Towards a Political Islam

Roel Meijer

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Introduction *

In Europe, and especially the Netherlands, an unfruitful debate rages on the issue of whether Islam is compatible with Enlightenment (and Europe and modernity) because it does not recognize the separation between state and 'church' – politics and religion – which is assumed to constitute the basis of Western freedom of thought and intellectual and technological progress. As progress or even development and Islam are considered incompatible, the need to study the Islamic movement and especially its thought is considered a waste of time because it does not comply with the 'real' or essential Islam, which is assumed to be totalitarian and intolerant. This paper will argue otherwise. Islam, like all religions, is malleable and can be bent in whatever direction thinkers and ideologues want, depending on circumstances and needs, even if they themselves claim to represent the true Islam. In fact, Islamic thought is going through an exciting phase of development. Not all of this is immediately positive, but a lot of it is, and perhaps much of it is essential as a phase of maturation. One of the most interesting intellectual developments is the discovery of politics as a new field of theory and practice. In contrast to what is assumed, this is quite a recent development. The major paradox of Islamism is that it is a modern phenomenon that emerged as a reaction to Western penetration of the Islamic world. Politics and religion were before that time perhaps loosely related in theory, but in practice were

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separated.[1] In many ways classical Islam was apolitical and the 'ulama (religious leaders) tended to shy away from rulers, who in most cases were thugs.[2] Although the 'ulama won the battle with the Abbasid caliphs (from 750–1258) over the monopoly to interpret Islamic law, they never succeeded in establishing their authority over the ruler, with the result that a split occurred between the ruler, who dominated politics, and 'ulama, who acquired religious authority and held sway over the text. Classical political theory recognized this division of labour, laying down the necessity of obeying the ruler (*wali al-amr*). This is a minimalist doctrine. According to Islamic law, obedience of the ruler is mandatory, even if he is unjust and incompetent, and revolt is rejected unless he actively works against Islam.

Modern totalizing claims to provide a worldview, and a complete social, economic and political system that is embodied in an 'Islamic state' should be regarded as a reaction to Western colonial rule. It was a response to the condescension of colonial powers towards conquered peoples, whose 'backwardness' was not ascribed to social-economic circumstances or a power struggle, but to their deficient civilization associated with their corresponding inferior religion, in this case Islam. The major problem with this counter-claim was that Islam-inspired movements generally detested politics at the time (as a form of negotiation and compromise, and a means to reach certain delimited goals) and deeply feared its mechanism as a source of corruption of authenticity and religious purity. The result has been a deep, but for a long time hidden, crisis: Islamic movements claim to be all things at once while not having the political instruments (which they never developed) to deliver. Whereas in theory Islamism promises a perfect society and is able to mobilize people on the basis of its slogan 'Islam is the solution' (*al-islam huwa al-hall*), in practice it suffers from the weakness of populism and its simple solutions to the complex problems that modern societies suffer, which are believed to be located in the personality of the ruler, morality of the believers and adherence to God's rule. In his famous book *The Failure of Political Islam*, Olivier Roy argued more than fifteen years ago that Islamism's problem is the limitation of politics to virtue and piety.[3] All the rest is 'sin, plot or illusion'.[4] Concentrating on values instead of politics, Islamism ignores the need for a political programme, open debate, and the value of checks and balances in curtailing power and the flexibility to produce a stable political practice.[5] Its basic flaw is to prefer purity and utopia above concrete results.

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1) Antony Black nicely sums up the political vacuum left after the death of the Prophet: 'It was assumed, after Muhammad's death, that someone must succeed him in his role as Leader (Imam) of the community, as his Deputy (Caliph). Apart from that, there is almost nothing about political leadership or state structures [in the Koran and Hadith]'. Cited in Antony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From Prophet to the Present* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), p. 14.
2) Daphna Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition: The Sunni 'Ulama of Eleventh-Century Baghdad* (Albany NY: SUNY Press, 2000).
3) Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1992), pp. 10, 21 and 29.
4) Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, p. 27.
5) Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, p. 45.

Modern Islamic movements have been engaged in three archetypical strategies to reach their goals of acquiring power and establishing an Islamic state. The first strategy concentrated on preaching (*da'wa*) as a means of peacefully spreading the call and convincing Muslims to lead the correct life of the Sunna, the example of the Prophet Muhammad. In its more activist version, this can adopt the guise of 'commanding good and forbidding wrong', or *hisba*, which can adopt a violent form of coercion.[6] The political assumption of *da'wa* is that once Muslims lead a pious life, a virtuous Muslim society will appear and political power will automatically follow without leaders having to dirty their hands. One finds the most extreme, apolitical version of this strategy in countries that did not experience colonialism and where political doctrine still goes back to classical tradition. In Saudi Arabia, for instance, the doctrine of obedience to the ruler has been promoted by Wahhabism/Salafism, leading to a more classical division of labour between the 'ulama, who gained control over society, while the rulers, the family of Sa'ud, acquired a monopoly over politics, the economy and foreign policy.[7] In this arrangement, the 'ulama actively discourage any political debate as deviant, leading to an internal division (*fitna*) that might undermine the power of the political and religious authorities. On the other extreme, modern Islamic political activism uses force and wages jihad[8] in order to capture the state and impose an Islamic society from above. In Egypt, the best example was the Jihad Organization, which was involved in the assassination of Egypt's President Sadat in 1981.

In establishing the Islamic state in this manner, the activists' conscience remains pure, their hands unsullied and their belief in their righteousness intact. The problem with these two strategies is that they are political in the sense that they seek power and transform society, while at the same time the political dimension of the action is denied. Moreover, the stress on religious purity, the religious sanction of jihad, and the rejection of politics, as well as the tendency to view the political adversary as deviating from the straight path (*inharif*) rather than having a different opinion or equally valid interpretation of Islamic law, or representing other interests, stimulates the use of violence. The third and least popular option, which has only recently been developed, is to recognize the limitations of *da'wa*, reject the severe liabilities of violence (*jihad*) and embrace politics (*hizbiyya*)[9] as a means to reform society and power relations while recognizing the existing order. As is the case with *da'wa*,

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6) For the history of *hisba*, see Michael Cook, *Forbidding Wrong in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). For the application of this practice in its activist form, see Roel Meijer, 'Commanding Good and Forbidding Wrong as a Form of Social Action: The Case of the Jama'a al-Islamiyya', in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (London and New York: Hurst and Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 189-220.

7) Madawi al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State: Islamic Voices from a New Generation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

8) The term jihad should be translated as religious war and not as holy war.

9) The word *hizb* means party, and *hizbiyya* means accepting party politics or the pluralism of opinions.

the acceptance of *hizbiyya* means adopting the long-term view.[10] But it also means that leaders have to become more savvy and interested in the world; willing to become immersed in topics that do not immediately touch upon religion, or even recognize that religion has its limitations and can be seen as an inspiration rather than a model. The process of accepting politics as intrinsically valid and a separate sphere is a tortuous road. The repressive nature of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East has not been helpful, but, paradoxically, has also in a way strengthened this trend. While, on the one hand, the regimes make it extremely difficult to become democratic in a non-democratic context, on the other hand the movements have adopted democratic claims in order to oppose these states in a universal idiom and formulate their claim in the form of civil rights. At the same time, however, the unstable context also demands that these movements remain flexible, moving between the three archetypical strategies of *da'wa*, *hizbiyya* and jihad, or combining them (sometimes by promoting jihad outside its borders, for instance in Iraq and Palestine, taking part in elections, while building up a civil society by means of *da'wa*). This flexibility, which is often regarded as ambiguity, has laid them open to the accusation of opportunism or even duplicity. What has increased this ambiguity is the often opaque internal struggles between the different Islamic movements or different currents within movements. The clash over doctrine and strategy has recently been represented by the reformist Muslim Brotherhood on the one hand and the apolitical, quietist Salafism – both in its peaceful and in its jihadi apolitical forms – on the other. If *hizbiyya* has become accepted in the former, in the latter it is rejected as a form of unbelief (*kufr*).

This paper will address the emergence of modern Islamic political thought by first looking back at the origins and nature of Islamism as it emerged as a *da'wa* organization and its subsequent development of the jihadi trend. It will than analyse the two currents in the 1960s that tried to resolve its ambiguity: by either taking the route of jihad; or concentrating on *da'wa*. The second section will analyse the outcome of this debate and the attitude towards violence by using the examples of the Egyptian al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, the Saudi jihadi ideologue Yusuf al-'Uyairi (sometimes called 'Ayiri), the Iraqi Association of Muslim Scholars, and finally the Egyptian and Syrian Muslim Brotherhood. Salafism, as promoted by Saudi Arabia, will also

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10) Besides Olivier Roy, Gudrun Krämer and Amr Hamzawy have written the most important books on the subject. See Gudrun Krämer, *Gottes Staat als Republik: Reflexionen zeitgenössischer Muslime zu Islam, Menschenrechten und Demokratie* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlags-gesellschaft, 1999); and Amr Hamzawy, *Zeitgenössische politisches Denken in der arabischen Welt: Kontinuität und Wandel* (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut, 2005). In fact, Gudrun Krämer wrote one of the first articles on the subject more than ten years ago: 'Islamists Notions of Democracy', in Joel Benin and Joe Stork (eds), *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 71–82. For an anthropological analysis of the relationship between Islam and politics, see Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); and Salwa Ismail, *Rethinking Islamist Politics: Culture, the State and Islamism* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

be shown as the least likely solution, as it tries to smother all forms of politics in an attempt to reassert the authority of the 'ulama and stifle critique of the monarchy. Major changes have occurred within the Islamic movement during the past 25 years and this paper argues that the writings underpinning both trends have become much more sophisticated. Their development can in particular be traced by their interpretation of 'reality'. Much can be learned from their definition of reality. Is it evil and must it be changed, or does it contain the seeds of mutual understanding and acceptance? And what is the relationship between sacred texts and reality?

Chapter 1 Moralism and the Rejection of Politics

The Advantages and Drawbacks of Ambiguity

One of the major problems of political Islam is that when it arose as a movement and an ideology with the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 in Egypt, it was forced to make exaggerated claims in opposition to Western political, economic and cultural colonial dominance. At the same time it had to engage with the secular nationalist concept of religion of the Wafd Party, which in its attempt to mobilize Copts, relegated it to the private sphere, as expressed in the slogan 'everyone his religion and the nation for everyone'. As part of the process of turning Islam into an ideology, the Brotherhood claimed to represent a comprehensive all-inclusive religious 'system' (*nizam*), laying claim in the words of its leader Hasan al-Banna (1906–1949) to be everything from 'a Salafiyya message, a Sunni way, a Sufi truth, a political organization, an athletic group a cultural-educational union, an economic company, and a social idea'.[11] It enshrined political ambiguity by

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11) Richard Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 14. Hasan al-Banna's ideas are partly represented in his *Majmu'a rasa'il al-imam al-shahid Hasan al-Banna* [Collection of Epistles of the Martyr Imam Hasan al-Banna], n. p: Dar al-Shihab, n.d. An interesting overview of his ideas is presented by Ibrahim al-Bayumi Ghanim, *al-Fikr al-siyasi li-l-imam Hasan al-Banna* [The Political Thought of Imam Hasan al-Banna], Cairo: Dar al-Tawzi' wa-l-Nashr al-Islamiyya, 1992. For an overview of the history of the Muslim Brotherhood until the Second World War, Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement, 1928-1942*, Reading: Ithaca Press, 1998.

proclaiming the Koran, with its limited political directions, to be the constitution, while violence was sanctioned in the form of jihad. Hasan al-Banna rejected politics (*hizbiyya*) because it meant, in his words, to become involved with 'notables and names' and 'parties and societies'.[12]

Despite the fact that the Brotherhood emerged as an organization that was primarily directed towards *da'wa* and the spreading of the true call under the assumption that the Muslim world's problems derived from its deviation from the straight path, it in fact quickly became involved in the political intrigues of the monarchy. The monarchy realized its potential as a counterweight to its nationalist opponents after the Brotherhood gained nation-wide popularity because of its campaign to support the Palestinian uprising in 1936.[13] In the end, however, the connection with the monarchy and conservative minority parties did not work out well for the Brotherhood. The Brotherhood's massive growth of adherents turned it into a political force in itself, while the discovery by the police of its paramilitary 'battalions', which were mobilized during the Arab–Israeli war in 1948, made the monarchy realize that the Brotherhood was a dangerous ally, and the Brotherhood was disbanded in 1948. The subsequent assassination of Egyptian Prime-Minister Nuqrashi by the Secret Apparatus and the reprisal killing of Hassan al-Banna by Egypt's secret police brought to an end the first phase of the Brotherhood's experiment in the political arena.[14] Its subsequent re-emergence in 1951 ended even more disastrously after the failure of the assassination attempt on Egypt's President Nasser in 1954. The military cracked down on the Muslim Brotherhood, hanged several of its leaders and sent its members to detention camps, from where they emerged only in the 1970s. Because of its armed wing – the Secret Apparatus (*al-jihaz al-sirri*) – the new military regime could easily justify the Brotherhood's repression by condemning it as a terrorist organization.[15]

This trajectory was not inevitable and universal and was specifically related to the movement's Egyptian mother organization. How other branches developed depended on local circumstances. In Syria, where a branch of the Brotherhood was founded in the 1940s, the Brotherhood actively took part in politics and ran in elections between 1945 and 1963, even offering ministers in several cabinets.[16] But despite the participation of the Syrian Brotherhood in parliamentary politics, it did not result in a theoretical underpinning of democracy, which, like in Egypt, was feeble anyway and was interrupted by military putsches. In Jordan, the Brotherhood enhanced its reputation as an

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12) Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, pp. 14 and 218–220. Ghanim, *al-Fikr al-siyasi li-l-imam Hasan al-Banna*, p. 307, and Hasan al-Banna, 'Risala al-mu'tamar al-khamis' [Speech for the Fifth Conference], in *Majmu'a rasa'il al-imam al-shahid Hasan al-Banna*, p. 181.
13) Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, pp. 16–19 and 39–42.
14) Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, pp. 55–79.
15) Joel Gordon, *Nasser's Blessed Movement Egypt's Free Officers and the July Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 183.
16) Johannes Reissner, *Ideologie und Politik der Muslimbruder Syriens: Von den Wahlen 1947 bis zum Verbot unter Adib as-Shishakli 1952* (Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1980).

ambivalent force when it supported King Hussein against the pan-Arab movement in the 1950s.[17] It benefited hugely from this deal, and until liberalization in 1989, the Brotherhood was able to gain access through its alliance with King Hussein to crucial sectors of society, such as education and welfare organizations. Being registered as a NGO, however, it was never allowed to act as a political force and elaborate its political ideas.[18] In Palestine, the Brotherhood played a similar ambivalent role, and was even supported by the Israelis against the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on the assumption that is was non-political and based on personal salvation.[19]

Besides the adverse circumstances in many of these countries, internal reasons also hampered the development of a political theory and programme (*barnamij*). Opening a debate on political strategies and concepts always contained the threat of internal strife (*fitna*),[20] which might challenge the authority of the leaders and endanger unity. In order to prevent this, appointments to organs such as the Maktab al-Irshad – the Brotherhood's politburo – were made by the leader himself, or by co-optation. Reflecting the highly authoritarian nature of politics at the time, the political culture of the Brotherhood was based on the principle of 'obedience' (*ta'a*) and 'listening' (*sam'*), which would not be challenged until the 1980s.[21] The authoritarian terms of obedience and listening are Koranic, and are also much in evidence in Salafism, where they are used to legitimize the total adherence to the opinion of the 'ulama.

Repression and the Deepening of Da'wa and Jihad as Strategy and Ideology

In the 1960s and 1970s the ambivalence towards politics was resolved in two directions, neither of them conducive to the emergence of political theory and practice. The first was the revolutionary route of Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966); the second the 'moderate' official response of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Sayyid Qutb's total war on Egypt's military regime – as a means to end the ambiguity of the Brotherhood under Hassan al-Banna – led to the complete suppression of politics and the opening of floodgates to violence. Although highly activist, his project for liberation from the authoritarian state's political secular tyranny and its totalitarian nature (*shumuliyya*) was paradoxically directed by another total subjection – to that of the sovereignty

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17) Uriel Dann, *King Hussein and the Challenge of Arab Radicalism: Jordan, 1955-1967* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 60–61.
18) Hani al-Hurani et al. (eds), *al-Harakat wa-l-tanzimat al-islamiyya fi-l-Urdun* [Islamic Movements and Organizations in Jordan] (Amman: Dar Sindbad li-l-Nashr, 1997).
19) Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996), pp. 61 and 123–129.
20) *Fitna*, or internal strife in the *umma* (Muslim community) is in classical theory regarded as a major sin and is condemned. Not surprisingly, the term is used by Salafis to warn against political activism in any form, whether peaceful or violent.
21) Diya Rashwan, *Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt*, available online at www.ikhwanweb.com, accessed May 2007.

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of God (*hakimiyya*). Paradoxically, in this totalitarian form of Islamism, human freedom is gained by total submission to God:[22]

> This religion is really a universal declaration of the freedom of man from servitude to other men and from servitude to his own desires, which is also a form of servitude; it is a declaration that sovereignty (*hakimiyya*) belongs to God alone and He is the lord of all the worlds.[23]

Qutb refused to address the specific issue of divergent interpretations, individual differences and the possibility of dissension and internal debate – that is, the opening up to politics – which the Brotherhood already feared under the monarchy. Instead, he strove for unity and mobilization of the believers by a vanguard (*tali'a*) for a jihad against the ruling regimes, which were regarded as pre-Islamic (*jahiliyya*) and therefore based on unbelief (*kufr*). Qutb put discipline and obedience in the revolt against the *taghut* (idol) at the service of self-sacrifice and martyrdom, and regarded them as the only means of becoming a true Muslim. Ironically, with the introduction of excommunication (*takfir*) as a political instrument, Sayyid Qutb set the scene for individual megalomaniacs, leading to what he wanted to avoid: internal strife (*fitna*) and an endless sectarian regression of condemnation for those who do not approve of one's own doctrine (always regarded as universal), thus further Islamizing and colonizing the field of politics. If the goal was still the establishment of the Islamic state, the emphasis shifted towards action and jihad as a purifying act of washing away the sin of politics.[24]

The answer that the Brotherhood formulated in response to Qutb at the time was equally unhelpful in developing new political theories. By falling back on the old concept of *da'wa*, Qutb's concept of *takfir* was not criticized in political terms but in theological ones. The argument was that one Muslim was not allowed to judge another Muslim and condemn him unless this was done along very strict lines. Strategically, Hasan al-Hudaybi's *Preachers, Not Judges (Du'a, la quda)* is typical of the Brotherhood's withdrawal to its most inconspicuous minimalist tactical position under threat of annihilation of the authoritarian state.[25] Besides condemning the concepts of *jahiliyya* and *takfir*, its tactic – later evolved by the Muslim Brotherhood's subsequent General Guide 'Umar al-Tilmisani (1973–1986) – was to create a Muslim society rather than a state, in the expectation that in due time the state would automatically fall into the lap of the community if a majority of Muslims lived

22) Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (Damascus: Dar al-Ilm, undated), p. 11.
23) Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 57–58.
24) For the ideas of Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966), see Gilles Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh: Muslim Extremism in Egypt* (London: Saqi Books, 1985), pp. 36–58; Leonard Binder, 'The Religious Aesthetics of Sayyid Qutb: A Non-Scriptural Fundamentalism', in his *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 170–205; and Roxanne L. Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism. A work of Comparative Political Theory* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 49–92.
25) Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, pp. 61–64.

piously. It was assumed that the *shari‘a* – left undefined – contained all the answers to contemporary problems and that following it would eliminate the necessity for politics. This position was equally apolitical, for it was still based on the utopian idea that if all Muslims were virtuous, politics and the necessity for solving conflicts would become redundant. It also did not solve the issue of ambiguity, as the Brotherhood still strove for power, acted politically by creating an Islamized parallel civil society and a state within a state, while at the same time denying that it had any political ambitions. This, of course, was not only the fault of the Brotherhood but of the political system as a whole. Egypt's President Sadat had released the Brotherhood from prison at the beginning of the 1970s on the condition that it did not mingle in politics.

In the 1960s and 1970s both tendencies evolved further and were deepened. Many members of the Brotherhood fled to Saudi Arabia, where its authoritarian and apolitical tendencies were further underpinned and enhanced. Neither the apolitical Salafism of the religious establishment of the Saudi grand mufti Bin Baz and the main Hadith specialist Nasir al-Din al-Albani, nor the activism of Juhayman al-‘Utaybi, were conducive to the development of a truly political Islam.[26] In Saudi Arabia itself, the mixture of the Brotherhood's activism and Salafism would lead to a new hybrid propounded by such thinkers as Muhammad Surur Zain al-‘Abdin and ‘Abd al-Rahman ‘Abd al-Khaliq. Both studied at the Islamic University in Medina, the centre of the transnational expansion of Salafism (80 per cent of its students were foreigners), became critical of the Brotherhood for its lack of religious depth and tried to combine the dogmatism of Salafism with the activism of the Brotherhood. They were to have a special influence on the Saudi *Sahwa* (revival movement)as a political Salafi movement, which in the 1990s would criticize the Saudi monarchy and demand reforms after the monarchy allowed American troops to be stationed on 'holy soil'. But other forms of Salafism would also evolve. In Jordan, the apolitical Salafi movement would emerge as a new protest movement, as the Muslim Brotherhood had been co-opted by King Hussein in his struggle against Nasserism and pan-Arabism.[27] In Afghanistan the jihadi trend would have its field day and blossom into a variety of spectacular forms, as developed by ‘Abdallah ‘Azzam, ‘Abd al-Qadir bin ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, Bin Laden, and others, such as Yusuf al-‘Uyairi. Repressed in its political expression, and outraged by the moral corruption and Western interference in the Middle East, their hope for liberation lay in striving for a total destruction of the enemy. Martyrdom, still

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26) For the apolitical character of Salafism as a means of sanctioning the state, see Madawi Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State: Islamic Voices from a New Generation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 22–58. For the thoughts of Juhayman al-Utaybi, see Thomas Hegghammer and Stephane Lacroix, 'Rejectionist Islamism in Saudi Arabia: The Story of Juhayman al-‘Utaybi Revisited,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1 (2007), pp. 103–122.

27) Quintan Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism: Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood, and State Power in Jordan* (Albany NY: SUNY Press, 2001), pp. 111–146.

in its infancy in Qutb's works and imagination, would become central in the works of these intellectuals.

Three types of justification for violence have evolved since the 1980s. The first, influenced by Qutb, is the spread of the call of non-direct opposition to the ruler, exemplified by the practice of violent *hisba* by breaking up festivals, burning video shops, and intimidating opponents, and ending in jihad against the ruler. The second is that of the unleashing of global jihad and 'jihadism' as a permanent revolution. And the third is that of the use of jihad as a means of national resistance against foreign occupation. All three reject politics (*hizbiyya*), but they differ in the method of violence, between low-level warfare, global jihad, and violence in the service of national resistance. The basic difference between these currents and their tactics is reflected in their interpretation of reality.

Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya's Tactic of Low-Intensity Warfare

Most academic works concentrate on the Jihad Group and jihad against the far enemy.[28] For the Egyptian context, the Jama'a al-Islamiyya was much more important and developed a much more specific form of violence. The Jama'a al-Islamiyya is a generic term used in the mid-1970s for apolitical pious university societies that spread the call, and organized services for its members, while promoting pious Islamism. During the 1970s they gradually became politicized, radicalizing as soon as the left wing was crushed and the regime was caught between its contradictory policy of playing the Islamic card and becoming dependent on the United States and making peace with Israel.[29] The Jama'a rejected the Brotherhood's deal with the Egyptian state of limiting its activities to *da'wa* as too soft and law-abiding.[30] Instead, in the principle of 'commanding right and forbidding wrong' (*al-amr bi-l-ma'ruf wa-l-nahy 'an al-munkar*), or *hisba*, it found a potent repertoire of contention to justify the use of violence as a flexible and multi-faceted political tool to intimidate its opponents, maintain control and discipline over its followers, as

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28) Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad went Global* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
29) Hisham Mubarak, *al-Irhabiyyun qadimun! Dirasa muqarana bayn mawqif al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin wa Jama'at al-Jihad min qadiya al-'unf, 1928–1994* [The Terrorists Are Coming: A Comparative Study of the Views of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jihad Society on the Issue of Violence, 1928–1994] (Cairo: Kitab al-Mahrusa, 1995), pp. 158–170.
30) For the disagreement on the use of violence with the Muslim Brotherhood, see: Muntasar al-Zayyat, *al-Jama'at al-Islamiyya: Ruy'a min al-dakhil* [The Jama'at al-Islamiyya: A View from Within] (Cairo: Dar Misr al-Mahrusa, 2005), pp. 71 and 90; 'Abd al-Rahim 'Ali, *Muqamara al-Kubra: Mubadara waqf al-'unf bayn rihan al-hukuma wa-l-Jama'at al-Islamiyya* [The Great Gamble: The Initiative to End Violence between the Hostages of the Government and the Gama'at al-Islamiyya] (Cairo: Markaz al-Mahrusa li-l-Nashr, 2002), p. 141; and Mubarak, *al-Irhabiyyun qadimun!*, p. 139.

well as to provoke the state by increasingly taking over more public space and whittling down the state's authority.[31]

Of the three means of forbidding the wrong by the heart (*bi-l-qalb*), by the tongue (*bi-l-lisan*) and by the hand (*bi-l-yad*) – that is, using 'violence to change the wrong' (*manhaj al-taghyir al-munkar bi-l-quwa*) – clearly the hand became the most important.[32] At the end of the 1970s and during the 1980s, the Jama'a would become notorious for intimidating students and Egyptian citizens. The Jama'a's lawyer and a former prominent leader, Muntasar al-Zayyat (born in 1956), describes in his memoirs how as a young zealot in the 1970s he smashed liquor stores belonging to the Christian Coptic minority in Aswan, the town where he was raised.[33] Universities were terrorized by the Jama'a, who broke up cultural festivals, prevented singing, forbade mingling of the sexes and enforced a religious code of chastity.[34] As acceptance of the violence expanded, at the end of the 1970s the Jama'a started to train with weapons in the hills of Asyut in Upper Egypt, eventually merging with the Jihad Organization in 1980 and embracing jihad as a means of ending the *jahiliyya* state.[35] They found its justification in 'Abd al-Salam Faraj's tract, *The Hidden Duty*[36] and in Qutb's *Milestones*, both famous for the metaphorical way in which they describe reality.

How politically underdeveloped the Jama'a in fact was became glaringly clear during the assassination of President Sadat in 1981. The only aim of Khalid al-Islambuli, Sadat's assassin, was to remove the corrupt tyrant (*taghut*), thus missing the opportunity to wipe out the political elite at the bandstand during the commemoration of the October War of 1973.[37] The botched revolt in Asyut two days later was an isolated revolutionary spark that was quickly stamped out by the Egyptian state. All other attempts to take over crucial centres of power, such as the television station, were abandoned for lack of preparation. In the end, the attack was typical of the 'anarchism of the deed', of the end of the nineteenth century in Europe, which was meant to set an example, betting on a spontaneous uprising, without really making a political analysis of the overwhelming odds that they faced against the power of the state and drawing up a strategy to overcome it.[38]

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31) Zayyat, *al-Jama'at al-Islamiyya*, p. 73; and Mubarak, *al-Irhabiyyun qadimun!*, pp. 159 and 164.
32) Zayyat, *al-Jama'at al-Islamiyya*, pp. 73, 104 and 215; and Mubarak, *al-Irhabiyyun qadimun!*, p. 162. For an analysis of the classic texts, see Michael Cook, *Forbidding Wrong in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
33) Zayyat, *al-Jama'at al-Islamiyya*, p. 83.
34) Zayyat, *al-Jama'at al-Islamiyya*, p. 91.
35) Zayyat, *al-Jama'at al-Islamiyya*, pp. 143–145.
36) For the translation of the 'Abd al-Salam Faraj's tract, see Johannes J.G. Jansen, *The Neglected Duty: The Creed of Sadat's Assassins and Islamic Resurgence in the Middle East* (New York: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 159–234.
37) Zayyat, *al-Jama'at al-Islamiyya*, p. 183.
38) Zayyat, *al-Jama'at al-Islamiyya*, pp. 179–189. It is fair to mention that strong doubts about the feasibility of the assassination attempt had arisen among the leaders of the Jihad Organization, especially the military members, such as 'Abbud Zomr.

Inevitably, Sadat's spectacular assassination was followed by a deep gloom in prison, where hundreds of members of the Islamist movement and totally innocent youth were thrown together. What saved the movement and its apolitical line of 'commanding right and forbidding wrong' was the systematic torture of its members.[39] In order not to repeat their previous mistake, the writings of the second half of the 1980s were highly political, providing historical analyses of the plight of Islam and explaining in concrete terms the movement's modus operandi,[40] giving detailed analyses of Egypt's political system,[41] as well as emphasizing the inevitability of confrontation with the state,[42] while appealing to the public against state repression.[43] The difference with the earlier tracts is that all of them dealt with 'reality' and especially with 'means of changing reality'.[44] None of them, however, presented a political theory besides how to 'make' a revolution by means of jihad. At the same time, cadre training and more ideological indoctrination also seems to have evolved, making the Jama'a into a tighter organization. An interesting insight into this period is given by Khalid al-Birri (born in 1972), who describes how in his youth in the 1980s he applied the intimidation tactics in his secondary school and neighbourhood.[45] At the same time the Jama'a was able to penetrate the marginal neighbourhoods of Cairo, such as Imbaba, Ayn Shams and Bulaq Dakrur.[46]

Even with their more sophisticated political analysis, the second generation of leaders did not realize that the provocative nature of commanding good and forbidding wrong (*hisba*), together with their highly aggressive pamphlets, constituted a standing provocation to the authorities and would in the end lead to another round of confrontation with the state.

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39) 'Ali, *Muqamara al-kubra*, pp. 144–145.
40) *Mithaq al-'amal al-islami* [Charter of Islamic Action]. The Charter is an internal document, 194 pages long in handwriting, issued in 1985 and photocopied for distribution. It is written by the three leaders who were at that time in prison, convicted for the assassination of Egypt's President Sadat: Muhammad Isam Darbala; 'Asim 'Abd al-Majid; and Najih Ibrahim. A shorter version is *Min nahnu wa madha nuridu* [Who are We and What Do We Want?], which is 50 pages long and also handwritten, and is meant as an introduction for new recruits to the movement. Copies of the two documents are at the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam.
41) *Mawqif al-haraka al-islamiyya min al-'amal al-hizbi fi Misr* [The View of the Islamic Movement on Party Politics in Egypt] is partly republished in Rif'at Sayyid Ahmad, *al-Nabi al-musallah: Rafidun* [The Prophet Armed: The Rejectionists], Part I (London: Riad El-Rayyes Books, 1991), pp. 273–282.
42) *Hatmiya al-muwajaha* [The Confrontation is Inevitable] was published in 1987 and has been republished by 'Abd al-Rahim 'Ali in his *al-Mukhatira fi safqa al-hukuma wa-jama'at al-'unf* [The Danger of the Deal between the Government and the Society of Violence] (Cairo: Mirit li-l-Nashr wa-l-Ma'lumat, 2000), pp. 252–294.
43) *Taqrir khatir: Li-man kana lahu qalb aw ulqi al-sam'* [An Important Statement: For Whom had a Heart or has Received the Inauguration] is 61 pages long and was handwritten, probably in 1990, after increasing tensions with the authorities.
44) *Mithaq al-'amal al-islami*, p. 83.
45) Khalid al-Birri, *al-Dunya ajmal min al-janna: Sira usuli Misri* (Beirut: Dar al-Nahhar li-l-Nashr, 2001). The book has been translated into French, *La terre est plus belle qua le paradis* (Paris: J.C. Lattès, 2002).
46) Patrick Haenni, *L'ordre des caïds: Conjurer la dissidence urbaine au Caire* (Paris: Karthala, 2005).

From 1987 onwards the clashes with the state increased, until in 1990 a violent continuous low-intensity warfare broke out after the state assassinated the Jama'a's spokesman and in retaliation the speaker of parliament was assassinated. In the end, violence – which would cost 1,500 people their lives and was from 1992 also aimed at tourists – alienated the Egyptian public from the Jama'a.

It would take another seven years before the Jama'a was soundly defeated militarily. The interesting aspect of its defeat was not that it happened – this was never in question – but that its leadership subsequently reversed its ideas. Suing for peace, the Jama'a completely revised its ideas on the use of violence. The first sign of 'revisionism' (*muraja'at*), as it was called, occurred during a trial in Aswan in 1996, when a member of the Jama'a read a letter in which he condemned violence. It was addressed to the Egyptian people and 'the elite of this noble population'. It especially condemned internal strife (*fitna*) and included the classic rejection of violence and revolt against the ruler. It was also thoroughly nationalistic, in the sense that it deplored the weakening of Egypt, once a powerful nation that was now being humiliated by its enemies – Israel and the United States – which were taking advantage of the internal turmoil.[47] The 'Initiative to End Violence', as the whole campaign was called, was interrupted by the Luxor massacre in November 1997, but was continued in 2001. In January 2002 the Jama'a issued four tracts in which it explained the ideological reasons for the 'revisionism' concerning violence.[48] It would subsequently issue another two tracts: one denouncing violence in Saudi Arabia;[49] and another further expounding on Jama'a's ideas.[50]

Revisionism makes a strong case against the use of violence and the dangers of extremism (*ghuluw*), and pronounces itself in favour of tolerance and moderation. The dichotomous world view of the charter of an eternal struggle between the West and Islam is still there.[51] However, the reasons for going astray are that violence and jihad have become goals in themselves.[52]

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47) Communiqué of Khalid Ibrahim, photocopy at the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam.

48) The series is called *Silsila tashih al-mafahim* [Series of the Correction of Concepts] and was published by Maktaba al-Turath al-Islami in Cairo in 2002. The first deals with general concepts and is called *Mubadara waqf al-'unf: Ru'ya waq'iyya wa nazra shari'iyya* [The Initiative for the Ending of Violence: Realism and Legal Theory], written by Usama Ibrahim Hafiz and 'Asim 'Abd al-Majid. The second is entitled *Hurma al-ghuluw fi-l-din wa takfir al-muslimin* [Forbidding of Extremism in Religion and the Excommunication of Muslims], written by Najih Ibrahim 'Abdallah and 'Ali Muhammad 'Ali Sharif. The third is entitled, *al-Nashr wa-l-tabayyun fi tashih mafahim al-muhtasibin* [Advise and Clarification in the Correction of the Concepts of the Overseers], written by 'Ali Muhammad 'Ali Sharif and Usama Ibrahim Hafiz. The fourth is entitled *Taslit al-adwa' ala ma waq'a fi-l-jihad min ikhta'* [Clarification of Mistakes in Waging the Jihad], written by Hamdi 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Azim and Najih Ibrahim 'Abdallah.

49) *Tafjirat al-Riyad: al-Ahkam wa-l-athar* [Explosions in Riyad: Legal Opinions and (Political) Effects] (Cairo: Maktaba al-Turath al-Islami, 2003). It is a collective book written by the nine original leaders called the 'historical leadership'.

50) *Bahr al-dhikriyya: al-Muraja'at al-fiqhiyyat li-l-Jama'at al-Islamiyya* [The River of Memories: Legal Revisionism of the Jama'a al-Islamiyya] (Cairo: Maktaba al-Turath al-Islami, 2003).

51) *Mubadara waqf al-'unf: Ru'ya waq'iyya wa nazra shari'iyya*, pp. 36–48.

52) *Mubadara waqf al-'unf*, p. 49; and *Tafjirat fi Riyad*, pp. 37–48.

According to the authors, the Jama'a had lost sight of the principles and general goals of Islam. Jihad can only have meaning when it is used for the general good. The solution that the Jama'a seeks is still geared to leading man to be virtuous and that man's ultimate goal is 'submission to his God' (*ta'bid al-nas li-rabbihim*).[53] There are, however, important differences with the earlier tracts from the 1980s, namely their focus on the relationship with politics. They warn the Islamic movement that knowledge of religious texts is not enough; it must be combined with knowledge of 'reality' (*waqi'*). A crucial remark that highlights their heightened realism is that 'a profound knowledge of the *shari'a*, as well as a penetrating sense of reality and a deep understanding of politics are necessary tools for tackling this subject'. Continuing the argument, they state that 'otherwise, people will destroy themselves, spill blood and lose their homeland without justification and without serving the common good and attaining their goal'.[54] To end the preponderance of texts about reality, Islam is no longer portrayed in the Qutbian sense as a complete (*kamil*), total (*shamil*) and final (*khatim*) programme (*manhaj*) that solves all problems as soon as the *shari'a* is implemented. Likewise, the idea that the Jama'a itself has a monopoly over truth is relinquished. Rather, life is now acknowledged to be complex and the sources of Islam must be interpreted and debated in order to adjust them according to the differences in place and time in which Muslims live.[55] History is re-evaluated for the same reason. Historical experience is now regarded as a source of wisdom,[56] and the West is no longer simply rejected, but is regarded as a source of inspiration as long as it does not contradict Islam. Nor should all of the Middle East's ills be blamed on the West.[57] All previous methods that were used to combat the state and impose Jama'a's will on the population have been constricted by a series of conditions. For instance, the use of takfir (the excommunication of a ruler, a state or an individual) is forbidden.[58] Jihad must be based on consensus of the *umma*, and permission to exert jihad must be acquired through permission of the 'ulama and can only be executed by the state.[59]

Despite these major steps forwards in liberating Islam from total subjection to the text, and the rejection of violence in principle and practice (it cannot be used against the interests of the *umma*), the 'Initiative to End Violence' still suffers from some of the previous flaws. While it opens up space for the political, it does not give it its own autonomous rules. For instance, in a revealing answer to a question about the role of parliament, the authors stated that they regarded parliament as 'only one of the many means of

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53) *Taslit al-adwa' ala ma waq'a fi-l-jihad min ikhta'*, p. 4.
54) *Taslit al-adwa' ala ma waq'a fi-l-jihad min ikhta'*, p. 13. See also Mubadara waqf al-'unf, p. 39.
55) *Mubadara waqf al-'unf*, p. 38; and Nahr al-Dhikriyyat, p. 42.
56) *Nahr al-dhikriyyat*, p. 44.
57) *Tafjirat fi Riyad*, p. 21–22.
58) *Nahr al-dhikriyyat*, pp. 121–122.
59) *Tafjirat fi Riyad*, pp. 37–45.

spreading the call (*da'wa*)'.[60] From this remark and others, it is clear that politics still only functions as an instrument to establish Islam as a moral code. In this sense, a major opportunity for clearing the way to transform *hisba* into a principle of civic responsibility and a means of checking the power of the state was missed.[61]

Yusuf al-'Uyairi and the Permanent Salafi Jihadi Revolution

Yusuf al-'Uyairi, as the first leader of al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula, is probably one of the most well-known of the second generation of ideologues and fighters. His extensive writings inform us of the importance and function of violence and how it relates to politics and political theory.[62] Remarkably, 80 per cent of his work deals with an analysis of the political situation – that is, 'reality' – while the rest considers the legitimation of violence. His activism is geared towards changing reality (*taghyir al-waqi'*) – which is totally rejected – and much of his work, which typically can only be found on the internet,[63] deals with reality and ways to revolutionize society in different countries of the Muslim world: Saudi Arabia;[64] Afghanistan;[65] Chechnya;[66] the Philippines;[67] and Iraq.[68] His detailed analysis of the situation 'on the ground' in these countries, and economic and political relations in the Middle East and especially Saudi Arabia's relations with the United States, gives his work a highly realistic quality. His analysis suggests that religion as such is not the reason for rejecting the West. Rather, the manipulation of the region by the West, and especially the United States for its own interests, is the reason for revolt against the prevailing system.[69] Using modern terms such as 'imperialism' (*isti'mar*) 'Uyairi regards these international relations as deeply flawed. Any persons or institutions cooperating with the West are therefore

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60) *Tafjirat fi Riyad*, p. 162.
61) *Hisba* is an interesting principle that can be used for empowering the believer and can therefore be used as a starting point for evolving a theory of civil rights and the duties of the citizen and his/her relationship with the state.
62) See Roel Meijer, 'Yusuf al-'Uyairi, and the Making of a Revolutionary Salafi Praxis', *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 47, nos. 3–4 (2007), pp. 422–459.
63) The websites include www.tawhed.ws and www.ozoo.tk. Recently his works have been translated into English and even into Dutch.
64) *Tawajud al-Amrika fi al-Jazira al-'Arabiyya: Haqiqa wa-ahdaf* [The Presence of America on the Arabian Peninsula: Truth and Goals] (undated).
65) *al-Mizan li-haraka Taliban* [The Taliban Movement in the Balance] (undated).
66) *Hal intaharat Hawwa am istashhadat? Bahth mutawwal fi hukm al-'amaliyyat al-ishtishhadiyya* [Has Eve Committed Suicide or Has She Martyred Herself? Elaborate Study on Martyrdom Operations] (undated); and *'Amaliya 'al-Masrah fi Moscow': Madha rabh minha al-mujahidun wa madha khasaru?* [The 'Moscow Theatre' Operation: What is the Benefit of it for the Mujahidin and what did they Lose?] (undated).
67) *Ma hakadha al-'adl ya fadila al-shaykh! Difa'an 'an Jama'a Abi Sayyaf al-Filbiniyya* [This is Not Justice, Oh Honoured Sheikh: In Defence of the Society of Abu Sayyaf of the Philippines] (undated).
68) *al-'Iraq wa-l-Jazira al-'Arabiyya* [Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula] (undated); and *Silsilat al-harb al-salabiyya 'ala al-Iraq* [The Series of the Crusader War] (2003).
69) See his work on the American presence in the Arabian Peninsula, *Tawajud al-Amrika fi al-Jazira al-'Arabiyya* (undated).

rejected, whether they are rulers, 'ulama, or Westernized 'intellectuals'. Despite the political character of 'Uyairi's work, his writings are essentially non-political in the sense that they are harnessed to a strategy that, like that of Sayyid Qutb or even the Muslim Brotherhood in the past, utterly rejects politics as a pragmatic way to solve problems. Although he is highly flexible in his tactics of combating the enemy and is even tolerant in his religious estimation of many of the movements that he analyses – not rejecting them because they do not completely adhere to Salafism, such as the Taliban[70] – his whole work is steeped in a deep moralism and abhorrence of corruption and tarnishing of the self by a pragmatism that could lead to compromise (*tahadun*), cooperation (*ta'awun*) and coexistence (*ta'ayush*) – that is, the political.[71] He draws the ultimate conclusion from this stance: that rather than compromising one's principles and religion – one's very reason to exist as man – and engaging in negotiations with the adversary, one is admonished to fight him until victory and the establishment of God's rule on earth or find a glorious death as a martyr and win paradise. In this respect, 'Uyairi repeats the fallacy of some currents of 'political' Islam that purity instead of corruption (*fasad*) of politics is the highest goal.[72]

The reason for this uncompromising attitude is 'Uyairi's adherence to a metaphorical overarching master narrative of the clash of civilizations between the West and Islam as a zero-sum game. In this apocalyptic vision of the world, there is no compromise because the West is bent on destroying the Muslim world, not just by economic and political domination, but especially on account of its cultural war on Islam. The result will be the Muslims' loss of humanity and their 'bestialization'.[73] As in Qutb's view, the world is divided into dichotomous forces of evil and good in which there are no shades of grey. And as everyone who does not support the forces of good belongs to the opposite side, a continuous war should be waged not against the West alone, but against all Muslims who are connected with the West and are regarded as *kuffar* (unbelievers). Unlike Qutb, however, 'Uyairi crushes the political not on the anvil of *hakimiyya* or on the practice of commanding good and forbidding bad (*hisba*), as in the case of the Jama'a, but on that of 'jihadism', which has become a culture in itself, demanding submission to its totalitarian intellectual, physical and moral demands. The victorious sect (*al-ta'ifa al-mansura*), such a crucial doctrine in Salafism,[74] is regarded as the vanguard of

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70) See, for instance, his work on the Taliban, *al-Mizan li-haraka Taliban*, a movement that is often condemned by Saudi Salafi sheikhs for *bid'a* (innovation).
71) See his critique of the Saudi Sahwa sheikh Salman al-'Awda, *Munasahat Salman al-'Awda* [Advice to Salman al-Awda] (undated), p. 6.
72) See especially his works on jihad: *Thawabit 'ala darb al-jihad* [Principles of Jihad] (undated); and *Hukm al-jihad wa-anwa'ihi* [The Pronouncement of Jihad and its Forms] (undated).
73) *al-'Iraq wa-l-Jazira al-'Arabiyya*, p. 5.
74) The concept is based on the Hadith: that in Islam there are 73 sects, of which only one will be saved. It is synonymous with *al-firqa al-najiya* (the saved sect), explained in the section on quietist Salafism further on.

the 'jihadist' project and has privileged access to knowledge because its members are at the forefront of the civilizational battle.[75]

'Uyairi's writings are perhaps the best illustration of the creative flight that 'jihadist' literature has taken since the 1970s, as well as the political dead end into which this current has worked itself. While it struggles to come to grips with reality and is capable of defining and analysing the sources of political inequality and repression and corruption, and has been clever in mobilizing resistance and appealing to the imagination of the people because of the deplorable state of affairs in the Middle East, its Manichean concept of the world as a permanent struggle between good and bad prevents it from coming to terms with reality and coming up with a political programme and stating its goals other than to establish a virtuous society.

'Uyairi's revolution failed in Saudi Arabia after the first explosion of the Riyadh compound bombings on 12 May 2003. The state easily isolated his supporters and hunted them down during the following years, and Yusuf al-'Uyairi became one of the first victims when he was killed on 29 May 2003.[76]

The Iraqi Association of Muslim Scholars and Islamic-Nationalist Resistance

As 'Uyairi had predicted at the end of his life, it is in Iraq that the full potential of jihad would be fulfilled, but this would not adopt the transnational form that he had hoped.[77] In Iraq the ideologies of resistance and jihad – as developed by Hamas, Bin Laden or 'Uyairi – came together and could be readily used by opponents of the US-led invasion. The Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS, or in Arabic Hay'at 'Ulama al-Muslimin) would use and pick from them as it felt fit. The difference with the other currents was that the AMS tried to focus, control and direct violence for its own localized goals. The AMS was established as a nation-wide organization of Sunni religious scholars of all leanings. The AMS's major political breakthrough occurred during the first crisis in Falluja in April 2004 when it openly supported the resistance.[78]

The AMS is a typical Islamic-nationalist movement that legitimates the violent struggle for liberation in nationalist and religious terms, and does not primarily – unlike Sayyid Qutb or Yusuf al-'Uyairi – cast the struggle between

75) See *Hal intaharat Hawwa am istashhadat?*, p. 5.
76) See Roel Meijer, '"The Cycle of Contention" and the Limits of Terrorism in Saudi Arabia', in Paul Aarts and Gerd Nonneman (eds), *Saudi Arabia in the Balance: Political Economy, Society, Foreign Affairs* (London: Hurst, 2005), pp. 271–311; and Thomas Hegghammer, 'Terrorist Recruitment and Radicalization in Saudi Arabia', *Middle East Policy*, vol. 13, no. 4 (2006), pp. 39–60. Hegghammer argues that most of the members of the groups in Saudi Arabia were not attracted to such jihadi grand strategies and ideological radicalism of its leaders.
77) See 'Uyairi's fascinating war diary, *Silsilat al-harb al-salabiyya 'ala al-Iraq*.
78) For a full analysis of the AMS between 2003 and 2005, see Roel Meijer, 'Muslim Politics under Occupation: The Association of Muslim Scholars and the Politics of Resistance in Iraq', *Arab Studies Journal*, vols. 13/14, nos. 2 and 1 (2005), pp. 93–112.

the Middle East and the West as an eternal, global struggle of Islam against the West. Framed in nationalist terminology, AMS leader Harith al-Dhari stated: 'we as Iraqis limit ourselves to defending our country and we know what the interests of this country are'.[79] A transnational terrorist organization like al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia is rejected not only for its indiscriminate killing of Iraqi citizens, especially Shi'is, but also for the fact that Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi was a 'non-Iraqi and a foreigner' and has 'other goals than the national resistance'.[80]

The AMS also gratefully used the advantages of ambiguity that were so typical of the earlier Islamist movement to hide behind. For instance, it regarded itself as standing above the political parties and claimed unassailability as 'a religious authority on Islamic law' (*marja'iyya diniyya wa shar'iyya*).[81] According to one of its spokesmen, the AMS is 'not a political party, nor a movement'. Rather it 'contains political parties' and leaves room for 'a diversity of opinions'.[82] On the other hand, it is clear that the AMS strove for political power and was dictatorial in its single-minded pursuit to be regarded as the sole representative of the Sunni Arabs, as is apparent by the expression that it is the 'national and religious duty of the 'ulama [to] lead the people on the right path'.[83] That this also meant that the AMS endorsed, if not actively supported, the use of violence against the United States is clear when it stated that it regarded itself as 'spiritually' (*ruhan*) close to the resistance.[84] However, the most important non-political method for which the AMS became famous was the boycott, a practice that it adopted from another nationalist-religious movement, Hamas. With tremendous consequences for the Sunni community, the AMS led the boycott of the 'political process' from 2003 until summer 2005. As a result, the Sunnis did not participate in Iraq's general election of December 2004, only belatedly participated in negotiations for the Iraqi constitution in summer 2005, and were encouraged to fight in the resistance.[85]

The best insight into the AMS's justification of resistance and indirectly of violence and the political boycott is provided by the writings of Muhammad 'Ayyash al-Kubaysi, its chief ideologue.[86] Four topics stand out that demonstrate the AMS's special ideological mix of internal, nationalist

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79) Interview with Harith al-Dhari by the TV station *Al Arabiyya*, broadcast on 11 December 2005, and published on the AMS website.
80) *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 6 October 2004.
81) Interview with Harith al-Dhari by *Al Arabiyya*, 11 December 2005.
82) See www.swissinfo.org, 29 April 2005.
83) Interview with 'Abd al-Salam al-Kubaysi in *al-Sabil*, 7 October 2003, available online at www.assabeel.info.
84) Interview with Harith al-Dari by *Al Arabiyya*, 11 December 2005.
85) See Roel Meijer, 'Sunni Factions and the Political Process', in Markus Bouillon et al. (eds), *Iraq: Preventing a New Generation of Conflict* (Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007), pp. 89–108.
86) He wrote a series of twenty articles on the topic, of which the first ten were published in the Jordanian newspaper *al-Sabil*. They were also published in one volume as *Min al- fiqh al-muqawama wa-l-jihad* [On the Jurisprudence of Resistance and Jihad] (Amman: Al-Sabil, 2005). I bought the booklet at the Amman Marriott, where it was sold in the lobby.

and Salafist elements (and even Ba'thist and pan-Arab, which are not covered here). First, the ideological legitimation of resistance was initially primarily couched in a non-Islamic discourse of international law. In a debate on a television programme of *Al Jazeera*, just after the fall of Falluja in November 2004, when the whole of Anbar province was in uprising and it was clear that the resistance was there to stay, Kubaysi stated that each nation, whether Vietnamese or Arab, non-Muslim or Muslim, had the right to armed resistance against the forceful occupation of its country. As it was a natural human right (*haqq al-insan*), it was not necessary to call for jihad or issue a fatwa to sanction it.[87] The AMS preferred the term resistance (*muqawama*) to that of jihad.[88]

However, despite this effort to coach the insurgency in nationalist/religious terms, along the lines of Hamas, it is clear that the AMS adopted large chunks of Salafi jihadism, as developed by, among others, Bin Laden and Uyairi. This is especially apparent in Kubaysi's vehement condemnation of moderate 'ulama who oppose armed resistance as hypocrites (*munafiqun*), one of the prominent themes of the jihadi Salafi writings. In response to the Iraqi Islamic Party, which did participate in the political process, 'Abd al-Salam al-Kubaysi asserts that this is not the time for mutual leniency (*tasamuh*) and flexibility (*lin*). As the US-led invasion is a direct attack on the Islamic umma by unbelievers, there is only room for armed resistance, and all Muslims should subordinate their life to the waging of jihad.[89] Resistance, he stated, has become an individual duty (*fardh 'ayn*) that can only be ignored at the risk of denying the unity of God (*tawhid*).[90]

Third, while the AMS adopted an uncompromising stand on the predominance of resistance, it tried to make a distinction between legitimate Sunni resistance against the US occupation and the indiscriminate terrorism of Zarqawi, whose actions were increasingly directed against Shi'i Iraqis, who were regarded as 'collaborators'. The official position of the AMS was that both Iraqi civilians and military, even those of the National Guard, who were mostly Shi'is, belong to this category.[91] In numerous communiqués, the AMS condemned terrorist attacks against 'innocent people' (*abriya'*).[92] On the other hand, Kubaysi did make a case for 'martyrdom operations', as long as they were in the service of national liberation. These martyrs were regarded as

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87) Transcript of the programme of *Al Jazeera*, *al-Shari'a wa-l-Hayat* [Islamic Law and Daily Life], in which Muhammad Ayyash al-Kubaysi participated, broadcast on 28 December 2004.
88) For comparisons with Hamas, see Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine*.
89) *Min fiqh al-muqawama wa-l-jihad*, Part 11 entitled 'Mujahidun am du'a?', available online at www.iraq-amsi.org, 4 May 2005.
90) *Min fiqh al-muqawama wa-l-jihad*, Part 3 entitled '*Al-Muqawama wa-'aqida tawhid*', originally published in *al-Sabil*, 1 March 2005.
91) Interview with Harith al-Dhari by the TV station *Al Arabiyya*, 11 December 2005.
92) *Bayan* (no. 18) *hawl ahdath fi-l-mudun al-'Iraqiyya*, 15 February 2004, on the website of the AMS at www.iraq-amsi.org, accessed in March 2004.

courageous and faced death with equanimity and a strong faith (*'aqida wadiha*) for a noble goal (*hadaf nabil*).[93]

Fourth, the AMS succeeded in organizing an uncompromising boycott of all political institutions because they were established with the aim of bringing the Shia to power. The AMS did not reject democracy outright, but stated that 'true democracy is impossible under an occupation'. The angle that the AMS chose to frame this ideological point was to accuse the Americans of deliberately instigating sectarian strife (*al-fitna al-ta'ifiyya*).[94] Kubaysi was convinced that the American aim was to convince the Shia that they were an oppressed sect (*al-ta'ifa al-mazluma*).[95] In line with its counter-frame that Iraq was a united nation, the AMS cleverly used the insurgency in Falluja in 2004 to propagate its Arab and Islamic programme of unity between the Shi'is and Sunnis. In order to win over Muqtada al-Sadr, who at the time was a potential ally of the AMS, its ideologues repeated again and again that the martyrdom of imam Husayn at Kerbala was now an example for all who defended Islam against the invasion of unbelievers. According to Muhammad 'Ayyash al-Kubaysi, imam Husayn had established a school of martyrdom (*madrasa al-Husayn al-ishtishhadiyya*) that was an example for Sunnis and Shi'ites together.[96]

The AMS is typical of resistance movements in the Middle East and the ways that they can draw on huge reservoirs of violent rhetoric to justify a totally negative attitude towards politics and what in Iraq was called the 'political process', which was supported by the Iraqi Islamic Party, a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, which accepted *hizbiyya*.[97] Even if this process was fatally mismanaged by the Americans and discriminatory to the Sunnis, it is clear that the fundamentally 'apolitical' stance of the AMS damaged the Sunni community's chances of salvaging some of its power and influence. In the end, the AMS's ambiguity towards violence against Shi'is would damage its relations with Shi'i organizations that supported resistance against the United States. Only one spark was needed to unleash Shi'i forces against the Sunni community in Baghdad to punish them for their ambiguous attitude towards politics and their religious condescension towards Shi'is, whose increased power the AMS was unwilling to countenance. When that spark came with the bombing of the Askari shrine in February 2006, this studied ambivalence backfired and Sunni neighbourhoods were cleansed of their inhabitants.

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93) *Min fiqh al-muqawama wa-l-jihad*, Part 4 entitled '*Al-Muqawama…al-ihtilal…wa-harb al-mustalahat*', originally published in *al-Sabil*, 29 March 2005.
94) See, for example, *Bayan* (no. 21) *hawl al-'itida' 'ala al-Rawda al-Kazimiyya*, 28 February 2004, available online at www.iraq-amsi.org, accessed 21 March 2004.
95) *Min fiqh al-muqawama wa-l-jihad*, Part 12 entitled '*al-Muqawama wa-l-waraqa al-ta'ifiyya*', available online at www.iraq-amsi.org, 11 May 2005, accessed June 2005.
96) *Al Jazeera* debate, 28 December 2004.
97) See Meijer, 'Sunni Factions and the Political Process'.

Chapter 2 Towards an Acceptance of Politics and Pluralism

The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the Acceptance of Hizbiyya

The alternative to this ambiguity – by openly rejecting violence and unconditionally embracing democracy and the rule of law that was so typical of the Islamist movement – occurred in the 1980s. The tone of this development had already been set when the former general guide Hasan al-Hudaybi condemned the concepts of *takfir* and *hakimiyya* in the 1960s. This attitude was initially reflected in the traditional stance of the Brotherhood towards Egypt's President Mubarak when he came to power in 1981. It accepted a ruler along the lines of wali al-amr, even if he is a tyrant, as long as he maintains the minimum of Islamic principles as the 'imam of necessity' (*imam al-darura*).[98]

A major breakthrough occurred when room expanded for the establishment of political parties and the holding of elections during the 1980s, despite the fact that the establishment of parties on the basis of religion was banned by the 1976 Parties' Law. What made this possible was the emergence of the second generation of members of the Brotherhood as a professional middle class. At a meeting in 1983 in Cairo, Tilmisani argued

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98) Cited in Hesham Al-Awadi, *In Pursuit of Legitimacy: The Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982–2000* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2004), p. 16.

that becoming a party had several advantages: the Brotherhood would no longer be a secret organization; it could acquire experience in the political process; and it would finally have direct access to ministers and officials.[99] Once it had decided to take part in parliamentary elections, the Brotherhood formed alliances with other parties in 1984 and 1987, and after having boycotted the elections in 1990 and 2000, it won a spectacular 88 seats in 2005. All analysts agree that since then the Brotherhood has obtained an excellent reputation in parliament, showing political skills and discussing issues that were of broader concern to the people than only implementation of the *shari'a*, such as unemployment, inflation, corruption, debts and privatization.[100] Part of this success must be explained by the growing experience that the younger generation of the Brotherhood had acquired in the professional syndicates, winning elections of the medical syndicate in 1984, the engineer's syndicate in 1986, and the pharmacists' syndicate in 1988. From there they reached out to other social classes in society. The new generation also maintained close contacts with the student movement and the campuses,[101] subsequently winning the majority of seats in the student unions of Cairo, Alexandria and Zaqaziq, Mansura, and at al-Azhar universities in the second half of the 1980s.

Ideologically, the new trend was supported by an increasing number of internal publications that gradually opened the road to parliamentary systems (*hizbiyya*). In 1984 the Brotherhood drafted a manifesto that banned all restrictions on political parties, organizations or political gatherings that intend to express the views of a particular group with regard to a particular issue.[102] In 1987 it recognized the Christian minority of Copts as full citizens,[103] and in 1994 it issued statements on women's rights and party pluralism. In their *Shura and Party Pluralism in Muslim Society* of 1994, it stated that the Koran stipulated 'that the umma is the source of all powers'.[104] It furthermore called for a legislature with oversight functions and binding decisions. In 1995 it published *Statement on Democracy*, reconfirming the equal rights of non-Muslims (Copts), the sovereignty of the people, stating that 'people have the right to invent different systems, formulas, and techniques that suit their conditions, which definitely vary according to time, place and living conditions', and rejecting violence.[105] However, during the repression of the second generation of leaders in 1995 and their imprisonment until 2000, the Brotherhood lapsed into the old-style rhetoric of its older

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99) Al-Awadi, *In Pursuit of Legitimacy*, p. 57.
100) Al-Awadi, *In Pursuit of Legitimacy*, pp. 82 and 116. Also see Amr Hamzawy and Nathan J. Brown, 'Can Egypt's Troubled Elections Produce a More Democratic Future?', *Policy Outlook* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 2005), p. 7; and Mona El-Ghorbashi, 'The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 37 (2005), pp. 378 and 380.
101) Al-Awadi, *In Pursuit of Legitimacy*, p. 93.
102) Al-Awadi, *In Pursuit of Legitimacy*, p. 84.
103) El-Ghorbashy, 'The Metamorphosis', p. 379.
104) El-Ghorbashy, 'The Metamorphosis', p. 383.
105) El-Ghorbashy, 'The Metamorphosis', pp. 384–385.

generation of general guides, Mustafa Mashhur (general guide from 1996–2002) and Ma'mun al-Hudaybi (general guide from 2002–2004), but after their release it picked up its earlier liberal trend. When the last of the old guard died in 2004, the Muslim Brotherhood announced under its new guide Muhammad 'Akif that it would do something about internal democracy, limiting the number of years of a general guide and ensuring that deputy guides were elected from among the younger group.[106] Finally, in a press conference on 3 March 2004, the general guide declared a 'Muslim Brotherhood reform initiative'.[107] This initiative called for reforms in politics, judiciary, economics and education and confirmed its earlier position regarding universal suffrage, freedom of personal conviction and expression of opinion, freedom of political parties and organizations, the army's dissociation from politics and limited powers for the president.[108] A written constitution and the separation of powers – with an independent judiciary, the repeal of emergency laws and activation of parliament's oversight role – had by that time become part of its standard programme.[109]

The ambiguity of the Muslim Brotherhood was, however, not totally dispelled in this period. The election slogan of 1987, 'Islam is the solution', which had irritated the Egyptian government when it was used during the Brotherhood's relief programme after the Cairo (Heliopolis) earthquake of 1992, was retained in the 2005 elections.[110] In its thorough study of the reform of the Brotherhood, the Carnegie Endowment concluded that if it has made important strides in political liberalization, its sacrosanct concept of a religious point of reference or source (*marja'iyya*) forms a limit to going the full length of giving politics its own space and becoming a political party instead of a religious movement.[111] More reason for concern were its opposition to artistic and philosophical freedom in the form of *hisba*, and commanding the good and forbidding the bad, with which the Jama'a had become infamous.[112] This is no small matter when it comes to violence, as is demonstrated by the Brotherhood leader Muhammad al-Ghazzali's condoning of the assassination in 1992 of the fiercely anti-Islamist publicist Faraj Fawda. Although the Brotherhood accepts the parliamentary system, its conservative cultural, philosophical and potentially repressive measures can

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106) El-Ghorbashy, 'The Metamorphosis', p. 389.
107) Noha Attar, *The Muslim Brotherhood's Success in the Legislative Elections in Egypt 2005: Reasons and Implications* (Rome: EuroMeSCo, October 2006), p. 16
108) Attar, *The Muslim Brotherhood's Success in the Legislative Elections in Egypt 2005*, p. 24.
109) Amr Hamzawy and Nathan Brown, 'Can Egypt's Troubled Elections Produce a More Democratic Future?', p. 6; and Barbara Kerr, *The Egyptian Brotherhood: A Normal Conservative Party?*, available online at www.ikhwanweb.com/lib/Kerr-EgyptianMB.pdf, p. 3.
110) Attar, *The Muslim Brotherhood's Success in the Legislative Elections in Egypt 2005*, p. 21.
111) Nathan J. Brown, Amr Hamzawy and Marina Ottaway, 'Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process in the Arab World: Exploring Grey Zones', *Carnegie Papers*, no. 67, March 2006.
112) Bruce K. Rutherford, 'What Do Egypt's Islamists Want? Moderate Islam and the Rise of Islamic Constitutionalism', *Middle East Journal*, vol. 60, no. 4 (2006), pp. 726–731.

restrict freedom of speech and stimulate the use of violence against individuals.[113]

'Quietist' Salafism: Piety and the Denial of Politics

The development of ideas within the Muslim Brotherhood has been vehemently opposed by the Islamic movement and not just the Egyptian state. The extent of opposition to the tendency to accept politics is exemplified by transnational, quietist Salafism, which is perhaps currently one of the fastest growing Islamic movements.[114] In its opposition to these new trends, Salafism[115] can be compared with the counter-reformation of the Roman Catholic Church against Protestantism (although, ironically, Salafism resembles early Protestantism in many aspects),[116] a struggle that is waged in the name of 'Oneness of God' (*tawhid*). Its authority is typically based on the claim to have access to the Truth (regarded as transparent) and therefore to have a superior knowledge (*'ilm*) of the sources of Islam (Koran and Hadith), which raises the Salafis to the status of the saved sect (*al-firqa al-najiya*).[117] Individual salvation and purity in doctrine, rather than political mobilization, are the crucial issues. As a typical throwback to an earlier period, their opponents are not condemned for their political ideas as such, but are attacked as religious deviants (*munharifun*). Against them, the whole range of theological weapons that Salafism can muster is launched: by incorporating non-Islamic terms and concepts, the opponents are accused of committing innovation (*bid'a*); by giving their political leaders authority, they are accused of worshipping humans, which is an infringement of the doctrine of the 'Oneness of God' (*tawhid*) and is committing the major sin of giving God associates (shirk);[118] by giving priority to activism instead of piety, they are

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113) Attar, *The Muslim Brotherhood's Success in the Legislative Elections in Egypt 2005*, p. 24.
114) For the most comprehensive account of Salafism, see the anthology edited by Roel Meijer, *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (London and New York: Hurst and Columbia University Press, 2009).
115) The term Salafism derives from the pious forefathers, *al-salaf al-salih*, which includes the first three generations of Muslims, the sahaba or the companions of the Prophet, the subsequent generation of followers (*tabi'un*) and the next generation ('the followers of the followers' or *atba' al-tabi'in*), the last of whom died around 810. They form the sources of the Hadith, the sayings of the Prophet.
116) Theoretically, the concept of *tawhid* (the Oneness of God, or strict monotheism) is egalitarian and also the principle of *ijtihad* (individual interpretation of the sources of Islam, the Koran and Hadith) is basically democratic. Apolitical or quietist Salafism, however, has become a current that has strong hierarchical overtones, as all issues must be referred to the 'ulama, for they alone have the necessary religious knowledge (*'ilm*) to give the right answers.
117) Based on the Hadith, there are 73 sects in Islam and only one of them will be saved.
118) Abdu al-Salam bin Salim bin Rajaa'as-Sihaymee, *The Ideology of Terrorism and Violence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Its Origins, the Reasons for its Spread and Solution*, abridged version of *Fikr al-irhab wa-l-unf fi-l-Mamlaka al-'Arabiyya al-Sa'udiyya: Masdaruhu, asbab intisharuhu ilaj* (Cairo: Dar al-Manhaj, 1426/2005), translated by Abdul Haq for SalafiManhaj, 2007, available online as an e-book at http://www.salafimanhaj.com/pdf/SalafiManhaj_Terrorism_In_KSA.pdf, p. 54.

called *harakis* (activists), which is a curse in Salafi anti-political parlance.[119] Although quietist Salafism is careful not to excommunicate its opponents (*takfir*), they are vilified, their reputation is smeared and their followers are ostracized, with the implication that their souls hang in the balance and they are on the brink of becoming unbelievers (*kuffar*).

If in other movements a greater openness and debate is discernable, discourse is controlled in Salafism and is directed solely to the text that allows only for one interpretation. Because knowledge can only be reached after a long study of the text, in practice the 'ulama control access to Truth. The normal believer is discouraged or even forbidden to think outside the restricted parameters laid down by the 'ulama, let alone to engage in open debate with 'others', to be allowed self-reflection (other than in religious terms), or to question the authority of the religious establishment. The pronouncement that 'questioning is in principle forbidden and is not allowed except when it is necessary',[120] is perhaps one of the most revealing remarks made by Sheikh Rabi' Hadi ('Hadee') al-Madkhali, one of the major sheikhs of the older generation (born in 1931).[121] And although the appeal of Salafism is ascribed to its non-hierarchical nature – as everyone has access to the sources – in practice an inner circle of mostly Saudi 'ulama, who are appointed to a hierarchy of different official Saudi religious institutions,[122] determine doctrine and practice. The struggle therefore is for authority, and most of the internal struggle is waged by denying other Salafi 'ulama, but especially non-Salafi 'ulama, and above all non-'ulama – often the case with the Muslim Brotherhood, which is led by laymen – their religious authority and by implication the right to have a (political) following.

Needless to say, in the political context of the Middle East, or even Europe with its emphasis on integration, this non-political, quietist attitude of Salafism is highly political.[123] But Salafism is not simply political by recognizing the state in practice. This recognition is also theoretically

119) Noorhaidi Hasan, 'Ambivalent Doctrines and Conflicts in the Salafi Movement in Indonesia', in Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism*, pp. 169–188.

120) 'This negation means that many questions must be avoided, especially those that are connected to obstinacy, evoking strife, and debate of what is valueless (*batil*), as well as excessive in demanding questions that cannot be answered'; cited in *Mudhakkira al-hadith al-nabawi fi-l-'aqida wa-l-ittiba'i* [Memoirs of the Hadith of the Prophet in the 'aqida and followers] (Cairo: Dar al-Manhaj, 1424/2004, originally published in 1406/1985), p. 36.

121) My account of quietist Salafism is mainly based on an analysis of Rabi' Hadi al-Madkhali's work and those close to him. Although he is one of the most strident and polemical of the older generation of Salafi sheikhs, his campaigns against 'deviants' have been endorsed by the three great founders of modern Salafism: Nasir al-Din al-Albani (d. 1999); Salih Fawzan bin Fawzan; and 'Abd al-'Aziz bin Baz (d. 1999), the former Mufti of Saudi Arabia, who have bestowed upon him the title of *jarh wa-l-ta'dil al-'asr* (the person who has the right to wound and determine what is correct [of Hadith] of the age), a classical term that gives someone the right to evaluate Hadith, but in the modern political context denotes the right to make the distinction between who is a friend and who is an enemy.

122) Anwar 'Abdallah, *al-'Ulama' wa-l-'arsh: Thani'yya al-sulta fi-l-Sa'udiyya* [The Ulama and the Throne: The Second Power in Saudi Arabia] (Paris: Maktabat al-Sharq, 2004).

123) Quintan Wiktowicz, 'Anatomy of the Salafi Movement', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 29, no. 3 (April–May 2006), pp. 207–239.

grounded in the principle of *wali al-amr*, the doctrine of unconditional obedience to the ruler, who can only be opposed when he actively undermines Islam.[124] The other principle defending the status quo is that of the rejection of politics as a threat to the unity of the *umma* because it leads to dissension and division (*fitna*). To Salafism, the only accepted form of politics is to give discrete advice (*nasiha*), which is always done hidden from the public eye and is never published.[125] Not surprisingly, much of the critique of Salafism by their opponents, including jihadi Salafism, is aimed at undermining the credibility of the 'ulama as stooges of the state.

Quietist, conservative Salafism has adopted two ways to steer the debate away from politics and the role of its 'ulama in condoning the iniquity of the prevailing political system in the Middle East. One is to emphasize a correct daily demeanour that is focused on piety and accepts the status quo. Whereas jihadi Salafism concentrates on the struggle (*jihad*) and activism as self-fulfilment (even if it means martyrdom), and the Brotherhood focuses increasingly on practical politics as a means to achieve its goals, 'apolitical' Salafism emphasizes correct behaviour and a positive attitude that is based on civilized norms (*akhlaq*) as its main task, as well as propagating the right creed and promoting the right *manhaj*, or practice. In its view, living according to *akhlaq* – in fact, following the Sunna of the Prophet – is a sign of belonging to the chosen sect.[126] Extremism (*ghuluw*), together with dissension (*fitna*)[127] – its dangerous twin brother – are regarded as enticements of the devil. This means that the individual should defend his own honour, respect those of others, maintain social stability, and above all pursue a 'moderation of emotions'. Uncontrolled feelings, such as passions (*ahwa'*), hatred (*aghrad*) and resentment (*ahqad*)[128] are believed to lead to extremism (*ghuluw*) or fanaticism (*ta'assub*). Instead, qualities such as endurance (*sabr*), wisdom (*hikma*),

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124) In a recent Salafi book against terrorism, the *hadith* (saying of the Prophet) on the doctrine of *wali al-amr* was reproduced: 'There will come leaders who will not follow my guidance and not follow my Sunnah. There will be among them men who will have hearts of devils in the bodies of humans'. He (the Companion of the Prophet) asked 'What shall I do, O Messenger of Allah, if I reach that?' He replied, 'You should hear and obey the ruler even if he flogs your back and takes your wealth, then still hear (*sam'*) and obey (*ta'a*)'. For the quotation, see *'The Brothers of the Devils': Islamic Condemnation of Terrorists, Hijackers and Suicide Bombers*, (Birmingham: SalafiPublications.com, October 2001, with a second edition published in May 2003), p. 22. Incidentally, the doctrine of 'hearing and obeying' is also the principle that rules the relationship between leader and followers in the Muslim Brotherhood and has only recently been contested.

125) Typical of the Salafi attitude towards politics is the pronouncement of Imam al-Barbahaaree (Barbahiri): 'If you find a man making supplication (*nasiha*) against the ruler, know that he is a person of innovation. If you find a person making supplication for the ruler to be upright, know that he is a person of the Sunnah, if Allah wills', quoted in *'The Brothers of the Devils'*, p. 22.

126) Sulayman bin 'Abdallah bin Hamud Aba al-Khayl, *Mawqif al-Mamlaka al-'Arabiyya al-Sa'udiyya min al-irhab: Dirasa shar'iyya 'ilmiyya watha'iqiyya* [The Position of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia towards Terrorism: An Academic Legal Study Based on Documents] (Riyadh: Maktab al-Malik Fahd al-Wataniyya athna'al-Nashr, 2003), p. 10.

127) *Saudi Arabia's Permanent Council of Senior Scholars on Terrorism & Related Issues* (undated), pp. 7–8, available online at www.answering-extremism.com, accessed on 10 February 2009.

128) Rabi' bin Hadi al-Madkhali, *Nasiha ila al-umma al-Jaza'iriyya sha'ban wa-hukuma* [Advice to the Algerian Nation, its Population and Government], 14 January 1422 HA, 2001, p. 2.

friendliness (*rifq*),[129] truthfulness/correctness (*sidq*) and brother-hood among Muslims (*ukhuwa*)[130] are promoted. The correct practice (*manhaj*) is based on *wasatiyya*, which means following the straight path (*sirat al-mustaqim*) that keeps a believer in the middle of the road and prevents him from falling in the pitfalls of excess (*ifrat*) and severity (*tashaddud*) on the one hand and negligence (*tafrit*) on the other, while applauding generosity (*samaha*), enhancing facilitation (taysir) and condemning destruction (*halak*), obstinacy (*tanatta'*) and transgression (*tajawuz*) in deeds and sayings.[131] That the positive attitudes mentioned above are equated with the right creed (*'aqida*) is clear from the accusation that those who oppose Salafism – 'the overwhelming majority of the Muslims' – are called 'the people of innovation and passions' (*ahl al-bid'a wa-l-ahwa'*).[132]

From this Salafist terminology and way of thinking, it seems that we are back at Olivier Roy's critique in *The Failure of Political Islam* of moralism in which virtue is everything and all the rest is 'sin, plot or illusion'. But it would be a mistake to underestimate the tenacity and pluck of quietist Salafism; it is a highly sophisticated, battle-hardened movement that has been interlocked in a fierce struggle with its adversaries, especially political Islam, since the 1970s,[133] and has developed a highly polemical discourse, called 'muscular' by some.[134] In practice this discourse is a reflection of Salafism's capacity to use Islam's historically grown ambiguous relations with the state to its utmost.[135] While on the one hand its power is based on its excellent relations with the authoritarian state from which it obtains privileges in the form of finance and the freedom to build mosques and religious institutes in exchange for attacking their common enemies – especially political Islam – and exerting a pervasive influence on the population, it has obtained the largest following when it is led by leaders who manage to keep their independence from the state (there is always the danger that its opponents accuse the 'ulama of *shirk* for aligning themselves too strongly with the state and infringing upon tawhid,

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129) *Bayan marahil fitna Abi al-Hasan* [Communiqué on the Phases of Dissension of Abu al-Hasan], available online at www.alathary.net/vb2/showpost.php?p=2607&postcount=1, December 2003, accessed 10 February 2009, p. 4.

130) 'Aqil bin 'Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad al-'Aqil, *al-Irhab afat al-'asr: Madha qala 'anhu al-'ulama wa-l-mashayikh w-l-mufakkirun wa-l-tarbiyyun wa-bi-madha wa wafuhu* [Terrorism, the Bane of the Century: What do the 'Ulama, the Sheikhs, the Thinkers and the Pedagogues Say on the Issue and How do they Analyse It?] (Riyadh: Maktaba Fahd al-Wataniyya Athna'al-Nashr, 1425/2004), p. 12.

131) Muhammad bin 'Umar bin Salim Bazmul, *Takfir wa-dawabituhu* [Excommunication and its Principles] (Cairo: Dar al-Tawhid wa-l-Sunna, 1428/2007), pp. 8–9.

132) Rabi' bin Hadi al-Madkhali, *al-Bahth 'ala al-muwadda wa-l-i'tilaf wa-l-tahdhir min al-firqa wa-l-ikhtilaf*, available online at www.rebee.net/show_des.aspx@pid=3&d=263, 21 December 1429/2007, p. 13, downloaded on 22 January 2009.

133) Salafism is not only opposed to political Islam. It is opposed to all forms of Islam that do not comply with its restricted version of Islam: Sufism, Shi'ism, and most schools of law except Hanbalism.

134) Bernard Haykel, 'On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action', in Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism*, pp. 33–57.

135) For a more elaborate analysis of the ambiguity of Salafism, see Roel Meijer, 'Salafism: Doctrine and Practice', in Khaled Hroub (ed.), *Political Islam: Context versus Ideology* (London: Saqi Books, forthcoming in 2009).

the exclusive submission to God), at least publicly, as was the case in Yemen under Muqbil bin Hadi al-Wadi'i.[136] This combination of fighting political battles in the name of pure religion reached its most obvious form in its attack on 'extremism' (*ghuluw*), which was later conveniently presented as the Saudi war on 'terrorism'. Regarded by some as a recent policy that dates from '9/11' and especially 2003, when Saudi Arabia came under attack by al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula[137] (led by, among others, Yusuf al-'Uyairi), it actually dates back to the split with the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1980s and 1990s, and even earlier.[138] Much of the debate also concerns the relationship with reality, which is the red thread through most modern Islamic political thought. Whereas critics of Salafism such as 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd al-Khaliq accuse the Salafi sheikhs in Saudi Arabia of having lost contact with reality, they deny that reality should be the main focus of religion.[139]

It is illuminating to delve into this anti-terrorism campaign, not only to show how Salafism works, but also to give an insight into the sharp divisions that are opening up between Salafism and the Muslim Brotherhood as the result of the Brotherhood's greater involvement in politics. A whole range of adversaries are targeted by quietist Salafism in this campaign, each for different reasons. Favourite targets are the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hasan al-Banna (who died in 1949 and who is accused of being totally ignorant of Islam and being a political activist before a religious purifier), Sayyid Qutb[140] (for being the founder of 'jihadism' and corrupting Salafism), and above all the two 'hybrids' between the Brotherhood and Salafism, Muhammad Surur Zayn 'Abidin[141] and 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd al-

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136) For an interesting analysis of this skilful manoeuvring of Muqbil bin Hadi al-Wadi'i, see Laurent Bonnefoy, 'How Transnational is Salafism in Yemen?', in Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism*, pp. 321–341. This model seems to apply to all the countries in the Middle East where Salafism is active and is used by the state against its political Islamist adversaries.

137) See Christopher Boucek, 'Extremist Re-education and Rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia', in Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan, *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement* (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 212–223.

138) There exists a whole library on the Salafi campaign against extremism. Some of the most salient publications are reprinted in work mentioned in footnote 127, *The Position of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia towards Terrorism*. Needless to say, the Salafi concept of extremism differs from the liberal concept of this phenomenon. Typically, its roots and solutions in these works are not sought in socio-economic or political causes but in religious 'deviation' and bringing people back to the straight path. Salafis themselves argue that the campaign against extremism is inherent in Salafism itself and has been waged since the rise of the khawarij in the first century hijra and against later medieval innovations, such as Mu'tazilism.

139) See the refutation of Rabi' bin Hadi al-Madkhali of 'Abd al-Kahliq's accusation that Saudi Wahhabi 'ulama are irrelevant to the modern world because they do not deal with reality, in Rabi' bin Hadi al-Madkhali, *Jama'a wahida la Jama'at: Wa-sirat wahid la 'asharat* [One Group not Many Groups: One Life of the Prophet not Ten] (United Arab Emirates: Maktabat al-Furqan, 1423/2002, first published in 1995).

140) Sayyid Qutb is a favourite target of Salafi sheikhs. Someone like Rabi' bin Hadi al-Madkhali has written five books against Qutb, the most famous being *Adwa'a islamiyya 'ala 'aqida Sayyid Qutb wa fikruhu* [Islamic Light Cast on the Creed of Sayyid Qutb and his Thought] (1413/1982).

141) Zayd bin Muhammad bin Hadi al-Madkhali, *al-Irhab wa-atharuhu 'ala al-afrad wa-l-umam* [Terrorism and its Influences on Individuals and Nations] (United Arab Emirates: Maktabat al-Furqan, 1417/1996).

Khaliq,[142] or more recently the Abu Hasan al-Ma'ribi[143] (these last three for being the closest to Salafism and diluting Salafism with Brotherhood activism). Not incidentally, all of these adversaries are Egyptians (except for Muhammad Surur, who is Syrian), although the Egyptian 'hybrids' left their homeland long ago under Nasser. They studied at Medina Islamic University in the 1960s, where they mixed the doctrinaire of Salafism with Brotherhood activism. All are in the end thrown together as sources of terrorism and their genealogy is traced further back to the first century hijra and the khawarij, a radical sect that is vilified by Salafis because it assassinated the third rightly guided caliph 'Uthman, and they are therefore called neo-khawarij. They are condemned for being political activists and are typically defined as 'people of passions, innovation and partisanship/divisions' (*ahl al-ahwa' wa-l-bid'a wa-l-tahazzub*).[144]

If unity (*wahda*) and the Muslim community as a unified whole are represented by Salafism as upholders of the Truth and defenders of the umma, its opponents are regarded as the opposite. Even their names, according to Salafis, give them away as deviants promoting division (*fitna*), and endless variations on the terms for group (*jama'a*, *firqa*) are used to disqualify them. The fact that they train followers as cadres (*kawadir*)[145] is regarded in itself as leading to division, and their flexibility in accepting divisions on creed and manhaj confirms their misjudged tolerance,[146] while a host of further accusations, such as promoting leadership,[147] trying to mobilize the population, disrespect for Saudi Arabia,[148] or support of Saddam Hussein against Saudi Arabia in 1990–1991,[149] and above all the acceptance of *hizbiyya* (multi-party systems) and *tahazzub* (partisanship), as well as other modern notions such as pluralism[150] and equal rights for Christian Copts,[151] mean that they belong to the 'sects of destruction' (*al-firaq al-hilak*) and are held directly responsible for terrorism.[152]

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142) See, for instance, http://www.salafipublications.com/sps/downloads/pdf/NDV090003.pdf.

143) See, for instance, http://www.salafitalk.net/st/viewmessages.cfm?Forum=23&Topic=947, 'Putting the Fitnah of Abu-Fitan al-Ma'ribee into Perspective'. Rabi' bin Hadi al-Madkhali is also the most prominent critique of Abu Hasan; see his, *al-Tankil bi-ma fi al-jaj Abi al-Hasan al-ma'rabi min al-abatil* (United Arab Emirates: Maktaba al-Furqan, 1424/2003).

144) *Nasiha al-shaykh Rabi ' li-l-salafiyyin fi Firansa*, available online at www.rabee.net/show_des.aspx?pid=3&id=103, pp. 1–2, downloaded on 21 January 2009.

145) As-Sihaymee, *The Ideology of Terrorism and Violence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, p. 63.

146) As-Sihaymee, *The Ideology of Terrorism and Violence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 65–66.

147) Zayd bin Muhammad bin Hadi al-Madkhali, *al-Irhab wa-atharuhu*, p. 82.

148) As-Sihaymee, *The Ideology of Terrorism and Violence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, p. 74.

149) Al-Madkhali, *Jama'a wahida la Jama'at*, p. 88.

150) Al-Madkhali, *Jama'a wahida la Jama'at*, p. 68.

151) Al-Madkhali, *Jama'a wahida la Jama'at*, pp. 58 and 97.

152) Al-Madkhali, *Jama'a wahida la Jama'at*, p. 75.

The Pluralist Breakthrough? The Case of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood

Despite this strong counter-current, some branches of the Muslim Brotherhood have continued on the road that the Egyptian branch pioneered. The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, led by 'Ali Sadr al-Din al-Bayanuni who lives in exile in London, has adopted an even more profound reformist programme than its Egyptian sister organization. Like its Egyptian branch, the Syrian Brotherhood had clashed with the state and had lost. Unlike the Egyptian branch, however, whose members were in prison when Sayyid Qutb launched his ideas, the Syrian branch was illegal but active and was taken over by a radical wing at the end of the 1970s, which led to a head-on clash with the Syrian state, almost resulting in the fall of the Ba'ath regime.[153] The Syrians are therefore more comparable to the Egyptian al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya. This also applies to the revision of their previous ideas on violence. Having started to come to terms with their past in the 1980s,[154] the major public breakthrough occurred in 2000 when the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood issued a critical overview of its own history and its violent past.[155] In an interview in 2002, Bayanuni, who had been involved in the violent clash with the regime as deputy general guide from 1977 to 1982, stressed the necessity of revisionism (*muraja'at*) as a principle: 'it is continuous and permanent; we are constantly revising our life'.[156] This was followed in August 2002 by the presentation of *The Noble National Charter*[157] and a conference in London, in which Nasserists, Ba'athists, communists and independent Islamists participated. Finally, in 2004, the Syrian Brotherhood published an extensive document of more than 100 pages, *The Political Project for the Syrian Future*,[158] in which it spelled out its revisionist views, not only rejecting violence and accepting democracy but also embracing a fundamentally new concept of Islamic politics and a thoroughly revised worldview based on a humanist foundation in which the Qutbian *hakimiyya* (sovereignty of God), the Salafist *tawhid* (Oneness of God), and even the Ikhwani *marja'iyya* (sources of Islam) are replaced by the centrality of mankind – *insan* (humanity) – as the point of

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153) See especially Hans Gunther Lobmeyer, *Opposition und Widerstand in Syrien* (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut, 1995).

154) '*Al-Bayanuni yaftihu mu'tamar Lundun li-hiwar ikhwan suriya yu'aduna li-mashru'mithaq watani*' [Bayanuni Opens the London Conference to Prepare the Debate on the National Charter], *Al Jazeera Net*, 28 July 2002.

155) *Jama'a al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin fi Suriya 'ala masharif al-alfiya al-thalitha li-l-milad: Tajarib wa tatall'at* [The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Syria on the Eve of the Twenty-First Century: Experiences and Aims], available online at www.ikhwan-muslimoon-syria.org/01ikhwansyria/tajarub.htm, accessed in March 2005.

156) '*Al-Bayanuni yaftihu mu'tamar Lundun li-hiwar ikhwan suriya yu'aduna li-mashru'mithaq watani*', *Al Jazeera Net*, 28 July 2002.

157) *al-Mithaq al-sharaf al-watani fi Suriya*, 2001, available online at www.ikhwan-muslimoon-syria.org/04malaffat_nasharat/mithak2.htm, accessed in March 2005. It was signed on 25 August 2002. The original charter was issued in May 2002.

158) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, 2004, available on the Brotherhood's website.

reference. The basis of the Syrian Brotherhood's reform programme is acceptance of the idea of pluralism (*ta'addudiyya*).

Not surprisingly, the basic difference with the other currents is reflected in its approach to 'reality' (*waqi'*). Whereas in Salafism, and especially jihadi Salafism, reality is regarded as a source of evil and corruption and a thinker like 'Uyairi tries to impose his will on reality and manipulate it in the service of a permanent revolution, or in the Egyptian Brotherhood's case reality is approached with ambivalence, in the writings of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood reality is regarded as fact of life and is accepted as a source of inspiration for reform. For although it is true that it regards Syrian 'reality' as stagnant (*rukud*) and dominated by repression (*qahr*) and injustice (*zulm*),[159] it is not rejected because it does not conform to the holy texts of the Koran and Hadith. The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood accepts reality as a much broader 'social reality' (*al-waqi' al-ijtima'i*), which is anchored in history 'in all its forms, ideational, cultural, behavioural', including its 'customs and tradition'.[160] The Syrian Brotherhood's concept of reality is therefore inclusive and recognizes the importance of the 'Islamic social heritage' (*turath islami ijtima'i*) as the cultural heritage of the past 1,400 years, which forms the 'material ground' on which 'civilizational projects' are based.[161] The consequences of this historical relativism are not only applied to Syria's past but also to the Brotherhood's own past, and the recognition that it does not embody the truth (*haqq*) but is fallible.[162] The same 'realistic' method is applied to the West. The Brotherhood recommends that its members do not reject the West as the 'Other' (*akhar*); rather they are encouraged to evaluate the West critically, differentiate between institutions and individuals and accept the positive aspects of the West's culture – not just its technology – as part of 'living reality' (*al-haya al-waqi'iyya*). To the positive achievements of the West belong international norms of justice, human rights and the concept of good governance, which should be embraced as universal values and part of the 'accomplishments of human civilization'.[163]

Recognizing the historical past and present 'social' reality, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood accepts the existence of diversity (*tanawwu'*), as represented in individual forms of interpretation and viewpoints. Diversity is regarded as a universal phenomenon, not an aberration: 'It is the true reality of every human community'.[164] The Syrian Brotherhood regards it as the only way to preserve the unity of the nation.[165] As Islam recognizes the difference of tribes and nations, it calls for mutual understanding (*ta'aruf*) and promotes a 'positive constructive dialogue' (*al-hiwar al-ijabi al-banna'*) that will lead to

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159) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, p. 8.
160) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, p. 9.
161) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, pp. 8–9.
162) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, p. 14.
163) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, p. 12.
164) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, p. 23.
165) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, p. 18.

respect and recognition of the 'Other' (*i''tiraf bi-l-akhar*).[166] Having rejected the claim to truth (*haqq*) that is so common in political Islam or Salafism, the emphasis is on mutuality as a 'method of debate' (*manhaj al-hiwar*).[167] Force is rejected because 'in this age, with its enormous range of freedom, it is no longer possible to impose principles (*aqa'id*), methods (*madhahib*), ideas (*afkar*) or systems (*anzima*) from above'. Even the shari'a cannot be imposed by force, and fighting by the sword is only used in self-defence and never as a means to spread the faith.[168] But there are even more important reasons why the shari'a cannot be imposed. As the Brotherhood recognizes that the shari'a only provides general guidelines/goals (*al-maqasid al-'amma*), 'every generation is allowed to choose the form that is in accordance with its reality and to realize its goals'.[169] In fact, history went wrong when *ijtihad* (individual interpretation) was no longer applied and the 'gap between interpretation of the Islamic law and reality became enormous'.[170] The Syrian Brotherhood creates an autonomous space of politics by recognizing that the texts (Koran and the Sunna) in themselves are holy, but that interpretation 'is not holy and is subject to revisionism and debate'.[171] Moreover, in contrast to Qutb, the Syrian Brotherhood embraces the liberating capacity of human reason: 'Islam has given mankind rationality (*'aql*) and a will (*irada*) that forbids him to let his freedom be confiscated in the name of an interest or rule of some people over others whatever pretext [including Islam]'.[172]

Politically, this view of human life as a historical project, located in a specific time and space, is reflected in the acceptance of pluralism (*ta'addudiyya*). If the *marja'iyya* (religious reference point and source) in the programmes of the Egyptian Brotherhood is a barrier to full autonomy of the political, in the Syrian Brotherhood it has become the basis of, and coincides with, pluralism and political autonomy.[173] Having accepted the plurality of political parties, each with their own political programme, civil society and the concept of the change of power (*tadawiliyya*), it also recognizes that the ascension to power of different methods of politics (*manahij*) and different programmes (*baramij*), opinions and interpretations becomes the essence of the *marja'iyya*.[174] Even if it states that these should be 'within the confines of the general religious principles of the umma' (*fi itar al-marja'iyya al-'amma li-l-umma*), it leaves no room for control over this process.[175] Furthermore, the addition of such vague concepts as 'civilization' to *marja'iyya* (*marja'iyya hadariyya*) immediately makes it relative and regards it not in rigid legal terms

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166) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, p. 10.
167) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, p. 15–16.
168) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, p. 11.
169) Emphasis added by the author.
170) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, p. 13.
171) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, p. 15.
172) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, p. 10.
173) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, p. 23.
174) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, p. 23.
175) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-Mustaqbal*, p. 24.

but as a flexible, historically contingent identity (*huwiya dhatiyya*).[176] Moreover, the concept is broadened by accepting universal non-Muslim successes in the field of human rights and basic freedoms, and the notion that 'we strive to benefit from the experiences of the international community'.[177]

Finally, even if the *shari'a* is accepted as the juridical framework, it is mostly regarded in general terms as promoting justice *('aql)*, equality (*musawa'*) and mutual responsibility (*takaful*).[178] The central concept in the political philosophy of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood is citizenship (*muwatina*), which in modern times has replaced the concept of the protected religious minorities (*dhimmi's*) and guarantees complete equality in rights and duties, which must be laid down in the constitution.[179] Another part of the *marja'iyya* and citizenship is the sanctity of contracts. The modern state is a 'contractual state' (*dawla ta'aqudiyya*), which 'is based on the free choice that is the expression of the will of the people'.[180] Given the increasing rift between Salafism and the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, it was not surprising that revisionism (*muraja'at*) was immediately and vehemently attacked by a Salafi ideologue such as Abu Basir al-Tartusi.[181]

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176) *al-Mithaq al-sharaf al-watani*, p. 1.
177) *al-Mithaq al-sharaf al-watani*, p. 2.
178) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, p. 11.
179) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, p. 22.
180) *al-Mashru' al-siyasi li-Suriya al-mustaqbal*, p. 21; and *al-Mithaq al-sharaf al-watani*, p. 2.
181) Aside from the numerous attacks by Ayman al-Zawahiri on the Muslim Brotherhood, whether in the form of the Egyptian or Palestinian (Hamas) form, the most closely reasoned attacks have been written by Abu Basir al-Tartusi. See his attack on Egyptian revisionism in *Mubadara al-Jama'at al-Islamiyya al-Misriyya: 'I'tiraf bi-l-khita' am inhiyar wa-suqut* [The Egyptian Jama'a al-Islamiyya: Acknowledgement of their mistakes or their annihilation and fall], and of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood in *Wa la-na kilmat nazra shar'iyya li-mithaq al-sharaf al-watani alladhi tarahahu al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun al-Suriyyun* [Our Theoretical Analysis of the Noble National Charter on the Basis of the Shar'iyya], and of the Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS) in *Hay'at 'Ulama al-Muslimin fi mizan al-tawhid wa-l-jihad* [The Association of Muslim Scholars in the Light (Balance) of Unity of God and Jihad]. All of these were published online at www.tawhed.ws, accessed in April 2004.

Conclusion

Islamic political thought has come a long way during the past quarter of a century. In both its justification of violence as well as its rejection of violence and embrace of democracy, it has become much more sophisticated than the original Muslim Brotherhood of Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, or the simple tracts of the Egyptian groups that caught international attention in the 1970s.[182] Even compared to the analysis that Gudrun Krämer gave of the movement in the mid-1990s, political thinking has deepened and broadened and has become more complex. The struggle between Salafism and the Brotherhood has, in particular, given it an extra dimension. It seems safe to say that, on the whole, political consciousness of the Islamist movement has grown, as is apparent from its concern with 'reality', which includes the interests of its followers, the preservation of the organization, the complexity of its struggle with the state and the keen awareness that violence is a dead end that will end in destruction, not only of its own organization but of the prospects for Islam as a whole.

   With its more perceptive leaders and thinkers at least, the emphasis has moved on to civil rights and the development of Islamic concepts of citizenship and an interest in constitutional reform and the restriction of political power instead of expanding it in the name of God. The rise of this new attitude is not an accident; it is linked to the emergence of a professional class that emphasizes an Islamic identity and that has acquired vested

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182) See Gilles Kepel's chapters on the Society of Muslims, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, pp. 70–102.

interests and become part of a new middle class that entertains new ambitions and new ways of attaining these ambitions. As these ambitions have become more clearly defined, the ideas and methods of the struggle have become more focused and realistic. At the same time, it is clear that this trend has not won the day and is heavily contested. A strong imaginative jihadist (youth) culture has emerged that has given violence a new impulse. As is apparent, not all Brotherhood-inspired movements have laid down their weapons. National-religious resistance in Palestine still uses the religious rhetoric of jihad, but this serves the specific goals of liberation and national and international mobilization and has become less a goal in itself or has less of a utopian dimension, as is the case of jihadi Salafism.

The overall picture now seems to be a triangular struggle between the jihadi Salafism of Osama Bin Laden, Yusuf al-'Uyairi and others on one side, the different Muslim Brotherhood branches on another, and purist, quietist Salafism on a third. The differences are reflected in the way that the currents analyse reality and the discourse and terminology that they have developed in analysing or rejecting it. Although there are mixtures and 'hybrids' – as we have seen with the Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq, which mixed jihadi Salafism with nationalism and pragmatism, or the Salafi purist and Brotherhood activist combination in Muhammad Surur and 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd al-Khaliq – on the whole the relations are clear. During the past three decades, the professionals of the Brotherhood have developed a whole new inclusionary discourse on 'reality' that includes terms such as humanity (*insan*), culture (*hadara*), heritage (*turath*) and modernism (*hadatha*). Within this discourse, terms have evolved to connote mutuality (typically a sixth or eighth form in Arabic), such as tolerance (*tasamuh*), cooperation (*ta'awun*), coexistence (*ta'ayush*), mutual understanding (*tafahum*), respect (*ihtiram*), mutual recognition (*i''tiraf*); or political terms that reflect flexibility, such as multi-party system (*hizbiyya*), democracy (*dimuqratiya*) or freedom (*hurriya*). In the end, 'positive' political/cultural connotations such as pluralism (*ta'addudiyya*), progress (*taqaddum*) and even previously traditional theological terms such as reform (*islah*) and renewal (*tajdid*) are accepted and given a new content. This trend has infiltrated the writings of previous jihadi or more radical activist groups, such as the Jama'a al-Islamiyya and other violent groups that have recently renounced violence, which show how strong this trend has become and to what extent violence has been discredited.

In contrast, jihadi Salafism revolves around an unbridgeable dichotomy. Reality is primarily regarded as negative and the world is seen as a clash of civilizations, a zero-sum game. Progress is regarded not as the political manipulation of reality but as its destruction in order to install a new order. This is expressed in the adoption of rigid exclusionary theological terms that draw clear borders between the saved and the damned. Its discourse revolves around a strict definition of creed (*'aqida*) and principles (*mabadi'*), which lead to a certain method and tools (manhaj) to distance oneself from the evil and to show loyalty (*wala' wa-l-bara'*), and to implement (*tatbiq*) the method

(*manhaj*) by means of jihad. It is a top–down deductive method and its success depends on discipline and bravery of the mujahid rather than the flexibility and wit of the lawyer or the creativity of the social movement. It is the violence of the person who has made himself believe that he has nothing to lose, rather than the member of the middle class who has property and children to protect. This has not been a continuous process, but is a combination of the revival of the Qutbiyyan trend, the closed worldview of Salafism, and the disastrous policy of the West in the Middle East and the Muslim world. Whereas it seemed that during the past two and a half decades, with the defeat of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria in the 1980s, the Groupe Islamique Armée (GIA) in Algeria and al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya in Egypt in the 1990s, violence was discredited as a theoretical and practical dead end, since '9/11' and especially since the US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, 'jihadism' has been given a new lease of life on the ground in Iraq and especially in the imagination of young people by means of the internet. Although with the defeat of al-Qaeda in Iraq the trend now seems to be moving again in the direction of the countervailing trends, this battle is by no means over.

The most important question now is: what next? As the authoritarian regimes in the Middle East hardly seem inclined to budge and are unwilling to liberalize sufficiently their political system to stimulate further the democratic tendencies in the Brotherhood movements, having thoroughly defeated the violent trend in Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Algeria and Morocco. Instead, they seem to invest heavily in quietist Salafism or other forms of quietist and pious Islam, as a means to combat the canalization of political demands by the middle classes. This will have far-reaching consequences. In ideological and practical politics, the continuation of authoritarian regimes means that ideological ambiguity and the practice of practising politics 'by other means' – that is, religion – will continue. Although violence has become impossible and counter-productive and the thinkers along democratic lines have become important, one wonders how strong this trend can become if the avenues for expression of these trends are limited. A big question is the role that Salafism will play in this battle of the minds and canalization of grievances. Will the pious, quietist, conservative trend – directly or indirectly supported by authoritarian states – prevail, or will the hybrid forms with a greater activist orientation become more prominent, and will jihadi Salafism die out or be revived again?

One thing, however, is crystal clear: insight into the development of these trends and the transformations in their mutual relations are important for the policy that Europe has to adopt towards states in the Middle East, the populations in the region as well as for Muslims in Europe – as so many of these trends are also present in Europe. Simply denying that Islam is dynamic and should therefore be condemned as a whole – as some politicians and academics in the Netherlands argue – is not only not academically untenable

but is also counter-productive politically, for it drives Muslims into the arms of the most intolerant trends.

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