out as non-violent Salafi Islamists, and many were once Brotherhood members. For example, Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, mastermind of the September 11 terrorist attacks, told U.S. interrogators that he was first drawn to violent jihad after attending Brotherhood youth camps.¹ It is therefore inexplicable that policymakers should seek to empower Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood as a strategy to combat terrorism.

The deciding factor in determining which Muslims can be allies in the “long war” cannot be based on tactics—that is, whether or not a group eschews violent methods.² The deciding factor must be ideological: Is the group Islamist or not?

On Islamism

WHAT DO I MEAN BY “ISLAMIST?” THE TERM WAS COINED BY THE FOUNDER OF THE Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna, in an effort to politicize Islam.³ Broadly, the label Islamist applies to individuals or groups who believe that Islam should be a comprehensive guide to life. Islamists do not accept that the interpretation of Islam could evolve over the centuries along with human beings’ understanding, or that the religion could be influenced or modified by the cultures and traditions of various regions. Nor do they recognize that Islam can be limited to the religious realm, or to simply providing its followers with a code of moral and ethical principles. With this definition in mind, a nonviolent, American-born Islamist should not be considered an ally of the U.S. Yet a devout, conservative Muslim immigrant to Europe—one who does not even speak any Western languages but rejects Islamist ideology—could be.⁴

Islamists are strenuously opposed to secular governance. Instead, they believe that Islamic rules and laws based upon the Quran and the *sharia* code must shape all aspects of human society, from politics and education to history, science, the arts, and more. Islamic jurisprudence developed and codified over the course of the 8th and 9th centuries and has not changed since then. In wholly *sharia*-based countries such as Iran, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia, there is little distinction between religion and state, leaving no room for liberal democracy. The institution of *elections* might be maintained, but this will inevitably be an illiberal system without dissent, individualization, or critical thinking.

Today’s Islamists adhere first and foremost to the works of the Muslim Brotherhood’s most famous ideologue, Sayyid Qutb, and are not necessarily concerned with Islam’s spiritual or cultural aspects. Qutb, like his ideological predecessors Ibn Taymiyya and Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, was preoccupied with the relative

decline of the Muslim world. All three believed this deterioration was a result of Muslims having strayed from pure Islam. Qutb argued that Islam's crisis could be reversed only if "true" Muslims, emulating the ways of the Prophet Muhammad, worked to replace existing governments in the Muslim world with strictly Islamic regimes.⁵ Accordingly, followers of Qutb desire the overthrow of their current governments and declare armed jihad against non-Muslim states. It is important to underline that this step is often viewed as "defensive jihad," an interpretation which has broad acceptance among many Muslims. This logic has been used to justify attacks in Spain (which was ruled by Muslims for several hundred years) and any other Western countries that are deemed to be waging a war against Islam, either militarily or culturally.⁶ The next step is the establishment of the caliphate. Islamists believe that bringing about such changes is an obligation for all Muslims. They are not bound by constraints of time—they have been fighting this war for many decades already and will continue as long as it takes. Nor are they hindered by location—the new caliphate can be established anywhere.

Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood are engaged in a long-term social engineering project. The eventual "Islamization" of the world is to be enacted via a bottom-up process. Initially, the individual is transformed into a "true" Muslim. This Islamization of the individual leads that person to reject Western norms of pluralism, individual rights, and the secular rule of law. Next, the individual's family is transformed; then the society; then the state; and finally the entire world is expected to live, and be governed, according to Islamic principles. This ideological machinery is at the core of Islamist terrorism and it works to promote separation, sedition, and hatred. The tactics of the Muslim Brotherhood may be nonviolent in the West and less violent than other groups in the Muslim world, but the ideology behind those tactics remains fundamentally opposed to the Western democratic system and its values.

Many critics of the War on Terror complain that it fosters an "us versus them" attitude between Muslims and non-Muslims. In reality this mentality did not begin with the Bush Administration; it has long been part of the Islamists' rhetoric. For decades, Brotherhood-affiliated organizations have been telling Muslims that they are different—in fact, superior—and must remain separate from non-Muslims. While more recently, some Islamists in the West have begun talking about integration or participation, these concepts are meant to be followed only if they serve the long-term Islamist agenda.

Non-Islamist Muslims understand the inherent incompatibility between Islamism's desired imposition of *sharia* law upon society at large and Western society's pluralism and equality. To the Brotherhood and groups like it—whether in the Middle East or the United States—the Quran and Islam are not merely one *possible* source

of law; they are the *only* source of law. As the Muslim Brotherhood declares in its motto, “Allah is our objective, the Prophet is our leader, the Quran is our law, jihad is our way, dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope.”⁷

When the U.S. government engages with Islamist organizations in conferences or government outreach programs, it lends legitimacy to an ideology that does not represent—at least not yet—the views of the majority of American Muslims. American policymakers who advocate pursuing such a strategy are actually facilitating Islamism by endorsing it as a mainstream ideology. Both at home and abroad, this policy is leading to disaster. Liberal and non-Islamist Muslims—having already been denounced by Islamists as apostates—are now being told by Western governments that they do not represent “real” Islam.

Through engagement, the U.S. government effectively legitimizes the Islamists’ self-appointed status as representatives of Muslim community. This also legitimizes the Islamists’ self-appointed ability to judge “Muslim-ness” of others. Bestowing this status and capability upon Islamists is particularly dangerous in America. Muslims living in the U.S.—particularly converts and those born to immigrants—are more vulnerable to being won over by Islamist ideology because America does not have a strong native tradition of Islam. American Muslims searching for a greater understanding of what it means to be Muslim often find little information available except the Islamist perspective. This is because most prominent Muslim organizations in America were either created by or are associated with the Brotherhood—and have therefore been heavily influenced by Islamist ideology.

The Brotherhood Infiltrates America

THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD BEGAN OPERATING IN THE U.S. IN THE 1960S UPON the arrival of Muslim immigrants from the Middle East and South Asia. These individuals sought a university education (mostly at the leading state schools of Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan)⁸ and greater professional opportunity. A number of these Muslims were Brotherhood members escaping the persecution and repression of their native lands. Starting in the 1950s, many Middle Eastern governments began cracking down on the Muslim Brotherhood, particularly in Egypt.⁹ The Ikhwanis soon recognized that American social and political liberties would enable them to easily spread their Islamist ideology. Still, they cloaked themselves in secrecy from the start, publicly referring to their organization as “The Cultural Society.”¹⁰

The 1960s was also when Saudi Arabia’s Wahhabi establishment began its global Islamization project, partnering with Brotherhood members who had left countries where the group was targeted for repression. One former U.S. Treasury official

estimated that the Saudi government has spent some \$75 billion supporting Islam and Islamic institutions worldwide.¹¹ In 1962, the Muslim World League (MWL) was established in Mecca, with Brotherhood members in key leadership positions, to propagate Wahhabism worldwide. Over the ensuing decades, the MWL has funded many legitimate charitable endeavors but also a number of Islamist projects. Some of this money has come to support Brotherhood activists in the U.S., in part to change the perception of Wahhabism in America from “extremist” to “mainstream.”

A primary focus of the MWL and the Brotherhood has been on education and indoctrination—especially of the youth—as the critical first step of their bottom-up approach.¹² According to the Brotherhood’s own documents, “In 1962, the Muslim Students Union was founded by a group of the first Ikhwanis in North American and the meetings of the Ikhwan became conferences and Students Union Camps.”¹³ The next year, a more formal organizational structure was created by two Brotherhood members, Ahmed Totonji and Jamal Barzinji, who helped found the Muslim Students Association (MSA) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In its early years, the MSA distributed at its chapter meetings English translations of the writings of al-Banna, Qutb, and other Islamist ideologues. Arab Muslim members of the MSA who adopted these ideologies would then be recruited into the Brotherhood.¹⁴

With a global mission in mind, Barzinji, Totonji, and a third Brotherhood associate named Hisham Altalib then spearheaded the founding of the International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations (IIFSO) in 1969. The first IIFSO meeting took place that year in Mecca; Totonji was its first Secretary-General and his friend Altalib served as Deputy Secretary.¹⁵ It may be worth noting that Totonji, Barzinji, and Altalib were born in Iraqi Kurdistan, and after completing their studies in the UK, came to the United States for graduate study but also to continue organizing Muslim youth activities. These three men played a critical role in the Brotherhood’s original establishment, its vertical and horizontal institutionalization in the US over the decades, and the development of linkages between the American Brotherhood and other international Brotherhood networks.

Three years after the IIFSO was formed, the World Association of Muslim Youth (WAMY) was created in Riyadh. WAMY has described itself as “an independent international organization” yet it has strong ties to the Saudi government. In fact, the Saudi Minister of Islamic Affairs, Endowment, and Dawa once served as the group’s president.¹⁶ Just as with the IIFSO, Totonji and Barzinji were deeply involved in WAMY’s creation. Totonji served as deputy to WAMY’s first Secretary-General and Barzinji was listed as a WAMY representative in the 1980s.¹⁷

In 1973, seeking to expand its influence beyond school and university campuses, Barzinji and Altalib also helped establish the North American Islamic Trust (NAIT). According to its incorporation documents, the purpose of NAIT was to “serve the

best interest of Islam and the Muslim Students Association of the United States and Canada” by establishing a non-profit, tax exempt corporation (known in Arabic as a *waqf*). NAIT received large sums of money—especially from Saudi Arabia—allowing it to form a variety of Muslim professional associations as well as to build schools, Islamic centers, and publishing houses.

By the late 1970s it became clear that many of the students who had come to the US from the Middle East and South Asia were not returning home. Following the Iranian revolution of 1979, the Saudis/Wahhabis intensified their focus on American Muslims, as more funds and more literature flowed into the country. During this period, NAIT received funds and was able to take control of American mosques. Today, NAIT’s website claims that it owns approximately 300 Islamic centers, mosques, and schools in the U.S.¹⁸ Other NAIT documents indicate that in 2002 it held the deed to 20 percent of America’s approximately 1,200 mosques at that time.¹⁹ However, some assess that NAIT’s influence is even greater. In 2003, one national security expert claimed that NAIT owns or controls the physical assets of 75 percent of U.S. mosques and that ISNA (a NAIT affiliate—*see below*) controls their ideological content.²⁰

A number of MWL- and WAMY-linked men then founded the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in 1981, a think tank dedicated to the “Islamization of knowledge.” This phrase could be a euphemism for the rewriting of history to support Islamist narratives. For example, after such Islamization, Spain is permanently relabeled “Al-Andalus” (as it was called during Muslim rule) and the country becomes the rightful property of Muslims.²¹ That Spain was first conquered *from* Christian peoples before it was re-conquered *by* them does not matter—Islamists still believe that the region “belongs” to Muslims. The IIIT’s founders include Barzinji and Totonji, along with Abdulhamid Abusulayman, Taha Jabir al-Alwani (both of whom were leaders of WAMY along with Barzinji), Yaqub Mirza (chief executive of the now-defunct SAAR Foundation, a fundraising operation linked to Hamas), Sayyid Syeed (then-President of the MSA), and Anwar Ibrahim (founder of a Malaysian student movement (ABIM) affiliated with WAMY and later Malaysia’s deputy prime minister). Ishaq Ahmad Farhan, a former Jordanian education minister affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood in that country, joined later. The IIIT states that it “supports research projects that study the reconstruction of Islamic thought and worldview based on Quranic principles and the Sunnah.”²²

The IIIT also convinced the United States government that they should be the official arbiters of Islam in the American military. Indeed, Abdurahman Alamoudi, a close associate of the IIIT leadership, was tasked by the U.S. government in 1991 to select Muslim chaplains for the U.S. military. Alamoudi became a well-known political personality in Washington and was a frequent guest of Presidents Clinton and Bush in the late 1990s and early 2000s. This same Muslim activist—previously praised as a

great moderate—was later convicted on terrorism charges and sentenced to serve 23 years in prison.²³ Alamoudi was also later identified by the U.S. Treasury department as having funneled more than \$1 million to a UK-based affiliate of al-Qaeda.²⁴

Another major organization founded in 1981 with the involvement of American Muslim Brotherhood related entities NAIT and the MSA was the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), a self-described umbrella organization for all Muslims in North America. ISNA was incorporated in Indiana on July 14, 1981 “to advance the cause of Islam and service Muslims in North America so as to *enable them to adopt Islam as a complete way of life.*” For those familiar with Islamism, this is a clear statement. ISNA represents a continuation of the MSA. According to the Brotherhood’s own internal documents, “the Muslim Students Union [i.e. the MSA] was developed into the Islamic Society in North America (ISNA) to include all the Muslim congregations from immigrants and citizens, and to be a nucleus for the Islamic Movement in North America.”²⁵

ISNA’s funding sources are not transparent—it is classified as a church for tax purposes and is therefore not required to file Form 990. However, it too received significant support from Saudi Arabia and has many connections to the MWL and WAMY. A former FBI analyst has testified before the Senate about a 1991 ISNA financial statement indicating that Saudi Arabia was the largest source of donations at that time.²⁶ More recently, in November 2005, Canadian media reported that in 2002 Saudi King Fahd gave \$5 million and an annual grant of \$1.5 million to the Islamic Centre in Toronto which also houses ISNA’s headquarters there. In 2005, the Saudi Islamic Development Bank announced a \$275,000 grant to ISNA’s high school, as well as a scholarship program.²⁷ The website of the Islamic Development Bank confirms both awards.²⁸

It is instructive to look more closely at just three of the men who founded or directed ISNA. Their Salafi background is clear, as is their connection to other Muslim Brotherhood related organizations created inside the U.S.

Sayyid Syeed helped found ISNA. Following his immigration to the United States, he graduated from Indiana University in 1984 and appears to have spent his entire professional life working for organizations related to ISNA. He served as its Secretary General, and is currently National Director of the group’s Office of Interfaith and Community Alliances. Syeed has also served as President of the MSA, Secretary General of the IIFSO, and is on the board of advisors at the Washington-based lobby group Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR, *see below*). Interestingly, his official biography omits that from 1984 until 1994, he was the Director of Academic Outreach at the IIIT.²⁹

Jamal Badawi is another important ISNA leader. Badawi was born in Egypt and received his undergraduate degree in communications from Ain Shams University in

Cairo, which is now well known to have been a center for Muslim Brotherhood activity during the years Badawi was there. Muslim Brotherhood leaders and Islamic extremists who studied or taught at Ain Shams during that time period include Mohammed Akef, current leader of the international Muslim Brotherhood; Shaykh Ahmed Yassin, the late Hamas leader;³⁰ and Shaykh Abdul Majeed al-Zindani, then head of Yemen's Muslim Brotherhood.³¹ Badawi came to the U.S. in 1963 to obtain his PhD in Management at the University of Indiana, where he joined the local MSA chapter.³² Badawi has been a member of ISNA's board of advisors since 1988, and served on NAIT's board from 1991 until 1993. He is also on the executive committee of the Fiqh Council of America, which is run as a subordinate group to ISNA and is comprised of a collection of Muslim scholars who answer questions of jurisprudence and issue religious edicts.¹³³

Taha al-Alwani, also a key figure, was until recently the Chairman of the Fiqh Council. He was born in 1935 in Iraq and received both his primary and secondary education there; then he went to the College of Shari'ah and Laq at al Azhar University (Cairo), receiving his degree in 1959. He continued at the college, receiving a Master's Degree in 1968 and a doctorate in Usul al-Fiqh in 1973. Ten years after the completion of his doctorate, al-Alwani taught Usul al-Fiqh at Imam Muhammad Ibn Sa'ood University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.³⁴ Mohammed Ibn Sa'ood University is generally described as Saudi Arabia's premier Islamic educational institution—known for upholding strict, fundamentalist Islamic teachings. *The Washington Post* called the university the “main citadel for Wahhabi instruction.”³⁵ Al-Alwani was also a founding member of the MWL in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. He then came to America and began work in his community. Al-Alwani was a founding member of the IIT, where he served as president and is still a member of the board. He currently serves as president at the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences, an institution run under auspices of the IIT in Virginia. He is also a professor at this institution, occupying the Imam Al Shafi'i Chair in Islamic Legal Theory. Since 1988, al-Alwani has also been a member of OIC Islamic Fiqh Academy based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.³⁶

Supporting Palestine, Promoting Hamas

AFTER SEEING DOZENS OF MUSLIMS GRADUATE FROM THE MSA AND INTO THE ISNA umbrella, the Islamist community was able to focus on its version of *dawa*, or proselytizing Islam, in a more systematic way.³⁷ This allowed the Ikhwan to continue to build an Islamist support base in the U.S., and also to begin lobbying in favor of the Palestinian cause. Under the direction of senior Muslim Brotherhood activist Khalid Mishal (who would later become secretary-general of Hamas), Brotherhood member

Mousa Abu Marzook (who had come to the U.S. to pursue his PhD in Industrial Engineering and in 1991 became Chairman of Hamas's Political Bureau), and Sami al-Arian (who was pursuing his PhD in Computer Engineering at the time and would later be convicted of providing material support to terrorism), the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP) was formed in Chicago in 1981. Its stated purpose was "to communicate the Ikhwan's point of view" and "to serve the cause of Palestine on the political and the media fronts."³⁸

After Hamas was created in 1987 in Gaza, the IAP became its leading representative in North America. The IAP was the first organization to publish the Hamas charter in English and received hundreds of thousands of dollars from Hamas leader Marzook.³⁹ Yet the IAP would not be alone in furthering Hamas' cause. Mousa Abu Marzook soon formed the Palestinian Committee to raise money for Hamas. Then, in 1989—also in Chicago—Marzook founded a think tank called the United Association for Studies and Research (UASR). This think tank was established to promote the ideology of Hamas in the United States and also received large infusions of cash from Marzook—all during the time when Marzook was supposedly an unemployed graduate student. The UASR shut down in 2004 as it began receiving increased levels of scrutiny from federal investigators. The UASR's link with Hamas has been confirmed by a captured Hamas operative named Mohammed Salah. He revealed that political command of Hamas in the United States was vested with the UASR and that the terrorist group's American-based leader, Ahmed Yousef, was the UASR's director.⁴⁰ Yousef fled the United States in 2005 to avoid prosecution and has since become the chief political advisor to Hamas' leader Ismail Haniyeh as well as the organization's principal Western media spokesperson.⁴¹

Though many American Islamist organizations deny any connection to Hamas, given its use of violence and terrorism, the direct links between Hamas and the Brotherhood are indisputable. In fact, Article 2 of the Hamas Charter states:

"The Islamic Resistance Movement is one of the wings of the Muslim Brothers in Palestine. The Muslim Brotherhood Movement is a world organization, the largest Islamic Movement in the modern era. It is characterized by a profound understanding, by precise notions and by a complete comprehensiveness of all concepts of Islam in all domains of life: views and beliefs, politics and economics, education and society, jurisprudence and rule, indoctrination and teaching, the arts and publications, the hidden and the evident, and all the other domains of life."⁴²

The roster of American Islamist organizations grew larger when Ikhwanis created the Muslim American Society (MAS) in 1993. Incorporated in Illinois but now

operating out of Virginia, MAS was founded by Jamal Badawi, Omar Soubani, Ahmad Elkadi and Mohammed Akef (now head of the Muslim Brotherhood) to serve as the *de facto* public face of the Brotherhood in the United States. Elkadi, according to a profile by *The Chicago Tribune* in 2004, is an Egyptian-born surgeon who was formerly personal physician to Saudi Arabian King Faisal. He and his wife—both Brotherhood members in Egypt, along with his father—moved to Louisiana in 1967, where he continued his medical training. As Elkadi told the *Tribune*, he became treasurer of the U.S. Brotherhood in 1970 and was elected president in 1984. Elkadi explained that he was the leader of the Brotherhood in the U.S. from 1984 to 1994—the final year also serving as director of the newly-created MAS.⁴³ In response to Elkadi’s revelations, MAS has moved to discredit Elkadi, arguing that his memory is failing and unreliable.⁴⁴ In any case, Akef told the *Tribune* that he helped found MAS and Shaker Elsayed, then-Secretary General of MAS, told the *Tribune* that “Ikhwan members founded MAS” and that about 45 percent of the organization’s “active” members belong to the Brotherhood.⁴⁵ Becoming an active member of MAS entails completing five years of Muslim community service and studying the writings of key Brotherhood ideologues like al-Banna and Qutb.⁴⁶

Following a 1993 Philadelphia meeting of Hamas leaders and activists in which the need to engage in propaganda efforts was discussed, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) was founded in Washington DC. Its stated mission is to “enhance understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.”⁴⁷ Although these objectives sound innocuous enough, the Muslim Brotherhood (of which many of CAIR’s founders were members) often uses terms like these as euphemisms for more insidious actions. A Brotherhood memo written in 1991 makes reference to a “dictionary” that the Ikhwanis use to decipher the true meaning of their words, which are put in quotation marks in written documents.⁴⁸ The fact is that CAIR was created by Ikhwanis for influencing the U.S. government, Congress, NGOs, and academic and media groups. The Brotherhood identified the media as “stronger than politics,” highlighted the importance of training activists to present a “view of the IAP” that would be acceptable to Americans. One of CAIR’s founders, Omar Ahmad, explicitly suggested the need for “infiltrating the American media outlets, universities and research centers.”⁴⁹

CAIR, whose founders included top leaders of the IAP and the UASR, can be considered as one of the most effectively camouflaged Brotherhood-related groups in the U.S. Over the past 15 years, CAIR has successfully portrayed itself as a mainstream Muslim organization—and has been treated as such by many U.S. government officials, including Presidents Clinton and Bush.

It is also important to note that American Islamist organizations are alleged to

have played a vital role in supporting violent groups in other countries. CAIR, ISNA, and NAIT were all named as unindicted co-conspirators in the federal trial against the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLF), which was charged with providing millions of dollars to Hamas. The HLF court case ended in October 2007 with a mistrial and a deadlocked jury, but facts uncovered during the trial revealed numerous disturbing linkages between Hamas and America's most prominent Muslim organizations. Among other things, court documents and testimony specifically identified CAIR as a member of the Palestine Committee in America, which is tasked with working to "increase the financial and moral support for Hamas," to "fight surrendering solutions," and to publicize "the savagery of the Jews."⁵⁰

This brief review of the history of major American Muslim organizations should make it rather obvious that the majority of them have for some time been intertwined with the Muslim Brotherhood. The same leaders appear in multiple organizations, tend to have familial relations, and move within the same close trusted circles. For example, Ghassan Elashi, who incorporated the Holy Land Foundation and served as the organization's Treasurer and later as its Chairman of the Board, was also responsible for the IAP's incorporation and was a founding member of CAIR's Texas Chapter. Marzook is married to Elashi's cousin and Mufid Abdulqader, a "top fundraiser" for the HLF, is the half-brother of Khalid Mishal. Meanwhile, Mohamed El-Mezain, the original Chairman of the HLF Board, is Marzook's cousin and identified by Mishal as "the Hamas leader for the U.S."⁵¹

Many of the initial group of Brotherhood members who came to the U.S. to study and set up the organizations detailed above are still actively involved in the movement. While their tone and presentation may have changed, their Islamist ideology has not. Even when an American-born "next generation" takes over the leadership of these organizations, little will change. Indeed, this is exactly what the Ikhwan intended. The same 1991 strategy memo referenced earlier states that the most important thing is to establish a "foundation" so that "we will be followed by peoples and generations that would finish the march and the road but with a clearly defined guidance."⁵²

Moreover, given that today there nearly 600 MSA chapters actively nurturing Islamist ideas among next-generation American Muslims at universities throughout the United States and Canada,⁵³ one cannot be too optimistic about the future nature of Islam in America. Indeed, it is unnerving to think that American Muslims who are genuinely seeking greater knowledge about their religion are obliged to turn to one or several of these organizations. Once there, Islamism is presented as synonymous with Islam, and the new member has no way to know otherwise. New members often fail to realize that the groups they have joined are not merely religious groups but political ones with a Wahhabi bias.

The case of Ahmed Omar Abu Ali is instructive of the dangers of education and indoctrination. Abu Ali was convicted in late 2005 of plotting to assassinate President George W. Bush. Abu Ali graduated as the valedictorian of his class from the Islamic Saudi Academy in Alexandria, Virginia. This school is run by the Saudi government, the property is under the Saudi government's control, and the Saudi Ambassador is the school board's chairman. In fact, the school is currently the subject of scrutiny and questions have been raised regarding the propriety of its curriculum. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has urged that the school be shut down until it can ensure that the texts (provided by the Saudi government) do not preach religious intolerance and violence.⁵⁴ Abu Ali also participated in the paintball sessions organized by the "Virginia jihad" group of Ali al-Tamimi, who was convicted to life in prison without parole in April 2005 on charges of conspiracy, attempting to aid the Taliban, soliciting treason, soliciting others to wage war against the United States, and aiding and abetting the use of firearms and explosives.⁵⁵ Along with many other Islamists, including two of the 9/11 hijackers, Abu Ali attended the Dar al-Hijrah mosque (run by none other than Shaker Elsayed, the former Secretary General of MAS). In fact, Abu Ali taught youth Islamic classes there during high school.⁵⁶

Secrecy and Deception

IN SETTING UP THEIR VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS OVER THE PAST FOUR DECADES Brotherhood members have remained secretive, working through the organizations mentioned above to exert their influence. When questioned, most of these organizations at first deny any links to the Brotherhood. One undated MAS memo explicitly instructs group leaders to respond negatively if asked whether they are part of the Brotherhood. When this deception failed and connections to the Brotherhood were disclosed, MAS members have downplayed these links as merely an association of the past.⁵⁷ At the same time, they adopt the role of the victim, accusing their accusers of "McCarthyism" and "Islamophobia." This intimidation, up to and including anti-defamation lawsuits, has silenced many journalists, researchers, and other Muslims.

Thanks to the HLF case, however, much previously-classified evidence and many documents have emerged that clearly demonstrate these linkages. One of the key document unveiled in this trial is a 1991 strategy paper of the Muslim Brotherhood authored by Mohamed Akram, who was a key Ikhwan leader in the U.S. at the time and is now the Secretary General of the International al-Quds Foundation in Lebanon as well as Director of the al-Quds International Institute. The International al-Quds Foundation is headed by none other than the Muslim Brotherhood's chief ideologue,

Yusuf al-Qaradawi.⁵⁸ In Akram’s 18-page “Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal for the Group in North America,” he states that “the general strategic goal of the Group [the Muslim Brotherhood] in America” consists of six stages:

1. Establishing an effective and stable Islamic Movement led by the Muslim Brotherhood
2. Adopting Muslims’ causes domestically and globally
3. Expanding the observant Muslim base
4. Unifying and directing Muslims’ efforts
5. Presenting Islam as a civilizational [sic] alternative
6. Supporting the establishment of the global Islamic state wherever it is⁵⁹

Akram then notes that the priority for this strategy is “Settlement.”⁶⁰ This entails becoming “rooted in the spirits and minds of [the] people” and establishing “organizations on which the Islamic structure is built.” Akram states that Muslims should look upon this mission as a “Civilization Jihadist responsibility,” one that “lies on the shoulders of Muslims [but especially on those of] the Muslim Brotherhood in this country.” Akram then clarifies exactly what the “jihad” required by this strategy entails:

The Ikhwan must understand that their work in America is a kind of grand Jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and “sabotaging” its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers so that it is eliminated and God’s religion is made victorious over all other religions.⁶¹

Clearly, in this case jihad is not intended to be an inner, personal struggle, as is often claimed by American Islamists when they must explain why they were caught inciting for “jihad.” Akram also lists the stages of the Ikhwani activism in the U.S.:

1. The stage of searching for self and determining the identity.
2. The stage of inner build-up and tightening the organization.
3. The stage of mosques and the Islamic centers.
4. The stage of building the Islamic organizations—the first phase.
5. The stage of building the Islamic schools—the first phase.
6. The state of thinking about the overt Islamic movement—the first phase.
7. The stage of openness to the other Islamic movements and attempting to reach a formula for dealing with them—the first phase.

8. The stage of reviving and establishing the Islamic organizations—the second phase⁶²

The memo further describes the role of the Ikhwan as “the initiative, pioneering, leadership, raising the banner and pushing people in that direction. They are then to work to employ, direct and unify Muslims’ efforts and powers for this process. In order to do that, we must possess a mastery of the art of ‘coalitions’, the art of ‘absorption’ and the principles of ‘cooperation.’” It then underlines that “the success of the Movement in America in establishing an observant Islamic base with power and effectiveness will be the best support and aid to the global Movement project.”⁶³

Akram lists various tactical and strategic methods to “merge” all the various organizations established across the U.S. (*dawa* and education organizations, women’s groups, political organizations, media, economic, scientific, professional, youth, etc) in order to reach their goal. He concludes the memorandum by listing the various Ikhwan organizations and “the organizations of our friends,” adding a final parenthetical phrase: “Imagine if they all march according to one plan!!!” ISNA, NAIT, the MSA, and the IIIT are among the 29 organizations he lists. (CAIR had not yet been created.)

This document makes clear that the Brotherhood’s goal is to spread its version of political Islam, making it a “civilization alternative” to the West’s civilization. In the past 17 years, the Ikhwan in the U.S. has made serious progress in its six-stage strategy. In fact, if it were not for the 9/11 attacks and the resulting increased scrutiny on American Muslim organizations, it might now be farther along in its plan.

Even though many Brotherhood-linked organizations have dismissed this memo as “outdated,” it is fairly consistent with numerous more recent statements as well as the generic long war strategy. In a 1995 speech to an Islamic conference in Ohio, the Muslim Brotherhood’s spiritual leader, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, declared that “victory” will come through *dawa*. “Conquest through *dawa*, that is what we hope for,” said the Qatar-based imam who has authored a number of religious edicts justifying Hamas suicide bombings against Israeli civilians and American soldiers in Iraq. In a chilling note, he confidently stated, “We will conquer Europe, we will conquer America, not through the sword but through *dawa*.”⁶⁴

Other prominent American Muslims have made similarly provocative remarks. In the late 1980s, future CAIR board member Ihsan Bagby said that “Ultimately we [Muslims] can never be full citizens of this country, because there is no way we can be fully committed to the institutions and ideologies of this country.”⁶⁵ And in 2006, Zaid Shakir, a well-known African-American imam declared “Every Muslim who is honest would say, I would like to see America become a Muslim country.”⁶⁶

A later affirmation of the Brotherhood’s goal is clear in the views of the group’s official supreme leader, Mohammed Akef. In a series of January 2004 interviews,

Akef called the U.S. a “Satan” and said that he was confident America would collapse. Akef also stated that he has “complete faith that Islam will invade Europe and America, because Islam has logic and a mission.”⁶⁷

It is actually rather amazing to find such straightforward statements. Since the 1990s (especially after the 1993 World Trade Center bombing), the Brotherhood has been increasingly cautious. At a secret 1993 meeting of Hamas members and sympathizers in Philadelphia, Shukri Abu Baker, the HLF’s former chief executive, stated “war is deception” and urged “caution should be practiced not to reveal our true identity.” Also present at this meeting was CAIR founder Omar Ahmad, who agreed with Abu Baker’s comments that “war is deception” and went on to say, “this is like one who plays basketball; he makes a player believe that he is doing this while he does something else...politics is a completion of war.”⁶⁸

To deceive Americans, Ahmad also suggested that the Ikhwan create some neutral sounding organizations such as a “Palestinian-American Friendship Association...This will be done in order to...put some honey a little bit at a time with the poison they’re given. But if from the first night you ...call it ‘The Islamic Society for Youths’ Welfare,’ they will shut the door in your face.” He also asked his “brothers” not to even mention Hamas by name and instead refer to it as “Samah” Later, in 2002 he claimed to “reject and abhor Hamas, its goals and methods,” in total contradiction to earlier tapes and documents that revealed him praising Hamas.⁶⁹

At this 1993 meeting Abu Baker also stated, “It does not benefit me to show to the American people that...I hate Abu Amar [Yasser Arafat] and hate the [Palestinian Liberation] Organization.” Instead of “attack[ing] the [Palestinian Liberation] Organization in a personal and direct manner,” Abu Baker suggests that U.S. Islamist groups should speak about “democracy and freedom of expression.” Another participant then agrees on the importance of “playing a very important tune to the average American which is the issue of democracy, the issue of representation. When you tell an American individual that, ‘...this person is not elected. He is an oppressor...This is a dictatorial regime...’ bring up Saddam Hussein’s name...”⁷⁰

Deception is a key tactic the Islamists use to proceed with their “settlement” plan. Below are just a few of the recent and well-known examples demonstrating that MAS, ISNA, and CAIR all play dual roles

Muslim American Society (MAS)

UNTIL THE HOLY LAND FOUNDATION TRIAL, MUSLIM AMERICAN SOCIETY LEADERS played word games regarding their connection with the Ikhwan. At the trial, it was revealed that a phone book was found at the home of Ismail Elbarrasse—an unindicted

co-conspirator of the HLF and former assistant to Hamas leader Musa Abu Marzook—listing the names and numbers of the Muslim Brotherhood leadership in the United States. On the first page of the phone book under the title “Members of the Board of Directors” were fifteen names. Among those names are Ahmad Elkadi, Jamal Badawi, and Omar Soubani—the founders of MAS.⁷¹

In fact, in light of previous documents that became public in other trials, MAS leaders finally have admitted that the group was founded by the Brotherhood.⁷² Yet, they quickly add that it has since evolved beyond the Ikhwan to include greater ideological diversity. They maintain that MAS has no formal connection with the Brotherhood. Meanwhile, the Brotherhood is just as reluctant to acknowledge any ties with MAS. One senior Muslim Brotherhood official explained that he does not want to say MAS is a Brotherhood “entity” because doing so “causes some security inconveniences for them in a post-September 11 world.”⁷³

Esam Omeish, president of MAS, claimed that the documents introduced at the HLF trial were “full of abhorrent statements and are in direct conflict of the very principles of our Islam.” He said, “The Muslim community in America wishes to contribute positively to the continued success and greatness of our civilization...The ethics of tolerance and inclusion are the very tenets that MAS was based on from its inception.” He also firmly stated that “MAS is not the Muslim Brotherhood.” Omeish said that MAS “grew out of a history of Islamic activism in the U.S. when the Muslim Brotherhood once existed but has a different intellectual paradigm and outlook.”⁷⁴

In August 2007, Virginia Governor Timothy Kaine appointed Omeish to a state commission on immigration. Yet Omeish was compelled to resign less than two months later after a December 2000 video was released in which he praised Palestinians for knowing that “the jihad way is the way to liberate your land;” in another video he congratulated Palestinians for giving up their lives for the sake of Allah.⁷⁵ When confronted, Omeish engaged in a rhetorical dance over his intended meaning of “jihad.” But the 1991 Akram memo makes clear just what jihad means to Islamists. Moreover, Omeish’s comments were made at the height of the 2000 Palestinian intifada. In this context, it is clear that the type of jihad that Omeish praised as the way to “liberate” Palestine was the very same process that the Palestinians were engaged in—that is, violent jihad.

What is particularly worrisome in this example, like so many others before, was that Omeish’s accusers were automatically put on the defensive, while many others, including the governor, supported Omeish. It should be a concern to Americans that those who reveal the Islamists’ true nature are tarred as Islamophobes, McCarthyists, or part of some “vast right-wing conspiracy.”

The Omeish incident reveals a clear tactic: MAS officials’ first move is to maintain that they have no formal connection with the Brotherhood. When evidence comes

out that proves otherwise, they engage in wordplay, claiming that they have “moved on” from its ideology.⁷⁶ Of course, to become one of the elite, so-called “active,” members of MAS, one still must—among other things—study in detail the writings of al-Banna and Qutb.⁷⁷

Islamic Society in North America (ISNA)

WHILE INFORMATION HAS BEEN AVAILABLE FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW, THE HLF trial clearly demonstrated the ISNA-Hamas connection. Marzook, the political leader of Hamas at the time, thanked ISNA for its support while he was in prison.⁷⁸ This is not a surprise given that ISNA was effectively established by the Ikhwanis and almost all of ISNA’s founders have since remained active either in ISNA or in one of its affiliated organizations. Several key individuals who have been very active since the beginning—such as Sayyid Syeed—have tellingly omitted their early Islamist backgrounds from their “official” biographies.

ISNA also has deep links to well-known Islamists. One of the most prominent such individuals is Sami al-Arian, who helped establish ISNA in 1981 and founded the Islamic Committee for Palestine (an official ISNA affiliate) shortly thereafter.⁷⁹ Al-Arian is also currently serving the remainder of a 57-month conviction for supporting the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). Until he was arrested in 2003, he was considered to be one of the country’s leading civil rights activists and was often invited to meet top U.S. government officials, including Presidents Clinton and Bush. This was despite the fact that al-Arian had been the subject of an FBI investigation into his connections with the PIJ since 1996. After videotapes appeared in 2001 of al-Arian speaking at rallies calling for terrorist jihad in Palestine, he was suspended from his professorship at the University of South Florida. Al-Arian and a host of groups—including ISNA—immediately sprang to the defense, loudly proclaiming this to be nothing more than a “smear campaign” and an example of “anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bigotry.” In February 2003, a federal grand jury served a 50-count indictment against al-Arian.

Until the trial, for over a decade, al-Arian denied any connection to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad—in a 1994 interview, he even pretended that he did not know what the initials PIJ stood for.⁸⁰ In the trial, one piece of evidence was a videotape showing him declaring to supporters: “Let us damn America, let us damn Israel, let us damn them and their allies until death” and “Quran is our constitution...jihad our path...victory to Islam...death to Israel...revolution till victory.”⁸¹ The case eventually ended in a partial acquittal and mistrial but al-Arian pled guilty in 2006 to “conspiracy to make or receive contributions of funds, goods or services to or for the benefit of the Palestinian

Islamic Jihad, a specially designated terrorist organization.”⁸² Moreover, the judge who presided over his trial had few doubts as to al-Arian’s true nature. During sentencing, the judge called him a “master manipulator,” saying to al-Arian “you looked your neighbors in the eyes and said you had nothing to do with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. This trial exposed that as a lie...The evidence was clear in this case that you were a leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.”⁸³

Al-Arian was sentenced on May 1, 2006, to 57 months in prison (which included 38 months time served) and agreed to be deported after serving the prison term. Credit for serving his sentence was frozen due to a contempt citation resulting from al-Arian’s refusal to testify before a Virginia grand jury investigating the IIT, which financially and ideologically supported his work in Tampa. However, in December 2007, a federal judge overturned this contempt charge and al-Arian will likely be released and deported in April 2008.⁸⁴

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)

THE HLF TRIAL DOCUMENTS ALSO PROVED THAT CAIR WAS PART OF THE MUSLIM Brotherhood linked network created to help Hamas in the U.S. Even though it has portrayed itself to be a civil rights group, and is often described as such by the mainstream press, its top leadership is made up of the IAP and the UASR principals mentioned earlier. Despite public denials, CAIR leaders have been heard expressing their support for Hamas both in public and on FBI surveillance tapes. CAIR has received support from, and lent support to, Hamas financial conduits in the United States. Several CAIR officers and employees have been indicted on terrorism-related charges.

A brief look at the men who founded CAIR, their objectives, and their deceptive methods make clear that this it is not just a civil rights group. As mentioned earlier, CAIR was created following the 1993 Philadelphia meeting of Hamas leaders and activists where the need to engage in propaganda efforts was discussed. U.S. prosecutors named Nihad Awad, CAIR’s executive director, and Omar Ahmad, CAIR’s founder and chairman—both ethnic Palestinians—as unindicted co-conspirators in the Holy Land case.

Among the founders of CAIR were three important leaders of the IAP: Omar Ahmad (IAP President, 1991-1994); Nihad Awad (IAP Public Relations Director, 1991-1994); and Rafiq Jabir (IAP President from 1994 to 2005, the year IAP shut down). Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, Awad’s CAIR profile neglects to mention his IAP connection.⁸⁵ CAIR’s website no longer contains biographies of Ahmad or Jabir, but even when they were posted they did not include their IAP connections. Likewise, the CAIR biographies of both Mohammed Nimr al-Madani (current

research director of CAIR and a former board member at the UASR) and Nabeel Sadoun (CAIR board member and co-founder of UASR) do not mention their association with the UASR.

Typically, when the Ikhwanis are confronted with extremist quotes they claim that they have been misinterpreted. Yet in many cases the directness of their rhetoric leaves little room for interpretation. On July 4, 1998, the *San Ramon Valley Herald*, a local California newspaper, published an article about an Islamic school study session entitled “How Should We Live as Muslims in America?” The article stated that at this gathering CAIR Chairman Omar Ahmed urged Muslims not to assimilate into American society but instead to deliver Islam’s message. He underlined that Islam is not in America to be equal to any other faiths, but to become dominant, and that the Quran should be the highest authority in America with Islam the only accepted religion on Earth.⁸⁶ When Ahmed’s statements were highlighted in 2003, the CAIR founder flatly denied making these statements and said that he had sought and obtained a retraction from the newspapers that printed the article. Interestingly, as of December 2006, neither of the newspapers that ran the article received a retraction request from Ahmed and the reporter who wrote the article has adamantly stood by her account of the events.⁸⁷

Ibrahim Hooper, CAIR’s communications director, has also expressed his wish to overturn the U.S. system of government in favor of an “Islamic” state. “I wouldn’t want to create the impression that I wouldn’t like the government of the United States to be Islamic sometime in the future,” Hooper said in a 1993 interview with the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. “But I’m not going to do anything violent to promote that. I’m going to do it through education.”⁸⁸ By “education,” Hooper likely means *dawa*, which would be in line with what the Muslim Brotherhood commands its members to carry out.

As with other aspects of its existence, CAIR’s funding has also been deceptive. In a November 2001 news release, CAIR stated that it does not support, or receive support from, any overseas group or government.⁸⁹ There is evidence however; that this statement was not true even at the time it was issued: In August 1999, the President of the Saudi-based Islamic Development Bank announced a \$250,000 contribution to the purchase of land in Washington DC for CAIR’s headquarters.⁹⁰ WAMY also financed the construction of the headquarters. In December 1999, Arab news reported that the Riyadh-based group was “extending both moral and financial support to CAIR in its effort to construct its own headquarters at a cost of \$3.5 million in Washington DC.”⁹¹ WAMY later provided in excess of \$1.04 million for one of CAIR’s advertising campaigns.⁹²

Given all the facts that are being revealed, especially as the HLF trial unfolded, the posturing of CAIR is very troubling. In August 2007, at a banquet in Dallas, CAIR

Chairman Parvez Ahmed stated, “it is not just the HLF that is under fire, but the entire American Muslim community is under fire.”⁹³ With this, Ahmed is implying to the American Muslim community that groups like CAIR are being persecuted simply because they are Islamic rather than because of links to terrorist organizations—further creating a sense that all Muslims need to unite to the Islamist cause. Such rhetoric is increasingly used to drive a wedge between Muslims and non-Muslims in America, as well as in Europe and elsewhere.

The Muslim Brotherhood in America: Implications

THE PRECEDING PAGES HAVE SHOWN HOW VARIOUS BROTHERHOOD-LINKED Islamist organizations have flourished in the tolerant environment of the U.S. In the process, they have been actively and openly creating a fifth column of activists who work to undermine the very foundations of America by challenging its constitution and religious plurality.

Turning a blind eye to the Brotherhood and its ideological extremism—even if done for the sake of combating violent extremism and terrorism—is a direct threat to the democratic order. Of course, such a threat might be welcomed by the Ikhwan goals, as the group’s long-term strategy paper of 1991 states that it hopes to “destroy America from within.” Moreover, as mentioned earlier, they seem have realized how certain concepts such as “democracy” and “freedom of expression” can be used in America to win over audiences.

The Islamist threat is real and is the result of decades of networking, infrastructure-building, and intellectual and ideological preparation. These groups have spent billions of dollars in creating networks of like-minded supporters (much of their support comes from the “us versus them” mentality they have helped to create) and have worked hard at social engineering (i.e., Islamization) for nearly four decades. As the Brotherhood in America became more “settled” and mature, it added new institutions, expanding its coverage geographically, based on issues and at various levels—from local to international, from charities to public relations and eventually to national politics.

The Brotherhood’s own documents clearly state a need for “a mastery of the art of coalitions, the art of absorption and the principles of cooperation.” As a result of this strategy, individuals like Sami al-Arian—who claimed to have delivered the Muslim vote to the Republican Party in 2000—obtained access to the highest levels of the U.S. government. Gaining influence within the United States is especially important

for the Ikhwan since, as a superpower, it has a huge impact on how Islamists are treated in other parts of the world. Indeed, one of the goals mentioned at the 1993 Philadelphia meeting was “forming the public opinion or coming up with a policy to influence the...way the Americans deal with the Islamists.” Given this information, it may be worth exploring the decision-making process that led the U.S. to haphazardly push for elections in the Palestinian territories as it led to the election and empowerment of Hamas, which—as this paper has detailed—has strong linkages to some of most prominent and influential American Muslim organizations.

Cloaking themselves in civil rights and charity work, the leaders of these organizations have successfully managed to disguise their true agenda: supporting Islamism, and protecting and augmenting the operations of radical groups that support terrorism. So it is not unexpected that large sections of the institutional Islamic leadership in America do not support U.S. counter-terrorism policy. Far from it; they denounce virtually every terrorism indictment, detention, deportation, and investigation as a religiously motivated attack on Islam. Instead of considering whether the individual in question actually broke any laws, they instinctively blame the legal accusations on bigotry or an anti-Muslim conspiracy. For example, after the FBI raided the offices of HLF co-founder Ghassan Elashi in 2001, CAIR’s Executive Director Nihad Awad called the government’s actions an “anti-Muslim witch hunt.”⁹⁴ It should be noted that Elashi was later indicted and convicted of channeling funds to Hamas.

Islamists sometimes even provoke incidents intended to make the American Muslim community feel under siege, presumably in an attempt to compel them to unite. The case of the six imams who were denied access to a U.S. Airways flight in 2006 is instructive. CAIR, which represented these imams, claimed this was a clear case of discrimination against Muslims. Yet the imams were prevented from flying not because they were Muslim or held a prayer session directly outside the gate (and again on the plane, which is peculiar since even devout Muslims do not pray this frequently), but because they were behaving like hijackers. The imams demanded to board at the same time even though only two had first-class tickets and then attempted to reseat themselves on the plane in a suspicious formation (two in the tail, two in the mid-section, and two in first class). They muttered loudly in Arabic about jihad and cursed the United States for its involvement in Iraq. They requested seat belt extensions (which can be used as makeshift weapons) even though none was large enough to need it. Other Muslim passengers on the flight were not harassed. Given their blatantly suspicious behavior it has been suggested by many that the imams were deliberately trying to provoke their removal from the airplane.

Countless young American Muslims—whether converts, Muslims born into secular families, or those brought up in traditional households—that have entered

college since 9/11 are curious about Islam and their identity as both a Muslim and an American. Too often these young men and women end up at the local MSA chapter looking for answers. Sadly, the MSA is still often the only option available for college students who wish to get involved in Muslim affairs. Perhaps it's no wonder that a Pew report released in May 2007 found a quarter of American Muslims aged 18 to 29 believe suicide bombings against civilians can sometimes be justified to defend Islam, while only 9 percent of those older than 30 agreed.⁹⁵

For non-Islamist Muslims Islam is a matter of personal faith. As long as the government continues to grant them freedom to practice their faith as they see fit, they have no reason to organize politically. It is therefore essential to help American Muslims—particularly younger ones—understand the difference between Islam and Islamism, because the various Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated organizations, which have presented themselves as representatives of American Muslim community, are not faith groups. They are political entities with a political agenda. If the U.S. government continues to engage with them, it should be done in the context of a “war of ideas” debate, and not in a passive and receptive mode, expressing concern about offending their religious or spiritual sensitivities.

Another important consideration for the United States is that the Islamist revolutionary vanguard is no longer limited to the Arabic-speaking Middle Easterner. The hardline Islamists and even the terrorists of today and tomorrow are smart, tech-and-media-savvy citizens of the West. Terrorist acts inside the U.S. are huge setbacks for American Islamists; their long-term strategy of gradual infiltration was in fact seriously hurt by the 9/11 attacks as they increasingly came under the scrutiny of law enforcement authorities. It is not surprising that most of these organizations offer their cooperation to prevent Islamist terrorism inside the U.S. This is also the primary reason why some in the U.S. favor engaging the Islamists. But as described earlier, this is a misguided policy, as ideological extremism is at the root of the terrorist problem. The New York Police Department explicitly stated this link in its recent report on homegrown terrorist threats, stating that “jihadi-Salafi ideology is the driver that motivates young men and women, born or living in the West, to carry out ‘autonomous jihad’ via acts of terrorism against their host countries.”⁹⁶

Within America, the key threat is not an eventual Islamist takeover of the country, but an Islamist takeover of its Muslim citizens. In accordance with the Brotherhood’s long-term plan to create an “us and them” mentality, Islamists in Europe are also beginning to push for the creation of self-segregated societies—a process that has been labeled “voluntary apartheid.” This tactic has been enthusiastically supported by Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who has repeatedly advised Muslims living in the West to create their own “Muslim ghettos” to avoid cultural assimilation. If American Muslims start forming “parallel societies,” it will be much easier for the Ikhwan to push for

the introduction of *sharia* in these societies. While this may seem far-fetched, it cannot be so easily dismissed—especially given how close the Islamists came to introducing *sharia* for Canadian Muslims.⁹⁷ And since most of the American Muslim organizations are in the hands of Islamists who enjoy seemingly unlimited money, media attention, and political influence, few non-Islamists would be able to fight back.

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Reporting the Muslim Brotherhood

by Rod Dreher

IN A FEDERAL COURTROOM IN DALLAS LAST OCTOBER, THE LEADERSHIP of the now-defunct Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, once the nation's largest Muslim charity, stood accused of using the charity as a Hamas fundraising front. It was the federal government's most important terrorism fundraising case to date. But on October 22, the judge declared a mistrial. The trial was not a total wash, however. The reason is Exhibit GX 3-85.

That's a 1991 "Explanatory Memorandum" prepared by a leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, outlining the organization's goals for its American operations. This stunning eighteen-page document was recovered in an FBI raid on an Islamist's house in suburban Washington, DC. It met standards for admission into evidence at a federal trial. It lays out the Muslim Brotherhood's (*Ikhwan*) plans to take control of the American Muslim community, to embed itself in civil society, and ultimately prepare the way for a sharia state. Here is a key quote from the memo:

The process of settlement [of Islam in the United States] is a "Civilization-jihadist" process with all the word means. The *Ikhwan* must understand that all their work in America is a kind of grand jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and "sabotaging" their miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers so that it is eliminated and God's religion is made victorious over all religions. Without this level of understanding, we are not up to this challenge and have not prepared ourselves for jihad yet. It is a Muslim's destiny to perform jihad and work wherever he is and wherever he lands until the final hour comes, and there is no escape from that destiny except for those who choose to slack.

This sounds like something out of a lurid Hollywood conspiracy thriller. But its authenticity was not disputed by defendants in the Holy Land Foundation trial. They only said it was an old memo, and irrelevant today. That's not the opinion of U.S. Army Lt. Col. Joseph Myers, a senior army advisor and former senior Defense Intelligence Agency official, who said that the document shows why the Muslim Brotherhood should be seen as a "threat organization," and that organizations mentioned in the document should be treated as part of its network.

Those organizations include most of the leading Islamic groups in the United States, including the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), and the Muslim American Society (MAS). This memorandum seems to indicate that virtually the entire organizational leadership of Muslims in America are operating consciously as a fifth column.

That's quite a story. You would think that American journalists would dive head first into it. Given the ramifications, you would think that they'd want to know how seriously to take this phenomenal memorandum.

According to a Nexis search, there have been only three mentions of this document in the mainstream media. The first was in the last paragraph of an August 8, 2007 general trial story in the *Dallas Morning News*. The second was in a September 9 column I wrote, which was devoted exclusively to the document. Then, on September 17, the trial reporter for the *News* published a lengthy front-page article on the document. The *Washington Times* has mentioned it a couple of times. *Investor's Business Daily* wrote an editorial about it. The *Augusta (Ga.) Chronicle* and the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* picked up that column of mine. Last month, one of the top five newspapers in the country commissioned an op-ed from me about the document and its implications, but killed my piece at the last minute, without explanation.

And that's it. One of the most important Islamist terror documents we know of, one vital to our national security, has been almost entirely ignored by the American news media.

Why? Short answer: fear of the charge of Islamophobia. Let me elaborate from my own experience as a journalist working in the mainstream media.

It starts for me in early October of 2001, a few weeks after the 9/11 attacks. I was sitting at my desk at the *New York Post*, watching a very special episode of the Oprah Winfrey Show called "Islam 101." Oprah set out to educate Americans about Islam. She clearly wanted to ease tensions in those awful days, and I think most fair-minded people would have welcomed someone of her stature reminding a mass audience that not all Muslims are terrorists. But the program was truly shocking. It so candy-coated Islam—especially those parts of the faith, its practice, and its holy book that encourage violence and the subjugation of women—that it amounted to nothing more than propaganda. It was an exercise not in education, but in therapy. In my

opinion, Oprah's therapeutic approach is typical of the general attitude the U.S. media has had to covering Islam in America.

Two Octobers later, I had learned a lot more about Islam than I had known on 9/11. I was by then living in Dallas and working as an editorial writer and columnist at the *Dallas Morning News*. One day, I saw that Sayyid Syeed, then-head of the Islamic Society of North America, was coming to the newspaper for an editorial board meeting. I did a good deal of research on the organization in preparation for the meeting. The board heard a rather laborious presentation by Dr. Syeed, who went on and on about how we journalists needed to partner with ISNA to promote peace and tolerance. He particularly stressed that we could help ISNA fight Christian bigots like Jerry Falwell, whose name was anathema to most journalists. I was impressed, but not happily so, by how well Dr. Syeed understood how to play to his media audience and its biases.

When I had the opportunity to ask a question, I told Dr. Syeed that his sentiments were laudable, but if ISNA really stood for peace and tolerance, why did it have on its board ... and then I rattled off a list of board members and their direct connections to Islamic extremism. Dr. Syeed had been polite and professorial to that point, but at that point, he dropped his mask. He literally shook his fist at me, said this inquisition was worthy of Nazi Germany, and that I would one day "repent." I told him mine was a fair question, and that I would appreciate an answer. I didn't get one. But I had learned an important lesson about how groups like his operate: by evading legitimate queries, and browbeating journalists into retreat by calling them bigots and persecutors.

After I wrote a *Morning News* column about the Syeed encounter, I found myself identified on a local Islamic blog as "The New Face of Hate." It turned out that the north Texas Muslim community had been engaged in a running battle with the *Dallas Morning News* since a series of investigative articles in the early part of the decade had uncovered alleged connections between the Holy Land Foundation charity and Hamas. The *News'* reporter on the Holy Land story, Steve McGonigle, had had to be guarded for a while after threats, and the newspaper was picketed by local Muslims. Before I arrived, the newspaper had been making outreach efforts to the Dallas Islamic community in the wake of the Holy Land stories and indictments. And now I had come to town and spoiled things.

On a lark, I joined the Islamic blog's listserv, to which several leading Dallas Muslims subscribed. I used my own name, which got me booted after a day or so upon discovery. Fortunately, in the short time I was on the site I printed out e-mails in which participants deliberated a plan to quietly approach unwitting business and religious leaders in the city and enlist them in a campaign to force the *News'* publisher to fire me because of the threat I posed to the safety of Muslims.

"Dreher needs to be ruined," one message said. Another suggested that "a campaign

must be planned and carefully executed to expose this hate-monger and render him a joke.” I made all this public on the editorial board’s blog and sent copies to the newspaper’s lawyer. My guess is that aborted the whispering campaign before it could launch. But again, it was useful to see what journalists are up against.

BETWEEN MY EDITORIAL ASSIGNMENTS, I KEPT LOOKING INTO THE DALLAS Muslim community. The leading local imam, Yusuf Kavakci, has a reputation in Dallas as an avuncular ecumenist, aided by positive press coverage over the years. He leads the Dallas Central Mosque, the largest mosque in Texas, and involves himself in the large and active broader religious community in the city. But I found on his website praise for the radical Muslim Brotherhood ideologues Hasan al-Turabi, who gave Osama bin Laden refuge in Sudan when Turabi ran the country, and Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the Muslim Brotherhood’s spiritual leader. Dr. Kavakci cited them as the kinds of Islamic leaders American Muslims need to guide them on the straight path.

I blogged about these inconvenient truths, and thanks to the unwavering support of my editor—who caught hell from Muslim readers—I got into the editorial pages the news that the Dallas Central Mosque in 2004 had hosted a quiz contest for Muslim youth in which teenagers were tested on their knowledge of Said Qutb’s *Milestones*—a sort of *Mein Kampf* of jihadism. Qutb, of course, was the brilliant Muslim Brotherhood ideologue who preached worldwide violent jihad to bring the whole world under the boot of radical Islam. The quiz contest was sponsored jointly by the Muslim American Society and the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA)—two organizations closely tied to the Muslim Brotherhood. So the largest mosque in Texas is, or was until a short time ago, educating its youth in radical Islam.

Later, the *Dallas Morning News*’ editorial pages were also the only place in print that readers in Dallas would learn that an area Shiite mosque held a “Tribute to the Great Islamic Visionary, the Ayatollah Khomeini,” and that the headline speaker was a Muslim hothead from Washington, DC, who was so radical and anti-Semitic that the Saudi-sponsored mosque there kicked him out. Top Dallas Muslim leaders, including Dr. Kavakci, attended and spoke to the conference. But most of the local news media had no interest in reporting it. Only our editorial page and one TV station gave it any attention.

Two years ago, the editor-in-chief of my newspaper, a very fair-minded man, put together a working lunch in which Mohamed Elmougy, for years the leader of CAIR in Dallas, and I could meet to discuss our differences. Mr. Elmougy, who is no longer with CAIR but who had been for some time the leading public voice of Dallas-area Muslims, brought with him two associates. The editor-in-chief and the editorial page editor of the *News* accompanied me. Mr. Elmougy and I did most of the talking. It was

a long meeting, but a cordial one. As we waited for the check, Mr. Elmougy said he didn't understand why I considered Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the popular satellite TV evangelist and spiritual advisor of the Muslim Brotherhood, to be violent. I responded by pointing out that Qaradawi has advocated executing homosexuals, and that he gave advice on his website about how a Muslim man can beat his wife in an Islamically correct way.

"That's violent," I told Mr. Elmougy. He slammed his hand on the table and said he agreed with the Shaykh, and that he wouldn't apologize for it. He went on to tell a story about an adulteress who came to the Prophet asking for release from her sins. The Prophet ordered her stoned to death, said Mr. Elmougy, and declared that he could see her rejoicing in paradise. Mr. Elmougy finished his account by saying that things we Westerners consider to be unacceptable violence are considered by Muslims like him to be pro-family "deterrence."

I thanked him for his candor, for admitting that he favors executing gays, wife-beating, stoning adulteresses, and chopping the hands off of thieves. I could tell, though, that my colleagues from the paper were shocked by what they had heard. American journalists simply aren't used to hearing Islamic leaders in this country talk like that. And Islamic leaders in this country, I'd wager, are not used to being questioned sharply about their views. It's also the case that Mr. Elmougy fits no Westerner's idea of what a radical Muslim looks like. He is smart, well-dressed, professional, and to all appearances, Westernized. You simply don't expect to be sitting in a fancy steakhouse and to hear a man who looks like the manager of a luxury hotel—which is what he was at the time—advocating medieval tortures. The cognitive dissonance can be overwhelming.

My next meeting with Mr. Elmougy came a year later, in the late autumn of 2006, when he led a delegation of local Muslim leaders in to the paper to meet with the editorial board, mostly to complain about, well, me, and to clear up misunderstandings that my supposedly biased rantings might have caused among my colleagues. The meeting was on the record, and I openly recorded it, later transcribing the session and posting it to the editorial board blog of the *News*. That transcript exposes how at least some Muslim leaders deal with media inquiries: through obfuscation, misdirection, and defensive accusations of bigotry. Allow me to dwell on this transcript to give you a flavor of how this sort of session goes. You can find the transcript archived at http://dallasmorningviews.beloblog.com/archives/2006/12/muslim_meeting.html. Mr. Elmougy began the meeting by stating that his goal was to help journalists "find out how could we live in harmony ... as opposed to pointing the finger." He added that he wanted "to create some kind of comfort level," and to end journalistic suspicion of Islam and Muslims. "We need to figure out a way [to] help you get rid of that."

Notice what he's doing here. He's framing everyday journalistic practice—asking

critical, skeptical questions—as an antisocial, even bigoted, act. He begins by trying to put his media audience on the defensive, as if they, the journalists, should be ashamed of themselves for their inquiries.

If you read the transcript, you will see that I tried repeatedly to get Mr. Elmougy and his cohorts to answer a simple, basic question: *Are you for imposing sharia as the law of the land in the United States?* Mr. Elmougy was indignant at the question itself, and ate up a considerable amount of our limited time in that session protesting the inquiry. Later, members of the delegation criticized me for pointing out in print that Dr. Kavakci, the head of the Dallas Central Mosque, had praised notorious radical Islamists and Muslim Brotherhood members as ideal leaders, and had allowed MAS and ICNA, two Brotherhood-affiliated organizations, to organize a youth quiz at his mosque. A CAIR spokeswoman at the table accused me of failing to seek the imam’s side of the story. I replied that our staff had tried several times, by phone and by e-mail, to reach Dr. Kavakci, but he refused to respond.

“Do you blame him?” Mr. Elmougy said, incredulously.

THERE IS NO WAY FOR THE JOURNALIST TO WIN THIS EXCHANGE. FIRST THEY accuse us of not reaching out to them for their side of the story. When we can show that we did, in fact, reach out, and were refused an interview, we are faulted for being the kind of people to whom no self-respecting imam would give an interview. You see the psychological strategy here: always, always put the media on the defensive, and treat their inquiries as illegitimate.

In this same session, the subject came up of my criticizing the Dallas Central Mosque for teaching the work of Said Qutb to teenagers. Mr. Elmougy called him an “obscure Egyptian writer” and said that he, Mr. Elmougy, had never read his work before I’d made an issue of it. (He called me “obsessed” with Qutb’s book *Milestones*.) Now, it’s risible to think that a man born and raised in Egypt, who believes in *sharia*, has barely any knowledge of Said Qutb. (In fact, a few minutes later in this same session, one of Mr. Elmougy’s colleagues, a Syrian, said that Qutb’s work has been at the center of Mideast political conversations for decades). Mr. Elmougy went on to describe Qutb’s work as being geared toward unifying the Muslim community and helping clean up its morals. “It didn’t bother me in the least,” he said. What’s instructive about this pose—and I’m convinced absolutely that that’s what it was—is that Mr. Elmougy was apparently counting on all the other journalists in the room being ignorant about Said Qutb, his work and his influence.

It was a smart call, too. Most American journalists don’t know about Qutb and as a general rule are ill-informed about religion in general. Mr. Elmougy tried to paint me as a wild-eyed obsessive finding a devil in a supposedly benign book that no one purportedly had ever heard of. Fortunately there was in the room a *News* reporter,

recently returned from our London bureau, who spoke up and said that Said Qutb's work was exactly the kind of material that young British Muslims were reading, and becoming radicalized by. So it wasn't just that right-wing Dreher guy from New York—traumatized by 9/11, alas for him—asking these questions. They had no comeback to that, actually. It's amazing how undone these Muslim leaders become when informed journalists, refusing to be intimidated into embarrassed silence, confront them with the facts.

Later, after I blogged about the meeting, the group's leader fired off an e-mail to me and my supervisors accusing me of single-handedly "burning every bridge" built between the Dallas Muslim community and the newspaper. I would genuinely hate for that to be the case, but the point of journalism is not to build bridges; it's to ask important questions and to get credible answers. No journalist can afford to yield to this kind of intimidation. In Dallas, at least, it would seem that as far as the leadership of the Muslim community is concerned, there is only one way for journalists to cover the Muslim community: uncritically and unquestioningly.

Now, I cannot say how typical the Dallas experience is of the broader American experience, but my contacts around the country suggest that this is standard operating procedure. Islam remains a sacred cow in many American newsrooms. My experience with the Muslim leadership in Dallas provides insight, in my view, into why American journalists have ignored the radicalism present in mainstream U.S. Muslim organizations, and in particular why—with the singular exception of an extraordinary 2004 series in the *Chicago Tribune*—the mainstream media has shown almost no curiosity about the Brotherhood. Why? Reflecting on my experience as a journalist, and as a journalist dealing with Muslim leaders, I have several ideas as to why.

First, Muslims provide non-Muslim journalists with an opportunity to demonstrate their broadmindedness. Most journalists are secularists and cultural liberals, as survey after survey has shown. Cultural liberals have a natural sympathy for the underdog, especially besieged minorities. As a general matter, they are predisposed to believe the best about all American Muslims, and to discount evidence to the contrary as right-wing paranoia. Muslim leaders like Sayyid Syeed of ISNA and Mohamed Elmougy understand this, which is why they pitch their presentations to journalists as they do. The legacy of McCarthyism has such a powerful hold on the minds of many journalists that it disarms the instincts that every journalist has to nurture in order to do a proper job. Now that the Cold War is over, we look back at the water-carrying and fellow-traveling so many mainstream liberals, especially journalists, did for the communists, and wonder how on earth they could have been so deluded. Well, they saw what they wanted to see. One day, I am confident that historians and others will wonder the same thing about the silence and incuriosity of today's journalists with regard to the threat from radical Islam in America.

Along those lines, I think at least some journalists sympathize with Muslim leaders because they—the Muslim leaders—have made enemies of conservative Christian counterparts. I have heard on many occasions journalists fuming that American society gets uptight about radical Islam, but ignores the threat from the Jerry Falwells and Pat Robertsons of the country—as if they were remotely the same thing! As if the sins and failings of the Christian right justified ignoring Islamic militancy. It is nothing short of bizarre that the secular fundamentalists in the U.S. media are so consumed by fear and loathing of conservative Evangelicals that they give a free pass to Islamic religious fundamentalists who stand for a far more intolerant form of faith.

Similarly, I've observed that some canny Muslim activists have adopted the tactic of invoking the threat of danger to Muslims should critical stories appear in the media. The idea is that journalists should not write stories, even if true, that reflect poorly on the Muslim community, because somewhere, there might be a redneck thug who would use the information to attack innocent Muslims. Again, this plays well into the stereotype that many journalists have of the great right-wing unwashed, lying in wait to carry out pogroms against defenseless minorities.

This is just one more reason why I believe that leaders from these Muslim Brotherhood-influenced organizations—CAIR, ISNA, MAS—are typically good at understanding the psychology of liberal American journalists, and know how to intimidate them. But it's also true that they know how to present a positive spin on themselves and their organizations. They adopt the language of civic engagement and civil society, and deploy it at every opportunity. One young Muslim activist in Dallas who embraces Said Qutb's message as spiritually enlightening is downright Tocquevillian in the language he uses in public. This is not entirely deceptive. The Muslim Brotherhood's general strategy is to work through the institutions of civil society to achieve the ultimate goal, which is an Islamic state. It is obviously un-American to decide that Muslim citizens are to be distrusted when they want to participate fully in the political and civic life of this country. The Brotherhood activists understand this, and make this public goodwill work to their advantage. Without informed journalists making meaningful inquiries about the ultimate goal of this or that Muslim group, critics can come across looking like bigots who want to disfranchise and disempower honest Muslim citizens.

It is vital that the public be able to tell the difference between Muslims who honestly and legitimately want to be part of American public life, and those who are using the laws and customs of this country surreptitiously to undermine, and ultimately destroy, them. But the news media, which is the institution best able to make that distinction, is failing to do its job.

In fact, we are acting like useful idiots for the Muslim Brotherhood, continuing to write uncritically about CAIR, ISNA, and these other organizations. I am particularly

shocked by how often the news media turn to CAIR for the Muslim perspective on any given issue, despite all we've learned about that organization, its founding, and its leadership. CAIR is, by this point, mostly a media creation. It stays influential because the media keep calling them for their opinion. It's the same reason why Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton remain high-profile leaders of the black community: because lazy journalists keep calling them and treating them like exclusive spokesmen. Why don't reporters ever call Muslims like Dr. Zuhdi Jasser, a physician in Arizona who is risking his life to take a public stand against Islamists in America? Mostly laziness, I'd say. It's just easier to call CAIR.

I should say too that the U.S. government is utterly foolish on this front. By continuing to do business with ISNA, CAIR, and other false friends of American democracy, the government legitimizes them. In 1996, for example, Abdulrahman Alamoudi, who was at the time head of the American Muslim Council, said at the national conference of the Islamic Association of Palestine—a Brotherhood front group—that America was going to become a Muslim country. He said he's not opposed to using violence to overthrow the American order, but that it was imprudent to try that here. "We have other means," he said. But in 2002, the FBI praised Mr. Alamoudi's organization as "the most mainstream Muslim organization in the United States." Mr. Alamoudi also moved easily within top political circles in Washington, and even lectured abroad for the State Department. Since 2004, though, he has been residing in prison after pleading guilty to participation in a plot to assassinate King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. For reasons I find impossible to discern, the U.S. government continues to treat establishment Islamic radicals in this country as friends and allies. Consider this absurdity: earlier this fall, as the Department of Justice was pursuing the Holy Land Foundation case in a Dallas courtroom, and identifying the Islamic Society of North America as an "unindicted co-conspirator" in terrorist financing because of its Muslim Brotherhood connection, the very same Department of Justice manned an outreach booth at the 2007 ISNA national convention in Chicago. At least six other federal agencies did the same thing.

It's no wonder so many in the mainstream media don't pursue critical investigations of these mainstream Muslim organizations. If the U.S. government gives them the official seal of approval, it's that much easier for journalists, who may be disinclined to dig deeper anyway, to justify their lack of curiosity.

I don't know what it will take to wake American journalists up. Probably another 9/11, I'm sorry to say. If you saw the important documentary "Islam vs. Islamists," which PBS tried to suppress, you will have learned from Muslims themselves that American mosques are being taken over by radical Islamists right here, right now. Several years ago, when I was beginning to learn about radical Islam in America, I told a friend in Washington working in counterterrorism that I didn't understand

why so few Muslims spoke out against the radicals. My friend told me that there actually are plenty of Muslims who reject the radicals among them, but to speak out would mean putting themselves and their families at serious personal risk. These are the real underdogs, these Muslims, these friends of democracy and the open society, who understand what kind of threat the Muslim Brotherhood and its American apostles pose to us all. Why are American journalists not listening to them? What can possibly be gained by averting our collective journalistic eyes from this critically important story?

Husain Haqqani discussed how America's ignorance of Islam and the complexities of the Muslim world led previous generations to make foolish mistakes. The mainstream media are making the same mistakes today.

I am not calling for any sort of journalistic crusade against the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliates in this country. I am only calling on my fellow journalists to apply the same professional standards to Islamic organizations as they would to any Christian or other organization that had clear ties to radical ideology. I am only calling on my fellow journalists to pay attention to the documents that are coming out, to connect the dots, and without fear or favor to give the public a clear picture of what we are facing in this country—and, to counter the true bigots and paranoids, a clear picture of what we are *not* facing. I am calling on journalists to quit being intimidated by empty charges of Islamophobia, and by their own liberal guilt.

I am simply calling on my fellow journalists to do their jobs.

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