KAI HAFEZ (ED.)
Translated from the German by MARY ANN KENNY

The Islamic World and the West

An Introduction to Political Cultures and International Relations

BRILL

THE ISLAMIC WORLD AND THE WEST

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STUDIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND ASIA
(S.E.P.S.M.E.A.)

(Founding editor: C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze)

THE ISLAMIC WORLD AND THE WEST

An Introduction to Political Cultures and International Relations

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EDITOR'S PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

The popularity of "Islam" as a topic in contemporary writing bears an inherent danger of overstating the point. Is it legitimate to discuss "the Islamic world" in its relationship to "the West"? How can one possibly subsume Central Asia and the Middle East under the common denominator "Islam" and thereby suggest an identity of political cultures in two quite distinct areas of the world? Contrary to first impressions, the title of this book does not imply that "Islam" as religion or culture is the most important factor in the political development of those countries in North Africa, the Near and Middle East, the Balkans and Central Asia where a majority of the population is Muslim. "Islam" is merely one of the many appellations that could be used. The "Arab world," geocultural formations like "Europe," "the West" or "the Mediterranean" are of equal importance in attempting to analyse the areas in question. However, the best known and most frequently used term today in both academia and public opinion is "Islam," usually with an emphasis on so-called "Islamic fundamentalism." It was with this in mind that the title of this volume was chosen. The term "Arab world," to take but one example, is legitimate, but it contributes little to our understanding of the political phenomenon usually referred to as "Islam." The aim of this book is not to construct an Islamic political monolith as the antithesis to Western political cultures of democracy, human rights, the market economy and world peace, but to *deconstruct* many of the easy assumptions about the bipolarity of "Orient" and "Occident."

This anthology is an introduction to political cultures and international relations, focusing on Islamist thought and Islamist movements. At the same time, the authors have endeavoured to present their cases in the wider political, social and cultural context of the Islamic world, where the Islamist element is just one factor of complex civil societies in confrontation with authoritarian regimes and hegemonic Western foreign policies. Analyses of Western mass media have revealed that the most moderate and liberal segments of political cultures in North Africa and the Near and Middle East are given little coverage, while radical forces gain disproportionate attention. Following its original publication in German in 1997, the present

book was deemed to be a "convincing reply to Huntington"[1] for seeking to explore forgotten political cultures and to identify the contribution of Western policy to the many political failures in the area. It has gained considerable attention in Germany, being widely read and discussed, and is used as required reading at many German universities.

With the exception of two contributions from France, all articles in the following anthology were written by German scholars. It therefore offers a valuable insight into the contemporary German Middle East studies scene. Edward Said excluded German Oriental studies from his critique of "Orientalism" when he said it was not a tool in the hands of colonial or post-colonial politicians.[2] In light of Said's comments it is not surprising that criticism of monolithic perceptions in the context of Islam and the West is more prevalent in Germany than in most other countries. While German Oriental, Islamic and Middle Eastern scholars, like other academic communities, may have been tempted by what Said labelled the Orientalist way of thinking, distinct scholarly traditions and the relative distance from political interests have facilitated a remarkable process of self-criticism in Germany. The post-Orientalism academic discourse is echoed in many institutions. Former President of the Federal Republic of Germany Roman Herzog who must be seen as a representative of the German people rather than as a politician who could be suspected of foreign political opportunism, made enormous efforts to enhance intercultural dialogue between the Islamic world and the West.[3] Likewise, the late Ignatz Bubis, former head of the *Central Council of the Jews in Germany*, was a committed advocate of Muslim-Jewish-Christian trialogue.[4] In the foreword to this book, Mohammed Arkoun and Udo Steinbach argue that scholars and politicians alike must face up to their responsibilities if they wish to contribute to a better understanding of the relations between Islam and the West, a viewpoint which must be taken seriously on the threshold of the new millennium.

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[1] *Süddeutsche Zeitung,* June 2, 1997.

[2] Edward Said. 1995. *Orientalism* (Orig. 1978). London et al.: Penguin Books, 18ff.

[3] Herzog, Roman. 1999. *Preventing the Clash of Civilizations. A Peace Strategy for the Twenty-First Century.* New York: St. Martin's.

[4] See Kai Hafez and Udo Steinbach (eds.). 1999. *Juden und Muslime in Deutschland. Minderheitendialog als Zukunftsaufgabe.* Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut.

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FOREWORD

Mohammed Arkoun, Udo Steinbach

Since the 1970s, scholars have taken part in many international conferences and local seminars dealing with Euro-Arab dialogue, Islamic-Christian dialogue and, in the rare cases when Jews and Muslims agree to sit together, Christian-Islamic-Jewish trialogue. After more than twenty years of meetings, publications and discussions, the situation today is characterised by a "Clash of Civilizations," with *jihad* versus McWorld, genocides in Africa and civil wars not only in Algeria, Sudan and Afghanistan, but also in "civilised" European countries like Ireland and Yugoslavia. While we cannot ignore the resounding failure of political reason on a geopolitical level, we also have to ask to what extent scientific reason shares responsibility for this failure.

Most leading academics are as indifferent to their responsibilities as the political leaders whose decisions result in catastrophes endured by entire peoples. Intellectual responsibility is not viewed as a serious matter for debate, especially by scholars who specialise in the cultures of "others." The esteemed Orientalist Josef van Ess illustrates this fact, when he writes: "I could have brought examples from the *Mutazila*,[1] but since they were considered to be heretics by the majority of *Sunni* Muslims afterwards, I would have to reckon with the objection that they were ultimately not representative for Islam. I could even have come up with a parallel to the modern Christian belief that Scripture is only human speech about God (...). I do not want to put the Islamic view of history upside down. This would be something for the Muslims themselves to do."[2]

What van Ess avoids saying in order to uphold Islamic tradition is precisely what needs to be established and clearly conveyed to all Muslims who have no access to the tools, methodologies and intel-

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[1] Rationalist theological current in Islam which emerged in the first half of the 8th century and taught that the Koran was created at a specific point in time, as opposed to orthodox Islamic belief which holds that the word of God is eternal (the editor).

[2] Stefan Wild (ed.). 1996. *The Quran as Text.* Leiden: Brill, 180ff.

lectual purport of modern historical criticism as applied to the history of religions. Van Ess knows better than anyone that what he refers to as "the majority of *Sunni* Muslims" is merely a product of political history. Most Muslims had to obey the *Umayyad* and *Abbasid* caliphate. The concept of orthodoxy can only be subverted through the evidence of historical fact, and not through theological speculation and debate on the exegesis of sacred texts. The fact that *Mutazili* thinkers were eliminated as a result of a political decision when they tried to use the caliphate to argue against the *Sunni* position on the cognitive status of God's word, has to be reported in full by the historian. Only in this way can contemporary Muslims be liberated from dogmatic confusion about the "true religion," orthodox belief, "authentic Islam" and all the ideological and mythological vocabulary used in the struggle against the West, against secularisation and against *laicité*. In order to learn more about the historical and philosophical genesis of what is often trivialised in contemporary polemics on religion, it is necessary to think what is as yet unthinkable both for the majority of Muslims and for Westerners who look down on "fanatic," "obscurantist" and "violent" Muslims. If van Ess, with his admired scientific authority, refuses to embark on this didactic endeavour, who is going to spread the new enlightenment?

Shying away from relevant criticism as van Ess and others do, has the same negative impact as the ruination of a living tradition without consideration for the people whose values, beliefs and customs have been irreversibly undermined, as happened in Europe during the process of secularisation. It is not only the right, but the intellectual obligation of scholars to carry out research and to participate in the ongoing process of deconstruction and re-appropriation. It is their duty to propose alternatives, to open up new possibilities and to examine the concrete effects of scientific criticism on historical evolution.

More and more citizens in the Muslim world, or rather individuals aspiring to the status of modern citizenship, are engaged in a struggle for the separation of religion and politics, for the recognition of religious freedom and for the abolition of the *Sharia* (especially its normative code for personal status—*ahwal shakhsiyya*). This struggle should be viewed as part of the social, cultural and political evolution of societies which can no longer be described as one homogenous, intangible "Muslim society" according to the paradigm set by Ernest Gellner and others.

One must object to the monolithic use of terms like "Islam," "Islamic" and "Muslim" to qualify all societies and activities in the so-called "Islamic world." The established conceptualisation and interpretation of Islam as an isolated province of religious history and anthropology is consistently taught and reproduced in all academic institutions. An intellectual breakthrough has therefore remained elusive. The very scholars who perpetuate this *taqlid* in modern scholarship, have written and continue to write inspiring pages on the damage caused by the same *taqlid* in Islamic thought. The titles alone of the books published in Europe during the last thirty years, suggest that Islam has become an ideological monster present everywhere and controlling all aspects of Muslim life and thought. Very few Muslims view Islam as an object of critical study, however. Scholars, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, should analyse all manifestations of "Islam" with a critical eye. All social discourse must be treated as a product of social actors. Deconstruction is not just a technical procedure by means of which the components of a system of representations, values or postulates can be discovered. It is rather a springboard, from which we may go beyond the definitions and frames imposed by Islamic tradition and Western scholarship.

The future of relations between Islam and the West does not lie in a "Clash of Civilizations." This is the central message of the articles presented in this volume. Relations between the two sides are changing: the current situation and future perspectives point to a relationship based on active and constructive communication. Relations prior to this were static; they were marked by a political hierarchy and a ranking in matters of culture and civilisation. Political leadership lay with the Western powers, while culture and civilisation were dominated by Western interpretations of modernity.

Since the beginning of the 1970s, certain forces in the Islamic world have set about instigating change. For want of a more precise expression, academics and journalists have employed the term "re-Islamisation" to describe this development. The concept took on dramatic shape and assumed international political significance as a result of the revolution in Iran. There was little appreciation at the time, however, of the far-reaching changes signalled by the revolution; what it heralded was nothing less than the end of the conflict between East and West. By removing the Shah, a movement dominated by Islamic ideology had "dared" to destroy an important component in the edifice of Western political, economic and se-

curity interests. This could only mean that the tectonics of international politics was changing. (It would, in fact, remain static only for a further decade.)

The revolution in Iran had much in common with the French revolution (although there were many differences as well). It was not long, for example, before the need to compromise became obvious. And like its French precursor, the revolution in Iran provoked changes with far-reaching effects. Despite all the contradictions which characterise the situation in Iran less than two decades after the revolution, the latter's impact on the Islamic world cannot be overlooked. The most important question (besides that of overcoming economic stagnation) is this: how can the Muslim world adapt to the new horizons opened up by the end of the conflict between East and West without becoming isolated from other worlds, and in particular from the West?

It is important to remember that political Islam is also susceptible to political manipulation. In the 1980s, Washington openly backed the Afghan *mujahidin* in their struggle against the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Militant Islam thus became an instrument in the fight against Marxism. The intervention of the Pakistani-supported *Taliban* militias, who captured Kabul in October 1996, also received the tacit support of Washington. The US was motivated by its interests in Central Asia and its determination to undermine Iran's influence in Afghanistan. Whereas Iran's Islamic course has provoked strong criticism and sanctions, outrages perpetrated by the *Taliban* in the name of Islam, such as violations of human rights and international law, have not been subject to the same treatment. The credibility of Western policies and Western values in general has been severely impaired as a result. The much criticised use of double standards is so blatant that the West has been seriously discredited in the eyes of Islamic forces involved with it in the common search for partnership.

The West can only insist on a commitment to democracy and human rights if it is itself unambiguous in this regard. And the demand for cultural authenticity on the part of leading circles in the Islamic world is credible only if it is not used to justify repression at home. In spite of the difficulties resulting from new forms of exchange, it should be possible to avoid the "Clash of Civilizations." Coexistence will become a reality, provided there are cultural and politico-cultural changes as well as a clear and concrete political agenda. The

peace process in the Middle East is a case in point. This is more than "simply" a political settlement: its success will bring about mutual respect and a new type of exchange; failure will result in collision and cultural confrontation.

Another key development is the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership agreed in Barcelona in November 1995. This can be interpreted as a signal that the two sides, to the north and the south of the Mediterranean, are willing to collaborate instead of preparing in secret for a collision. Co-operation in the fields of economics and development can contribute to the construction of a partnership between political and cultural spheres. It may be possible, on the basis of this partnership, to return to the fertile cultural exchange which began in the nineteenth century and was interrupted by the First World War, when it gave way to the complete violation of the Islamic world by the West and an arrogant process of Europeanisation.

The situation in Europe also necessitates a change in the quality of relations between the West and Islam. Never before has there been such a strong Muslim presence in Europe. Muslim immigrants have begun to reconsider their position and growing numbers are striving to enhance the status of Islam in their "host" societies. This is a source of irritation on the part of the non-Muslim majority, and leads in turn to the "ghettoisation" of large numbers of Muslims. The situation represents a challenge to both sides. The non-Muslim majority in Europe has to learn to come to terms with a religion which has largely been ignored to date, both politically and socially, and is now demanding its rightful place in "Christian" society. It has to accept the wish on the part of Muslim immigrants to cultivate their identity in what they perceive to be an alien environment. The leaders of the Islamic community in Europe must ensure for their part that the constitution is recognised unconditionally as the framework of secular society and as an expression of the European concepts of democracy and human rights.

Islam and the West—this is a cultural challenge, an intellectual exercise and a practical structural problem in one. What the current situation requires is a change in outlook, and herein lies the contemporary relevance of this book. The information contained in it should be utilised where the focus is on Islam as a political partner and on Muslims as fellow citizens: in universities, by political parties, in dealing with the media and, naturally, in everyday life.

What lies ahead is not a cultural conflict. But the novelty of the situation and the challenge it represents may lead to tension, irritation and occasional clashes. For this reason it is important to be aware of perspectives which point beyond everyday problems to the fundamental principles and components of new types of cultural exchange, particularly with our neighbour Islam.

INTRODUCTION

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ISLAM AND THE WEST
THE CLASH OF POLITICISED PERCEPTIONS

Kai Hafez

If there is a *Zeitgeist*, Samuel P. Huntington has discovered it. The Harvard professor's ideas on "The Clash of Civilizations" have provoked more in-depth discussion in recent years than any other work in the field of international politics. Huntington maintains that since the end of the conflict between East and West, political and economic matters have diminished in importance, as has the ideological dispute between capitalism and communism. The world has now entered an era of cultural struggle, where wars and confrontations are no longer the result of clashes between individual nation states. Rather they arise principally from conflicts between the seven or eight great civilisations of the earth—the West, Confucianism, Japan, Islam, Hinduism, the Slavic-Orthodox East, Latin America, and possibly Africa. According to Huntington, one of the most important global fault lines in the twenty-first century will run between Islam and the West.

There are clear indications of a deep crisis in the relationship between the West and the Islamic world, which stretches from Morocco to Indonesia, and whose religious origins lie in the Arabian Near East. In the Iranian revolution of 1978/79, the Ayatollah Khomeini not only ousted Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi; he also established an Islamic republic which saw itself as the political and cultural antithesis of the West. Islamic fundamentalism, with its adherence to the Koran and Islamic law (*Sharia*), threatens the very fundamentals of the West's conviction that it holds the key to the progress of mankind, despite the political tensions which mark its relations with the "Third World." The use of archaic religious symbolism and the increasing "re-Islamisation" of Middle Eastern societies, which had been in the process of secularisation, seems to undermine Western ideas of the irreversibility of history and a "world society" shaped by Western culture. The Rushdie affair, the Gulf war, the Algerian crisis and, most recently, the Bosnian conflict: are these not indications of the resurgence of the 1300-year-old cultural conflict between the West and Islam?

Differences and similarities

Concepts like "culture," or "civilisation," to use Huntington's term, are of limited application in the analysis of international politics. Nevertheless, the Harvard professor regards the opposition between Western and Islamic cultures as an ontological truth, basing his "Clash of Civilizations" on an alleged rivalry between two closed and monolithic systems of meaning. From the standpoint of cultural studies, his interpretation of Orient and Occident as separate worlds, each with its own clearly defined, mutually exclusive, characteristics or essence, is flawed by essentialism.

Huntington's view of the disparity between Islam and the West is not supported by history, which reveals many similarities between the two worlds. It is not without reason, for example, that many people in China have always viewed the Islamic Orient as part of the West. The conceptions of God central to the three monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, are similar in many respects. The liberation of man through religious belief is of central importance in each, although doctrines like the trinity, "original sin," "redemption" and "forgiveness" are alien to Islam, as is the conviction that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Islamic teaching strives to establish a direct relationship to God and is concerned less with theological questions than with social issues. Like Judaism and Christianity, however, the origins of Islam are traced back to Abraham. Jesus, moreover, is a prophet in Islam, while Jews and Christians are tolerated as people of the scripture in the Koran.

Western and Eastern cultures are united not only by their religious roots, but by a common Greek heritage. During the high Middle Ages, the works of Aristotle, which represent the ancient foundations of Western scientific development, were made available to European scholars through the translations and commentaries of Arab and Arab-Jewish philosophers such as Avicenna (Ibn Sina / 980–1037), Averroes (Ibn Ruschd / 1126–1198) and Maimonides (Moshe Ben Maimun / 1135–1204). In the same way as the Renaissance in Europe could not have happened without the scientific achievements of the Islamic Orient, the modern Islamic world was deeply influenced by Western ideas and thinking. Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1798, for example, triggered a process of modernisation which was encouraged by the Ottoman Sultan's Governor in Egypt, Mohammed Ali (1769-1849), and led to the adoption of ideas like "the

border" and the "nation state" in the Arab provinces of the Otto-
man Empire. In 1918, finally, the post-colonial era of the constitu-
tional state began in the Near East, inspired by American President
Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points" and the adoption of the prin-
ciple of the right to self-determination.

The political transition from an Islamic Empire to individual
secular states was facilitated by the fact that religion and the state
have similar functions under both systems of rule. Organised Islam-
ist movements and parties regularly call for *al-Islam din wa-daula*, i.e.
the union of religion and state, yet no such demand is made in the
Koran. Thus, the Prophet Mohammed's successors tended to leave
political affairs to temporal powers and dynasties. Not unlike the
European doctrine of divine right, the main purpose of Islamic law
(*Sharia*) and its interpretation by legal scholars (*ulama*) was to legiti-
mise the position of the ruler. For centuries, political culture in the
Islamic world has been largely determined by a de-facto form of
secularism which is reminiscent of the Biblical principle: "Render
to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God, the things that
are God's." (Mt 22,21)

The theocratic form of rule which exists in Iran today is without
precedent in the *Sunni* and Shiite Islamic world. It is only on social
issues that Islamic fundamentalists can appeal to universal Islamic
law. This is characterised by strict conservatism on moral issues and
severe penalties for wrong-doings such as the death sentence for
apostasy and stoning for "fornication." It has not been practised in
most Islamic countries for several decades and has scarcely changed
since the Middle Ages. Yet, paradoxically enough, it is rarely the
aim of fundamentalist movements or governments "to return to the
Middle Ages." Nor do they believe that the advances of Western
modernity should be entirely renounced. Most fundamentalists do
not aspire to a theocracy dominated by revolutionary forces, but are
drawn instead to more "moderate" political models in which Islam-
ic-conservative parties hold sway. And they do not completely rule
out a limited form of pluralism, economic liberalisation and the
separation of powers.

Iran's political and social system has many radical traits, even from
the perspective of Islamic teachings. Despite the prevalence of anti-
Western rhetoric, however, it has retained many Western innova-
tions, including constitutionalism, parliamentarianism, technology and
industry. Notwithstanding its clerical leadership, the Iranian revo-

lution shared several characteristics with other radical transformations in world history, not least of which was the mobilisation of the impoverished masses by an old and marginalised elite. Islamic fundamentalism must be judged not by what it professes to be but by what it is. It is not a religious but a political movement, which came into existence as a reaction to the failure of the post-colonial secular development model. Fundamentalism represents an attempt to find a more appropriate interpretation of modernity by returning in both a real and a symbolic sense to the cultural origins of the traditional Islamic system of society.

It is precisely because fundamentalism is a social and cultural-psychological movement in search of "identity" that the term "fundamentalism" is misleading and criticised by many scholars. It suggests that because political Islam refers to the religious-ethical norms (fundamentals) laid down in the holy book of Islam, the movement's essence is the Koran, making it comparable to Christian fundamentalism which refers to the Bible as the guide to living. Yet ethical references to religion are also used by followers of the German *Christian Democratic Union,* for example, and by many American politicians. "Fundamentalism" is not therefore the privilege of political Islam. The frequent reference to "tradition," moreover, (fundamentalists are sometimes called neo-traditionalists) is a secondary phenomenon, as traditionalism is present in all kinds of policies, especially conservative ones. While some countries like Afghanistan have reverted to strict *Sharia* law as codified in the Middle Ages, many variants of Islamic fundamentalism are not based on historical precedent, as the example of Iran shows. As mentioned above, fundamentalism and the "Islamic state" can mean everything today from autocratic to democratic rule.

However, there is one issue which poses a challenge to democracy and supports an understanding of the many manifestations of contemporary political Islam as belonging to a single phenomenon usually called "fundamentalism": fundamentalists believe in the supremacy of religious over secular law. In this they differ from those orthodox Islamic scholars and jurists who, like most members of the *Azhar* University in Cairo, represent the historically grown model of quasi-secularism. This is also the real difference between fundamentalism and German Christian democracy or American Protestantism in mainstream politics. The idea that Islamic religious law is superior to secular law is the basis of all efforts to integrate religion

and politics. It is for this reason that French scholarship usually refers to "fundamentalism" as *integrisme* (a term hardly known outside the French speaking world). While the secular constitutional state protects the rights of the individual and of religious minorities, religious law tends to discriminate against "non-believers," being based on religious-ethnic differentiation to the advantage of a particular group, in this case Muslims. This group-building and identity-building function, coupled with the social activities of Islamists, enables fundamentalism to provide social and psychological support to its followers. But this type of discrimination also generates conflict between Islam and the West. Political Islam can only be accepted as part of the democratic system if the discriminatory idea of the supremacy of religious law in politics and society is renounced.

When fundamentalism emerged in the 1930s in the form of the Egyptian *Muslim Brotherhood*, a second important current—Islamic modernism, also known as Islamic reformism—was already in existence. In its attempt to create a synthesis between Western philosophical and political thought, scientific-technological progress and Islam, the latter movement provides lasting evidence for the kinship between Western and Islamic cultures. Modernists continue to maintain that the basic teachings of Islam as laid down in the Koran are no less compatible than Judaism and Christianity with human rights, democracy, liberalism, socialism and capitalism. The original Koranic doctrines did not dictate polygamy, for example, or the veiling of women, although both have become established in traditional Islamic jurisprudence, which upholds the social and political subjugation of women. The ideas of Islamic modernists like Qasim Amin (1865-1908), who as early as the nineteenth century called for "The Liberation of Woman," help to explain the paradoxical position of women in the Islamic world today: it is difficult to imagine an American or German female head of government like Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, Khalida Zia in Bangladesh, and Tansu Çiller in Turkey, or a presidential candidate like Samiha Khalil in the Palestinian Autonomous Area (1996).

Islamic fundamentalism has become a powerful social and political force in the last few decades, marginalising modernists like Nasser Hamid Abu Zayd, the Egyptian scholar whose wife Ibtihal Yunus was forced to divorce him in 1993 for alleged heresy. Nevertheless, the swing of the Oriental pendulum between secularism, orthodoxy, modernism and fundamentalism throughout the twentieth century

illustrates that Western and Islamic cultures are not divided worlds. Both are characterised by considerable cultural variety, which can provide the basis for co-operation, integration and dialogue, provided the forces of liberalism, cosmopolitanism and globalism are allowed to prevail.

Identification and imagination

Is it correct therefore to assume that Samuel P. Huntington's fear of a "Clash of Civilizations" is unfounded? Far more threatening than the purported incompatibility between Islam and the West is the increasing emphasis placed by many Westerners and Muslims alike on cultural identity. Regardless of the problems inherent in defining essentialist concepts of civilisation and culture, "Islam" and "the West" do exist as subjective, *imaginary* constructs, which influence the way each side perceives itself and the other. The explosive force of Huntington's ideas lies in his depiction of the continuing effects of old hostilities between Orient and Occident on modern-day collective consciousness, and the potential consequences in relation to world politics.

The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Eastern bloc has spurred a pro-Islam form of nationalism in areas as diverse as Central Asia, Chechnya and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The process of nation-building is so advanced in the Near and Middle East and in North Africa, that a reinstatement of Islamic super-nationalism as in the times of the caliphate (which united Turks and Arabs before it was abolished in 1924) is out of the question. Nevertheless, the social climate in most Islamic countries has been developing along conservative Islamic-traditionalist lines. Only a minority of Muslims support fundamentalism, but many have nativist leanings towards the traditional symbols, rites and customs of Islam. The number of mosques and attendance at them have been increasing in the last two decades. Headscarf and veil are once again part of the public image of the Orient. The relative cosmopolitanism of the intelligentsia has been replaced by an introspection which emphasises the distinctiveness and self-sufficiency of Islamic culture.

Political and military conflicts throughout the twentieth century have been a principal cause of alienation from the West, and have stoked fears of a Western threat to the Islamic world. Defeat at the

hands of Israel and its Western allies in the 1967 Six-Day War was a traumatic experience for the Arab world, which devalued the ideology of Arab nationalism and strengthened the forces of political Islam. The 1991 Gulf war was seen by many as a revival of the Crusades, despite the fact that a number of Islamic states joined the military alliance against Iraq. Western predominance in the Near East, be it as colonial ruler or post-colonial mandatory power as in "Palestine," has nurtured a historicist view of the Crusades, whereby the Orient of the Middle Ages is assigned the role of victim despite its position of strength at the time. As a result, the serenity and fortitude which characterised Muslim reactions to the Medieval Crusaders, or *franji* (Franks), is reinterpreted as defensiveness. Such perceptions derive from the military, political and economic subordination of the Islamic world today. Islamic fundamentalists present young people in particular with the alternative of *jihad,* which refers more to the "internal effort of faith" than to a "holy war," and offers an escape from suppression, at least on a psychological level: the discovery of the glorious "zero hour" of Islamic civilisation becomes an experience of personal strength.

At the same time, the image of Western culture in the Orient has been severely undermined. Acknowledged Western virtues such as scientific endeavour, scholarship, industriousness and enterprise continue to be eclipsed by the stereotypes of materialism, egoism, moral degeneration and the absence of community spirit. The ethical and spiritual foundations of the West—Christianity, the Enlightenment, humanism—are rapidly disappearing from the Islamic view of Western modernity, to be replaced by a perception of gross inhumanity. The Saudi-Arabian royal family, to mention one example, has increased its radio and television empire in recent years in order to protect the Arab-Islamic world from Western corruption. Ideas like those of Rifaa al-Tahtawi (1801-1873), the Arab historian who claimed that the West was a master of material things, while inner spirituality was the domain of the East, are also gaining popularity in the Islamic world.

In the industrialised countries of the West, Islamic fundamentalism and Muslim immigration have caused the old "spectre of Islam" to resurface. During the 1950s, a very different image of the Orient as a positive and exotic place and as a centre of sophistication, splendour and sensuality, prevailed. The West's view of Middle Eastern culture, as personified by the Shah of Persia and his wife Farah Diba,

gradually deteriorated during the following decades. The Arab position on Israel, the Suez war, the Arab socialism of Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918–1970), Palestinian terrorism and the oil crisis all resulted in a revision of European and US perceptions of the Orient. It was no longer seen as an earthly paradise, but as a geopolitical strength, as a dangerously *Near* East. The resurfacing of the Islamic menace at the end of the twentieth century represents the culmination of this development. Media and public opinion in the Western world tend to perceive Islamic politics and culture through a prism of extremist governments and groups. The 1978/79 revolution in Iran gave new relevance to entrenched European stereotypes of Islam as violent, fanatical, expansionist and anti-progressive.

Notwithstanding the growth of fundamentalism, cultural conflict between Islam and the West is often based more on flawed intercultural communication than on factual differences. Even serious issues like the case of the British author Salman Rushdie, who was condemned to death by the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989 for his "Satanic Verses," are partly a result of distorted communication. The enormous support Rushdie received from the Western public and even from politicians in the West, was a legitimate and necessary reaction to Khomeini, who violated the most essential human right, the protection of life and the individual. However, public opinion in the West tended to consider the Rushdie affair as evidence that humaneness and human rights are foreign to Islam. There is large scale ignorance of the fact that the Iranian Ayatollah's *fatwa* (religious decree) is not binding even under Islamic law, and that it was disregarded by all but the most extremist groups. In most countries of the Islamic world, public opinion supported the banning of the "Satanic Verses"—in itself an offence against freedom of speech—but seldom favoured the death sentence against Rushdie. Yet like other Western media, even reputable German newspapers described Islam as a "sinister reality" and "an ideology of absolutism" following the declaration of the *fatwa*. Reference was made to "fanatical Islamic countries," to the "appalling spiritual chasm between Christianity and Islam" and to the "millions of bloodthirsty Muslims." The Rushdie affair has nurtured old perceptions of a struggle between the civilised West and Islamic barbarity, in which the former tends to resort to a "fundamentalism of enlightenment," as the German political scientist Claus Leggewie has described the phenomenon.[1]

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[1] See "Mutig und notwendig." *Frankfurter Rundschau*, October 9,1993.

At a time when the West has begun to "play" with its own religious symbols, it appears to have lost the ability to understand the cultural importance of religion in other societies.

Recent developments in relations between the Islamic and Western worlds demonstrate that collective cultural identification has increased at the cost of a willingness to engage in inter-cultural dialogue. The imaginary has been an important factor in foreign-policy conflicts such as the 1991 Gulf war, when Iraqi President Saddam Hussein called for an Islamic campaign, and the crisis in Algeria, when the majority in the West, fearful of an Islamic dictatorship in the Mediterranean region, was prepared to turn a blind eye to the coup staged by the Algerian government and military. Negative and one-sided perceptions of Islam also affect the position of Muslim minorities living in the West. Public images of Muslims as fanatical and violent *by nature* reveal a dangerous congruence between mainstream ideas and right-wing xenophobic slogans warning of "Muslim immigrant mobs" and "Islamic infiltration." The perception of Muslims in the West appears to be shaped by a "collective extremism of perception" which functions as a breeding-ground for xenophobia. While the majority is not as willing as the racist minority to engage in violence, modern racism is "racism without races"[2] and is based less on physical dominance than on cultural discrimination and cultural supremacy. Such a biased and negative interpretation of Islamic culture represents a threat to Western democracy's capacity to resist racism. The presence of Muslims is tolerated merely because general humanitarian principles require it, yet there is no cultural interaction with Muslims and Orientals. Should hostility to Islam become a recognised norm, it is a clear indication that the multicultural society is in demise.

An unbalanced cultural understanding is frequently at the root of the problem. Liberal demands that "cultural uniqueness" be respected lead to the exaggeration of the status of culture, a phenomenon cultural anthropologists refer to as "culturalism." If, for example, a Western woman is harassed by an Oriental, his background does not explain his behaviour, as some would suggest. Impolite treatment of women meets with the same disapproval in his native Oriental culture as in the Western "host" country. The reason for his misde-

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[2] Etienne Balibar, "Gibt es einen 'neuen Rassismus'?" *Das Argument* 3: 369-380.

meanour is not *intra*-cultural, but is based, rather, on an *inter*-cultural misperception, namely a distorted image of the "availability" of Western women.

Realpolitik *without cultural boundaries*

The current climate in Islamic-Western relations is marked by a fossilisation of cultural perceptions. Nevertheless, certain forces in society—specifically in foreign policy, foreign trade, religion and science—run counter to this general trend. Anticyclical in nature, they do not conform to Huntington's prognosis of a "Clash of Civilizations." Multiple inter-state relations prevent the formation of Islamic and Western blocs, with the two camps encountering each other in the field of *Realpolitik*, where hostile perceptions frequently yield to a spirit of co-operation. This is a truer reflection of the inherent kinship between the two civilisations than is the perpetuation of cultural stereotypes. Iran, for example, has consolidated economic relations with Europe, despite its poor "image" and despite hostilities with the US. It currently conducts approximately one-third of its foreign trade with Western Europe, whose dependence on Arabic and Persian oil is the driving force behind the pragmatic nature of Western-Islamic state relations. Thus, many Western governments have learnt to take the phenomenon of Islam in politics seriously and to acknowledge the sensitivities of their political partners.

At the same time, pragmatic foreign relations often causes basic human rights questions, particularly the right of the individual to physical and spiritual protection, to be overlooked. Why is it that the Rushdie affair was instrumental in Western public opinion (re-)adopting the erroneous perception of Islamic barbarity, while the moral justification of maintaining close alliances with repressive regimes like those of Saudi Arabia or Kuwait is never debated by Western politicians or by the general public in the West? Globalisation and the advancement of mutual interests are progressing in spite of growing cultural alienation. At the same time, relations between Islam and the West are based on political double standards, to the detriment of ethical principles on both sides. While distorted perceptions of the culture and politics of the "other," based on an alleged conflict between hostile worlds, have become consolidated in

the makeup of Orient-Occident relations, this does not mean that *all* conflicts are fictitious and the result of selective perception: the fact that an *image* of the enemy exists does not reveal a priori whether the enemy is real or fictitious.

Political pragmatism is also morally questionable when the ideological components of Islamic-Western relations are manipulated to further the national interests of a particular state. Unlike the spectre of communism which was invoked by both Islamic and Western politicians, stereotypes can only be called into use sporadically in the Orient-Occident context, due to the pronounced political and economic ties linking the two. At the same time, however, the end of the East-West conflict has left an ideological vacuum, which may be filled in times of conflict or crisis by evoking existing cultural stereotypes in order to encourage a climate of confrontation. The Islamic menace, and in particular the "Islamic nuclear bomb," functioning as a sword of Damocles, have long since become components of NATO strategy. Similarly during the 1991 Gulf war, Saddam Hussein proclaimed the sacred "mother of all battles." In the final analysis, political relations between Western and Islamic states fluctuate between relaxed co-operation, ethical slackness and ideological excess.

A new policy of détente

Samuel P. Huntington has been rightly accused of playing into the hands of future Western military strategists with his "Clash of Civilizations." His thesis is not only apodeictic in that it rules out any possibility of understanding between the two cultures, it also includes clear proposals for Western defence strategies against Islam: Huntington recommends that the West consolidate relations with culturally related regions such as Latin America and exercise military control over the "Confucian" (China) and Islamic states.

Détente and dialogue represent an alternative to the "Cold War" paradigm between Islam and the West. West Germany's *Ostpolitik*, which began at the end of the 1960s, illustrated that pressure could be exerted on authoritarian systems, while keeping tension and violence to a minimum, through a combination of firm principles and a readiness to talk, through protesting against human rights violations by the state while at the same time fostering understanding

between peoples. Relations between Islam and the West were de-
scribed during the Gulf crisis of 1990/91 as a conflict "in a holding
pattern" by the Norwegian peace researcher, Johan Galtung[3]. Ideo-
logical thought patterns representing the West as pagan, selfish and
materialistic and Islam as irrational, fanatical and expansionist fos-
ter antagonism in the age of global communication and migration,
and can only be eliminated through the adoption of an active peace
policy.

But are the Western and Islamic worlds capable of engaging in
dialogue? When the *Association of the German Book Trade* awarded the
1995 Peace Prize of the German Book Trade to the Orientalist
Annemarie Schimmel in acknowledgement of her contribution to
cultural mediation over a number of decades, controversy flared up
over whether or not her criticism of Salman Rushdie's "Satanic
Verses" and his violation of religious feelings amounted to an en-
dorsement of Islamic fundamentalism. In the same year, a confer-
ence of politicians and academics from the Islamic world called by
Germany's Minister for Foreign Affairs Klaus Kinkel was cancelled
following public objections to the invitation issued to Iran's Foreign
Minister. What is significant about these events is not the criticism—
which was to some extent legitimate—but the selective fixation on
manifestations of radical fundamentalism. An article on the Islamic
conference in the German newsmagazine *Der Spiegel* had the para-
noid heading: "The Conquest of Europe."[4] The dilemma inherent
in any approach to Islamic-Western relations which focuses on
détente and dialogue is that it presupposes a climate of dialogue in
which cultural horizons are broadened and there is a willingness to
correct problematic perceptions and traditions. Yet, such a climate
can only come about as a result of dialogue.

In his speech marking the presentation to Annemarie Schimmel,
German President Roman Herzog referred to negotiation as the
cornerstone of all dialogue on human rights with the Islamic world.
The objective of such dialogue must be to find humanitarian values
which are mutually acceptable and binding. Herzog suggests that
human rights negotiations should not rest on a "weakly ethical rel-
ativism"[5] which remains neutral on conditions in other cultures, and

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[3] "Jahrtausendkonflikt in der Warteschleife." *Die tageszeitung*, August 24, 1990.
[4] "Europa erobern." *Der Spiegel* 45/1995.
[5] Herzog 1999: 17.

in so doing disregards the most fundamental humanitarian principles. A spirit of negotiation on human rights also implies, however, that as one culture's canon of human rights cannot be imposed on another, conflict resolution must be based on ethically sound compromise. According to Herzog, apart from certain non-negotiable essentials, zones of greater flexibility do exist, which provide Islamic culture with the means to retain and develop its own political, economic and societal way of life while adhering to certain basic standards. There is no obligation to recognise principles such as the right to private property as fundamental to the *conditio humana*, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. In its approach to Christian-Islamic dialogue, the Catholic Church formulated a principle in 1965 ("nostra aetate") involving both mission *and* dialogue, which is similar to Herzog's concepts of "essentials" and "negotiation."

Past developments have demonstrated that lasting changes in attitude are not brought about when dialogue is conducted exclusively by an elite—be it political, religious or academic. Thus the European Parliament in Strasbourg demanded in 1991 that the mass media revise their negative image of Islam in order that Islam's contribution to the history of culture and ideas in Europe might be given proper recognition.[6] It may not be a coincidence that it was a journalist, Valentine Chirol, Director of the Foreign Department of the *Times*, who in a lecture to the Harris Foundation in 1924 (long before Huntington) coined the phrase, the "Clash of Civilizations." Chirol said that the discords and conflicts which divide Orient and Occident "arise out of a clash of different, and in many respects mutually antagonistic, civilisations."[7] More than any other institution, the media transmits cultural messages which colour the everyday consciousness of the individual. In this sense, it is the communicative "eye of the needle," through which the cultural understanding of both the West and the Islamic world must pass.

Religious fundamentalism has inhibited dialogue not only in the West but also in the Islamic world. Nevertheless, the potential for positive change does exist. The West has felt no compulsion to date to engage in dialogue due to the unequal distribution of power

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[6] La Contribution de la Civilisation Islamique à la Culture Européenne, Conseil de L'Europe, Doc. 6497 (Recommendation 1162 from 1991), Strasbourg 1992: 2.

[7] Chirol 1924: 4.

between the Western industrialised nations and the developing coun-
tries of the Islamic world. The Islamic states, for their part, have lost
their ability since the end of the East-West conflict to manoeuvre
between the blocs and to play off the superpowers against one an-
other. At the same time, however, political Islam, by creating a
contrived and frequently exaggerated perception of the danger
emanating from the Islamic world, has indirectly caused the West
to focus its attention on the Islamic world. In the same way as the
Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat waged the October war of 1973
in order to force the Americans to the negotiating table and to
compensate the Egyptian people for the defeat of 1967, political Islam
today, while representing a set-back for the relationship between the
West and the Islamic world, may on the other hand have the effect
of improving the psychological preconditions for dialogue. It is not
unthinkable, therefore, that the "Clash of Civilizations" can be avoid-
ed—in spite of Huntington's contentions.

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PART I
BASIC ISSUES

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IS THERE AN ISLAMIC MODERNITY?

REINHARD SCHULZE

Among the most popular criteria used to describe contemporary cultures in the Islamic world are the terms *tradition* and *modernity*. Together they form a pair of opposites with which even the most complex social phenomena are interpreted and explained, be it on the basis of scientific analysis or superficial impression. "Tradition" and "modernity" are, furthermore, the analytical terms most frequently employed in the interpretation of non-European societies. The growth in their usage has been phenomenal. Headings like "Islam between tradition and modernity" enjoy particular currency in middlebrow publications, operating with classifiers familiar in everyday speech, which make them appear immediately digestible. Images associated with the two terms reconcile the world of the observer with that of the observed. "Modernity" evokes tractors, electricity, computers, steelworks and urban architecture. "Tradition," on the other hand, conjures up something quite different: water being raised from the Nile by waterwheel, food being pounded in wooden bowls, men wearing colourful garments, and candles burning in huts.

Apart from their material definition, tradition and modernity are, of course, also associated with ethical, aesthetic and cultural values, which shape both the modern and the traditional person. Modern values and norms are generally perceived as being *super*ordinate to their corresponding material characteristics. Thus, the modern world is controlled by the modern human being. Traditional norms, in contrast, are viewed as *sub*ordinate to the material characteristics of tradition. Consequently, traditional man is controlled by tradition. One image paints an active relationship, the other a passive relationship to the world.

Today, tradition can only be interpreted as the absence of modernity, which in turn is seen as the social and cultural liberation from tradition. It is clear that this simple analytical constellation is unlikely to yield a plausible interpretation of Western societies. A simplistic dichotomy of this kind is hardly of relevance when attempting to explain social and cultural unrest among the youth of Western Europe, for example. The more complex social phenomena are

perceived to be, the less appropriate is their interpretation on the basis of the tradition/modernity dichotomy.

A different situation prevails when non-European and particularly Islamic societies are the focus of analysis. Precisely the opposite process of interpretation may be observed: the more complex the social structures and phenomena under investigation, the more likely the employment of the tradition versus modernity dichotomy. Thus we are told that the problem of the Islamic world today lies in its having experienced only one half of modernity, i.e. in the material realm; culturally, the Islamic world remains rooted in Islam. Islam is not an expression of modernity, the argument continues, thus Muslims today live a schizoid life: half modern and half traditional.

The dichotomy of tradition and modernity was adopted into Middle Eastern studies in the 1950s and 60s within the framework of modernisation theories and came to be widely used in the interpretation of contemporary historical and social phenomena. At the same time, the cultural affiliation of modernity and tradition was established within the modernisation theories: tradition was defined as the reality of non-European societies; modernity as that which existed in the West. According to this interpretation, modernity, i.e. the modernisation of state and society, could only exist in non-European countries if it was prompted by Europe and adopted by the local elite. The tradition/modernity dichotomy thus became embedded in the West/non-West dichotomy. Muslim intellectuals striving to adopt the values of modernity were seen as modernists, those who did not share this desire as traditionalists, and those who identified with neither value system as fundamentalists. Since modernisation, i.e. the conscious adoption of modernity in non-modern societies, had led to a conflict with tradition, this imported modernity, it was argued, was "unmastered" and had led to a fundamentalist reaction.

Islam and tradition

As early as the beginning of the twentieth century, groups of so-called Islamic reformers began to be identified as modernisers. In most cases the term was no more than a classification aid, used to explain structural analogies between contemporary Islamic and Western thought. Modernism at the time was a theological/philosophical world view within Catholicism. Particularly prominent in England and France,

its endeavours to reconcile religious dogmatics with the natural sciences facilitated the classification of Islamic reformers, who shared the same concern, as modernisers. "Tradition" and "modernity" only became established as analytical concepts in the 1970s, when the first hesitant steps were taken to adopt sociological models into Middle Eastern studies.

In the German academic discourse, the term "*traditionell*" was seen to have a subjective, pejorative undertone and was deemed unsuitable as an analytical tool. It was supplanted by "*traditional*" following Max Weber's categorisation of the ideal types of authority as rational, traditional and charismatic authority and his division of "traditional authority" into gerontocracy, patriarchalism and patrimonialism. "Modernity" had also fallen into disrepute within the debates on development theories due to its idealisation of a Western bourgeois lifestyle, and was dropped by many social scientists in favour of terms like "European colonialism." The roles of subject and object continued to be clearly assigned, albeit with a moral reevaluation: traditional societies were now said to have passively experienced colonialism or to have been penetrated by colonialism, as opposed to the earlier view which held that traditional societies had been modernised by the West.

As analytical terms, "tradition" and "modernity" were construed in such a way as to clearly emphasise the notion of outside intervention. All kind of romantic ideas were associated with the concept of tradition: village communities, tribal societies, cults and rituals as well as non-mechanised farming practices. From a modern-day perspective, it is evident that the transposition of tradition into non-Western societies was merely an exteriorised criticism of social and economic structures in the West. Similar to Enlightenment thinkers in the 18th century, who projected their criticism of the *ancien régime* onto the Orient, Western critics now used non-Western societies as a projection area, fixing their yearning for an intact world with clearly delineated social structures onto the tradition of non-European cultures.

A certain amount of ethnological research reinforced this belief. Much study was devoted to the reconstruction of an "autochthonous" tradition, said to have existed before the dawn of colonialism, and to the elucidation of the survival strategies of tradition. The potential of local tradition to evolve "independently" as an alternative to the self-destructive forces of modernity was the subject of investiga-

tion. (The negative concept of tradition meanwhile remained large-
ly intact.)

When applied to the Islamic world, positive, romantic visions of
an autochthonous tradition proved difficult to sustain. What was
identified as tradition there in no way corresponded to the roman-
tic cravings of Western critics: it was authoritarian, elitist, sultanic,
obfuscatory and despotic, and was in fact much more in line with
Max Weber's "patrimonial, primordial order." It was only in the
tribes that some remnants of a positive order could be discerned.
Inherent to the concept of modernity is a tendency towards an es-
sentialist determination of, and perpetuation of timeless cultural
characteristics which underlies interpretations of the history of Is-
lamic civilisation. Since the heyday of historicism, an essentialist
standardisation of Islam developed within Middle Eastern studies,
whereby Islam as the subject of Islamic history was perceived as
analogous to modernity (or the West): when modernity became a
sociological classifier, it was juxtaposed with Islam. Thus, since the
end of the 1970s, two interdependent concepts existed: modernity
and Islam, and Islam was reinterpreted as a sociological classifier.
Henceforth two dichotomies applied to the Islamic world: one his-
toric (tradition and modernity) and the other essentialist (Islam and
modernity).

Scholars of the Middle East were generally content to employ the
two concept pairs. With very few exceptions, they made no attempt
to question the application of eurocentric categories to Islamic civil-
isation. After all, the essentialist construction of Islam was thoroughly
modern in the sense that modernity demanded an essentialist stan-
dardisation of the world. The modern construction of reality creat-
ed a modern Islam, which was not, however, related to the present,
but to the time when Islam was still Islam, i.e. to early history. Thus
there emerged what is now the classical picture of the development
of Islamic civilisation: it began with Islam, lapsed into tradition and
was confronted with modernity. The essence of fundamentalism was
said to lie in a reaction to this process.

Many Muslim critics at the time shared this modern interpreta-
tion of Islamic civilisation, using "Islam" and "tradition" to explain
the course of history. The designation of the third element in the
chain was, however, far from uniform: some adopted the label
"modern," others "colonialism," while a third group opted again for
"Islam." Once more a correlation existed between Islam and mo-

dernity, but in this case, both terms related to the present. The designation of the third link in the chain came to represent an ideological allegiance: "Muslim" modernists contrasted with "Islamic" socialists, who in turn were opposed by the "true" Islamists. In their dispute about the legitimacy of the correct interpretation, modernists viewed Islamists as opponents of modernity, while the Islamists followed suit and branded the modernists as opponents of Islam. Viewed from a distance, it is impossible to distinguish between the two constructions of modernity and Islam. Both rested on a similar discursive strategy, beginning with an essentialist standardisation and ending with the exclusion of all that was perceived to belong to historical tradition.

This interpretative modus operandi has existed in Islamic intellectual history since the end of the 19th century. It should not be confused with the ideas of older thinkers who regarded their venerable forefathers as the ethical ideal of correct conduct. Even those "medieval" writers who idealised the early Islamic period such as Abdel Rahman Ibn al-Djauzi (1116-1200) and Ahmed Ibn Taimiya (1263-1328) did not endeavour to define Islam as the sum of essentialist norms or to delimit it through definition. While both were involved in the construction of ideals, these ideals were simply an expression of their "medieval" milieu and their scholastic erudition and can hardly be equated with contemporary modernity.

The synchronised construction of tradition and modernity

From the above we can deduce that the concepts "tradition" and "modernity" were deployed by a Western and Muslim elite in the 19th and 20th centuries to interpret the social and cultural life of their time. What we understand as Islam today is therefore a particular, culture-specific construct of modernity. The two terms reflect the world view of an elite, which defined itself and was united in a transnational culture by means of these concepts.

This has important implications for the definition of tradition. It is obvious that what is understood as tradition can only be interpreted in the context of modernity. The British historian, Eric Hobsbawm, used the celebrated expression "the invention of tradition" to describe this phenomenon. The now frequently employed concept of "invention" refers to the conscious demarcation of modernity from what

is perceived as extraneous to modernity. Strictly speaking, what is evoked is a discourse furnished with a set of rules which have, as yet, been inadequately explored. Thus "tradition" and "modernity" do not represent a diachronic pair of opposites. They arose in synchrony and are indivisible. From this, it follows that tradition cannot be understood in isolation. It needs a conceptual antipode: modernity.

Originally both terms related not to objective reality, but to human behaviour and observation. Like the binaries big/small and good/bad, they provided information not about the objective reality to which they referred, but about the speaker who spoke about one state of affairs in comparison to another. Traditional/modern, unlike beautiful/ugly, good/bad or big/small, have an additional temporal component: tradition relates to the past (what once was), while modern refers to the present or future (what is or should be). Thus, one and the same reality can be classified as traditional or as modern, depending on the speaker's viewpoint. If a speaker sees himself as modern, he will judge a house, a city, a culture or a society according to whether he lives in it (then it is modern) or apart from it (then it is traditional).

The semantic origins of "tradition" and "modernity" may be explained as follows. The speaker, who takes his perception to be an objective description of reality, attributes to this reality the subjective categories of his perception. His perception of a house, a city, a culture or a society is transformed into a modern house, a modern city, a modern culture or a modern society, or alternatively into a traditional house, a traditional city, a traditional culture or a traditional society. As with big/small, it is ultimately the consensus of the elite which decides on the designations "modern" and "traditional." Everybody claims to know what is meant by big and small, and there is little awareness that what is being expressed is merely a viewpoint, which is not, in fact, a subjective perception, but a societal consensus.

Essentialising Islam

A societal consensus concerning all things considered intrinsic to modern and traditional life respectively was reached in the Islamic world towards the end of the nineteenth century. An understanding

of Islam was adopted which construed Islam first and foremost as the antithesis of the norms and realities deemed by the elite to be traditional. Mystic cults and magic worlds were denounced. Before long, the actuality of life in the villages and historical old towns had been identified as tradition, as had entire historical processes. Modern man rejected any association with historical traditions of this kind. After all, what intellectual struggling for recognition in the modern urban world would want to be "outed" as the member of a restrictive, local and mystical community?

It is an established fact in European cultural history that the idealising restoration of tradition in the late Romantic period also marked the beginnings of modernity. This demonstrates the possibility of identifying with tradition in the context of modernity. In post-revolutionary French Catholicism, for example, the traditionalists led by Louis Gabriel de Bonald played an important role in restoring the old order. For the first time, tradition had become politicised and was set against modernity. That this could happen was due to the secularisation of the concept of tradition and its transformation into the romantic antithesis of what Hans-Georg Gadamer called "the rational freedom of the Enlightenment." To this day, tradition has not lost its romantic connotation, while the Enlightenment's apologia of reason continues to resonate in the term modernity. The positive characterisation today of the Islamic world as entrenched in tradition derives from a romantic and sentimental view of Islamic culture. Arab writers at the beginning of the 20th century like Mahmud Tahir Haqqi and Ahmed Schauqi had a similar view of things. They waxed lyrical about their country's adherence to tradition, without actually having to live there. The childhood memories of Saiyid Qutb, for example, who later became the Islamists' ideological mentor, abound with ambivalent evaluations of what he understood to be tradition.

The terms "tradition" and "modernity" are ill-suited to the analytical description of social realities. That the dichotomy persists in the classification of extra-European societies is due to Western modernity's continuing need for a "contrasting opposite" in order to understand itself. Tradition has become so secularised in Western culture that it is barely recognisable. At the same time, modern essentialism has left little scope for the construction of romantic or negative traditions, while the constant re-invention of traditions within Western culture is increasingly subject to constraints created by the

representatives of modernity. The West therefore looks to the non-European world and, by identifying the existence of anti-modern traditions there, sustains its belief in its own modernity.

Charlie Chaplin's skilful caricature of the machine age, "Modern Times" (1933), provides compelling evidence for the thesis that modernity is the exclusive domain of the West. It shows how the energy, chemistry and machines generated in scientific revolutions have become the material symbols of modernity. Just as machines can move by themselves, modern man is seen to move autonomously in the modern age, detached from the history which has formed him. He has, to paraphrase Foucault, constituted himself as modern. He believes he can live disconnected from his history by stepping outside it as an autonomous being. The Egyptian farmer, on the other hand, who ploughs the land with his team of oxen, is said to be so anchored in his history that he has become its slave. Autonomy, reflectiveness and liberation through rational thought are alien to him. This simple construct is frequently transposed onto the Islamic world as a whole. According to this view of things, Muslims, incapable of generating technology themselves, are chained to their religion. They are unable to engage in autonomous thought, for their thinking is determined by Islam. The modern essentialist view equates Islam with "submission" and contends that Muslims *sui generis* are incapable of being modern. Even when they use machines, they cannot partake of the autonomy of modernity as long as they are identified as Muslims. And according to this view of things, even their identity is determined from without. This is precisely what numerous *Bosniaks* were forced to understand and experience during the war in Bosnia: in a climate of "ethnic cleansing," a passport bearing an Islamic forename was frequently sufficient grounds for execution.

In this view of things, an Islamic modernity is a contradiction in terms. At best, Muslims can respond to Western pressure by attempting to modernise i.e. civilise their social existence and their world view. Yet the idea continues to flicker through that Muslims are so rooted in tradition that modernity can only ever envelop the essence of Islamic culture as an ill-fitting garment. Should the garment be removed, the Islamic barbarian would be revealed—in the form of the Islamic revolutionary leader Khomeini, for example.

Postmodernist criticism of modernity

As long as modernity continued to celebrate itself as the culmination of human history and to reproduce itself through the civilisatory demarcation from extra-European traditions, it was impossible to resolve this confrontation. The impulse for a re-evaluation of modernity came with the fundamental postmodernist criticism unleashed at the beginning of the 1970s, which has only recently been adopted into non-European scholarly debates. Foucault's discussion of the "Birth of Prison" was typical of the new thinking. He laid bare the ambivalence of modernity and exposed it as a specific discourse formation in which freedom and captivity, autonomy and heteronomy had become institutionalised. To remain with the concepts thus far employed: what had hitherto been identified as tradition was now revealed to be an integral component of modernity.

Postmodernist criticism involved a thoroughgoing re-evaluation of the concept of modernity. It also created a forum for new interpretations of modern-day Islamic cultures. What is most significant about postmodernism for our discussion is the disentanglement of modernity from its antinomical construction. As a result, the all-too-familiar distinction between Western and non-Western culture, which was ultimately based on the assignation of modernity to "the West" and tradition to "the East," disappeared.

Thus it was recognised that the linking of tradition to "modernity" rendered the latter unsuitable as a theoretical concept. Once the numerous essentialist discourses on society, culture and history had been deconstructed, new viewpoints came to the fore whereby modernity was interpreted as a subjective, even aesthetic approach of a specific, historically identifiable elite. As a result, the sociological divide between tradition and modernity was dropped. In the postmodernist view of things, the two concepts together represent a particular interpretation of the world or, as Foucault put it, a specific discourse formation. Historical investigation reveals the beginnings of this specific discourse formation and also demonstrates how it developed and remained in existence to the present day. In an investigation of this kind, the West can no longer be seen as the ideal type of modernity, for if we recognise that the West/non-West dichotomy was merely an expression of a discursive process, it is no longer justifiable to separate the two worlds. However, the question arises whether it is possible to reconstruct an epoch in which this

interpretative approach was predominant, without confining it to one particular culture.

Nor is it beyond dispute that modernity can be interpreted as an epoch. Michel Foucault gave good reasons for avoiding the perception of a particular epoch as a model for global society. Is there not a real danger that the reconstruction of modernity will lead to a renewal of the global historiography so vehemently criticised by Foucault in his "Archaeology of Knowledge"? From this critical perspective, any attempt to reconstruct Islamic modernity appears anachronistic, and warnings of a new temporal interpretation of Islam as reflecting a modernity seem justified. Why attempt to find an Islamic epoch of modernity at the very moment when modernity has been—and is being—destroyed in Europe?

However, in the same way as the construction of modernity was eurocentric, its deconstruction also appears to be eurocentric. This does not acknowledge the important contribution which the experiential and interpretative horizon of non-Western societies can make to the investigation of modernity. If it is demonstrated that the elite in Islamic, Chinese or Japanese society also experienced their world by means of a conceptual division between tradition and modernity, that they also used the norms of their subjective experience in the objective description of their world and that they too re-defined their culture in essentialist terms, it will become clear that "modernity" is not the privilege of the West, but a global process on a grand scale, which may be conceived in other than Western contexts. Perhaps it would be more correct to speak in the plural of "modernities" or to view modernity as a historical process of globalisation, which assumes entirely different forms in different cultures and which is always constructed in the context of a specific tradition.

All of this is of significance for a contemporary understanding of Islamic cultural history. The postmodernist view demands that the processes leading to an essentialistist construction of Islam be clarified. As essentialism is an important, if not decisive characteristic of modernity, an investigation of this kind must aim to uncover the social and cultural history of Islamic modernity. From a historiographic perspective, the period between 1650 and the present must form the focus of investigation. It may be assumed that it was during this era that a world view based on the construction of tradition and modernity was adopted by the elite in many Islamic cultures. Thus, Islamic modernity may be perceived as a historical period. The

ambiguity of the concept "Islamic modernity" is in itself not optional, but compulsory. For it is only through clarifying the historicity of modernity that contemporary Islamic modernity will be understood.

Discussions on Islamic modernity must take the following premises as their point of departure if they are to reflect the current status of criticism:

– The "tradition"/"modernity" dichotomy must be seen as the subjective, cultural approach of a particular (bourgeois) elite in a specific historical period. The two terms should not therefore be used as analytical classifiers.

– Modernity should also be understood as a historical period, in which a distinction was made between "tradition" and "modernity" within the framework of a specific discursive formation.

– This historical discursive formation must be seen to possess validity in all places where bourgeois culture has developed. The historiography of modernity must recognise that there are no grounds for treating modernity as a European privilege: the basis for a tradition/modernity dichotomy appears to have existed in all societies and cultures. The formulation of this binary as a specific cultural approach, on the other hand, is subject to particular historical processes.

– "Tradition" and "modernity" are categories of world interpretation. They are categories of understanding, and the conditions under which this understanding takes place must be uncovered.

Is there an Islamic modernity? There are in fact two: the historical period of modernity and the discursive formation of modernity, both of which are inextricably linked.

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VISIONS OF AN ISLAMIC REPUBLIC
GOOD GOVERNANCE ACCORDING TO THE
ISLAMISTS

GUDRUN KRÄMER

Relations between the Muslim world and the West are difficult and marked by mutual suspicion. This does not necessarily imply hostility; nor does it mean that each side has a clearly defined notion of the other as enemy. But each holds an image of the other that tends to be deeply critical; each fosters its own prejudices and misconceptions; and each believes that the other poses a threat. From a European perspective, perceived threats include migration caused by rapid population growth and political instability at the other side of the Mediterranean, and political Islam, if not Islam per se. Anxieties and apprehensions are not just a result of the close proximity between Europe and the Middle East. They are also due to the growing presence of Muslims inside Western Europe itself, which has led to the increasing blurring of the former distinction between domestic and foreign politics. Europeans today are more directly confronted with Islam, or rather with Muslim lifestyles, norms and aspirations, than they have been for centuries.

The debate on values

Mutual perceptions are greatly influenced by the debate on values, which even in Western Europe is no longer the domain of conservative circles: the unsettling effects of modernisation have provoked harsh criticism of modernity, and the search for a moral and social renewal has brought about a renaissance of virtues and values. While within Western society itself the "crisis of modernity" has generated a sense of insecurity, the West has largely maintained its posture of self-confidence towards the outside world. This is especially clear in the debate on human rights, civil society and the market economy ("good governance" and "best practices" in the neutral language of international organisations such as the United Nations, the *World Bank* and the *International Monetary Fund*). Particularly since the collapse of the Soviet empire, such values are held up as a panacea to the non-

Western world. "Democracy-cum-market economy" presupposes the existence not only of a framework of rules and institutions, but also of specific values, first and foremost among them respect for the intrinsic value of the individual and the diversity of beliefs and opinions.

It is precisely this "ethics of tolerance" that is said to be lacking in Islam, both on a doctrinal and on a practical level. Not only do critics tend to identify religion with political culture, they also fail to make a distinction between theory and practice. They attribute to Islam a general disregard for the concept of freedom, for rational thought and the principle of responsibility. Also criticised is the absence of voluntary associations and of a self-confident middle class upholding modern, democratic ideas. And what Islam has not known in the past, it cannot produce in the future. Islam is said to promote collective thought and action, barbaric forms of corporal punishment, the repression of women and non-Muslims, and intolerance towards artists, intellectuals and independent minds of all kinds. On the Muslim side, criticism is equally strong, displaying a similar level of ignorance and an equally arbitrary confusion of theory and practice, past and present. The Occident is considered to be devoid of spirituality and ethical orientation. It is said to indulge in hedonistic materialism which finds expression in the degradation of women, the break-down of the family, the destruction of the cities and a general deterioration of "values." The West, it is claimed, propagates democracy and human rights on a global level, only to utterly disregard them when it so chooses.

The debate serves an obvious function: to prove one's own superiority in the domain of morals, ethics and humanity, and to deny those values to the other. Yet there are basic values shared by both sides: they range from the concept of human dignity and individual responsibility for society, politics and the environment, to the right to political participation and the ideal of the rule of law. Many Muslims today—especially the Islamists among them—consider religion, and more particularly Islam, as providing the only solid foundation for those values. In the West, on the other hand, it is often argued that modernity with the humanitarian values attached to it can only be attained by Muslims if they emulate developments in Europe and the West in general. The Reformation, the Enlightenment and secularisation are cited as processes which liberated Western society from the shackles of religion and freed it from the "iron cage

of bondage" (Max Weber). The same path should be followed by the Muslim world. Some Europeans hope that the Muslims living among them will develop a liberal "Euro-Islam" reflecting their experiences in modern, democratic societies, and that this will eventually spread to the Islamic world. "Euro-Communism" was instrumental in overcoming the more rigid variants of communism in the East, and why should not "Euro-Islam" have a similar effect on the Orient? *Ex occidente lux*. It must be said that there are, as yet, few indications of the emergence of this liberal Euro-Islam. By and large, Muslim migrants living in Europe continue to look to the Islamic world for religious and spiritual guidance, and the Near and Middle East is still their main source of inspiration. It is to the Islamic world then, and more specifically to the Near and Middle East, that we must turn in order to find modern expressions of Islamic thought, including models of an "Islamic order" of morality, government and society.

Since the late 1970s, Islam has come to renewed prominence in the Muslim world as the guiding principle of individual behaviour and public life. This has gone hand-in-hand with the search for an "Islamic order" which might serve as an alternative to all known models of social, economic and political organisation. Such a system must fulfil two conditions: it must be "modern," i.e. respond to present-day demands and expectations, and it must be "authentic," demonstrating the cultural autonomy of the Muslim world from Morocco to Indonesia. Needless to say, the notion of "authenticity" is problematic. Even Muslims agree that it cannot simply be taken to stand for Islam writ large, since Islam (with a capital I) is commonly identified with the "grand tradition" or "orthodox Islam" as defined by the normative texts of the Koran and *Sunna*, at the expense of the numerous "little traditions" of Muslim life and spirituality based on oral traditions. Muslims, like the followers of other religions, are influenced by their social and cultural environments. Consequently, "Islamic" life-styles and "Islamic" norms display a large degree of diversity.

Even the most rigid scripturalists, who regard the Koran as their constitution and the Prophet Mohammed as their leader, will find that the authoritative sources do not contain precise guidelines for an Islamic order. While the Koran and the *Sunna*, i.e. the reports of the doings and sayings of the Prophet Mohammed, set down certain general rules regarding social and political life, they do not

prescribe any particular model, not even the caliphate. There is no Islamic state independent of time and circumstance. Rather, there are various projects, some based on utopian thinking, others on existing models, such as the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which differ from each other in important respects and are not even recognised as "truly Islamic" by many contemporary Muslims.

Most models for an "Islamic order" as an alternative to those existing both in the West and in Iran or Saudi Arabia have been outlined by adherents to the broad and heterogeneous Islamic, or Islamist, movement. This includes groups and organisations who vary as to their support of, or opposition to, the regimes in power. They range from the *Muslim Brotherhood* organisations in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine, the Algerian Salvation Front (*Front Islamique du Salut*, FIS), the Tunisian *Movement of the Islamic Tendency/Nahda* party and the Yemeni *Reform Movement* (*Islah*), to the Islamist opposition in Saudi Arabia, the Turkish *Refah Party* and Pakistan's *Jamaat-i Islami*. The Islamist movement also includes scholars and academics working at the institutions of classical Muslim learning and the non-religious state universities, as well as numerous "independent Islamic thinkers," intellectuals and activists who are not affiliated to any particular group or organisation. In terms of their social background, they tend to belong to the educated urban middle class, and the majority are men.

They all refer to the Koran, the *Sunna* and selected authors of the classical age, and nearly all claim to have outlined *the* ideal Islamic system. As suggested above, such assertions should be approached with caution. Islamists, like other Muslims, do no more than interpret the normative sources, and they cannot claim universal validity for their interpretations. The Muslim community does not recognise one single, central authority which can provide a binding definition of belief or unbelief, let alone of the Islamic state. The scholars at the *Sunni Azhar* University are not in a position to do so, nor are the Shiite Grand Ayatollahs like Imam Khomeini. Their interpretations are clearly rooted in the modern experience and reflect the needs, demands and ideals of the modern age—even when the authors believe they are resurrecting the golden age of Islam, a time when, due to the presence of the Prophet and ongoing revelation, belief and action were one.

Techniques and values

One of the most interesting, and at the same time most problematic aspects of the debate on an "Islamic order" is the distinction frequently made between techniques and values. Muslim scholars (*ulama*) and Islamist activists refer to this distinction, as do some of their staunchest critics—albeit for different reasons. Islamists hold that techniques are entirely neutral from a religious and moral perspective, and provided that Islamic values are preserved intact, they can be adopted from other civilisations without jeopardising Islamic authenticity. This applies not only to scientific discoveries and modern technology, but also to methods, instruments and institutions of economic, political and social organisation. This line of argument is of particular significance in the debate on human rights and democracy, since liberal and pluralist democracy, which is what most Muslims think of when discussing democracy in general, clearly encompasses both techniques and values.

Bassam Tibi, one of the best-known critics of fundamentalism, draws a similar distinction. He maintains that the fundamentalists (referred to here as Islamists) advocate the acquisition of modern technology, while rejecting modern values. What they want, he suggests, is merely "one half of modernity." Others, like the French political scientist François Burgat, have argued that it is precisely the reference to Islam which allows Muslims in general and Islamists in particular to assimilate the "essential references" of the "discourse of modernity," as it first evolved in the West. This includes democracy and human rights. According to Burgat, Islamists aim at an "Islamisation of modernity," and in his opinion they may very well achieve their objective. While Burgat has not substantiated his thesis, a closer look at contemporary models of "Islamic constitutions" may help to support his view, while at the same time revealing some of the contradictions inherent in the project of an "Islamic state."

Another, equally problematic, distinction should be mentioned here: that between a fixed and stable "core" of Islam and its time and place dependent "variables." Contemporary Islamists and Muslim jurists trained in the classical tradition contend that the core or essence of Islam was laid down by God and the Prophet, and cannot be affected by the changing circumstances of time and place. From this immutable core or essence, human minds derive positive norms and regulations in response to their specific needs and aspi-

rations, which are of necessity flexible, reflecting human reasoning based on divine will, rather than divine will itself. Technically speaking, they practice *ijtihad*, which by force of legal reasoning based on the normative texts and regulated by certain procedural rules, derives the norms of social and political order, adapted to specific needs. Reason is given a prominent role in this context, but it is neither autonomous nor dissociated from divine will and guidance. The distinction between a stable core and its variable derivations may seem plausible, or even necessary, if the relevance and vitality of the Islamic message are to be preserved under the most diverse circumstances. But it is essentially arbitrary and subject to variation. For it is not God who made this distinction, but human beings, whose frail and fallible nature Islamists never cease to emphasise.

The distinction between the "core" and dependent "variables," the "stable" and the "flexible" constituents of Islam, is largely based on concepts of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), which are transferred to the sociopolitical sphere. Islamic jurisprudence distinguishes between "duties towards God" (Arabic: *ibadat*), which include the ritual obligations of prayer, fasting, alms-giving and pilgrimage, and "duties towards other human beings" (*muamalat*), covering all other fields of life from the family and politics to the economy and international relations. "Duties towards God" are classified as part of the immutable core of Islam, while "duties towards men"—with the exception of a limited number of issues definitively laid down in the Koran and *Sunna*—are subject to change and re-definition through *ijtihad*. There are obvious parallels with the occidental distinction between the "sacred" and the "profane" which did not, of course, spring directly from the Bible, but from a long and violent history culminating in the medieval dispute on the investiture of the high clergy, during which the respective rights of royalty and the church were defined. Muslim writers tend to avoid the terms "sacred" and "profane," and emphasise that all spheres of human life are subject to divine law. Nevertheless, the differentiation between an unchangeable and a flexible domain could allow for greater autonomy of the political sphere, and prepare the way for a process of secularisation – even though secularisation is certainly not among the aims of those who make the distinction.

That Islam is both "religion and state" (*al-islam din wa-daula*) is a basic assumption shared by contemporary Islamists, who have succeeded in dominating the Islamic discourse at least on this particu-

lar issue. Politics should therefore be determined by the "values of Islam." These values are contained in the *Sharia*, which regulates and shapes all aspects of life, and which for this reason is not confined to the legal sphere. Indeed, it can be argued that the "myth of the *Sharia*" (E. Sivan) has largely replaced the caliph as the symbol of Islamic identity and unity. Hopes of justice, clarity, order, and stability, which play such a crucial role in the thought of present-day Muslims, are vested in the *Sharia*. In this respect, one cannot but note an obvious contradiction: if the *Sharia* is to guarantee unity, order and stability and if it is to provide an inviolable foundation for individual life and the social order, which cannot be challenged by men no matter how powerful, the limits of its adaptability must be narrowly defined. As all adaptation is based on human interpretation and interest, the flexibility of the *Sharia* must be limited, particularly as there is always the risk that certain groups or individuals will claim a monopoly on interpretation. This has happened in the past, not only in Iran under Khomeini, but also in Tunisia under Habib Bourguiba (no advocate of Islamic fundamentalism), and there is no reason to think that it will not be repeated in the future. The risk of political manipulation can only be countered by securing the right of the Muslim community (or the people) to political participation, and by limiting the power of the ruler within the framework of a state of law. What is required, in other words, is a democratic system of government.

The basic values which Islamists consider fundamental to an Islamic order deserve close scrutiny. Interesting, if contradictory, signals come to light which seem to support the thesis of the "Islamisation of modernity" (or is it rather the "modernisation of Islam"?). Present-day authors, including committed Islamists, identify justice and the *jihad*, i.e. any effort on the path of Islam, as basic values of an Islamic order. But they also list freedom, equality and responsibility, which were not part of classical doctrines of Islamic governance, at least not in the politicised sense meant here. This reveals the influence of modern political thought not only in the domain of "techniques," but also in the area of "values." It is true that many Muslims will argue that freedom, equality and responsibility are nothing but the expression of true and unadulterated Islam, which was falsified during the course of history through a combination of error, tyranny and usurpation. Nevertheless, from an outside per-

spective it is the integration of the concepts of freedom and equality into the project of an Islamic state that matters.

The question remains to what extent the general references to freedom, equality and responsibility are translated into concrete rulings concerning specific areas of law and the social order. The Islamic state is characterised by the "application of the *Sharia*." Yet what is widely perceived as divine law essentially refers to positive norms derived from the Koran and the *Sunna* by (male) Muslim jurists. Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) distinguishes in detail between different categories of people, who in important areas of private and public life do not enjoy equality before the law: men and women, Muslims and non-Muslims and, in pre-modern times, freemen and slaves. Consequently, the principle of equality can only be realised if the regulations of traditional *fiqh* were revised and the relevant stipulations of the Koran and *Sunna* given a radical re-interpretation. One way of doing this would be to refer to the ultimate objectives of the *Sharia*, its finality (*maqasid al-sharia*), and to the public interest (*al-maslaha al-amma*) which in cases of conflict are strong enough to overrule discriminating prescriptions of the law.

Many Muslim men and women—even some who regard themselves as Islamists—believe that this objective is attainable. It clearly presupposes extensive *ijtihad*. But what kind of political framework would such a revision require? Who should be authorised to define Islamic norms? Would Islam not be forced to sacrifice some of its traditional openness and plurality so that limits may be set—at least on the level of individual states or regions? To what extent should Muslim scholars and religious experts be involved, and what would be the role of the elected representatives of the people? The crucial question of legislative authority and political power is mentioned in the relevant literature, but it has yet to be given more rigorous thought.

The Islamic republic

As has been emphasised, there is no longer a universal model for an Islamic state—not even the caliphate, which began to decline in the Middle Ages, was abolished in 1924 by the newly established Turkish Republic and despite various attempts has not be re-established since. Even *Sunni* Islamists differ in their visions of an Islamic

order which reflects the spirit of "true Islam" while at the same time meeting the demands of the modern age. It is nonetheless possible to sketch its essential outlines on the basis of a large body of written sources which include several detailed model constitutions.

There is general agreement that sovereignty in the Islamic state lies with God alone. In this sense it is a theocracy. God is not the political head of the polity, however. In the *Sunni* view, His direct intervention in the form of revelation ended with the death of the Prophet Mohammed. Divine sovereignty is manifested in the *Sharia* which contains the norms and values ruling human existence and the entire universe. The authority to "implement" God's law, which in medieval treatises on Islamic governance was the preserve of the imam or caliph assisted by the *ulama*, extends to the community of the faithful in its entirety. The faithful are equal before God. According to classical *fiqh*, this does not imply that they are equal before the law. Some authors, including committed Islamists, go beyond this to assert the equality of all human beings as descendants of Adam, on whom God has bestowed dignity and whom He has set on this earth as His trustees and representatives. The Koranic notion of human dignity and basic equality of all human beings regardless of gender, race or religious affiliation, could make a significant contribution to Islamic concepts of human rights. It requires further elaboration, however, and an effort to bring the general guidelines of the Koran as understood by these authors into harmony with the prescriptions of *Sharia* and *fiqh*.

It is commonly accepted that the "ruler" (the *imam*, caliph, or President) is no more than the representative of the community of believers (*umma*) from whom he derives his authority. In accordance with modern usage, it is often said that "all power originates in the *umma*." This constitutes a radical departure from medieval doctrines which held that the ruler, though subject to the *Sharia*, was God's representative or "shadow on earth." Modern *Sunni* writings paint a different picture: like any other human being, the Islamic head of state is responsible before God, but he is also answerable to the community (the latter is often referred to as the "nation" or the "people," allowing the possibility that non-Muslims or unbelievers may be included). In many respects, his position is similar to that of the American, French or Russian President. On the basis of its institutions, therefore, the Islamic state could be compared to a pres-

idential republic—although its purpose as defined by the constitu-
tion would mark it as quite distinct.

As the Islamic state is founded on the *Sharia* with the explicit
mandate to implement Islamic law and values, it cannot be neutral
with regard to ethical and religious issues. This does not imply that
the ruler or the authorities enjoy religious status. They are not "sa-
cred," at least not for the *Sunni* majority who differs on this point
from the Shiite minority who believes in the superior status of the
imams. For present-day *Sunnis*, there is no place in Islam for a prince
who rules by the grace of God, nor does the clergy hold the reigns
of power. (In the *Sunni* understanding, Islam does not have any clergy.)
The head of state may have religiously defined duties—he must apply
the *Sharia*, defend the faith and lead the faithful in prayer—but he
has no religious authority and is only authorised to interpret the law
if he is properly qualified as a legal scholar (*alim*). *Sunni* Muslims do
not accept Khomeini's doctrine of the "guardianship of the juriscon-
sult" (*wilayat al-faqih*) which, incidentally, is also disputed by high-
ranking Shiite authorities because it presupposes a well-defined hi-
erarchy among the class of scholars and assigns political leadership
to the "most able one" among them.

With regard to the institutions and procedures regulating politi-
cal life in the Islamic republic to be, the influence of Western mod-
els is obvious. These include the principles of representation and
majority rule, the separation of powers and the independence of the
judiciary. The adoption and adaptation of such principles are justi-
fied, and by the same token "Islamised," in terms of the Koran and
Sunna. Thus the establishment of a consultative assembly as the Is-
lamic counterpart of a Western parliament is based on the Koranic
verses calling upon the faithful to practice "*shura*," i.e. to consult with
each other on all important matters. Insofar as it is appropriate to
consider these institutions and procedures as "techniques," consid-
erable modernisation has taken place, for the current repertory of
ideas and institutions would have been as alien to the scholars of
classical Islam as to the thinkers of the European Middle Ages.

What has been preserved from classical doctrines is the charac-
teristic reluctance to recognise the legitimacy of private interests and
political dissent. According to our authors, consultation and deci-
sion-making must be guided entirely by the common good and must
be free from personal interest, which is condemned as selfish and
divisive. *Shura* is not meant to be a platform for different—and

potentially antagonistic—ideas and interests. Its purpose rather is to even out divergent opinions and to preserve unity and harmony on the basis of the much-cited "framework of Islam," the *Sharia*. Argument and debate are not viewed as positively as they are in certain Western circles. On the contrary, there is a strong yearning for unity and harmony. The fact that reality in the Muslim world falls short of these ideals (in this it does not differ from reality elsewhere), merely helps to explain their ongoing appeal.

What are the implications of the debate on values, moral as well as democratic, for relations between "the West" and the Muslim world? It would be a significant achievement if both sides could be persuaded to devote the same level of critical evaluation to the theory and practice of the other as it demands for its own position. People living in the West would be well advised to take note of contemporary Islamic models of society and the state, which are not simply the outgrowth of outdated patterns of Islamic thought and lifestyles, but which reflect present-day needs and aspirations. Islamists should not be condemned as medieval or crypto-fascist simply because they see Islam as the only alternative to existing political systems and ideologies. Whereas it is important to denounce and combat intolerance, violence and authoritarianism among Islamists, or for that matter among any other political group engaged in the present debates and conflicts, the values shared by Muslims and non-Muslims must not be ignored.

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UNIVERSALISM VERSUS RELATIVISM ON THE NECESSITY OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Heiner Bielefeldt

The issue of human rights is one of a variety of political topics on which Western and Islamic perceptions occasionally collide. Mistrust and suspicion exist on both sides. Such feelings are rooted in past experiences, which resonate to the present day, and are in many cases consciously evoked and nurtured.

In the Muslim world, the experience of injustice during the era of European colonialism has left lasting scars. Muslim perceptions of international human rights are consequently coloured by a very real fear of renewed dependence, in a political, economic or cultural sense, on the more powerful West. Not only is the UN Security Council dominated by the West, its human rights policies are marred by contradictions and inconsistencies, raising doubts as to the sincerity of those who champion universal human rights. Suspicion has spawned veritable conspiracy theories, according to which human rights are nothing more than a modern manifestation of Western imperialism. Some Muslims see political advocacy of human rights in the same light as the Crusades and fear that the ultimate aim of international pressure is the imposition of a "Western" or "Christian" moral code and system of society.

In the West, on the other hand, violent conflicts in a number of Islamic countries are habitually perceived as evidence for the traditional conviction that Islam is in essence violent. While the image of Buddhism as a peaceful religion remains unscathed by the inflammatory nationalist campaigns of Singhalese monks in Sri Lanka and while Christianity is only rarely held responsible for the bloody conflict in Northern Ireland, terrorist attacks and suicide commandos by Islamic extremists reinforce the prevailing, centuries-old picture of Islam in the West. In consequence, human rights violations in the Islamic world are unquestioningly linked to the religion and culture of Islam. Islam as a whole is seen as militant and repressive and fundamentally opposed to the ideals of universal equality and freedom.

Notwithstanding conspiracy theories and political propaganda, one has to admit that differences exist in the two sides' understanding of human rights. This is particularly so on questions of religious freedom and the legal status of men and women. Rather than attempting to harmonise or deny such differences, what is needed is a precise clarification of the disparities. The pursuit of such a project of "enlightenment" will reveal that the "Western world" and the "Islamic world" are not, in fact, two rigid opposing blocs, as Samuel Huntington would have us believe in his "Clash of Civilizations." A diversity of views on the issue of human rights exists *within* the West and *within* Islam. While differences and conflicts between the two sides must be acknowledged, recognising the existence of internal disagreement is a first step towards revising the perception of Islam and the West as two monolithic and diametrically opposite worlds.

Human rights—a "Western" concept?

It is helpful at this point to consider the Western human rights discourse, which is frequently referred to by Muslims, be it to agree, to criticise or to engage in polemical attack. In the West, human rights are the subject of much political discussion, focusing on the normative foundations, political prioritisation and legal-institutional implementation of such ideals: natural law concepts and theological arguments contrast with positive law positions; communitarian approaches contradict arguments based on individual rights; the relationship between liberal and social rights generates heated debate; and feminist criticism of the established Western human rights discourse continues to assume a position of growing importance.

For over two hundred years, the relationship between the universality and particularity of human rights has been debated in the West. One line of argument is of particular significance to the dialogue between Western and Muslim worlds, namely the widespread appropriation by Western politicians and academics of human rights as an exclusively "Western" cultural asset. This appropriation, which represents an almost insurmountable obstacle to intercultural understanding, is based on a re-interpretation of human rights as a particularist concept, and can assume a number of forms. The "traditional" variant holds that human rights are part of the cultural legacy of Western and Christian civilisation and that they are a secularised

form of what were originally Christian values. The "modernist" variant, on the other hand, depicts human rights as a rejection of tradition and suggests that the philosophy of the Enlightenment prepared the intellectual ground for their introduction—often in the face of bitter opposition from the Christian churches. From this perspective, human rights are seen to be rooted in Western civilisation, particularly in the form it has assumed since the French revolution.

The effect of both the traditionalist and the modernist forms of Western human rights appropriation is to undermine the universalistic approach or to link it with imperialist ambitions. Thus, Muslims see their worst suspicions confirmed: human rights appear to be nothing more than a prolongation of the Christian Crusades or of the aggressive cultural mission of European colonial rulers. In the former, the imaginary line of conflict runs between Christianity and Islam, while in the latter it lies between Western modernity and Oriental pre-modernity. An additional source of uncertainty for Muslims is the frequent lack of clarity as to which of the two variants, Christianity or secular Enlightenment, the "West" represents. The question of who or what the "harmless" and supposedly purely geographical term, the "West," stands for, is rarely asked, much less answered on the Western side of the debate, yet it is of critical importance for intercultural dialogue and "Western-Islamic" discussion of human rights.

Human rights should not be seen as the exclusive achievement of Western or Christian tradition, or as an immanent component of the project of modern Western civilisation. They derive rather from a fundamental concern for human dignity, which is under particular threat in the modern age, not least as a result of widespread dehumanisation in the modern capitalist system and the modern bureaucratic state. While the philosophical roots of the idea of universal human dignity can be traced back to antiquity, it has only received political recognition in the modern age. Specifically modern experiences of crisis and injustice have lent legitimacy to demands for universal and equal rights of liberty and participation. The global effects of modernity, with its opportunities, its risks and its dangers have necessitated the political and legal protection of human existence and coexistence in all corners of the world. Thus, there are two reasons for a universalistic approach to human rights: the *normative* reason is the equal and inalienable dignity of every human being;

the *sociological* reason is the world-wide spread of the territorial state and modern capitalism, which has made it necessary to protect conditions for a humane existence through the universal adoption of human rights.

The issue of human rights is without historical precedent in its universalistic and emancipatory orientation. While such rights cannot be "derived" from one religious tradition such as Western Christianity, it is possible to reconcile them with humane elements of the religious tradition, particularly with the idea of human dignity. The Christian churches, having abandoned their initial hesitation and opposition, recognised the kinship between their own ethical demands and the modern ethos of freedom, which is enshrined in the human rights ideal. The question now needs to be addressed whether and to what extent human rights can become religiously and culturally established in Islam. This is a question which has provoked a multiplicity of answers from the Muslim side and is the subject of heated inner-Islamic debate.

On the variety of Islamic human rights concepts

Muslim attitudes to human rights are as varied as Western human rights concepts, and controversy on the subject is just as common in the Islamic world as it is in the West: liberals clash with socialists, rationalists with traditionalists and the advocates of thoroughgoing emancipation with the supporters of a strong state. A similar diversity of views is evident in the debate on the cultural or religious derivation of human rights. Existing positions cover a wide spectrum from one-sided demands for the "Islamisation" of human rights through pragmatic conciliatory efforts to decidedly secular concepts.

What is involved in the comprehensive "Islamisation" of human rights was demonstrated at the fourth German-Iranian Human Rights Conference in November 1994.[1] In the course of the Teheran conference, Ayatollah Taskhiri from Ghom emphasised the pre-eminence of the Islamic understanding of human rights, on the grounds that it is based on divine revelation rather than on mere human direc-

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[1] See Heiner Bielefeldt. 1995. Auseinandersetzung um die Menschenrechte. Zum vierten deutsch-iranischen Menschenrechtsseminar, 8.-10. November 1994 in Teheran, Conference report in *Orient* 1: 19-27.

tives. The theological foundation of human rights, he continued, implies that only practising Muslims can have a complete understanding of the issue. It is obvious that such an approach diametrically contradicts the universalistic essence of human rights. Even the idea of universal human dignity was qualified by Taskhiri, who distinguished between "potential" and "actual" dignity: Islamic precepts, he said, call on all human beings to lead a life which is pleasing in the sight of God, thus all men "potentially" have the same degree of dignity. However, those who follow their calling and live a truly religious life can claim to have a higher level of "actual" dignity than those who ignore their calling. Thus the idea of human dignity, from which the *equality* of all human beings is derived in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is used in Taskhiri's argument to justify *inequality* and the superiority of practising Muslims over people of other faiths and non-believers. The concept of liberty was given a similarly Islamist interpretation at the Teheran Conference, whereby it can serve as a pretext for the state to implement "forcible liberation" from vice and ignorance. Two female Iranian parliamentarians argued, for example, that the emancipation of women should be politically enforced by acknowledging and fostering women's divinely-ordained role in family and society. Attempts were also made to justify restrictions on the freedom of religion and opinion by referring to man's God-given "right" to protection against uncertainty and temptation.

The tendency to give the concept of human rights an authoritarian, Islamist interpretation is also evident in a number of international Islamic human rights documents. While it is not legally binding, the most politically significant document of this kind is the declaration of "Human Rights in Islam," which was published by the *Organisation of the Islamic Conference* in August 1990 in Cairo.[2] The rights listed in the Cairo declaration are subject to the constraint that they concur with Islamic law (*Sharia*) and that they are interpreted according to the *Sharia*. In cases of conflict between Islamic *Sharia* and modern human rights concepts, the *Sharia* must be given priority. The contradiction with the international human rights standards of the United Nations is particularly obvious in Article 10 of the Cairo declaration, which stresses the superiority of Islam over other reli-

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[2] The declaration is published in English in: *Conscience and Liberty. International Journal of Religious Freedom*, Spring, 1991: 90-95.

gions, thereby denying equality to followers of other faiths and the freedom to do missionary work or convert to another religion. The article reads: "Islam is the religion of unspoiled nature. It is prohibited to exercise any form of compulsion on man or to exploit his poverty or ignorance in order to convert him to another religion or to atheism."

While the Cairo declaration acknowledges that men and women have equal dignity and that women have a legal position, nowhere does it state that men and women have equal *rights*. The effect of the declaration is, rather, to solidify the traditional roles of the sexes and in this it also falls short of the international standards of the United Nations. Finally, in the case of the right to life and the right to freedom from bodily harm, the declaration defers to *Sharia*. The harsh corporal punishments contained in traditional *Sharia*, which are still practised in some Islamic countries such as Iran, Sudan and Saudi-Arabia, are not questioned in the declaration.

The uncritical merging of human rights with Islamic *Sharia* is typical of human rights considerations in the conservative and Islamist circles of Islam. Even conservative Muslims, however, occasionally employ modern human rights viewpoints, be it consciously or unconsciously, in the interpretation of *Sharia*. While this lack of agreement may be due to the absence of a uniform interpretation of the *Sharia*, it also reflects the transformation of living conditions and moral concepts in modern-day society. Apart from some of the more purist schools, the *Sharia* has always been open to flexible interpretations and to the adaptation of its norms to the necessities of life. Thus a humanitarian pragmatism has developed, which remains influential to this day, particularly in popular Islam.

On the subject of the harsh *Sharia* punishments, for example, Muslims like to point to the role-model of the second caliph, Omar, who is said to have given orders that the Koranic punishment for theft, i.e. amputation of the hand, should not be imposed in times of hunger and need. Many Muslims take this to mean that the corporal punishments of the *Sharia* must be seen as a religious-ethical "admonition" rather than an enforceable component of criminal law. In any case, *Sharia* punishments of this kind have long been abolished in most Islamic countries, and calls for their re-introduction emanate only from a radical minority.

Even marriage and family law, which has always been at the core of *Sharia*, displays a certain flexibility, allowing for the pragmatic

bridging of traditional Islamic law with modern human rights. As early as the end of the nineteenth century, Mohammed Abduh, then Grand Mufti of Egypt, suggested that the Koran did not, in fact, endorse polygamy. While the Koran recognises the theoretical possibility of a man's marrying more than one woman, this is subject to the condition that he treat all his wives equally—a requirement which in the express words of the Koran is rarely met. This example demonstrates that demands for a reform of family law leading to an improved legal status for women can frequently be substantiated by the Koran with arguments which should also be acceptable to more conservative Muslims.

Many liberal and intellectual Muslims are not content with the pragmatic and eclectic merging of *Sharia* with modern legal concepts, but demand instead an informed criticism of the Islamic legal tradition as a whole. This does not necessarily imply rejecting the *Sharia*. Many reform-oriented Muslims are concerned rather to reduce *Sharia* to its religious-ethical core. As well as paving the way for political and legal reform, this would make it possible to re-interpret the normative regulations of *Sharia* and to practise them in a manner that reflects mature religious belief.

In this context, modernist Muslims frequently point out that the term *Sharia* is not, in fact, primarily a juridic category. "*Sharia*," they argue, literally means "path," rather than "law" or "jurisprudence." The Algerian historian, Ali Merad, stresses that *Sharia* originally stood for "the way which leads to the drinking trough, to water, the source of life."[3] For Merad, it is nothing less than a regrettable perversion that the ethical-religious path of *Sharia* has become an instrument of authoritarian regimentation or militant power politics. "A few lines of the Koran, which are adaptable, light, ethereal and spiritual, have been moulded into steel and bombs. (...) What is happening today is a form of deception, whereby the word of God and Koranic law are concealed by a legal system, 90 per cent of which is historically determined and the work of man."[4]

The first step towards a new understanding of *Sharia* is to liberate it from its concealment in a medieval legal casuistry. Some Muslims go a step further and subject the primary sources of *Sharia*, the Koran and *Sunna*, to critical historical examination. The Sudanese jurist and

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[3] Quoted in Schwartländer (ed.). 1993: 392.
[4] Ibid.

human rights activist, Abdullahi Ahmed an-Naim, does so in a systematic and methodologically reflected manner, as does the Egyptian literary critic, Nasser Hamid Abu Zayd. While their approaches differ in many important respects, both agree that Koranic stipulations must be understood within the historical and social context in which revelation occurred. The literal transference of such stipulations to the very different context of modern industrialised society is, they suggest, anachronistic. Abu Zayd stresses that such transference "freezes" the Koranic text and degrades it to an instrument of reactionary politics. He calls instead for a dynamic understanding of the text of revelation: its pronounced ethical-emancipatory impulse, leading to an improved legal status for women, for example, will only become apparent if it is employed in the service of human rights and democracy. Thus, in an-Naim's and Abu Zayd's view of things, modern notions of religious freedom and equality of the sexes are not only compatible with the Koran, they also form the cognitive horizon within which Muslims must attempt to rediscover the original dynamism of the Koranic message of liberation. In this way, Koranic verses which refer to human dignity and responsibility and to man's calling as God's "deputy" on earth may be interpreted in the modern context as theological grounds for a commitment to human rights.

In modern Koran interpretations of this kind, political secularism, which is rejected by many Muslims as anti-religious and akin to atheism, appears in a new light. When secularism (a concept which is also ambivalent and disputed in the Western debate) is interpreted as the necessary counterpart of religious freedom, it can be recognised and acknowledged from a religious point of view. In 1925, immediately following the abolition of the caliphate by Kemal Atatürk, a book was published in Egypt with the title "Islam and the Basis of Power."[5] In it, the author, Ali Abdel Raziq, outlines Islamic grounds for political secularism. He attacks as blasphemy the arrogance of a religious-political authority, which gave the caliph the title "God's shadow on earth." While God's uniqueness and transcendence are demeaned and ultimately denied when His name is used in the service of power politics, Abdel Raziq argues for a clear

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[5] Excerpts in Andreas Meier. 1994. *Der politische Auftrag des Islam. Programme und Kritik zwischen Fundamentalismus und Reformen: Originalstimmen aus der islamischen Welt.* Wuppertal: Peter Hammer.

distinction between religion and politics in order to honour God. He contends that man's modesty complements God's sovereignty: in recognition of his mortality and fallibility, man should strive to conduct his communal life in a democratic system which is open to correction and reform. Islamic secularists contend that secularism is not, as is frequently believed, an anti-religious stance, but an expression of respect for the transcendence of God. Like Abdel Raziq, Fuad Zakariya stresses that "secularism refuses to make man into a God or an infallible being. It recognises the limitations of reason and acknowledges the shortcomings of existing political and social systems. In view of these shortcomings, it strives for improvements and reforms, and aims to create a more humane and just world."[6]

Intercultural dialogue on human rights

As a pre-condition for intercultural understanding on human rights, "the West" and "Islam" should no longer be seen as two more or less monolithic blocs. It must be recognised that a plurality of positions on human rights exists not only in the West but also in the predominantly Islamic countries. While fundamentalist hardliners are gaining ground in many areas of the Islamic world today, the situation is more difficult for Muslim liberals and secularists. Like Abdel Raziq, who was expelled from the *Azhar* University following his plea for an Islamic interpretation of political secularism, Abu Zayd, the most recent prominent victim of growing Islamist repression, was declared an "apostate" by an Egyptian court on the basis of his modern Koran exegesis. As the *Sharia* prohibits marriage between a non-Muslim man and a Muslim woman, his marriage was forcibly dissolved as a result.

While threatened human rights advocates must be given political support from Europe, such solidarity should not consist in labelling as "Westernist" the supporters of universal human rights. What may sound positive to Western ears, and may even be intended as a compliment, can easily be misinterpreted as justifying the cultural, religious and political exclusion to which critical Muslim intellectuals are frequently subjected. In such cases, Islamist excommunication and the unthinking and enthusiastic support of the West for

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[6] Quoted in Lüders (ed.). 1992: 243.

allegedly "Westernised" dissidents are merely two sides of the same coin.

It cannot be stressed often enough that the ideal of universal human rights does not imply a uniform, global mono-culture. The human rights concept encourages a plurality of religious, philosophical and cultural world views and lifestyles. Pluralism and multiculturalism also apply to the human rights issue itself: it rests on the central ethical idea of human dignity, which is open to a variety of philosophical interpretations and religious symbols. This plurality of possible interpretations is not arbitrary, however, and must conform to the principles of universal freedom and equal participation. Thus intercultural dialogue on human rights does not involve striving for an easy harmony and compromise which, intentionally or otherwise, forfeits the ideals of freedom and equality in favour of authoritarian concepts. It is only through a willingness to face conflict for the sake of human dignity and freedom, that intercultural dialogue on human rights will become serious and binding.

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FROM EXOTIC HAREM BEAUTY TO ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST. WOMEN IN ISLAM

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Most popular perceptions about Islam originated in travel reports, novels and pictures dating back to the colonial era. Europeans have always been fascinated by the splendid palaces and esoteric colourful bazaars, by the mysticism and by the eroticism of the harem. At the same time, a perception of the Orient as uncivilised, barbaric and despotic has persisted. "Classical" Oriental stereotypes, which include the misogyny of Islam and the depravity of the Prophet, continue to shape images of the Islamic world today, influencing areas such as tourism advertising and media reporting.

The most obvious counterexample to the seductive lady of the harem, who spends her days preening herself for her master, is the female fundamentalist or Islamic fanatic. In 1978/79, world opinion was disturbed by TV pictures of Iranian women clad in black veils demonstrating against the regime of the Shah. Betty Mahmoody's "Not without my daughter," published at the end of the 1980s, made a greater impact than practically any other book about the subject. Following her success, countless examples of "veil literature" appeared in which American, Iranian and Arab authors describe the painful experiences of Muslim women.

Western literature and the Western media alike paint a uniformly dismal picture of Islam and the living conditions of Muslim women. Nevertheless, many women in Turkey, Egypt and other Islamic countries are re-turning to Islam. From a Western perspective, this development is seen as regressive and contrary to the ideals of enlightenment, democracy, human rights and emancipation. In the Islamic world, it has been similarly condemned by the advocates of secular, liberal and left-wing development models. The impoverishment and hopelessness of large sections of the population as well as the failure of capitalist and socialist development concepts are blamed for the Islamic renaissance. The political elite of the Muslim nations, it is argued, failed to initiate democratic and social reforms following independence, focusing instead on increasing their own power and wealth. Such failures are said to have facilitated the rise of

fundamentalism by eliminating left-wing opposition forces and by
undoing initial moves towards democratisation and female emanci-
pation.

   That the Islamist movements' supporters and members include
many women is undeniable. That these women might be there on
the basis of a conscious and rational decision is more difficult to
apprehend, however. They are seen as victims of venal manipula-
tion by the *mullahs*, as naive creatures, seduced by free Islamic clothing
and other material benefits, or as particularly timid and helpless. The
Islamists, it is claimed, promise them protection and security in return
for subservience and obedience.

The veil as a symbol of cultural identity

The most conspicuous aspect of the trend towards re-Islamisation
is the reappearance of the veil. In the Koran, men and women are
warned equally against unchastity (Surah 24:31-32), and it is stipu-
lated that clothing should loosely cover the whole body. In many
parts of the Islamic world it was (and still is) common for women to
keep their hair covered. The way in which this is enforced differs
considerably from country to country, however. Why more and more
women, including many academics and other middle-class women
whose mothers had "emancipated" themselves from *chador* and head-
scarf, have opted to wear the veil, is the subject of much debate. The
well-known Moroccan sociologist, Fatema Mernissi (1991), for ex-
ample, has highlighted social and political motives for its reappear-
ance. Women, she argues, used to be identified with pre-Islamic
Goddesses and were therefore required to cover themselves in or-
der to purge the Islamic community of all remnants of pre-Islamic
disorder. Nawal al-Saadawi contends, on the other hand, that there
are practical reasons for the veiling of women: in the same way as
a man locks his car to prevent it from being stolen, he veils his wife
to label her as his private property.[1]

   In her book, "The Forbidden Modern" (1996), Nilüfer Göle shows
how social and political developments in Turkey have been affect-
ed by re-veiling and the renaissance of Islamic values and lifestyles.

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[1] Nawal el-Saadawi. 1994. "Der doppelte Standard." In *Menschenbilder—
Menschenrechte. Islam und Orient: Kulturen im Konflikt*. Zürich: Unionsverlag.

She demonstrates that the Turkish Islamist movement did not originate in the rural areas or the slums of big cities, as might be expected, but that it gained most of its support from socially integrated urban groups, such as students, doctors, engineers and civil servants. Their family backgrounds are mostly rural and traditional, however. Most of the students and other insurgent women interviewed by Göle began wearing the headscarf while they were still at school. In many cases they disregarded the wishes of their families from whom they differed both in terms of education and lifestyle as well as in their political interpretation of the primary Islamic sources. Göle maintains that the new Islamic dress expresses something completely different than the headscarf traditionally worn in rural areas of Turkey and elsewhere. Contrary to the impression often created by the Islamists themselves, their concept of culture is not static or unchanging. Thus, while the veil does symbolise cultural identity, it does not signal a return to traditional culture in which patriarchial structures determined a strict segregation of the sexes and the exclusion of women from public life.

The resurfacing of Islam in the political and social arena and the appearance of the new female Islamist have severely shaken Turkey's self-image. Göle points out that the advent of modernity and the establishment of a secular and scientific system of education were wrongly perceived to signal the disappearance of religion and tradition. While the opponents of Islamism brand it as reactionary, and have been instrumental in banning the headscarf in Turkish universities, Göle takes a different approach. She argues that veiling is a result of the re-interpretation of Islam by new, urbanised social groups who have become detached from traditional beliefs and practices and have politicised religion in order to assert themselves against modernity.

In this respect, Islamist movements have much in common with civil rights movements, and with those supporting feminist, environmental or ethnic causes. Like postmodernism, Islamism is concerned with identity creation, and focuses on the particular and local as opposed to the uniform and abstract. Islamic movements have set about re-forming Muslim identity and encouraging Muslims to become active participants in a collective whole. Interpreted in this way, Islam is not the antithesis of modernity. Rather, it is a means of coming to terms with modern-day society and a compass to aid orientation through life. The "new veil" represents a specifically

Islamic social order and the distinctiveness of Islam, while the female body and female sexuality have become a political arena in which the struggle against modernity's homogenising and egalitarian forces takes place.

<div align="center">Muslim immigrant women: caught between two cultures?</div>

There are currently between two and a half and three million Muslims living in Germany. Most are of Turkish origin. Muslim women who are unable or unwilling to "emancipate" themselves from wearing the headscarf are frequently suspected of complicity with Islamist fundamentalists. Equally common is the view that they are pitiable victims of an Islamic partriarchy whose influence extends even to countries like Germany, France and Great Britain. German newspapers and magazines, from *Bravo* and *Bild* to *Emma* and *Spiegel*, frequently publish reports about young women bullied by fathers, brothers or husbands, and forced into marriage in Turkey—a country that is alien to them—or murdered for the slightest transgression.

The situation of second or third generation Turkish women who have grown up in Germany is seen as particularly difficult. On April 16, 1994, the *tageszeitung* newspaper published a number of articles on the subject of "Turkish girls in Germany," which began with the following words: "Forced marriages and the pressure to conform to a traditional female role are still everyday realities for many young Turkish women in Germany. Those who resist are forced into submission through a mixture of psychological and physical pressure. In many cases, their only alternative is to take flight from their families and begin a new life with a partly Turkish, partly German identity." The compilation of articles was illustrated with a picture of two cheerful young women, their flowing hair uncovered. "These girls are not interested in headscarf Islam," the journalist comments appreciatively. This type of analysis has serious consequences for the social, educational and professional opportunities of the Muslim community. One of the articles in the *tageszeitung* deals with the difficulties in the labour market faced by those who insist on wearing the headscarf. Instead of targeting recruitment practices in Germany, it focuses on the religiously motivated rigour of Muslim parents who allegedly spoil their daughters' prospects by "shackling"

them in this way.[2] The idea that these young women might not be subjected to force is not entertained even as a theoretical possibility. Nor is the fact that yielding to societal pressure and discarding the scarf does not necessarily lead to liberation.

This essay does not set out to ignore or trivialise actual problems, of which there are many: narrow-minded and dogmatic Islamic teachers; the socially and intellectually limiting milieu of the ghetto; and Turkish parents who stifle their daughters' personalities and severely punish "wilfulness." Calls for the emancipation of Muslim women and an adaptation to Western lifestyles are often heard in this context. The opponents of Islam ignore the fact that many of the "poor headscarf girls" are students and qualified professionals, with an interest in politics, sports and travel—*and* a deep-seated loyalty to their religion and their Islamic way of life. The freedom to make independent decisions, which is perceived to be lacking in Islam in general and in the "headscarf women" in particular, presupposes the existence of real alternatives. However, the situation today is characterised by an unequal contest between two systems of values and two ways of life. One model is regarded as intrinsically free and emancipated, providing the framework for professional success and private fulfilment; the other as repressive, a source of unhappiness and a stumbling block to advancement in society.

The teachings of Islam

An in-depth analysis of the position of women as defined by the Koran and the written tradition, and the *Ahadith* in particular, is beyond the scope of this essay. A short sketch must therefore suffice. In the Koran, men and women are equal in value. The two sexes were created from one being (Surah 4:1; 7:189) and questions of faith, behavioural norms and social responsibilities are consistently directed at both men and women (Surah 9:71). The rights and obligations of the individual are determined by his or her position in society, the smallest unit of which is the family. Islam differs from Christianity in its positive evaluation of sexuality, which is, however, strictly confined to marriage. In the Islamic view of things,

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[2] Vera Gaserow, "Das Kopftuch wird zum Fallstrick." *Die tageszeitung*, March 8, 1995.

marriage is a civil contract rather than a sacrament, in which men and women are a "garment" for each other. They complement and protect one another (Surah 2:187) and God has placed love and mercy between them as a sign (Surah 30:21). Women cannot be forced into marriage against their will and have the right to get a divorce.

Men are allowed to marry up to four women (Surah 4:2-3); far from authorising them to give free reign to their harem fantasies, however, the intent of this Koran verse is to drastically curtail polygamy. Men are obliged to treat all their wives equally. As is obvious from the context—a discussion of how to treat orphans and their possessions—the aim is to ensure that women, who would otherwise be helpless and impoverished, are provided for. Polygamy is rejected with the comment: "ye are never able to do justice between wives, even if it is your ardent desire" (Surah 4:129).[3] In principle, women are free to work outside the home, to receive an education and to participate in political life and public affairs. They have control over their property and can engage freely in commercial transactions.

Leaving aside intentional distortions and defamatory interpretations, there are several reasons for the perception of Islam as misogynist: misinterpretations of the Koran and other Islamic sources; the confusion of religion with traditions which are specific to a particular region or social stratum; and a lack of familiarity with alternative views of humanity and society and with differing historical experiences.

The problematic nature of Koran interpretations and translations—which can only ever be approximations of the Arabic original—may be illustrated by the example of Surah 4 (Women), verse 34. This verse deals with man's pre-eminence over woman and his right to use corporal punishment against women. While phrases like "men are better than women" and the "superiority of men" are often used in the translation of the passage, the Orientalist Abdoldjavad Falaturi (1990) argues that an unbiased translator would correctly interpret the key term *qawamuna* as "look after." Thus, this verse actually refers to man's responsibility for the support and welfare of women, and prohibits him from mistreating his wife.

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[3] It must be remembered that from an Islamic point of view all translations are only approaches to the original.

Several *Ahadith* (sayings of the Prophet) express a disapproval of beating. The Prophet, who is a role model for all believers, is known to have resolved his own marital conflicts by engaging in dialogue. If necessary, he "withdrew affection," but he never used force. According to Abdoldjavad Falaturi, man's right to use corporal punishment against women is no longer an issue in more recent legal literature. These examples illustrate how important it is not to rely blindly on translations, and to consider the particular context as well as additional details handed down by tradition. It must be said, however, that Islamic clerics and scholars (who do not have to rely on translations) have contributed to an interpretation of Islam which supports hierarchical and patriarchal structures.

Much of what is commonly considered "typically Islamic" is based on equating "Islam" with misinterpretations of religious stipulations and on confusing religion with tradition. Even authors who might be expected to distinguish between a religiously binding text and a common idiom are guilty of misrepresenting Islam. Fatema Mernissi (1975), for instance, supports her contention that the purpose of polygamy is to humiliate women by referring to the Moroccan saying: "You should humiliate a woman by taking another (into your home)."

Acrimonious debates about whether or not Islam permits the emancipation of women point to fundamental differences between Islamic and Western views of humanity. The ideal personality in the West is an autonomous individual; in Islam it is a union of the person with society. Unlike their Western counterparts, Muslim women devote themselves to their husbands, their families and their society. The concept of equal rights for men and women, considered a *sine qua non* of human rights and emancipation in the West, is usually taken by Muslims to imply a convergence of the sexes. This is considered undesirable from an Islamic point of view, which regards inequality as one of the basic principles of creation.

While the "internalising" culture of the West values the internalisation of moral principles and social norms, "externalising" cultures like Islam attach importance to external control systems and boundaries. Divergent attitudes towards sexuality and the relationship between the sexes are the result. The segregation of the sexes may appear to Western eyes to be disreputable and injurious to women; from an Islamic perspective it is permissible and desirable. Closely related to concepts of externalisation and internalisation are the

differing perceptions of the human body. The "modern" Western perception is oriented to health, fitness and youth and regards nudity as an expression of autonomy and freedom. The Muslim approach, on the other hand, emphasises cleanliness, fasting and prayer.

Women's rights from an Islamic perspective

An enormous body of literature exists on the subject of women's rights and Islam. It includes countless European and American publications on "Women and Islam," in addition to numerous research papers, narratives and treatises published in the Islamic world. Barbara Stowasser (1993) divides the authors—mainly men—into *modernists* in the tradition of Mohammed Abduh, Rashid Rida and Qasim Amin, who advocate better education, professional opportunities and political participation for women; *conservatives*, who reject these demands as an imperialist conspiracy and consider women to be physically inferior; and *fundamentalists* or *integrists,* who call for a return to the *Sharia* and an "Islamic lifestyle" and the exclusion of women from political life.

While Islamism is invariably equated with a reactionary view of women, Nadjib Ghadbian (1995) calls for a more informed interpretation. He draws attention to the fact that some of the first Islamists, far from being narrow-minded custodians of tradition, advocated religious and secular education for girls. The founder of the Egyptian *Muslim Brotherhood*, Hasan al-Banna, intended both women and men to adopt his project of an Islamic society, and co-operated closely with Zainab al-Ghazali, who established the *Muslim Sisterhood*. Ghadbian does point out, however, that the first Islamists had conservative ideas on women's role in society. They viewed the home as women's natural domain and considered work outside the home appropriate only in the service of other women. Political involvement was also seen as detrimental to the development of female and maternal qualities. It should not be forgotten, however, that in the mid-1950s when the founder of the Syrian *Muslim Brotherhood*, Mustafa al-Sibai, was arguing against a public role for women, female suffrage had yet to be introduced in Switzerland.

Ghadbian maintains that persistent demands for the "liberation" of Muslim women as a basic element of Western power politics since colonial times, has actually increased the strength and perseverance

of the conservative position. At the same time, the conservative position has diminished in importance and influence in recent years. Islamist parties in different countries began to consider women's rights and to welcome the participation of women when they were finally allowed to contest elections. Nevertheless, the Islamist ranks continue to include many conservatives, reformers and extremists. (Ghadbian characterises the latter as an intellectually insignificant fringe group whose prominence results mainly from acts of violence.) Despite the advances, Ghadbian maintains that the Islamists have not done enough to integrate women into their movements and to actively combat the suppression of women. Future developments will be judged by whether or not they succeed in involving women in political and social decision-making.

In many Islamic countries today, there are two women's movements: one influenced by Western (left-wing, feminist and secular) ideas, the other Islamic. Feminists in both the West and the Islamic world disagree on the question of "fundamentalism." While some are sympathetic to the fact that women wear the veil and join "fundamentalist" groups in order to go to university, others call for the unequivocal rejection of fundamentalism. The latter group includes Nawal al-Saadawi, who equates Islam with out-dated traditions, and views it as an obstacle to development and liberation. She argues that critical thought can only result from the separation of state and religion. In Turkey, Algeria and elsewhere, where feminists and left-wingers have joined forces in defence of secularism and women's rights, polarisation is on the increase.

Fatema Mernissi is well-known in Europe for her criticism of "fundamentalism" and the catastrophic impact of re-Islamisation on the position of Muslim women. She has made an outstanding contribution to research on the subject with her studies of Islamic source texts and the position of women in the early days of Islam. Her writings do contain many contradictory statements and arguments, however. While emphasising the advantages Islam has bestowed on women and the ongoing importance of Islam for cultural identity, she also contends that women were happier and had a higher social status in pre-Islamic times. Furthermore she maintains that Islam is fundamentally incompatible with democracy and human rights. Mernissi's studies of Islam are extremely popular with European feminists and left-wingers, who disregard the inconsistencies in her writings. Labelled by some as "Westernised," her ideas may be as

relevant to the debate as non-orthodox interpretations of Islam. However, her claim that she speaks for *all* Muslim women must be approached with caution.

The Islamic women's movement is still in its infancy and Nilüfer Göle regards as paradoxical the fact that Islam has put women to the fore at a time of increasing politicisation. The results of her study show that Islamist women are not prepared to restrict themselves to the traditional female role. On the contrary, they are critical of patriarchal structures and an everyday reality which falls far short of the Islamic ideal. Female academics and politically active women examine their situation with a critical eye, discussing questions such as the divorce laws in Malaysia and Iran, and the relationship between feminist concepts and Islamic positions. They look back to the early days of Islam and the model of the socially respected and publicly visible "mothers of the faithful" as well as to famous female figures such as Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet. (Although insufficient research has been carried out on the role of women in Islamic history, it is known that there were many prominent female theologians, writers and—most importantly—mystics.)

Perspectives: with Islam towards a new modernity

The diverging evaluations of re-Islamisation in the Islamic countries and of its impact on the position of women in particular, are essentially the result of two contrasting interpretations of modernity. In the West, modernisation is equated with industrialisation and material progress and with a segmentation of society into different social spheres, e.g. politics, art and religion. It is synonymous with enlightenment, democracy, human rights and the emancipation of women. While the negative aspects of this process are acknowledged, the slogan "West is best" is generally accepted, especially since the collapse of the "Second," socialist world and the defeat of socialism. Najere Tohidi, for example, stresses that capitalism is not to blame for the economic plight of Islamic countries or for their disregard for democracy and human rights. The main problem, rather, is the lack of civil reform. The example of the Scandinavian countries, she argues, shows that capitalism—subject to social controls—can certainly be to the advantage of women.

The history of modernisation is viewed rather differently from an

Islamic perspective. Following their contacts with Western Europe in the 18th century, a small elite in the Islamic world became aware of the political, economic and cultural backwardness of their own countries. Europe became the model for a modernisation programme involving administrative, educational and military reform. The liberation of women became a priority, with particular emphasis on the establishment of girls' schools and on equal participation by women in public life. Mentors of the Arab and Turkish women's movement such as Qasim Amin (Egypt) and Ziya Gökalp (Turkey) emulated European standards in their denunciation of the powerlessness and oppression of Islamic women as symbolised by veiling. In 1923, Huda Sharawi, an aristocrat and pioneer of the women's movement in Egypt, threw her veil symbolically into the sea on her return from an international women's conference in Rome. This was the beginning of a campaign which was received positively by upper class women in Egypt. The Turkish women's movement was similarly influenced by Western ideals of freedom and beauty. Kemal Atatürk sent his wife Latifa—a lawyer who was educated in France—to the most remote parts of the country without a veil. Oriental garments and the customs of the harem were replaced by fashionable clothing and "civilised" practices with Atatürk instructing his ministers and their wives to attend European-style dances.

Göle refers to the history of modernisation in Turkey as a history of conflict between two cultural models. The same can be said of other Islamic countries. According to Göle, Kemalist reforms influenced all spheres of society and politics, from the system of government, institutions of state and the legal system, to cultural codes, lifestyles, clothing and, last but not least, gender-specific identity patterns. The Kemalists expected women to look and behave like their European sisters. Their role model was the no-nonsense, matter-of-fact teacher or nurse rather than the Western fashion model. Kemalist reforms aimed to liberate women from the influence of religion, and women's role was to advance Westernisation and secularisation (Göle). The Islamic movement in Turkey and elsewhere is now attempting to arrest this process. According to Göle, its objective is to re-create the collective Muslim identity which was previously erased from memory and to make Muslims active participants in society once again. It is against the background of these experiences and objectives that further discussion about emancipation and cultural identity must be conducted.

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WEST-EASTERN CULTURES OF FEAR
VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM IN ISLAM

Thomas Scheffler

The Muslim Orient of the late 20th-century is generally depicted in the Western mass media as an epicentre of dangerous eruptions of violence, for which the religion professed by most of its inhabitants, i.e. Islam, is held responsible. That this is so is not merely due to eurocentric projections or the cultivation of hostile perceptions. Violence is indeed a characteristic of the Islamic Orient. But is it first and foremost attributable to religious factors? A survey of the most important violent conflicts in the region does not corroborate this view, but points instead to authoritarian power structures as the main source of violence.

A panorama of political violence

A review of the Near and Middle East since 1945 brings to light at least four major conflict types:

1. *Uprisings against foreign rule*: these include in the first instance the bloody struggles against French colonial rule in Morocco (1952-1955), Tunisia (1953/54) and Algeria (1954-1962) and against British rule in Egypt (1946-1952), Palestine (1946-1948) and Aden (1963-1967); in more recent times, the resistance to Israel's occupation of West Jordan and the Gaza Strip (1967ff.) and to the annexation by Morocco of the former Spanish Sahara (1975/79ff.); the transformation of parts of Southern Lebanon into an Israeli "security zone" (1978ff.); and the Soviet invasions of Afghanistan (1979-1989) and Chechnya (1994-1996, 1999ff.).

2. *Post-colonial military interventions by foreign powers*: in particular, the British-French Suez expedition (1956); the American military intervention in Lebanon (1958); the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979-1989); the war conducted by an American-led alliance under the aegis of the United Nations against Iraq following its occupation of Kuwait (1991); and multinational military interventions

for "humanitarian purposes" in Lebanon (1982-1984) and Somalia (1992-1995).

3. *Violent conflicts between the post-colonial states of the region*: in particular the major Arab-Israeli wars (1948/49, 1956, 1967, 1973), the wars between Pakistan and India (1947/48, 1965, 1971), Algeria and Morocco (1962/63), Somalia and Ethiopia (1964, 1977/78), North and South Yemen (1972, 1978/79), Iraq and Iran (1980-1988), Iraq and Kuwait (1990/91), Armenia and Azerbaijan (from 1988) and the Turkish invasion of Northern Cyprus (1974). In addition, there is the grey area of border skirmishes, cross-border interventions and trans-national security measures, which are difficult to define under international law. These include the Palestinian diaspora's guerrilla actions against Israel since 1948, the Israeli-Egyptian "war of attrition" (1969/70), the Israeli military intervention in Lebanon (particularly 1978, 1982/83 and 1996) and Turkish persecution of Kurdish guerrillas in Iraq and Iran. To these can be added the attempts by many governments to destabilise other, "non-friendly" states and to exert pressure on them through a combination of assassination attempts, bomb attacks and covert support for armed opposition groups.

4. *Internal conflicts within the post-colonial states of the region*: here too we can identify a number of different types of conflict. Domestic conflicts are at their most protracted and most bloody when they are linked with *local* and *particularist* (i.e. ethno-national, ethno-religious, regionalist and tribal) loyalties and tensions. These include the Kurdish wars in Iran (1946, 1979ff.), Iraq (1961-1975, 1980-88, 1991ff.) and Turkey (1984ff.), "Black September" in Jordan (1970/71), the wars in Sudan (1955-1972, 1983ff.), Lebanon (1958, 1975-1990), North Yemen (1962-1970), Yemen (1994), Oman (Dhofar 1967-1975), Pakistan (Baluchistan 1973-1977, Sindh 1985ff.), Afghanistan (1978ff.), Somalia (1988ff.) and Tajikistan (1992ff.).

Less bloody but often of serious long-term political consequence are the numerous *military coups* in the region, in which the aim is usually not to undermine the existing state as such, but to strengthen it—by means of a change of government. Coup d'états have taken place in Syria (1949, 1951, 1963, 1966, 1970), Egypt (1952), Iraq (1958, 1963, 1968), Turkey (1960, 1971, 1980), North Yemen (1962, 1967, 1974, 1977), South Yemen (1986), Libya (1969), Sudan (1958, 1969, 1989), Mauritania (1978), Afghanistan (1978) and Pakistan (1958, 1977).

Generally further-reaching and more marked by violence are attempts by *fundamentalist* movements to subject state and society as a whole to religious laws. The main examples are: the Iranian revolution (1978/79); the occupation of Mecca's Grand Mosque (1979); the brutally suppressed anti-*Baath* and anti-Alawite disturbances in Syria (1979-1982); the high proportion of Islamist groupings involved in conducting and extending the Afghan civil war since 1978 and 1989; the Islamisation policies of the Sudanese military governments led by Jafar Numairi (from 1983) and Omar al-Bashir (from 1989); the government of Zia ul-Haq (1977-1988) in Pakistan; and the Algerian civil war (1992ff.). Mention must also be made of the numerous assassination attempts, hostage takings and bombing campaigns by fundamentalist groups in Egypt, Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi-Arabia, Turkey, Israel and the territories occupied by Israel.

In contrast to the Islamist movements with their comprehensive socio-political demands, social *mass protests against a deterioration in living conditions*, arising in most cases from isolated causes, only lead to violent conflict when connected to revolts against authoritarian structures. Examples are the bloody urban bread riots in Egypt (1977, 1986), Tunisia (1978, 1984), Morocco (1984, 1990) and Jordan (1989, 1996).

The *authoritarianism* of many regimes in the region represents a chronic type of violence of a particular kind. Massive human rights violations (arbitrary arrests, torture, deportations, executions and assassinations) are frequently part of every-day government practice, sometimes assuming the form of an undeclared war against certain sections of the population, as in Iraq under Saddam Hussein.

The demarcation lines between the various conflict types are blurred and frequently overlap. In many cases the conflicts reinforce one another. Struggle against foreign rule, for example, is a particular motif which permeates many inner- and interstate conflicts in the region. Religious motives or a supposedly archaic willingness to engage in violence on the part of the local population are less significant than the effects of foreign rule: suppression, colonial conquests, human rights violations and social injustice continue to foster violent conflict not only in the Islamic world, but beyond.

Many of the region's conflicts date back to before the "re-Islamisation" processes promoted by the success of the Iranian revolution (1978/79). Islamist opposition groups have frequently flourished in places where secularist forces were weakened by state repression (Iran

and Egypt, for example) or had lost some of their following through lack of success and unpopular compromise (as in the case of the PLO in Palestine).

In many cases, what we are dealing with are multi-layered, multi-causal processes, in which disparate cultures of conflict and strategic considerations are intertwined. Secularist and religious revolutionary ideologies, the muscle-play of foreign powers, economic interests and military-bureaucratic appeasement policies have a part to play, as do tribal and family feuds, militia and guerrilla warfare as well as a general coarsening of morals in the wake of lengthy conflicts.

These findings are more transparent when violence is measured by the number of victims. The greatest perpetrators of violence in the region are not nationalist guerrilla groups or fundamentalist suicide commandos, but *authoritarian states* with the potential to carry out mass annihilation and repression. Secularist dictatorships were responsible for the worst mass killings in the Muslim Orient of the twentieth century: the government of the "Young Turks" for the mass murder of Armenians in the First World War; the Syrian *Baath* government for the slaughter of thousands of Muslim insurgents in Hama (1982) and the *Baath* regime of Saddam Hussein for poisonous gas attacks, torture campaigns, deportations and the destruction of the *Lebensraum* of insurgent Iraqi Kurds and Shiites in the eighties and nineties.

This confirms the findings of an international comparative study conducted at the University of Hawaii at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 90s. Data was collected on the mass murders perpetrated by governments world-wide between 1900 and 1987. The study found that, measured by the number of killings, the intensity of political violence is determined less by religious, cultural, economic, social or geographic parameters, than by the absence of democratic structures. The more unlimited and uncontrolled the power of a political elite, the greater its willingness to kill and use violence. The deciding factor is not individual motivation, but the structural and political potential to kill unhindered: "Power kills, and absolute power kills absolutely."[1]

The same logic can be applied to situations such as the civil war in Lebanon and Somalia, where a weak central power gradually yields

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[1] Rummel 1995: 25.

to the lesser but equally authoritarian rule of local gangs, militia and warlords. Like many governments in the region, the latter veil their lack of democratic legitimacy through armed force and external earnings from drug and arms trade and subsidies from external sponsors.

Terrorism: violence as communication

The mass media of the Western world tends to focus on a particular type of "Oriental" violence—so-called "terrorism." The term is applied, for example, to the Palestinian commando attack on the 1972 Olympic summer games in Munich, to the suicide attacks by the Lebanese *Hizbollah* on the American embassy and US headquarters in Beirut (1983), to the bombing of the Berlin discotheque "La Belle" and the hijacking of the "Achille Lauro" (1986), to the attack on the World Trade Center in New York (1995) and to Palestinian *Hamas* suicide attacks in Israel in the spring of 1996.

Measured by the number of direct victims and perpetrators, these actions represent only a very small proportion of the tragic and violent happenings in the Near and Middle East. Yet their prominence in the Western media reveals a lot about the problems which mar perceptions and communication between Western and Middle Eastern audiences. Such actions have often had considerable resonance in the West. The Teheran hostage affair (1979-1981), for example, played a prominent part in the voting out of President Carter and the electoral victory of Ronald Reagan. The Beirut suicide attacks of the Shiite *Hizbollah* (1983) accelerated the US withdrawal from Lebanon, while the *Hamas* assassinations in February and March 1996 and the Katjusha attacks by *Hizbollah* on northern Galilee in March and April of the same year made a decisive contribution to the voting out of the Shimon Peres government and the election victory of Benjamin Netanyahu on May 29, 1996.

Since the mid-1980s, the struggle against "international terrorism" has been a major priority on the international agenda of the Western states. In reaction to the *Hamas* assassinations in Israel, an "anti-terror summit" was convened on March 13, 1996, which brought together 29 heads of state and government, and representatives of international organisations in the Egyptian seaside resort Sharm al-Shaykh. Following the bombing of an American military base in

Khobar, Saudi Arabia, on June 25, 1996, the leaders of the seven most important industrial nations (G7) together with Russia issued a strong condemnation of "terrorism" in all its forms and agreed on a catalogue of 40 measures to combat transnational criminality at their 22nd summit meeting in Lyon (June 27–29, 1996). One month later, on July 30, 1996, following the explosion of a TWA aircraft near New York (July 17, 1996) and a bomb attack on the XXVI Olympic games in Atlanta (July 27, 1996), a conference of Foreign and Interior Ministers of the same group of states decided in Paris on 25 measures to combat terrorism. By 1996, official UN sanctions had been imposed on two Muslim states, Libya (April 1992) and Sudan (May 1996) for refusing to extradite to the USA, Great Britain and Ethiopia people suspected of involvement in international terrorism. Of the seven states identified by the USA in 1996 as sponsors of international terrorism and consequently subject to American sanctions (Iraq, Iran, Cuba, Libya, North Korea, Sudan, Syria), five belong to the Islamic world.

As the word suggests, "terror" (Latin), denotes an act of violence capable of generating fear and horror, regardless of whether this is intended by the perpetrator. "Terrorism," on the other hand, suggests strategies in which terror is consciously employed in the pursuit of certain goals. In both cases, the direct relationship between perpetrator and victim is less important than the effect of the act on third parties. It is only when such forms of violence are *reported* that they develop their real potential. Thus the effect depends not only on the perpetrators and victims, but on the fears, norms, communication technologies and power structures of the societies in which they are perceived.

In principle, terror can be employed by both private individuals and states. In the political vocabulary of modernity, the concept was originally associated with *state* terror, particularly with the "*terreur*" of the Jacobin revolutionary government in France (1792-1794), who used it to intimidate the royalist opposition. Like the later "red terror" of the Bolshevist revolutionary government in Russia, the term "terror" was used (in a positive sense) by the perpetrators themselves to denote a particularly ruthless use of force for legitimate aims.

Since then, the concept has assumed a strongly pejorative sense as a generic criminological term for illegitimate and abhorrent political violence. The precise definition of political violence, however, depends on the political and cultural standpoint of the speaker.

Opinions on the subject are widely divergent: one person's "terrorist" is another's "freedom fighter."

In the last number of decades, a new interpretation of terror which contrasts with the older (Jacobin and Bolshevist) use of the term has gained international acceptance. According to this view, the legitimacy of violence is determined less by its causes or goals than by the formal status of the perpetrators and victims. Western mass media and governments tend to apply the "terrorist" label to politically motivated acts of violence by (apparent) *non-state* perpetrators, particularly when such acts are directed against *civilian* targets. Behind this is an underlying desire for nonviolence in domestic and international intercourse resting on deep-seated fears. While the norm of nonviolence may be understood against the background of the political and civilisatory development of modern Western societies, it is not, however, immediately applicable to the societies of the Near and Middle East.

"Cultures of fear" in conflict

Political cultures are always "cultures of fear." Every concrete political order is based on the elimination of other possible orders. However, these alternatives remain in existence as subliminal potential to cause disorder and fear, and must therefore be held at bay.

Since the 16th century, the modern state in Western Europe has developed a monopoly on legal violence. This process derives from the historically unprecedented expropriation of the instruments of power and force from "private" associations and individuals. It was seen by Max Weber as the political parallel to the development of the capitalist factory through the gradual dispossession of independent producers.[2] The state's monopolisation of legitimate force meant that a clear line was drawn between the military and the civilian population, and between the state and society. It also created a homogenous environment of peace within society, in which blood feuds, private warfare, plunder and other forms of violent and arbitrary law were replaced by less heroic and less violent forms of conflict resolution.

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[2] Weber 1976.

As Norbert Elias has shown, this development not only involved the external subjugation and bringing together of groups and individuals by an expanding centralised state.[3] It also entailed the taming of collective and individual emotions, leading to an increased level of self-control and a diminution in spontaneous outbursts of rage and violence.

The British political philosopher, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) defined this process in his mythological image of the *Leviathan*,[4] in which the people collectively relinquish all instruments of power, to be absorbed by the all-powerful figure of an artificial "great man"— the absolute state. Out of a fear of the insecurity of a war involving all against all, they enter a situation of absolute powerlessness in return for a guarantee of absolute safety.

This construct creates, and at the same time suppresses, three new fears: that the absolute state cannot fulfil its promise to protect; that certain individuals will not comply with their promise to remain powerless; and that those citizens who remain loyal to the contract and have surrendered the means to defend themselves will become victims of violence.

Such dormant fears are awakened when terror attacks are carried out by private individuals. "Successful" terror attacks on civilian targets such as airplanes, ships, discotheques, cinemas and supermarkets demonstrate the ability of determined individuals to unsettle the (apparently) omnipotent state machine. They undermine the citizens' conformity and alert them to their defencelessness. Thus non-state violence, while creating fewer victims than its state counterpart, has a greater ability to threaten and shock the public and is therefore given far greater prominence in the mass media.

Notwithstanding the catch phrase "Oriental despotism," which is as misunderstood as it is frequently used, a similar internal centralisation of power has *not* occurred within the "Islamic societies" of the Near and Middle East. The fact that large areas of land were governed by loosely integrated empires was not conducive to the kind of intensive militant embroilment and arms race which, when concentrated in the smaller and politically less unified area of Western Europe, ultimately led to the establishment of the modern, power-

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[3] Elias 1976.
[4] Hobbes 1985.

ful and technologically organised territorial state. The perpetual comings and goings of foreign conquerors in the Middle Eastern region were a hindrance to the identification of state and citizen. Far from being the servant and protector of the people, therefore, the state was largely the instrument of foreign rulers and a breeding ground for oppression and corruption. The monotheistic religions of the region, particularly Islam, only served to intensify the distance between the people and the state by subordinating the earthly power to a higher divine law, thereby exposing it to criticism and attack.

Under circumstances of this kind, the forceful removal of a contested ruler was not unusual. It is significant that the etymological roots of the Arabic word for state, *daula*, carry the connotation "to change periodically" or "to alternate." This reflects the fundamental historical experience of a group society, in which the central political authority was identified with the existing ruling dynasty, which was likely to be replaced by force.

More importantly, the central authority's lack of legitimacy meant that one's security was largely dependent on the ability of one's group to protect itself. In order to live in peace, a community had to command the respect of others on the basis of its fighting power. A reputation for a propensity to violence was a central component of (collective) *honour*. The main fear in a political culture of this kind was of losing honour, a fear the group surmounted by flaunting its potential to use force in words and—where possible—in actions. Under these circumstances, there was no strict division between collective and individual, public and private, or armed and unarmed spheres. Nor was there more than a rudimentary concept of the defenceless "civilian" in need of protection. What was important was to belong to a family, a tribe, a place, a religion or a clientele network which was capable of defending itself.

The distinction outlined here between two ideal types of "cultures of fear"—a Leviathan type in modern-day Western Europe, and a tribal type in the societies of the Near East—must be understood as an initial aid to orientation. When applied to individual examples, this model is in need of qualification and differentiation. What it does achieve is to account for the differing evaluations of private and state violence in public, i.e. normative, and psychological, i.e. emotional terms in the respective cultures of fear. It also shows that the decisive elements in this distinction, i.e. the differing scales of state centralisation and state expansion within society, cannot simply be traced

back to the (much older) distinction between Christianity and Islam. Nor are these factors restricted to particular "cultural continents."

European "world conquest" over the last number of centuries has gradually linked together these two cultures of fear in a global field of communication, in which one and the same act of violence is open to entirely disparate interpretations, which may intersect or mutually reinforce one another. In the first part of Goethe's "Faust" (completed in 1806), a "citizen" declares on his Easter walk: "When Sunday comes, or times of holiday, / Let's talk of fights: there's nothing I like more / Than news of Turkey, or lands far away, / Where malcontents have loosed the dogs of war." The essence of this passage becomes apparent a few lines later: "Good neighbour, that's the view I take, egad! / They're free to break their heads across, I say; / Let all the world go topsy-turvy mad, / But here we keep secure the same old way."[5] Written during the era of the revolutionary wars in Europe, this passage appealed to a public for whom little had remained "the same old way." The linking together of a cosy bourgeois scene with a stylised and (apparently distant) Orient as a place where chaos and violent turmoil reigned supreme was intended as a caricature of the idealising self-righteousness of a European world where the guillotine of the *ancien régime* and the victories of Napoleon were clearly visible.

While Goethe depicted Oriental violence in the light of an inner-European state of mind, many acts of violence in the Orient of the nineteenth and twentieth century have been staged with a view to public reaction in Europe. In the Ottoman Empire of the nineteenth century, one of the tactics employed by Christian nationalists who found themselves in a militarily precarious situation was to provoke Turkish massacres of Christian civilians in order to prompt intervention by the states of Europe. Many events which have shaped the West's perception of Oriental violence in the twentieth century—hijackings by Palestinian guerrilla groups and "suicide attacks" by Shiite commandos, for example—were frequently planned and perpetrated because of their symbolic value in the *West*.

It is significant that the vision of an imminent "Clash of Civilizations" has gained currency at a time when the spatial boundaries between "Oriental" and "Occidental" cultures of violence are dis-

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[5] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. 1949. *Faust*, Part I, Translated by P. Wayne. London: Penguin.

appearing as a result of the global mobility of people, ideas and finances. Islamist movements in the Near East frequently receive support and financial aid from the West, or are controlled from there. "Orient" and "Occident" (and their respective connotations) are increasingly employed as aterritorial, and therefore universally applicable polemical categories in the internal disputes of a global society.

The use of such categories has resulted in a stereotypical linkage of Islam and terrorism. This association is particularly problematic not only because it encourages witch hunts against Muslims and ignores the fact that terrorism is an international phenomenon, not tied to a particular culture or religion. It also disregards the extent to which Muslims in particular are victims of terrorist violence, not only in Bosnia and India, but in the Middle East itself. And finally, by concentrating on "terrorism" in the Islamic world, it neglects the more important question of the causes of political violence in the region.

Authoritarian rule and violence in the global society

As well as establishing a European state system world-wide, "European world conquest" in the modern era also universalised a European concept of violence, i.e. the proscription of non-state violence. The results have been paradoxical. In the Western centres of the modern global system, state monopolisation of the use of force is controlled by publicly sanctioned regulations. In the Islamic Orient, on the other hand, state violence has augmented authoritarian rule, first in the form of European colonialism and then as a result of the military support given to many authoritarian regimes by the superpowers of the Cold War era. Finally, the ability of many rentier states[6] in the region to secure substantial external incomes (oil revenue, political subsidies, loans) during the "oil revolution" and the East-West conflict, has enabled them to largely dispense with popular support.

Authoritarian regimes, as noted above, are more likely than democracies to use force internally and externally. They are less vulnerable on the domestic front to terror attacks and are more inclined

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[6] Pawelka 1993.

to employ terror as a political instrument. More importantly, they provoke violent counter-movements, in which the employment of non-state force in the removal of illegitimate and violent regimes is perceived as a positive value.

Thus, at a time when attempts are being made to use international law to curb the use of war as an instrument of international politics, a parallel development in the second half of the twentieth century has seen an unprecedented growth in non-state violence. This development has been nurtured by massive structural changes in the international state system since 1945: weapons of mass destruction and the fortified bloc fronts in the East-West conflict have rendered open state warfare increasingly unsuitable as a political instrument. Thus many governments have turned to violent policies which fall short of nuclear confrontation. These include the decades of support by Eastern bloc states for liberation movements in the "Third World," US attempts to destabilise undesirable regimes by supporting the Afghani *mujahidin* or the Nicaraguan Contras, for example; and the efforts of several Arab states and Iran to use Palestinian and Islamist groups abroad for proxy wars.

The growing number of non-state perpetrators of violence throughout the world has resulted in a baffling mixture of state initiatives and private goals. Resistance movements, militias, gangs, sects and the occasional individual player exist side-by-side with the pseudo-private activities of state or para-state secret services and a broad spectrum of political and religious groups, some of which survive on the support of interested governments.

At the same time, the suspected participation of some Middle Eastern states in a number of terror attacks has been used as effective publicity, particularly since the 1980s, in the implementation of a new world order involving the subjection of incriminated governments to international sanctions and the extension of state security politics into the transnational sphere. On August 6, 1996, US President Clinton signed the so-called "D'Amato Law" to bolster the struggle against "international terrorism." This prohibits foreign firms from investing more than 40 million dollars a year in the oil- and gas-based economies of Iran and Libya. Although President Clinton declared at the signing ceremony that the USA would, if necessary, go it alone in the struggle against terrorism and its state sponsors, the international significance of the law lies in the unilateral subjection to American jurisdiction of non-American firms operat-

ing outside the USA. The ensuing protests by European and Middle Eastern governments demonstrate that an approach of this kind only leads to new conflict.

In view of the close causal connections between authoritarianism and violence in the Near East, the most obvious way to reduce the dangerous potential described above is not to focus exclusively on terrorism, but to encourage democratisation in the region. Pluralism, freedom of opinion, the separation of powers, political competition, free elections and a political culture of negotiation and compromise remain the surest means of combating uncontrolled political violence.

It is in this area, however, that the West has a particular debt to pay to the countries of the Near East. The continued existence of authoritarian structures in the region is due in no small part to Western participation, as evidenced by the financial, military and police backing given to numerous authoritarian regimes in the region; the continuing problem of Israel's occupation of West Jordan and southern Lebanon; the Moroccan occupation of the western Sahara; and the occasional support given by Western or pro-Western states to radical Islamist movements out of a perceived need for allies in the struggle against communism and other secularist opposition movements. Those who continue to refer to the existence of "Oriental despotism" in the Near and Middle East should not forget that what we are dealing with is less the perpetuation of local and traditional power structures, than the products of a "modernity" which was launched in Europe and which was shaped by violence to a greater extent than the latter's self-image as peace-loving would suggest.

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ISLAMIC ECONOMICS: DOGMA OR SCIENCE?

Volker Nienhaus

Islam is a religion which concerns itself with much more than the after-life: it is a comprehensive world view, and as such it endeavours to provide an answer to all questions of human existence. For every world view, consistency and coherence are of paramount importance. In the past, Islamic jurists used to ensure that Islam met these criteria. The dramatic social and economic transformation of the Islamic world in the twentieth century means, however, that their traditional body of knowledge is no longer sufficient to fully understand contemporary developments and changes.

The capacity to understand and explain phenomena is a precondition for sound judgements and rational evaluations. Max Weber, who is known in the West for being the first to insist in the 1920s that social science should be value-free, did not deny the possibility of applying the tools of rational analysis and reasonable argument to the sphere of values. Indeed, he explicitly recognised the importance of this type of debate. He did argue, however, that philosophers rather than social scientists should concern themselves with such matters. While Western economists have tended therefore to withhold value judgements and have only begun to return to the treatment of normative questions in the last few years, "Islamic economics," in contrast, has always defined itself as a science which makes explicit value judgements and links them to the findings of positive economics.

The fundamental principles of "Islamic economics"

The proponents of Islamic economics tend to create the impression that only one Islamic economic system exists and that this is uniform, final and closed. In point of fact, the reverse is true. Islamic economics, in both theory and practice, comprises a wide variety of positions on important questions such as the permissibility of certain banking operations, the ideal social security system and the type and levels of taxation in the Islamic state. In spite of these differ-

ences, advocates of Islamic economics agree that the Koran and the *Sunna* must guide the behaviour of both the individual and the state. All practical recommendations and theoretical explanations must therefore refer to the regulations outlined in these primary Islamic sources. But this is by no means sufficient to resolve concrete problems such as the following when designing an Islamic system:

- The Koran and the *Sunna* contain very few prescriptions which are directly applicable to specific economic issues. The most notable exception are the laws of inheritance.
- Many of the concepts employed in the primary sources are based on terms which require interpretation. The most important example in this context is the word *riba*, which may be translated as "interest" or "usury."
- Even the first four "Rightly Guided" caliphs in the early days of Islam arrived at diverging interpretations of the primary sources, recommending, for example, different practices with respect to *zakat* (Islamic taxation), which is mentioned in the Koran. The method of analogy yields disparate answers depending on which passage in the Koran and *Sunna* is cited, and on how the similarity between the problem at hand and a previously solved case is established.
- In making an analogy, individual judgement comes into play, as does the individual's understanding of the theoretical background to the economic issue in question. As a result, different recommendations may be made while referring to the same passage in the *Sunna* or the Koran.
- Finally, the specific circumstances of a particular contemporary case also require consideration. Concrete recommendations may vary greatly even when starting from identical Koran citations, an identical theoretical background and an identical methodology in justifying the analogy. The appropriate practical implementation of Islamic taxation (*zakat*), for example, will depend on whether it is to be imposed in an oil-rich and sparsely populated country or in one that is densely populated and lacking in resources.

Thus the term "Islamic economics" represents a broad spectrum of differing positions. Politically, they range from justifying the status quo along strictly conservative lines to demands for social revolution, a radical transformation of property rights and ownership of the means of production, and a strong state with direct control over

the economy. Notwithstanding this diversity of viewpoints, there is increasing evidence for the emergence of a mainstream viewpoint, which is shaped by recognised Muslim economists and further disseminated by respected Islamic institutions like Islamic universities and the *Islamic Development Bank*. The following deliberations will concentrate on this perspective and will also consider those theoretical concepts of Islamic economics in the areas of Islamic banking and taxation (*zakat*) which have been implemented in a number of Islamic countries.

Interest and morality in the early days of Islam

One of the best known economically relevant rules of Islam is the prohibition of interest or usury. There is some disagreement about the modern meaning of the old Arabic term *riba*, which is used in the Koran. In the days of the Prophet, credit was usually granted in times of need, when the debtor was forced to secure his own and his family's livelihood as a result of illness or crop failure or having lost his work tools or his wares through theft. Only moderate rates or no interest at all was charged. However, the loans had to be repaid in full within a relatively short period. If the debtor was unable to meet the deadline—which was frequently the case due to the short maturity of the loan—an extension was granted, but the sum was doubled. This process was repeated either until the debt had been repaid, which became more and more difficult, or until the debtor—and his family and children—had become the creditor's bondservants. This type of usury is not only immoral, it is also detrimental to the economy and to society as a whole.

It is widely accepted that at the time of the Prophet the term *riba* referred to usury of this type. Its contemporary significance is less clear, however. One argument holds that the prohibition of *riba* is confined to the form of usury outlined above and that moderate interest is permissible, particularly on loans for the financing of productive investments. Against this, it is argued that the Koran is the direct and eternal word of God and that the starting point for all interpretations must therefore be the abstract meaning of the relevant terms, rather than their significance in particular historical situations. *Riba* literally means "growth." Thus the prohibition of *riba* on loans means the prohibition of any kind of growth or advantage

to the lender. The latter is merely entitled to full repayment of the loan by the agreed maturity date. This second, stricter interpretation of the prohibition of *riba* has gained general acceptance in Islamic economics and is the underlying principle of demands for an interest-free economic system.

Islamic finance today: between revolution and conservatism

Some Islamic authors interpret efforts to abolish *riba* at the time of the Prophet as a fundamental rejection of capitalist economic practices. Supporters of this radical, socialist position favour state control over capital investment and over the economy as a whole. They emphasise the exploitative nature of the debtor-creditor relationship and use selected passages from the Koran to substantiate their criticism of private ownership of the means of production. Whereas these arguments were once more widespread, they are of minor importance in Islamic economics today and will not be considered in further detail here.

A second group of authors also advocates an interest-free economy and criticises interest-based credit relations. They consider it unjust and immoral that the creditor makes a financial gain by lending money at no entrepreneurial risk. Unlike the radical-socialist camp, this group does not question private ownership of the means of production per se. Nor do they reject the productivity of private capital. Their objective is to replace risk-free, interest-based financial practices with a system which ensures that the capital owner and the entrepreneur have a fair and just share in the risks and opportunities of the project. They suggest a system based on "partnership contracts," whereby the provider of capital and the entrepreneur agree to share the profits and losses of the project according to a pre-determined ratio. This is a modern version of a type of business contract which was common in the days of the Prophet, and which is adapted to modern-day needs. At the time of the Prophet, traders tended to use equity capital rather than loans to finance their transactions. They and their business partners contributed the necessary capital for the implementation of the project, and subsequently shared both gains and losses on the basis of their financial contributions. Advocates of the *profit/loss-sharing system* consider it superior to the conventional interest-based economy, not only morally and from the

point of view of justice, but also economically, i.e. in terms of distribution, efficiency and stability.

A third group of Islamic economists base their ideas on the profit-sharing model, but focus specifically on its potential in terms of development. The most important criteria in a profit/loss-sharing system are the quality of the proposed project and the partner's integrity, rather than the security he can offer. Conventional banks, it is argued, lay so much emphasis on collateral that potential entrepreneurs with good ideas but insufficient cover have little chance of realising their projects. Banks operating on the principle of profit-sharing could, and should, ignore collateral considerations and rely on the quality of the project proposal. Advocates of this approach point out that the widespread adoption of Islamic banking practices would lead to an expansion of the entrepreneurial base in the national economy. A greater number of socially beneficial transactions and projects would be financed than is the case under the conventional banking system. Thus, Islamic finance could contribute significantly to a reform of the economy and of society in general.

A fourth group, finally, consists mainly of Islamic business people and bankers, who are not openly opposed to such reforms. However, they adopt a "legalistic" approach which implies a *de facto* adherence to the economic and social status quo. Bank practitioners are quick to point out that the principle of profit-sharing means sharing the risks as well as the opportunities. It stands to reason that entrepreneurs embarking on risky ventures will be interested in finding partners willing to share the risks, while those with safe projects will prefer to concentrate on their own profits and pay their creditors a fixed rate of interest. Interest-free banks can avoid the resulting problems by employing financing techniques which are essentially risk-free: Islamic jurists confirm the view of bank practitioners that the prohibition on interest only relates to loans of *money* and that profit resulting from leasing and trading with goods is permitted by the Koran. The bank should therefore act as a trader on behalf of the enterprise seeking funding: instead of granting a loan which will be used to buy raw materials, commodities or machines, the bank buys the goods and sells them on to the enterprise at a later date with an agreed surcharge on the cost price (*mark-up financing*). The mark-up is seen as legitimate trading profit rather than prohibited interest-based gain, as it is based not on money-lending, but on the delayed

payment of the purchase price in what is in essence a trade or rental transaction.

It is obvious that while such profit may not legally be interest, in economic terms it is. Under this system, profit-sharing is limited to the deposit business of the interest-free banks: savers do not earn interest on their deposits, but share in the profits (or losses) of the bank. With mark-up financing, the *economic* difference between conventional and interest-free banking largely disappears, and conventional and interest-free banks finance the same transactions and the same projects for the same customers. In practice, at least 80 per cent of the financing techniques used by interest-free banks are surcharge-based and the same kind of commercial transactions are financed by them as by conventional banks.

Financing techniques based on such an interpretation of the prohibition of interest, are unlikely to promote development in the Islamic world. Because the difference between mark-up financing and interest-based transactions is legal rather than economic, this approach has little to offer either in terms of macro-economics, i.e. efficiency and stability, or with respect to equity and development. Western observers and Islamic economists alike are critical of the often careless use of the adjective "Islamic." For them, it should mean more than interest-free in a legalistic sense. They point to the danger of conservative legal experts using Islamic labels to sanction capitalist banking practices, in which case Islamic economics and Islamic banking are no more than an ideological veneer for a dogmatic adherence to the economic status quo.

Most Islamic economists, all too aware of the widespread underdevelopment of the Islamic world and the often extreme inequality in the distribution of income and wealth, reject legalistic and conservative positions, whose effect is to keep existing structures in place. They call for extensive reform and adherence to the primary sources of the Islamic world view which, they believe, reveal the necessity and the direction of economic and social change.

Interest-free banking. A bridge between Western and Islamic economic systems

Many Islamic economists are critical of the discrepancy between the ideology and practice of Islamic banking. This is particularly striking in the case of Pakistan, which began to Islamise its entire bank-

ing system in 1981 and officially completed the process in 1985. In 1991, however, the country's Supreme *Sharia* Court declared the practice of interest-free banking un-Islamic and demanded the abolition or radical revision of the underlying legal decrees (which has yet to happen, for political reasons). Criticism focused on the fact that what had become the standard technique in the financing business was, in fact, a combination of two types of financing originally designed for different types of transaction: a) the purchase and resale of goods at a higher than cost-price and b) the purchase of assets with a buy-back agreement.

The first method of financing corresponds to the mark-up financing outlined above: customer A asks bank B to buy goods from supplier C and to sell them onto him with an agreement on deferred payment at a fixed mark-up on the cost price. In the second type of transaction—the purchase and resale of assets—only customer A and bank B are involved. The latter type of transaction was intended to secure claims from more long-term projects (such as the construction of a building), with purchase and repurchase occurring at different times. Rather than buying from supplier C, however, the standard technique used by Pakistani banks in about 80 per cent of all financing business was to buy customer A's goods—his stock for example—and to resell it to him immediately at a higher price. In this way, the bank was effectively giving the client an interest-bearing loan, which he could use for whatever purpose he chose. The practise involving two parties, rather than three as in the case of genuine trade financing, continued a tradition dating back to classical Islamic law of circumventing the prohibition of interest by means of legal tricks, a tradition which the *Sharia* court was not prepared to follow. It consequently rejected as un-Islamic the financing practices of Pakistan's banks.

There is no evidence to suggest that questionable practices of this kind are used by Islamic banks in other countries. It may be assumed therefore that what they practise is genuine trade financing—with three participants. Yet this too is criticised by Islamic economists for falling short of the ideal of profit/loss-sharing and because it differs only marginally in economic terms from interest-based commercial lending. Yet while criticism of this kind may be justified on a theoretical level, it should not be overstated: the particular circumstances under which Islamic banks operate in most parts of the Muslim world should also be taken into consideration.

With the exception of Pakistan, Iran and Sudan, all Islamic countries have conventional interest-based fiscal systems. Approximately 120 Islamic banks and financial institutions (mainly investment and insurance companies) are in existence today. They are generally of marginal importance in these systems, with shares of the market of between less than one and 10 per cent, and only in exceptional cases of up to 25 per cent. Governments and central banks in most Islamic countries are Western-oriented and approach the Islamic banks with more than a touch of scepticism. One notable exception is Malaysia, where the government and central bank have given their full backing to the development of a *dual banking system* since the beginning of the 1990s, in which conventional and Islamic banking practices are on an equal footing. Islamic banking in Malaysia is carried by one exclusively Islamic bank and separate Islamic departments in many of the conventional banks.

Islamic banks in most mixed systems defend the practice of mark-up financing by pointing to the danger of accumulating negative risks under a profit-sharing system. They maintain that in order to secure deposits, which are affected by the bank's profits *and* losses, there should be a strict limitation on high-risk profit/loss-sharing practices. The maturity structure is also seen as problematic: deposits are mainly short-term in nature, yet profit-sharing tends to be middle to long-term, and it runs counter to sound banking principles to finance long-term projects with short-term deposits. A further issue is that the Islamic banks must offer their depositors competitive returns, particularly in the first years of their existence. Yet while conventional trade financing yields relatively rapid returns, profits from projects financed on the basis of profit-sharing often emerge only after a long gestation period. In most countries, finally, responsibility for financing development projects is carried not by the commercial banks, which include the Islamic banks, but by special banks, which are established and supported by the state.

Against this background, criticism of the legalistic interpretation of the prohibition of interest seems less fundamental. Indeed it can be argued that co-operation between the two banking systems becomes relatively straightforward when the Islamic substance of financing contracts is restricted to *legal* issues, while the entrepreneurial decisions by the management of both Islamic and conventional banks are based on the same criteria of profitability and liquidity. In practice, Islamic and Western banks working on an international level

have intensified their contacts over the last number of years. Western banks have become progressively more interested in the Islamic banks' market, and growing numbers of conventional banks are offering their Muslim clients "Islamic products," opening Islamic departments and, in some cases, establishing Islamic subsidiaries in the Gulf region. They are also offering services and financing models to the Islamic banks which allow them to make interest-free, but profitable short-term placements of surplus funds. Whether *Sharia* experts would approve of all the types of "Islamic products" and co-operation currently in existence is open to question. It is undeniable however that Islamic financing practices are no longer viewed as a curiosity in the West, and that they are receiving growing recognition in both banking and business circles. Thus the legalistic interpretation of the interest ban has, in fact, helped to forge links between the Islamic and Western economic systems.

Islamic economics and political opposition

Not all Islamic economists welcome this "convergence of systems." Some see it as a reinforcement of existing conditions which are clearly a hindrance to development. With a view to introducing change, they demand a stronger adherence to Islamic ideals involving more competition, a reduction in privileges and a limitation of the power of the state to the reinforcement of the principles of law, justice and equal participation. An Islamic economic system, they argue, means more than interest-free financial practices. It presupposes a transformation of the economic and social power structures, a transformation which would have to be more radical in some Islamic states than in others.

A clash between the proponents of an Islamic economic system and the ruling elite is often inevitable. The latter essentially dictate the form in which the Islamic opposition expresses its demands. Either the opposition is involved in the parliamentary system and given the opportunity to make constructive criticism and contribute to the decision-making process, or it is forced into a fundamentalist, extra-parliamentary position in militant opposition to the status quo. The more radical the opposition, the more important the mobilising power of Islamic ideologies, which operate on an emotional level and whose promises of salvation have a far greater appeal than the

intellectually sophisticated concepts underlying the Islamic economic system.

The more politicised and radical Islam is in a particular country, therefore, the more simplistic and lacking in substance are demands for an "Islamic system." It is regrettable that the Western media's perception of Islam tends to be coloured by the most radical slogans, which can easily be misrepresented as applying to the Islamic world as a whole. There is little inclination in the West to look beyond the political agitation, and even political decision-makers regularly display considerable reluctance to come to an understanding of Islamic concepts. The tragedy is that such concepts could ultimately be demonstrated to justify a system which comes much closer to Western notions of development than the rigid and frequently repressive systems currently in existence in many countries.

Islamic economics: rigid dogma or dynamic science?

It is beyond question that Islamic economics is open to serious investigation. Far from being a monolithic and closed doctrine resting on irrefutable principles, or a rigid dogma open to change only on the most trivial details, it defines itself as a new academic discipline, which is practical in focus and uses rational methods to explain and advise on economic phenomena in the Islamic world. In the past, concrete recommendations regarding appropriate human behaviour and the best organisations and structures were made by Islamic jurists, who referred to the Koran and *Sunna* as the primary sources of the Islamic world view. While Islamic economists endeavouring to make similar recommendations today cannot afford to ignore the solutions contained in Islamic law, this does not mean that it is impossible to arrive at new answers.

The methods employed in Islamic economics differ from those used in Islamic jurisprudence and are derived from modern, i.e. Western, economics. When dealing with a problem for which Islamic jurisprudence has already found a solution, the Islamic economist who arrives at an alternative recommendation must be prepared to enter into a discussion on method. He must be able to demonstrate on the basis of rational argument why his method is superior to that of the Islamic jurists. For this, he needs to be familiar with legal methods, and to have a sound knowledge of Arabic language and

history. In its approach, therefore, Islamic economics is an inter- or multi-disciplinary science, under the umbrella of the discipline of economics.

In the early years of Islamic economics, from its origins in the 1950s until the 1970s, much study was devoted to the construction of *ideal worlds*. That these models were superior to the imperfect reality of Western socialist and capitalist systems, not to mention the real existing systems of the Islamic world, is neither surprising nor methodologically relevant. Since the mid-1980s, this phase, which was characterised by a strong ideological polarisation, has given way to a growing *realism*. This development was influenced to a large degree by the implementation since the mid-1970s of some of the doctrines of Islamic economics, such as interest-free banking. As a result, it has become possible to examine the experiences of Islamic banks working in a conventional environment and to analyse attempts to Islamise the economies of Pakistan, Iran and Sudan.

What has become apparent is that most Muslims are less influenced in their economic behaviour by Islamic rules such as the prohibition of interest and the mandatory payment of *zakat* than had been assumed in earlier models of ideal systems. If the prohibition of interest were rigidly adhered to by all Muslims, it would be difficult to explain why Islamic banks in countries with a mixed fiscal system have not secured a much bigger market share in the ten or more years they have been in operation, or why the majority of the population continue to conduct their business with conventional banks. Analyses of banking practices in the Islamised systems of Pakistan and Iran have also produced sobering results, particularly with regard to the behaviour of the bank management there. Developments in Malaysia, finally, raise further doubts as to the influence of Islamic rules on the economic behaviour of Muslims. Government support for the introduction of Islamic departments in conventional banks has not been matched by Malaysian depositors, who continue by and large to opt for conventional banking schemes.

Financing policy and social security is a further area with considerable influence on economic development which has begun to reflect a greater approximation of reality. It has become obvious in recent years that Islamic law in this area is in need of considerable modification and extension. For while there are numerous and detailed expositions on the taxation of the spoils of war, of camel and sheep, and of dates and honey, the imposition of taxes on wages and

salaries or on portfolio investments is rarely dealt with, and then in a contradictory manner. A discussion of the imposition of *zakat* in the modern age is long overdue, as is the creation of a wider consensus on the basic principles.

Islamic economics defines itself more through its methodology than its object of study. It is therefore somewhat surprising that the methods employed by modern-day economists, when defining the basis and rates for the levy of *zakat*, differ widely from those used by Islamic jurists in the past. The literature produced today on the subject of *zakat* contains a large number of false statements, questionable analogies and subjective evaluations, including the claim that the basis of assessment for *zakat* and the rates to be imposed were established once and for all in the Koran. In point of fact, most regulations were not even drawn up by the Prophet, but by the first caliphs, who in some cases modified the rules laid down by their predecessors. Furthermore it is argued that as landowners must pay a certain percentage of their crop in tax, *zakat* is a form of income tax. However, since the harvest is an indicator of the value of the agricultural land, it is more plausible to treat the landowners' contribution as a form of *property* tax, all the more so since the individual costs of cultivating the land are not taken into consideration. Subjective evaluations also colour discussions on the correct treatment of completely new types of income and property, such as wages and salaries and portfolio investments. As yet, there has been no clarifying discussion and no criticism of methodologically unsound studies.

Western literature on Islamic economics occasionally creates the impression that the great scholars from the early days of Islam and the Islamic Middle Ages provided an answer to all the important questions, leaving us with what is in essence a closed doctrinal system, inflexible on all but the most peripheral matters. While it may be true that modern-day Islamic economists frequently refer to earlier solutions, this does not imply that all questions have been answered or that Islamic economics is merely repetitive and uncreative. As suggested above, there are no definitive answers even to important questions such as the correct interpretation and implementation of the prohibition of interest or the rules governing *zakat*. To overlook the dynamism of Islamic economics would therefore be misguided.

Nevertheless, it must be remembered that scientific freedom and

a critical attitude towards existing conditions are not encouraged by the governments and ruling classes in many Muslim countries. Thus it is difficult, and in some cases impossible, to conduct an open exchange of views. Frequently it is left to Western institutions to create a suitable forum for discussion. Islamic institutions in the West also have an important contribution to make to the future development of Islamic economics. But despite the fact that progress is slow and not always continuous, Islamic economics is clearly beginning to establish itself as a *science*, which will not allow itself to degenerate into an ideology of social revolution or a veneer for conservative dogmatism.

Constructive dialogue cannot be conducted with dogmatists or ideologues. Science, on the other hand, has developed techniques to deal with disagreements and differences of opinion not by physical force but by means of rational argument. In the field of science, the "Clash of Civilizations" need not end in destruction and defeat: both sides stand to gain from a critical but rational intellectual examination of their own world view.

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PART II
COUNTRY STUDIES

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SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY OR FEAR OF ISLAMISM? EUROPE AND ALGERIA

Annette Jünemann

The year 1988 represents an important watershed in Algeria's recent history. The unrest in October of that year forced the *National Liberation Front* (FLN), the leading party in Algeria since national independence was achieved in 1962, to end its twenty-six years of autocratic rule. President Chadli Bendjedid initiated a process of democratisation which raised considerable hopes but proved to be short-lived. Four years later, in 1992, the military staged a bloodless coup to prevent an Islamic party from taking power by *democratic* means. Subsequent violent clashes between the regular army on the one hand and militant Islamist factions on the other escalated into a civil war which continues to be waged with equal brutality on both sides. Since 1992: 80,000 to 120,000 people—mostly civilians—have been killed.

The crisis in Algeria has had considerable international explosive force due to Algeria's geopolitical location on the Mediterranean and its comparatively recent liberation from the colonial power, France. It is not unusual for domestic developments in Algeria to be discussed in the innermost decision-making circles of the European Union (EU). France, in particular, is interested in retaining its influence in Algeria. With its fear of Islamic rule in the Mediterranean, Paris chose to tolerate the military coup there. While this policy continues to enjoy support in the EU, it is the subject of growing criticism within the Union for two reasons. Firstly, there is no consensus on the correct attitude for Europe to adopt towards democratisation processes in the Arab world. Although welcomed in principle, they can also result in Islamist parties assuming power. Furthermore, it is unclear how current policies on Algeria relate to the new understanding of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, agreed in Barcelona in 1995 on the initiative of the EU.

The political and economic background to the Algerian crisis

The unrest in 1988 was initially seen as a spontaneous reaction to deprivation. The regime attempted to suppress it with a dual approach of repression and concession. It soon became clear, however, that this was an extensive popular uprising against the entire political system and its corrupt leadership. Partial measures could no longer contain it; what was needed was fundamental political reform.

For decades, the authoritarian structures of the regime and its catastrophic economic policies had escaped serious criticism, because foreign currency earnings from oil and gas exports had guaranteed the majority of the population a secure existence. While the country's wealth was derived from oil and gas, other economic sectors were neglected and private initiative was suppressed. In the mid-1980s, however, oil and gas prices sank rapidly and the country was hit by a serious economic and financial crisis. It was only in 1988, when the government's ineptitude resulted in the impoverishment of large sections of the population, that the call for political participation was heard in Algeria. The entire political system was thus called into question.

In order to prevent a violent coup, President Chadli Bendjedid ordered the quelling of the revolt. He then introduced a new constitution, which was endorsed by referendum on February 23, 1989. This provided for the introduction of a multiparty system and a clear separation of powers. It also guaranteed civil rights hitherto unknown. In terms of economic policy, the President promised to phase out state centralism and put an end to economy's dependence on oil and gas. These reforms opened the way for political democratisation and economic liberalisation, and were received positively at home and abroad.

However, the admission of the *Islamic Salvation Front* (FIS) to the 1990 municipal elections in the new spirit of pluralism was greeted with alarm. The political objective of the FIS is to establish a state based on Islamic law, and the decision to include the party provoked widespread criticism in Tunisia and Morocco and in staunchly secular circles in Algeria. The European Union, on the other hand, welcomed unreservedly the initial steps towards democratisation and adopted a policy of wait-and-see on domestic developments in Algeria.

On June 12, 1990, the FIS achieved an absolute majority in the first free municipal elections in Algeria. It was obvious that the disillusioned masses had come to consider the Islamists as the only credible political power. This was due in part to their commitment to charitable causes: Islamic organisations filled the socio-political vacuum left by the economic and political failure of a corrupt government elite. The mosque had become both a social and a political gathering place for young people, approximately 60 per cent of whom were unemployed with little or no future prospects.

The Algerian regime was unprepared for an FIS victory. On the contrary, it had expected to split the opposition and prevent a changeover of power by opening up the election to several parties. Immediately following the success of the Islamists, the FLN demonstrated its unwillingness to adhere to democratic principles by hastily reforming the electoral law in order to further its own interests in the national parliamentary elections which were due to be held in 1991. When the FIS reacted by staging a general strike and organising widespread demonstrations, the regime opted for open force: as in 1988, it declared a state of emergency and on the March 26, 1991, five leaders of the FIS and a further 1,000 party members were arrested. The FIS secured victory in the first round of the national elections on December 26, 1991, despite some loss of electoral support. It is unclear whether this downturn was a result of state repression or whether many Algerians had changed their allegiance due to the growing violence of militant Islamist groups.

In spite of this setback, it was obvious that the FIS would emerge victorious from the forthcoming second round of elections. In order to prevent this, the Algerian military stepped in: it forced the President to resign and dissolved parliament, thus "legalising" the annulment of the remaining elections. On January 14, 1992, the newly established High Council of State took control and on March 4, the FIS was banned. A "civilian" President, the charismatic former independence fighter, Mohammed Boudiaf, was appointed, but political control remained in the hands of the military, as evidenced by appointments to the High Council of State. This body was given executive and legislative powers, while parliament was replaced by a consultative national assembly convened by the government. Algeria's first democratisation project thus came to an end. The democratically legitimate Islamists would henceforth be dealt with as a military problem.

Algeria's civil society between the fronts

Members of the regime can roughly be divided into "hawks" (*éridicateurs*) and "doves" (*réconcilateurs*). Whereas the *réconcilateurs* advocate a political solution to the conflict based on dialogue with moderate sections of the Islamist spectrum, the *éridicateurs* aim to "resolve" the conflict by military means. They have adopted an unyielding stance towards the militant Islamists, whom they are endeavouring to wipe out at all costs. The dirty war fought against the Islamists involves severe human rights violations such as torture, and, although difficult to prove, political murder by death squadrons. In addition to the rough division between *réconcilateurs* and *éridicateurs*, several clans within the regime are involved in power struggles based less on political concepts than on a desire to retain existing privilege. Internal factional disputes became apparent when Mohammed Boudiaf was assassinated from amongst his own ranks a mere six months after assuming office. While further Presidents have been appointed, none has remained in office for more than a year. The serving President, Liamine Zeroual, who has made known his intention to step down prematurely in April 1999, was also a compromise candidate. His political scope is limited, and real power lies with invisible wire-pullers within the military. Ultimately, the majority of the military-backed regime advocates a military solution to the civil war, as evidenced by the many implausible and unsuccessful attempts to negotiate with the Islamists. President Zeroual's unexplained announcement in October 1998 of his intention to step down prematurely certainly does not augur well and points towards an intensification of the power struggles within the military.

The Islamist opposition is more heterogeneous and does not fit into easy categories. Leading Islamist figures have been arrested or forced into exile, encouraging the fragmentation and radicalisation of individual groups, and hindering the search for potential negotiating partners. While the official leadership of the FIS, particularly the forces led by Abassi Madani, are moderate in outlook and are prepared to engage in dialogue, radical organisations like the *Armed Islamic Movement* (MIA) and the *Armed Islamic Group* (GIA), to mention only the most important, advocate the use of terror. Yet as long as the civil war continues, no Islamist group can renounce the use of force without incurring a loss of support. Such a move would have

to be rewarded by the granting of appropriate concessions on the part of the regime.

The civilian population, particularly the Western-oriented intelligentsia, is caught between the two fronts in the civil war. In the eyes of extremist Islamist forces (particularly the GIA), it is sufficient to practise a "Western" profession—journalism, the law or art—to become the target of an assassination attempt. Women are particularly at risk: by wearing Western clothing and by practising a Western profession, they are "guilty" of a double violation of Islamist standards. It must be assumed—although it is difficult to prove— that some of the political murders have been carried out by the security forces operating incognito. This strategy aims to undermine support for the Islamists among the general population and to create confusion among the Islamists themselves.

The persecution of the democratic intelligentsia by militant Islamists has created a paradoxical situation for the former. Having been engaged in years of political struggle against the authoritarian state, they now have to rely on state protection. The civil war provides the regime with the opportunity to launch a dual attack against Islamism on the one hand and against the government's older, democratic opponents on the other. It is extremely difficult for journalists, for example, to continue their work in Algeria without police protection. They find themselves depending on the state to protect their offices and their homes. These circumstances make it easy to discipline potential critics of the regime—by threatening to reduce the level of protection afforded to them.

Whereas the actions of the regime against the intellectual elite are "merely" repressive, the militant Islamists do not stop short of actual murder. As a result, most of the country's intellectuals have come out in favour of the regime. Almost all of the women's movements, most journalists' associations, the biggest federation of trade unions (the UGTA), the *Rally for Culture and Democracy* (RCD) and the communist *Ettihadi* party all support the regime in its tough approach to the Islamists.

The most important opposition parties in the country have taken a different approach. At the end of 1994 and the beginning of 1995, they met with moderate factions of the FIS for a national dialogue in the Catholic parish of Sant' Egidio in Rome. The so-called "Platform of Rome" (Platform for a Political and Peaceful Solution to the Algerian Crisis) demonstrated that there are other important polit-

ical forces in Algeria in addition to the warring parties and that all possibilities of a peaceful solution have not been exhausted. The meeting was attended by the former ruling party the FLN, the Berber *Socialist Forces Front* (FFS), the *Movement for Democracy in Algeria* (MDA) led by former head of state Ahmed Ben Bella, two small, moderate Islamic parties and numerous NGOs. The regime refused to participate, however, demonstrating once again its lack of commitment to a political solution to the civil war.

Attempts by the Algerian regime to achieve legitimacy

While the participants in the Platform of Rome represented the majority of the Algerian people, the regime was entirely lacking in democratic legitimacy, having come to power in the bloodless coup of 1992. Aware that its standing had been further diminished by its rejection of a political solution to the crisis, the Algerian government now made a number of belated attempts at achieving legitimacy. In November 1995, presidential elections took place. The fact that the regime's main rival, the FIS, had been banned and was not allowed to contest the elections, must call their democratic quality into question, however. The FIS, together with the FFS and other parties who had participated in the Platform of Rome, called for an election boycott. Support for the election, on the other hand, came from the laicist (secular) RCD, who put forward a candidate of their own; from the former mass organisations of the FLN (trade union, women's association, Organisation of Former Fighters); and from two moderate religious parties, *Hamas* and the *Regeneration Party* (PRA). These two parties are barely distinguishable from the FIS in terms of political programme. But unlike the FIS, they do not question the rule of the regime, and the government did not object to their participation in the elections. On the contrary, the hope was that they would absorb the electoral support of the banned FIS and thereby reduce the pressure on the regime, a calculation which proves that the Algerian civil war is not at bottom a religious conflict, but a power struggle.

The elections were overshadowed by the GIA's murder threats against anyone failing to observe the election boycott. Pressure on the population was increased by the regime's decision to register participation in the voter's passport. Thus, the question of whether

or not to participate in the elections required great courage from the Algerian people; each alternative involved a risk. It was impossible, moreover, for international observers to ensure that the elections were correctly conducted as they took place under state of emergency conditions. Under such circumstances, it is hardly appropriate to speak of free elections.

As expected, the election results confirmed President Zeroual in office (61 per cent). Even more important than this outcome in the eyes of the regime was the relatively high poll of 74.29 per cent, which was interpreted as a public rejection of the Islamists. The West also adopted this interpretation, which seemed to suggest itself on the basis of the voters' obvious disregard for the sweeping death threats of the GIA. However, since neither the course of the election nor the results are verifiable, a conclusive evaluation remains elusive. Whether it was advisable to conduct elections in the midst of a virulent civil war is in any case doubtful, as it was inevitable that they would be overshadowed by the threat and use of violence. While the regime was in part yielding to pressure from the West in agreeing to hold elections, it might have been wiser to urge Algiers to seek a political solution to the civil war as a necessary pre-condition for representative and democratic elections.

All hopes that the presidential elections would be a first step towards democratisation were dashed. Contrary to such expectations, which were also held in Europe, the constitutional reform of 1996 made it clear that the sole concern of the Algerian regime was to secure its own hold on power, while at the same time maintaining a democratic facade. The new constitution abolished the separation of powers, which had only been written into the constitution in 1989, by granting the President the right to pass laws by decree when the national assembly is in recess. The assembly, whose legislative powers were severely curtailed by this step, was further undermined by the establishment of a second chamber, which has to ratify all legislative acts by a 75 per cent majority. A third of this chamber is personally appointed by the President, who also has the power to appoint judges. Thus the third power, the judiciary, is also under his influence. The fact that the new constitution was endorsed by referendum is sometimes used to argue for its pretensions to democracy. This does not alter its undemocratic content, however.

It is worth noting that the preamble to the new constitution identifies Islam as the foundation of the Algerian nation. This further

substantiates the view that the conflict in Algeria is political rather than religious in nature. The regime sees no problem in Islamising politics and society as long as its position of power is not jeopardised. The perception widely held in Europe that support for the military regime will help to check the spread of political Islam overlooks the fact that rather than representing a political standpoint, the Algerian regime is merely engaged in securing its own hold on power.

On the basis of the new constitution, elections for the national assembly took place in June 1997. Once again the elections were conducted as a result of pressure from the West, which did not consider the 1995 presidential elections to have demonstrated sufficient commitment to democratic principles. While the conditions for conducting free elections were somewhat improved, they were not entirely representative as the FIS remained excluded.

Shortly before the poll, President Zeroual founded a new party, the *National Democratic Rally* (NDR), which brought together former party members of the widely discredited FLN. During the election campaign, the "President's party" was favoured by the state media. This, and the fact that the strongest rival was out of the running, contributed to the election success of the NDR (40.78 per cent). The regime also received the support of the FLN, which had distanced itself from co-operation with the FIS in the wake of the 1995 presidential elections. Under its new general secretary, Boualem Benhamouda, the FLN now shared the intransigent position of the government. The FFS, on the other hand, remained in opposition. Its decision to participate in the contentious elections was taken at a relatively late stage and was inspired by the hope of at least being able to stimulate political discourse in the disempowered national assembly.

Two moderate Islamist parties, *Al-Nahda* (Renaissance) and the *Mouvement de la Société de la Paix* (MSP), also decided to contest the elections. The latter is a front for the former *Hamas*, which was forced to change its name following a dictate of the new constitution banning political parties which define themselves in religious terms. The two parties hoped to profit from the ban on the FIS and were officially tolerated. Thus, even before the election, the regime had gained a double advantage: the FLN and *Al-Nahda* had left the opposition bloc of the Platform of Rome, and the most important opposition party, the FFS, had not called for an election boycott. Nevertheless,

the 65.4 per cent turn-out at the election was considerably lower than in 1995 (assuming, that is, that the figures for 1995 are correct).

The official election results for 1997 may be considered more reliable, since the elections did not take place under a state of emergency as in 1995 and were monitored by international observers, who raised only minor objections. Nonetheless, the FFS and other opposition parties accused the government of irregularities, without being able to substantiate their allegations. Criticism of the 1997 elections should not focus unduly on the way they were conducted, however, although there were certain deficiencies in this respect. Problematic rather was the exclusion of the FIS, which continues to have democratic legitimacy despite the ban. Even more serious was the disempowerment of the national assembly in the constitutional reform of 1996, which ultimately rendered the poll a farce.

While the regime attempted to achieve democratic legitimacy and to convey political normality to the West through the measures outlined above, the civil war continued to intensify. One contributing factor was the radicalisation of the Islamist spectrum. Assassinations and massacres became more frequent and more brutal, increasingly affecting all population groups. The escalation in violence was further exacerbated by the regime's decision to arm the so-called people's militias. As a result, there is now even greater access to more weapons and their use is uncontrolled. The widespread availability of arms has led to virtual gang warfare conducted for both political and criminal motives, with the result that the origins of terror and violence in Algeria have become more confused and the task of making peace even more difficult.

Reactions to the Algerian crisis in the European Union

The reaction of the EU to the Algerian crisis in 1992 was in line with French foreign policy which accepted the bloodless coup as the "lesser evil." An authoritarian, pro-Western regime in a neighbouring country was considered preferable to a democratically legitimate one run by anti-Western Islamic fundamentalists. France and the EU gave their unconditional support to the Algerian regime, especially under the conservative government of Edouard Balladur, who came to power in 1993. The French Interior Minister Charles Pasqua, known as a hardliner, largely shaped the conservative government's

policies on Algeria. He supported the official line of the Algerian regime which holds that there are no moderate Islamists, automatically precluding dialogue as a means of solving the crisis. In 1995, the Algerian question gained particular explosive force in France when the GIA and suspected other radical Islamist splinter groups began to extend their terrorist activities to France. The French government now came under increasing pressure to act. This did not lead to a political change of course, however. Instead, the government remained convinced that the Algerian regime could assert itself militarily. At the same time, Paris turned a blind eye to massive human rights violations on the part of the regime, including the establishment of "special courts" and "security camps." While these institutions were officially closed down in February 1996, there is evidence of continuing human rights violations including the torture of political prisoners.

After the government led by Lionel Jospin assumed power in June 1997, new trends became evident in France's policies on Algeria. As leader of the opposition, Jospin had frequently criticised the policies of the conservative government and had been opposed, for example, to the planned meeting between Presidents Chirac and Zeroual immediately prior to the 1995 Algerian presidential election on the basis that this could be interpreted as partisanship. The meeting was cancelled at the eleventh hour by the Algerian government after Chirac refused to participate in a larger media spectacle, which Zeroual had intended to use to his own advantage.

Once in government, Jospin's policies on Algeria preserved much more continuity with those of his predecessors than his earlier comments had led political observers to expect, and before the elections to the Algerian national assembly, he voiced his opposition to the participation of the FIS, albeit indirectly. At the same time, France has increasingly distanced itself from the hard line of the Algerian regime and is now pressing for political dialogue. Demands for democratic reforms frequently emanate from Paris, but such demands are not pursued with vigour, and economic support for the Algerian regime continues unabated.

At the beginning of the Algerian crisis, France's leadership on the Algeria question went unchallenged by other EU states, mainly because of their reluctance to assume political responsibility. Italy, for example, whose caution towards Algeria is motivated by its own energy interests, has countered criticism at home by referring to

France's special responsibility in the region. Other EU states, who are less dependent on natural gas from Algeria, were not prepared to risk conflict with France over Algeria, which is not high on the list of priorities of most EU member states.

This attitude is of benefit to France as it enables it to "hide" behind the EU when the need arises. It is well known that the Algerian regime is much more sensitive to interference from its former colonial master than from other external powers. By "Europeanising" its Algeria policies, France hopes to undermine this defensive attitude. Moreover, as long as France continues to dominate the relevant decision-making processes, it can exploit "European" policies on Algeria as an additional channel for its own interests. It is only against this background that its commitment to the Europeanisation of Mediterranean policies can be understood. No French government ever considered sharing its position of power in the region with other countries.

Europe's silence on the undemocratic conditions in Algeria began to encounter increasing criticism within the EU, since it was seen to jeopardise more worthy European goals in the region. Having finally acknowledged that political instability in the Mediterranean region is mainly due to socio-economic factors, the EU decided on a new approach which, it was hoped, would get to the root of the problem. With the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, which was conceived in Barcelona in 1995, the economic development of the Mediterranean nations, now referred to as "Mediterranean Partner Countries," became a priority. It was decided in Barcelona in November 1995 to establish a free trade area by the year 2010 which would link the Mediterranean states with each other and with the EU ("Economic and Financial Partnership"). The introduction of a political dimension focused on the democratisation of the Mediterranean partners on the one hand and the political stabilisation of the whole region on the other ("Political and Security Partnership"). Finally, a new "Partnership in Social, Cultural and Human Affairs" was also approved.

It would be mistaken to suggest that the European Mediterranean initiative is directed solely at the economic and political consolidation of the Mediterranean partners. Of equal importance to the EU is the creation of a further European sphere of influence. In this way, the EU hopes to be able to compete with the economic blocs of Asia and North America, and to enforce its claim to a political say in a

region where the USA continues to be the sole dominating external power.

The effects of the Mediterranean Conference of Barcelona on EU-Algerian relations

The vision of a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area could pose more of a threat than an opportunity to Algeria. The country is in the grips of an acute financial and economic crisis and has little chance of becoming competitive by the year 2010 unless the EU grants it lengthy transitional periods and comprehensive financial aid. All external support will be in vain, however, if the Algerian government fails to remove the obstacles to investment within the country itself. The main problem for Western investors continues to be the threatening security situation. As a result, Algeria faces a dilemma: economic recovery is dependent on political stabilisation, but as the causes of instability are primarily socio-economic in nature, political stability can only follow from an upturn in the economy. If the EU intends to contribute to overcoming the Algerian crisis, it must also come to terms with this dilemma.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership drawn up in Barcelona introduced a significant new development in this context. Future economic co-operation and financial aid would depend on the following four conditions: ongoing economic liberalisation, the effective use of previous financial aid, further democratisation and respect for human rights. This approach was intended to end the misuse of EU funds; to support the economic development of the Mediterranean partners; and to exert political pressure on authoritarian regimes to adopt the principles of democracy. Critics argue, however, that the EU's *unilateral* decision-making powers on the granting of funds is at variance with the spirit of equal partnership, and will prove difficult to implement.

The concept of *economic conditionality* is based on the market economy system of competition and favours economically successful countries at the expense of the less prosperous. The fact that the available funds are limited means that underdeveloped countries risk losing out in the new system. Algeria is obviously one such country and it will come under increased pressure to undertake economic reform in the future.

The promising beginnings of economic liberalisation in the late

1980s came to a halt shortly after the civil war began. President Belaid Abdel Salam, who was in office from July 1992 to August 1993, introduced more state controls following the start of the unrest, seriously undermining attempts at reform and liberalisation. The restrictions were only removed in 1994 by his successor, Redha Malek, within the framework of a debt rescheduling agreement with the *International Monetary Fund* (IMF). The EU welcomed the IMF agreement as a positive step in the right direction, signalling its approval by granting Algeria a loan of over 100 million dollars. Other Western and Arab countries reacted similarly with the result that economic and financial aid to Algeria amounted to a total of approximately 1.2 billion dollars in 1994.

In spite of this considerable financial impetus, economic reforms failed to materialise. At the same time, structural adjustments had numerous negative side-effects including growing unemployment, the devaluation of the dinar and rising prices. The deteriorating social situation has played into the hands of militant Islamists, whose escalating violence—directed specifically against foreigners since 1994—has further alienated investors. One of the main causes of stagnation is, however, the unwillingness of the regime and its supporters to reform an economic system which guarantees them privileges and power. Yet the EU has remained noticeably inactive to date on the regime's stubborn resistance to economic change.

The *political conditionality* conceived in Barcelona allows the EU to suspend or reduce economic and financial co-operation when human rights abuses and other gross violations of democratic principles come to light. While the Mediterranean partners expressed concern at potential European interference in their domestic affairs, the Union's silence on political conditions in Algeria would make such concerns appear unfounded: preparatory talks on a Euro-Algerian association agreement had already started in November 1994, despite the fact that the Commission only received a mandate from the European Council to begin negotiations following the November 1995 presidential elections. The go-ahead was given on the basis of the Algerian regime's decision in March 1994 to embark on economic reform in co-operation with the *International Monetary Fund*. That Europe regarded this agreement as sufficient reason to grant generous loans is a good indication of economic and political prioritising within the EU.

It would appear that the real criterion for economic and finan-

cial aid is the existence of a bilateral relationship between the applicant and an EU member state. In the case of Algeria, this special relationship is with France, and it was as a result of French pressure that the aforementioned generous loans were granted. This decision may have been justified with regard to the *economic* underdevelopment of Algeria. Politically, however, it signalled to the Algerian regime continuing European support despite an unwillingness to embrace political and economic reform. This negative impression was reinforced in the following two years. The EU failed to react either to the deficiencies of the 1996 constitutional reform, which legalised the authoritarian structures of the regime, or to the shortcomings of the 1997 elections, i.e. the exclusion of the FIS and the poll's lack of democratic authenticity following the disempowerment of the national assembly. In fact the EU interpreted both steps in the same manner as the presidential elections of 1995: as the cautious beginnings of democratisation. It may be argued in the case of the 1997 elections, that an elected parliament is a positive value in itself, even if its legislative powers are limited: at the very least a forum was created in which the opposition could publicly express its opinion and stimulate democratic discourse. But a constitutional reform which deprives parliament of important powers, should provoke a tougher response. Whereas the EU could have reacted by demanding political reforms as a pre-condition for negotiations on the association agreement, or by threatening to cut or suspend financial aid, it did not possess the political will required for such measures.

Partnership in social, cultural and human affairs. Partnership with whom?

The partnership in social, cultural and human affairs, which is also enshrined in the Declaration of Barcelona, is equally problematic. It aims to encourage democratisation at grass roots level by co-operating with civil society, which is especially weak in Algeria. With this objective in mind, various so-called MED programmes were set up to establish regional networks between universities, media institutions and also between cities and communities. One of the principal aims of the MED programmes was to stimulate dialogue between religions and cultures. The fact that the Commission could select the participants in these programmes without government interference was particularly significant. The programmes represented

a challenge to the Algerian regime as they impinged on the omni-present state controls. In order to counteract this loss of control, some Mediterranean partners insisted on including a passage in the Declaration of Barcelona stipulating that the MED programmes should remain within the framework of national laws. While the MED programmes remained largely ineffective in Algeria due to the domestic situation there, they had an auspicious start in most other Mediterranean countries. However, they were suspended in all Mediterranean Partner Countries in 1996, as a result of management problems.

As a result of this failure, an additional programme, the so-called MEDA Democracy programme, which was set up to support the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) in particular, has become more important. This programme has been marred by similar difficulties, however, and has been less successful in Algeria than in other Mediterranean countries.

The Barcelona agreement on co-operation against drugs, organised crime and terrorism in the Mediterranean region represents a particular stumbling block for the MED and MEDA Democracy Programmes. (The fact that these clauses are included in the chapter on "Partnership in Social, Cultural and Human Afairs" is also somewhat misleading.) The EU and the Mediterranean partners both expressed a particular interest in this aspect of the partnership, even though terms like "terrorism" are relative, and can easily be misused to criminalise political opponents. In the case of Algeria, this has led to the stigmatisation of certain groups who, while committed to a reconciliation with the Islamists, yet pursue democratic goals. The mutual undertaking to combat crime requires the EU to withdraw support for such groups.

The EU's democratisation programmes in Algeria are ultimately hampered by structural problems, which are a feature of all co-operation with authoritarian regimes: democratisation per se has a destabilising effect in undemocratic countries. Consequently, the two goals, "democratisation" and "stabilisation" are mutually exclusive in such regions of the world. It is impossible to cultivate a partnership with the regime at the same time as a partnership with civil society. The EU's priorities in this context are clear: stability takes priority over democracy. Preference is given to co-operation with the Algerian regime, while the concerns of civil society are taken into

consideration only when this does not jeopardise Euro-Algerian relations on an official level.

EU bilateral initiatives on Algeria

In early 1998, the escalating violence in Algeria provoked a new reaction in the EU, which went beyond the multilateral framework of Euro-Mediterranean partnership. Shaken by the massacre in Relizan, for which Islamist terrorists were held responsible and which claimed the lives of 400 civilians, the German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel proposed a visit to Algeria by the EU Troika. (The Troika is made up of the rotating EU presidency and its predecessor and successor, and consisted at that time of representatives from Luxembourg, Great Britain and Austria.) Kinkel's proposal met with the approval of all member states, who recognised the necessity of ending the spiral of violence. However, the fact that there were no detailed discussions of tactical procedures, or of the precise objectives of the mission, was to prove problematic.

Perhaps this is why the outcome of the talks which took place in Algiers on January 19 and 20, 1998, fell short of the hopes vested in them. The Algerian regime had dictated conditions to the EU Troika which barely permitted open dialogue, not to mention criticism: only one topic was to be debated, namely the common struggle against (Islamist) terrorism, and even then it was unclear whether this was to include discussion of the FIS. The Troika was not permitted to speak to the survivors of the massacres or to visit places where massacres had occurred. Offers of financial assistance to the survivors of the atrocities were rejected by the Algerian government, yet this did not prevent it from demanding material and technical support for the struggle against terrorism. The Troika was also prevented from meeting representatives of civil society, while discussions of the human rights situation in Algeria were ruled out as interference in the country's internal affairs. The proposal to send a UN human rights commission to Algeria, which was supported by the USA, encountered particularly hefty opposition and was rejected on the grounds that there were no human rights problems in Algeria. In any case, the regime added, Algeria was preparing its own report on human rights, which would be presented to the UN in spring 1998.

In appointing its own commission of enquiry, Algeria was following a tactic also used by other authoritarian governments: in order to defy growing pressure to observe human rights, the area of human rights supervision is appropriated and institutionalised by appointing an internal commission. While such politically dependent institutions are set up to demonstrate to the outside world a commitment to improving the human rights situation, their real purpose is to ward off external inspection. The scope of action of the Algerian parliamentary commission is limited, as all relevant opposition parties are not represented and the powers of parliament have been curtailed. It remains to be seen whether it can succeed in stimulating a dialogue on human rights despite the political obstacles. Since the strategy of appropriating awkward topics does not always succeed, any political opening, even one designed to uphold the status quo, has the potential for development and change.

On balance, the Troika mission has left the impression of unreserved EU support for the Algerian regime and its strategy of ending the civil war by force alone. While some critics assume that this was a result of overhasty and insufficient preparation for the visit, others see it as a manifestation of French influence. France, it is suggested, was unable to entertain any reversal of its policies on Algeria within the framework of a European initiative and continued to rely on the tacit support of other EU member states.

Against this background, particular importance must be attached to a visit by a delegation of the European Parliament (EP), which took place shortly afterwards, from February 8—12, 1998, with the objective of supporting the national assembly and the democratisation process in Algeria. Unlike the EU Troika, the parliamentarians insisted on discussions with representatives of civil society, including those speaking for the victims of the massacres. The main dialogue partners, however, were Algerian parliamentarians, who included representatives of all opposition parties. While the EU parliamentarians had a greater scope of action than the Troika, they were limited by restrictions imposed by the regime and were debarred, for example, from establishing contact with the banned FIS. This proviso was not only dictated by the regime, it was also backed by many Algerian parties and representatives of civil society, who while critical of the regime, categorically rejected any form of contact with political Islamism. Within the EP delegation, there were considerable differences of opinion on this issue. Of the nine parlia-

mentarians, three (Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Hans Swoboda and Anne Léonard) argued on principle for the inclusion of the FIS in any political solution to the civil war. Without entertaining political sympathies for the FIS programme, they did recognise that it reflected the will of the Algerian people, which was articulated in 1991 and which has not been refuted in any of the elections conducted since (under exclusion of the FIS). The three parliamentarians maintained that the EU cannot simply select dialogue partners on the basis of its own preferences. It must be open to all forces prepared to engage in dialogue if it is to contribute to resolving the Algerian crisis.

It was with this in mind that Cohn-Bendit departed from the official line of the delegation by demanding a meeting with FIS representatives. In addition, he publicly rebuked the Algerian regime for human rights violations and called for a public investigation into the background to the massacres. While the EP delegation attempted to play down his comments as the personal opinion of an individual delegate, they did spark off heated discussion. It may be considered a small step in the right direction that one of the ensuing debates in the Algerian national assembly, in which questions of internal security were discussed in a relatively open fashion, was transmitted live on television.

The parliamentarians displayed a united front when they were presented, without any advance warning, with a letter from the FIS. Not only was the letter not accepted, it was publicly rejected and torn up. With this gesture, the EP demonstrated its intention not to allow itself be used by anyone, including the FIS, which had ample opportunity prior to the visit to approach the parliament. Whether the EP should have accepted the pre-condition of not establishing contact with the FIS is open to question. Even if it felt it had no alternative on this issue, a second question remains: whether a polite, but firm rejection of the letter would not have sufficed. The aggressive gesture, on the other hand, conveyed the impression that the European Parliament was opposed on principle to any contact with the FIS.

The visit by the EP delegation marked the beginning of long-term co-operation within the framework of the "Inter-parliamentary Dialogue Europe / Algeria" and the "Forum Parlamentaire Euro-Méditerranéen," which was set up in October 1998. The EP's aim is to utilise the political scope of the legislative, which is greater than that of the executive. If it wishes to maintain official contact, however,

it must also respect the regime, despite the latter's questionable democratic legitimacy. Parliamentary co-operation has to be based on an acceptance of the status quo. Yet the EP also has the possibility of supporting those forces in the country attempting to effect political change, a strategy which builds on the development potential referred to above. In this context, the Algerian national assembly has an important role to play, as a forum in which political discourse is not only possible, but is frequently conducted with astonishing openness. Apart from supporting the Algerian regime, the EP is also endeavouring to involve democratic civil society to a greater extent through programmes like MEDA Democracy within the framework of Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

The question of how to approach the banned FIS remains contentious within the EP. Europe's call for a *political* solution to the civil war is, after all, nothing less than a demand couched in diplomatic terms for direct negotiations between the regime and the FIS. Yet in its official report, the EP clearly distanced itself from the FIS and categorically ruled out any intermediary role. In this, it fulfilled the expectations of its official negotiation partners and also came closer to the standpoint of the EU Troika. The dissenting opinions of individual parliamentarians like Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Hans Swoboda and Anne Léonard are worthy of particular attention. They have retained a more critical attitude towards the Algerian regime and, while they may have little esteem for the FIS, they do demand the party's inclusion in a political solution to the civil war.

Conclusion

It may be said in conclusion that while the EU has reacted to the escalation of violence in Algeria, it has failed to embark on a fundamental change of course. Verbal exhortations to democratise are not pursued with any level of vigour, despite the available potential to exercise political pressure on the Algerian regime. Demands for a political solution to the civil war will remain half-hearted as long as there is an unwillingness to enter into dialogue with the FIS, even on the part of the EP, whose scope of action is much broader than that of the national governments. In the meantime, the Algerian regime continues to enjoy the backing of Europe, despite a growing sense of unease.

European policies are founded on a fear of a takeover by anti-Western Islamists in Algeria, where the forces of democracy are weak and lacking in a broad support base. Islamist neighbours are clearly seen as a worst case scenario, while an agreement with the existing regime is perceived as the lesser evil. The Algerian government's increasingly apparent entanglement in the civil war makes such a position untenable, however, and the regime has come under considerable pressure to at least give the semblance of a willingness to undertake political reform. At the same time, it is secure in the knowledge that it has the EU's tacit agreement with the maintenance of the status quo. Europe has contented itself with a number of symbolic steps: the presidential elections of 1995 (which can hardly be called democratic), the somewhat less pivotal parliamentary elections in 1997 and the 1996 constitutional reform. Particularly the latter should have sparked off vehement protests from Europe, for it curtailed important powers of parliament even before it was elected. By failing to react, and by actually ascribing democratic tendencies to the regime, the EU was again supporting the formation of low-intensity democracies. While such systems may fulfil the minimum requirements of a democracy, namely "free" elections and a constitution, their principal effect is to stabilise authoritarian regimes.

Occasional attempts within the EU to abandon this line and exercise real pressure on the Algerian regime to introduce democratisation and seek a solution based on negotiation, were based on the assumption that an Islamist takeover was inevitable in the long term. This was the view of the USA in particular at the beginning of the civil war and led to considerable tensions with France. Since 1997, US and European positions have been reconciled, and the USA appears to have come around to the conviction that the Algerian regime can secure victory in the civil war. This assessment is difficult to comprehend in light of the continuing escalation of violence. For even assuming that the regime succeeded in crushing the Islamists, it could only remain in power by means of prolonged repression, which would rule out true democratisation in the long term.

There are no simple solutions to the Algerian crisis, and the chances of resolving the civil war peacefully are diminishing daily. The increasing fragmentation of the two parties to the civil war has made it impossible to distinguish clearly between political parties, terrorists and "normal" criminals. Even the distinction between the regime and its opponents has become blurred. Thus it is no longer

possible to assign responsibility for the violence. Nevertheless, a political solution involving all forces prepared to engage in dialogue continues to be the only practicable alternative. The question of who should participate in this process, however, is more difficult to answer today than in 1994/5. The Platform of Rome can merely serve as a model, since the participants have altered radically, chiefly as a result of the splintering of the Islamist spectrum. The greatest difficulty is that no single group possesses the necessary authority to agree on a binding cease-fire. The search for a political solution must therefore take place in the face of bitter opposition from radical forces on both sides.

What contribution can the EU make to a process of this kind? Its scope of action is limited, as it cannot pass over the Algerian regime, its official partner within the framework of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. However, the EU does have the option of employing the instruments agreed upon in Barcelona, and making its economic support for the regime dependent on political preconditions.

The EP has a wider scope of action than the governments, because it is in a position to cultivate direct contact with Algeria's civil society. Its commitment to the support of democratic NGOs, human rights groups and women's groups in particular is clearly evident. Yet this alone is not sufficient. The political clout of the small democratic elite is negligible, so that the key to solving the crisis in Algeria remains with the regime and the Islamists. While increased support for the democratic forces in Algeria is necessary, it has to be accompanied by a concerted effort to bring together all forces committed to a political solution.

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IRAN: TOWARDS AN END OF ANTI-WESTERN ISOLATIONISM?

Andreas Rieck

During the last few decades, no Muslim country has experienced a swifter and more radical change in its relations with the Western world than Iran following the 1978/79 revolution. From being a staunch Western ally and "America's gendarme in the Gulf," Iran has been transformed into a centre of anti-Western propaganda and supporter of radical movements in other Muslim countries. The new rulers view themselves as "vanguards in the liberation of all oppressed Muslim peoples." Anti-Americanism was a particular hallmark of the Khomeini era (1979-1989), and until recently even timid attempts at improving relations with the US have been fiercely resisted by powerful forces in Iran. The country's relations with Western Europe have been less affected, and an important level of trade and economic co-operation has been maintained throughout the last two decades. There have, however, been frequent conflicts and strains, the Rushdie affair of 1989 and the "Mykonos" trial of 1993-97 being recent examples. The policy of so-called "critical dialogue" with Iran announced by the European Union in 1992 was an indicator of the dilemma faced by European governments when attempting to justify their good working relations with a regime which was ostracised by the US and Israel and by many voices within Western Europe itself. The term was dropped in the wake of the "Mykonos" verdict in April 1997. The ensuing diplomatic row, resulting in the recall of EU and Iranian ambassadors, was quickly resolved, however, helped by the surprise election of the moderate Mohammed Khatami as the new Iranian President some weeks later. Even before assuming office in August 1997, Khatami proclaimed a "dialogue of civilisations" as one important aim of his government. With some daring gestures towards the US and declarations on the "closure" of the Rushdie affair, Khatami has also gone as far as he could towards improving relations with the West, while mindful of the strong position of the hardliners within the current Iranian power equation.

Roots of anti-Westernism in pre-revolutionary Iran

While resentment against Western domination past and present is
evident in varying degrees throughout the Muslim world, each coun-
try has had its own specific experiences with the West and each has
reacted differently. In Iran over the past few decades, there have been
widespread and somewhat exaggerated notions of an all-pervasive
Western influence and manipulation of the country's politics. This
was one reason for the *mullahs'* mass appeal during the revolution.
Although Iran never fell under direct European rule, it was an
important object of competing British and Russian imperialist inter-
ests since the 19th century, and was occupied by British and Rus-
sian troops during both World Wars. Exploitation of its oil-wells by
the *Anglo-Iranian Oil Company* (later BP) started as early as 1908, and
attempts by Prime Minister Mossadeq to nationalise that most im-
portant source of Iran's wealth were foiled by Britain and the US
between 1951 and 1953. Reza Khan, who with British assistance had
overthrown the weak Qajar dynasty in 1924 and who later pro-
claimed himself Shah, was a fervent nationalist with a strong deter-
mination to overcome Iran's dependence on the great powers.
However, when he opposed British and Russian occupation of Iran
in 1941—which was designed to secure transit routes to the Soviet
Union after the latter was attacked by Germany—he was uncere-
moniously forced to abdicate and driven into exile. His son, Moham-
med Reza Shah, who then assumed the throne at the age of 21,
almost lost his hold on power in 1953 and was only reinstalled as a
result of an American and British backed coup against Mossadeq.

    From that year on, the US became the dominant foreign power
in Iran, pouring one billion dollars of aid into the country in the 1950s
alone. Its aim was to make Iran, together with Turkey, a pillar of
the military alliances designed to contain the Soviet Union on its
southern flank. The Shah consolidated his domestic position with
American support, and in 1963 he launched a programme of en-
forced modernisation with his "White Revolution," which included
important positive elements such as a land reform and the right to
vote for women. Among those who resisted it were sections of the
Shiite clergy. The Shah had no difficulty in suppressing the rebel-
lion of 1963, which was led by Ayatollah Khomeini, and in the
following fifteen years his rule became more and more despotic and
megalomaniac. His secret police SAVAK became notorious for the

ruthless torture of opposition elements, including many leftists and pro-Khomeini *mullahs.*

Encouraged by the sudden wealth resulting from the 1970s oil-boom, the Shah predicted that Iran would soon reach a level of industrialisation and material prosperity comparable to that of Western Europe. But his dream of a "Great Civilisation" lacked substance. His autocratic paranoia alienated even many of the technocrats and better-off professionals who were considered to be the pillars of modernisation. At the same time, much of the oil wealth was simply squandered by a new class of favourites. The typical upper-class Iranian of the 1970s had nothing but contempt for the culture and traditions of the country and spent as much time as possible on vacation in Europe and the USA. While the Shah regime made every effort to revive interest in the ancient glory of Iran, especially in its pre-Islamic heritage, rampant Western-style materialism and consumerism swept the country. This was provocative both to the poor, who comprised the majority of the people and remained excluded from most of the blessings of material progress, and to a steadily growing number of intellectuals, who believed that Iranian society was losing its spiritual values by aping Western lifestyles.

Another important source of resentment were the vast amounts of money spent by the Shah to satisfy his obsessive quest for security and national glory. In addition to importing weapons from Europe on a large scale, Iran in the 1970s was the single largest buyer of sophisticated American arms. By 1978, twenty-five thousand American military advisors were stationed in the country. Their special privileges, most importantly immunity from juridical prosecution, caused an outcry as early as 1964, when they were denounced by Khomeini shortly before his expulsion from Iran. Fourteen years later, in spite of his efforts to enhance Iran's "national greatness," the Shah was still portrayed in many quarters as an "American lackey," squandering billions of dollars in order to protect US security interests in the Gulf.

Khomeini's deliberate confrontation with the West, 1979-1989

The Shiite clergy began a renewed campaign against the Shah in late 1977. Ironically they were encouraged to pursue this course of action by the pressure exercised on the Shah to liberalise and open

up his regime by US President Carter. Ever since the first violent manifestations of the revolution in January 1978, the preferred targets of attack besides institutions of the state were symbols of "Westernisation," namely cinemas, shops selling alcoholic drinks and banks (the latter because of a supposed ban on interest in Islam). Yet when the revolution reached its decisive stage from September 1978, with thousands of people killed in the streets of Iran's cities and towns and tens of thousands seriously wounded, all propaganda focused on the person of the Shah, rather than on his foreign backers. Khomeini, in the campaign he led from the Parisian suburb Neuphle-le-Chateau between October 1978 and January 1979, now avoided any provocative anti-Western statements. This was in marked contrast with the views made public by him in 1964 about a sinister "Jewish and Christian conspiracy to destroy Islam" in order to facilitate the "plunder of the Muslim peoples' wealth." The US government, for its part, failed to encourage the Shah to take a tough stance against the opposition in 1978, and during the final weeks of his rule a top US general was sent to Teheran to dissuade the Shah's military commanders from staging a coup. Following Khomeini's triumphant return to Teheran in a special Air France Boeing 747 flight on February 1, 1979, both the US and its European allies hoped for a smooth transition to a moderate "Islamic Republican" government which would maintain friendly relations with the West.

Such thinking seemed justified in the first months of the new order. Khomeini appointed a veteran of the liberal opposition, Mehdi Bazargan, to head a transitional government, and some days after the take-over, an attack by militant leftists on the US embassy in Teheran was repulsed on Khomeini's orders. While the new government cut off relations with Israel, withdrew from the CENTO defence pact, and declared "solidarity with liberation movements around the world," most of its ministers were Western-trained professionals with no intention of breaking ties with the West. Although radical activists announced their desire to "export" the revolution to other Muslim countries, this was not immediately taken seriously.

As it turned out, the Bazargan government was merely a smoke-screen behind which the politicised *mullahs* and those who shared their ideological beliefs laid the foundations for a totalitarian, theocratic system, which took more than two years to be fully implemented. All important decisions were taken by Khomeini himself and a semi-clandestine Revolutionary Council. Revolutionary *komitehs* and

Courts acted independently of the government, and powerful new institutions such as the *Revolutionary Guards* and *Revolutionary Foundations* were created. An important milestone on the way towards establishing a theocracy was the drafting of a new "Islamic constitution," which granted Khomeini extensive powers as the *Vali-ye faqih* (literally: the ruling jurisconsult), and was endorsed by referendum in December 1979.

The shift to militant anti-Americanism occurred in the midst of an intense power struggle between Islamist, leftist and liberal tendencies over the final shape of the new order. When the exiled Shah was admitted for medical treatment to the US in late October 1979, radical Islamist students used this as a pretext to occupy the US embassy in Teheran on November 4, taking more than 50 American staff members hostage. The act was condemned around the world, yet Khomeini immediately endorsed it and inflated its significance by referring to it as a "second revolution." His move was clearly tactical and designed to weaken his domestic rivals—the Bazargan government resigned on the same day—but it also reflected the deeper ideological convictions held by him and his devoted followers. Ever since that date, defying the "Great Satan" and "centre of global arrogance," namely the US, became a source of elevated pride, not to say an ideological intoxicant for Khomeini and all Iranian Islamist hardliners. Phrases coined by Khomeini like "America cannot do a damned thing" *(Amrika hich ghalati namitawanad kard)* and "we have rubbed the snout of America in the dirt" became immensely popular, and the slogan *"Marg bar Amrika"* (Death to America) was subsequently repeated ad infinitum at almost all public gatherings in Iran.

The main grievances against the US as articulated in Iranian propaganda since 1979 were former American support for the Pahlevi dictatorship (which had diminished under President Carter, as mentioned above) and its crucial backing of Israel and the so-called "vassal regimes" in the Muslim world. Accusations that the US was plotting to overthrow Iran's Islamic government in 1979 were also made, but could not be substantiated despite the publication of some 60 volumes of the so-called "Documents of the Nest of Spies," containing all confidential papers seized during the occupation of the US embassy. When Iraq attacked Iran in September 1980, an important new grievance against the US was added. Although President Carter condemned the attack at the time, still hoping that the Teheran

hostages would be released before the 1980 presidential elections, suggestions that parts of the US administration actually encouraged Iraq (albeit indirectly through America's Saudi allies) have never been invalidated. The eight-year long war with Iraq, which brought much more losses and suffering to Iran than the events of 1978/79, was rightly viewed as a means of "containing" the revolution's effects in the region (although it also turned out to have a stabilising effect on the Khomeini regime). Notwithstanding some leaks and inconsistencies, all Western countries maintained an arms embargo against Iran after the hostage crisis of 1979. Iraq, on the other hand, succeeded in building up a huge arsenal of state-of-the-art weapons with the help of the same countries, especially France, and with lavish financial support from America's Arab allies in the Gulf. The Western media and public, moreover, took only scant notice of the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-1988, which cost Iran some 500,000 dead and disabled, and caused immense destruction of its economic assets.

Thus Iran has paid dearly for Khomeini's confrontational stance in the 1980s. Yet this has never been a deterrent to the radical Islamists of the country, whether *mullahs* or laymen. The Iraqi attack in 1980 was seen as a blessing in disguise by the hardliners, because it kept the revolutionary spirit alive and inspired people of all ages to make new sacrifices. In the following years even children volunteered for the war fronts in tens of thousands, and a huge auxiliary force of volunteers *(basijis)*, including 10-year-old boys and men in their sixties, was formed in addition to the regular army and the much expanded *Revolutionary Guards Corps*. The state of emergency during the war also helped to suppress all serious domestic opposition until August 1981 and to accelerate the comprehensive "Islamisation" of public institutions, such as schools, universities and the judiciary.

One of the most repeated slogans introduced in 1979 was *"Esteqlala, azadi, Jomhuri-ye Eslami"* (Independence, freedom, Islamic Republic). While a mockery was made of "freedom," Iran did reassert its independence to a greater extent than any other contemporary Muslim country, braving international sanctions and fighting a major war without powerful allies in the 1980s. Other slogans like "War, war, until victory" and "We will fight on, if needed, for 20 years" were equally popular. By 1988, however, Iraqi air raids on Iranian cities and industrial areas had become so devastating that even his closest advisors were urging Khomeini to compromise. The later President Rafsandjani succeeded in convincing the Supreme Lead-

er to spare the country a further war of attrition and agree to a UN-sponsored cease-fire, which came into effect in August 1988. For Khomeini this admission of defeat was as repugnant as "drinking a cup of poison."

While the intended "export" of the Islamic revolution failed in Iraq despite a sizeable Shiite minority, Iran's hardliners were more successful in Lebanon with the foundation of the *Hizbollah* in the aftermath of the 1982 Israeli invasion. The *Hizbollah*, which soon won the support of roughly half of the country's Shiite population, earned fame through its relentless guerrilla war against Israeli occupation, thus lending credibility to Iran's much trumpeted radical stance against Israel. With their suicide bombings against US and French troops in Beirut in 1983 and the kidnapping of two dozen Western hostages (mostly American and French) in Lebanon during the following years, Iran's Lebanese clients also contributed to the "fight against Western influence in the region" promoted by Teheran. One of the more bizarre side effects of the hostage crisis was the ill-fated attempt by the US administration to exchange arms for hostages and money in secret dealings with Iran in 1985 and 1986 (the so-called Iran-Contra affair).

Four months before his death, the 86 year-old Khomeini seized a last opportunity to defy the West with his favourite posturing as "leader of all Muslims" when he issued the *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie. Although "The Satanic Verses" had been banned in several countries months before, and had triggered violent protests among Muslims in England and Pakistan, it was Khomeini's action on February 14, 1989, when he explicitly called on all Muslims to kill not only Rushdie but the publishers and translators of his blasphemous book, which alerted the world to the threat to Rushdie's life. Since Rushdie was a UK national, most member states of the European Community immediately withdrew their ambassadors from Iran in protest. Once again, Khomeini had used a provocation of the West for domestic purposes, namely to keep Iran on the track of "revolutionary fervour" even after the cease-fire with Iraq.

Iran and the West during Rafsandjani's presidency, 1989-1997

Following Khomeini's death on June 3, 1989, a smooth transition of power seemed to usher in a new "pragmatic" era in the Islamic

Republic. Ali Akbar Rafsandjani who was elected President and head of government six weeks later (the former office of Prime Minister having been abolished at that time) proclaimed reconstruction and economic development as his most important political goals. For the first time since the revolution, foreign investment and credits were sought and encouraged through new legislation, and Rafsandjani made serious attempts to rid the country of the ideological burdens which had marred its relations with the West. Most Western hostages in Lebanon were freed by late 1991, and a resumption of ties with the US was no longer ruled out should the latter release Iranian assets frozen since 1979. During the Kuwait crisis of 1990/91, Iran was wooed by Western countries and persuaded to stay neutral. It cashed in on Saddam Hussein's mistakes in several ways, securing a large increase in oil revenue during the two fiscal years, and benefiting extensively from Iraq's military defeat in the Gulf war of 1991. In December of the same year, the UN Secretary General branded Iraq the aggressor in the 1980-1988 war, thus vindicating Iran's long-term stance.

Yet expectations of a "Thermidor of the Iranian revolution" with the transition to the pragmatic Rafsandjani proved premature. His government, while enjoying the support of the majority of voters, was only one of numerous power centres in the Islamic Republic. Islamist "purists" were firmly entrenched in parliament, the judiciary, the Revolutionary *komitehs* (which had remained in existence since 1979), the *Revolutionary Guards Corps* and the "Foundations." These bodies continued to view relations with the US as sacrilege and to obstruct all attempts at diluting the "ideals of the revolution" in both domestic and foreign policy. Throughout the last ten years, these hardliners have found their most important ally and mouthpiece in the person of Sayyed Ali Khamenei, who was elected successor to Khomeini as the *vali-ye faqih*, or Supreme Leader, in June 1989. While Rafsandjani was arguably the most able politician among the ruling clergy, he was at best only one pillar of a ruling duumvirate, with power shifting more and more in favour of Khamenei and the radicals towards the end of Rafsandjani's eight-year term.

Renewed tension with the West surfaced shortly after the honeymoon period of 1989/90. The 1991 Gulf war, together with the demise of the Soviet Union and the emergence of independent Muslim republics in Central Asia later that year, enhanced Iran's position of power in the region. In addition, Russia began to rearm

the country with planes, missiles, tanks and submarines. At the same time, Iran's stance towards Israel remained resolutely antagonistic for ideological reasons. In October 1991, shortly before the US brought together representatives of Israel, Syria, Jordan and the Palestinians at the negotiating table in Madrid, opponents of the peace process from almost all Muslim countries were invited to Teheran to attend an "International Conference for Support of the Islamic Revolution in Palestine." Khamenei branded the Madrid conference as treason and "a declaration of war against Islam," expressing his belief that it would be possible to "eradicate the cancer of Israel" if Muslims united forces. The Oslo Accords of September 1993 between Israel and the PLO were likewise denounced, even by Rafsandjani who referred to them as "gross treason which Muslims of the world will never forgive," and Iran has since been suspected of providing radical Palestinian opponents of the accords with financial and logistical help.

During the 1980s, Iran's militant posturing against Israel was not taken particularly seriously (other than in the Lebanese context), because its energies were largely absorbed by the war against Iraq, another important enemy of the Jewish state. However, given Iran's growing military power and regional influence in the 1990s, its resistance to the US sponsored peace process began to be perceived as a serious threat, rather than as a mere annoyance. Consequently, both the US and Israel have kept a close watch on the development of Iran's military capabilities, especially its long-range missiles and suspected nuclear weapons programme. Russia, China and the countries of Eastern Europe were pressed to cease the transfer of nuclear and advanced military technology to Iran, albeit with little success. In early 1993, the new US administration under Bill Clinton announced its policy of "active containment" of Iran and invited its European allies and Japan to co-operate in Iran's "isolation." On April 30, 1995, during a speech to the *World Jewish Congress* in New York, Clinton announced a ban on all commercial transactions between American companies and Iran "to make clear our unrelenting determination to do all we can to arrest the behaviour and ambitions of a nation that ranks at the top of the world's ten most wanted list." The two allegations used to justify sanctions, namely Iran's support for terrorism directed against the Middle East peace process and its nuclear armament programme, have been consistently denied by Iran's leaders. Nevertheless, hardliners like Khamenei ac-

tually "welcomed" the sanctions, in the hope that they would "enhance self-reliance and productivity of the revolutionary Iranian nation." In 1996, additional legislation threatened even non-American companies investing more than 40 million dollars annually in Iran's oil and gas sector (its main economic asset), with US sanctions.

The countries of Western Europe had lifted economic sanctions against Iran as recently as October 1990. Their hopes of large profits from the reconstruction drive after the 1988 Iran-Iraq cease-fire were initially fulfilled with an export boom to Iran in 1990-92. From 1993, however, Iran had difficulties in repaying its debts, and drastically reduced imports. Moreover, the Rushdie *fatwa* and the violent persecution of exiled Iranian opposition figures in Europe were a constant strain on Iranian-EU relations. The death threat against Rushdie was a legacy left by Khomeini which even the most moderate elements of Iran's regime found impossible to overcome, since they did not dare to revoke his *fatwa.* Indeed Khamenei and other hardliners made a point of reconfirming it with defiant statements on each anniversary. High profile victims of assassinations perpetrated against Iranian exiles during the Rafsandjani era included former Prime Minister Shahpur Bakhtiar in Paris (August 6, 1991) and four leaders of the *Kurdish Democratic Party* in Berlin (Restaurant "Mykonos," September 19, 1992). While the French authorities later released the main suspects in the Bakhtiar case—a pattern followed in several incidents of Middle Eastern terrorism in France and other European countries—the persistence of the Berlin court in investigating the entire background of the "Mykonos" killings brought the matter to a head in 1996/97.

On December 12, 1992, an EU summit in Edinburgh agreed on a common policy towards Iran and issued the following statement: "Given Iran's importance in the region, the European Council reaffirms its belief that a dialogue should be maintained with the Iranian Government. This should be a "critical dialogue" which reflects concern about Iranian behaviour and calls for improvement in a number of areas, particularly human rights, the death sentence ... against ... Rushdie ... and terrorism. Improvement in these areas will be important in determining the extent to which closer relations and confidence can be developed." The EU also expressed "concern about Iran's arms procurement" and the desire for a "constructive Iranian approach to the Near East peace process." During the follow-

ing years, EU member countries resisted all pressure from both the US and Israel to sever diplomatic and economic ties with Iran. They were not willing to cancel outstanding debts and ongoing contracts worth billions of dollars, nor did they wish to sacrifice future commercial prospects in a potentially rich country with excellent transit routes to Central Asia. Europe also had sound political arguments for its stance, namely the need to maintain channels of influence in Iran and to strengthen the moderate camp there.

From 1993 until 1997, attitudes towards Iran were a constant bone of contention between the US and its allies, including Japan. American sanctions, although intended to "strangle Iran's lifeline," i.e. its oil and gas production and petrochemical industry, did not have a decisive impact and were criticised as counter-productive, even by many US companies and politicians. At the same time Iran found new customers for its oil and investors for its technical projects, particularly in East Asia. Nonetheless, economic development in Iran stagnated during the last years of Rafsandjani's term, mainly for domestic reasons. His inability to tackle the economic legacy of the revolution, i.e. ineffective state-owned enterprises, uncontrolled fiefdoms of the *Revolutionary Foundations* and huge subsidies on food and petrochemical products, was due in the main to the multi-headed Iranian power structure.

While the hardliners foiled most of Rafsandjani's economic liberalisation policies, they also opened another front against what they dubbed "Western cultural invasion" in the post-Khomeini era. So-called "vice-squads" formed by local *komitehs* or from amongst the *basiji* war veterans regularly searched homes in the better-off quarters of Teheran for prohibited music or videocassettes, and patrolled the streets to detect and punish women who neglected to wear "proper Islamic cover" *(hejab)*, especially during the hot season. Satellite dishes receiving foreign TV stations, purchased by hundreds of thousands in the early 1990s, were identified as one of the greatest dangers to Muslim youth and were banned in 1995, although no serious attempts were made to dismantle them or prevent their illicit use. The easing of press censorship in the Rafsandjani era also angered the hardliners, who would frequently send bands of thugs calling themselves *Ansar-e Hizbollah* (Helpers of the Party of God) to demolish editors' offices and beat up staff members who had written "objectionable" articles. In 1992, Sayyed Mohammad Khatami, then Minister for Culture, was forced to resign from his post

because his attitude was considered too tolerant. Mohammad Hashemi, a brother of Rafsandjani and director of the national radio and TV since 1981, was likewise accused of "propagating Western culture" and was deposed by Khamenei in 1994.

While Rafsandjani's presidency had started with high expectations of a rapid improvement in relations with the West, its end coincided with the embarrassing conclusion of the "Mykonos" trial. The controversial visit to Germany of Iran's Minister of Information and Security Ali Fallahian in October 1993 represented a first attempt to cover up the murder of the Kurdish leaders in Berlin. Its effect, however, was merely to make damage control more difficult for the German government. In November 1996, the bill of indictment in the "Mykonos" case explicitly blamed Iran's leaders, including Khamenei and Rafsandjani, for ordering the killings, causing an upsurge of protests and threats from Teheran. When these accusations were upheld in the final verdict on April 10, 1997, albeit without mentioning the Supreme Leader, the President or the Foreign Minister of Iran by name, all EU member states recalled their ambassadors from Teheran and declared the "critical dialogue" obsolete. Iran's government did likewise, but was anxious to prevent a violent reaction. As it turned out, the Europeans were even more eager than the Iranian leadership to overcome the repercussions of the affair. On April 29, a meeting of EU Foreign Ministers decided that the ambassadors could return to their posts. This gave Khamenei an opportunity to "retaliate" by forbidding the German diplomat to enter Iran. The stand-off lasted for six months and ended only when the EU ambassadors agreed to return to Teheran in two batches and to comply with Iran's demand that the German head of mission be the last to resume his function.

A breakthrough for détente with the West under President Khatami?

In the wake of the "Mykonos" verdict, European leaders once more rejected American pleas to co-operate in the sanctions against the Iranian regime. Their argument that maintaining links would strengthen the moderates received a timely vindication on May 23, 1997, when Sayyed Mohammad Khatami was elected to succeed Rafsandjani as Iran's president and head of government. The importance of this event cannot be overstated. The fact that Khatami

was permitted to run as a candidate was in itself proof of the opening up of Iran's political system, for the focus of his campaign ran contrary to the views of the majority of the ruling establishment. The same hardliners who had thrown numerous obstacles in the way of Rafsandjani during his term in office had also made their own preparations for taking over government in 1997. Their presidential candidate, the lacklustre Speaker of parliament Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri, was given all-out support by the state-owned media, the "Revolutionary Organisations," the judiciary and a majority of the deputies. Khamenei had declared his intention to support the people's vote regardless of the outcome, but he also had a scarcely hidden preference for Nateq-Nuri. Khatami, for his part, was supported by reformist technocrats and Islamist leftists. In his campaign he stressed the need for greater tolerance, the rule of law, and the implementation of all rights granted by the 1979 constitution, especially women's rights. For the first time since the revolution, Iran's voters were given the chance to make a choice between two very different political directions.

The second important aspect of the 1997 presidential election was the very clear plebiscite in favour of the reformist candidate. In a record turnout of 88.11 per cent, Khatami received 69 per cent of the votes and Nateq-Nuri only 25 per cent. This came as a shock to the hardliners, who believed they had the support of the overwhelming majority. Their illusions had been nurtured in a number of presidential elections since 1981, which were in fact one-horse-races, the winner clear in advance. Parliamentary elections, moreover, had been hampered by the absence of political parties and by the strict pre-selection of candidates. The 1997 results offered the first realistic evaluation of the public mood since 1980 (the only occasion when presidential and parliamentary elections were competitive to a certain degree).

Support for Khatami came in the main from female and younger voters. The generation which grew up after 1979 never experienced the Shah regime, but they had certainly been exposed to the negative aspects of the "mullahcracy", such as economic stagnation and repression of freedom. While veterans of the revolution still extol its achievements two decades later, younger Iranians, especially those living in the larger towns and cities, have become eager to learn about the outside world. Most are no longer impressed by the spectre of "Western cultural invasion." They are lured rather by Western free-

dom, Western thoughts and Western lifestyles, including the very "pop-culture" which is so reviled by the purists. After a period of intense self-assertion and a return to the spiritual roots of Islam, the pendulum in Iran seems to have swung in the opposite direction since the death of Khomeini.

Nevertheless, Khatami and his reformist supporters do not advocate a return to the blind imitation of the West. Although Khatami broke a taboo of sorts by speaking of the need for a deeper understanding of Western values and concepts shortly after his election, his much repeated offer of a "dialogue of civilisations" is based on a firm belief in the tenets of his own religion. Yet he does not share the siege mentality of the hardliners, who view exposure to Western influence as a dangerous contamination. Khatami's understanding of Islam is both tolerant and self-confident. Whereas Khomeini always maintained that Muslims must be prevented, if necessary by force, from "succumbing to the lures of Satan," Khatami believes that religion requires no coercion.

At the same time, however, Khatami is fully aware that while his supporters may be in the majority, the hardline minority is well organised, entrenched in powerful institutions and ready to fight for its privileges and ideological convictions. He therefore opted for a prudent step-by-step approach in the inevitable power struggle which followed his election. Unlike Rafsandjani, who was very close to Khomeini and a member of the inner circle of power ever since the success of the revolution, Khatami has yet to build up a stable support base of his own. Rafsandjani has retained an important position as head of the so-called "Expediency Council" since the end of his term in office, and the former duumvirat has been replaced by a ruling troika of sorts. But while Khamenei has remained on friendly terms with Khatami on the surface, many of the former's public statements, especially regarding Iran's relations with the West, sound like the antithesis of Khatami's views.

On May 18, 1998, President Clinton formally lifted the threat of sanctions against European firms investing in Iran, after it had become clear that the main effect of sanctions was to isolate the US itself. In a speech on June 16, American Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, while upholding US demands for "good behaviour," offered "a road map leading to normal relations" once Iran was ready. This was confirmed two days later by Clinton's offer of "genuine reconciliation" with Iran.

EU Foreign Ministers, for their part, decided on February 23, 1998 to resume ministerial contacts, which had been suspended after the "Mykonos" verdict. On September 24, 1998, Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi declared that "the Government of the Islamic Republic ... has no intention, nor is it going to take any action whatsoever to threaten the life of the author of 'The Satanic Verses' or anybody associated with his work, nor will it encourage or assist anybody to do so." Although Khatami's remark one day earlier that "we should consider the Rushdie affair as completely finished" proved no more than wishful thinking—the hardliners not only reaffirmed Khomeini's *fatwa*, but even raised the reward on Rushdie's head shortly afterwards—another important taboo had been broken by Khatami's government. This step was reciprocated by Foreign Secretary Robin Cook with a declaration that the British government "recognised the fundamental role of Islam in Iranian life and understood and regretted the offence the book ... has caused to Muslims in Iran and elsewhere in the world." Full diplomatic relations with the UK were restored for the first time since 1989.

Western attitudes towards Iran since the revolution—a retrospective view

Although Western European governments have generally dealt pragmatically with the Islamic Republic, at least in the post-Khomeini era, the same cannot be said of public opinion and the media in Europe, let alone in the US. Two decades after the revolution, perceptions of Iran continue to be coloured by stereotypes of "fanatical *mullahs*" and a "return to the Middle Ages." Even many Western intellectuals show insufficient understanding of the complexities of Iran's political system and its specific religious and cultural values. There is a tendency in the West to judge the Iranian regime's domestic and foreign policies according to a strict moral yardstick which is rarely applied to other countries.

During the 1978/79 revolution, and in its immediate aftermath, Western media coverage of Iran was intense, with a preference for "outlandish" aspects such as crowds of women in black *chadors* or turbaned mullahs chanting militant slogans. While relatively few pictures of the bloody clampdown on demonstrators by the Shah's police and army were shown in the Western media, extensive coverage was given to the excesses of revolutionary courts in 1979 and

later to the US embassy hostage taking. Thus the Islamic Republic became an object of incredulous indignation. With the end of the hostage affair in 1981, however, Western public interest in Iran receded. The importance of the war against Iraq and the suffering it caused to millions of Iranians was never properly reflected in Western media or brought to the attention of the general public.

The root causes of the 1979 Iranian revolution were soon forgotten by the West. While Iranian propaganda has somewhat exaggerated the crimes of the Shah regime and its alleged "sell-out" of national wealth and interests to "imperialism," Western expectations of "business as usual" after the Shah's downfall were also misplaced. Western governments, who for decades had overlooked the Shah's gross human rights violations, in order to advance their own economic and geo-strategic interests, could not shed all responsibility overnight. Their protests against the execution of a number of the Shah's generals and high-ranking former officials in early 1979 was regarded as hypocritical by Iran's revolutionaries, who were determined not to listen to any advice from abroad. Most Western political leaders, however, failed to appreciate the historical significance of the fact that Iran had retrieved full independence after some 200 years of Western domination. Instead of accepting this change, together with the strong religious revival, as a natural development in the context of worldwide decolonialisation, it was viewed largely as a threat to regional stability, especially by the US.

Intense efforts by the US, and to a lesser extent by America's European allies, to contain the export of the Islamic revolution demonstrated an unrelenting desire to keep much of the Muslim world, and the Persian Gulf in particular, within the sphere of Western political hegemony. The option of allowing the people concerned to decide the fate of existing regimes in countries like Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Egypt was never even considered. Instead, "Western interests" were linked to the continuing existence of these regimes, and various strategies were implemented to safeguard them against internal and external challenges.

Iraq assumed a key role as a first line of defence against Iran's revolutionary influence in the Arab world. In addition to direct Western arms sales, America's Arab allies gave some 40 billion dollars in grants and soft loans to prop up Iraq's defence in the 1980s. This is about ten times as much as the same countries donated in support of the Afghan *mujahidin* and gives some idea of how seriously

the challenge from revolutionary Iran was taken as compared with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which was also regarded as a major threat to regional security. It was only after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 that the West discovered the criminal nature of his regime, while Iran's leaders spoke of "a Frankenstein who has turned against his creators." Western double standards—which have never been acknowledged or apologised for—have made it impossible until this day for Western leaders to impress the rulers of Teheran with "moral" arguments.

When looking at Western grievances against Iran in the 1990s, we notice that European countries frequently refer to the Rushdie affair, human rights abuses and the persecution of Iranian dissidents abroad. The US, on the other hand, has tried to justify its policy of containment almost exclusively with arguments reflecting concern for the security of Israel. Iran's support for groups which directly confront Israel like *Hizbollah* and *Hamas* is one aspect of this conflict, but the real issue seems to be maintaining Israel's military edge over all potential enemies in the region. This general strategy is manifested in US opposition to Iranian re-armament and its determination to prevent the emergence of more Iranian-style Islamist regimes in Israel's vicinity.

While US policy towards Iran in the 1980s was largely influenced by the humiliating hostage affair, in the 1990s it has been shaped by the pro-Israel lobby more than any other factor. America's claim to permanent regional dominance must remain unacceptable to a regime as self-confident as that of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has compelling security concerns of its own. But US efforts since 1991 to break the stalemate in the Arab-Israeli conflict have opened an alternative track for coping with the challenge of radical Islamism. If the US were to achieve a genuine breakthrough in the Middle East peace process, it might reconsider its strategy on security in the region, including Iran and the Persian Gulf. The EU countries, for their part, have long since pinned their hopes on a solution of this kind, which would guarantee the security of Israel without the need to contain Iran. At the same time they have argued that the isolation of Iran only strengthens the hardliners within a system that has shown its capacity to develop towards political pluralism in recent years.

The European policy of maintaining dialogue with Iran's regime in all circumstances has been strongly criticised not only by the US and Israel, but by many journalists, writers, human rights activists

and members of the Iranian exiled opposition in Europe itself. Whatever opportunist motives may have accompanied such a policy, the 1997 elections and subsequent developments have proved its soundness. The trend toward internal liberalisation in Iran now seems irreversible, and will reduce Iran's involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict, which largely follows the ideological and religious imperatives of the hardliners. Developments over the last two years also suggest that the US might gradually accommodate Iran's re-emergence as the predominant power in the Gulf region. A genuine détente in US-Iranian relations will take time and will require important concessions from both sides, but there are no compelling reasons why this should not be achieved within the coming decade.

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THEY DARE TO SPEAK OUT
CHANGES IN THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF EGYPT, MOROCCO AND THE ARAB WORLD

Sonja Hegasy

Ask a European politician or journalist to name three so-called Muslim fundamentalists and he or she will probably come up with some names. At the very least, Ayatollah Khomeini (Iran), Abassi Madani (Algeria) and Shaykh Yasin (Palestine) have made it onto the front-pages of international newspapers. But ask the same European to name three contemporary liberal thinkers from the Muslim world, and there will probably be no response. Intellectuals like Salman Rushdie are not considered to be Muslim liberals. Sadik al-Azm, another important Arab liberal thinker, criticised Europeans for failing by and large to identify Rushdie as part of Muslim culture. Al-Azm regards Salman Rushdie as a Muslim dissident comparable to Rabelais, Voltaire or Joyce: "Perhaps the deep-seated and silent assumption in the West remains that Muslims are simply not worthy of serious dissidents, do not deserve them, and are ultimately incapable of producing them; for in the final analysis, it is the theocracy of the Ayatollahs that becomes them. No wonder, then, if a Muslim's exercise in satirical courage and laughter should pass unsung for what it is."[1]

Western media do not see Rushdie as part of a vast contemporary cultural production and constantly changing heterogeneous culture in the Muslim world, because the concept of heterogeneity contradicts the perceived antagonisms between "the West" and "Islam." Only recently the *Herald Tribune* suggested that Arabs did not think they were entitled to human liberty in their own nations since "only a few spoke or risked themselves for it."[2]

In contrast to such widespread opinions, this article seeks to examine some cases of liberal engagement in Egypt, Morocco and other selected Arab countries whose importance is derived from greatly

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[1] al-Azm 1991: 2.
[2] *Herald Tribune*, May 8, 1999.

influencing their respective political cultures. It is important to assess recent changes in the Arab world from this point of view since it is an aspect which has long been ignored in Western research on the region.[3] The following essay investigates a development which began in many Arab countries in the mid-1980s and has since led to varying degrees of economic and/or political opening. Political culture is the battleground on which this development has occurred. In order to understand this process of change, political scientists must analyse the micro-level of society, i.e. individual behaviour and thinking. Events must be studied which may appear peripheral, but which are, in fact, necessary for an evaluation of the changes in political culture.

The term "political culture" denotes the values, opinions and norms, as well as the cognitive and emotional ties which the individual develops towards the political system in which he or she lives. Political culture is formed by individual experiences, economic interests and historical lessons. It reflects the legitimacy of the political system and the participation of its citizens. Any attempt to assess change in the Arab world must focus on the political culture, i.e. on the formation of values and the varying forms of participation. The emergence of individuals with a liberal set of values is not only of benefit to a few peripheral upper-strata activists, writers and other artists whose own spaces of expression are thereby enlarged. It will also play an important role in forming society as a whole in the future. European individuals and institutions should familiarise themselves with this Arab liberal current, in order to be in a position to identify potential dialogue partners should a critical situation arise.

Winds of change

Some readers may remember the shock experienced by Arab leaders upon realising that their citizens had welcomed the summary execution of Ceaucescu. The collapse of the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and the peaceful opening of the Berlin Wall had far-reaching effects on the Arab world. Intellectuals, informal circles,

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[3] Explicit studies on political cultures in the Arab world are rare. For further reading see bibliography.

associations, church groups, artists, journalists and many others had succeeded in bringing about one of the most significant events of the 20th century: an end to the Cold War.

Expectations of pluralistic openness and the underlying idea of a civil society in countries with authoritarian regimes re-emerged in this context and entered the Arab discourse. When Arab intellectuals used the term "civil society," they were referring to the Eastern European variety. Civil society is understood here as opposition to the state. Its values rely on pluralism, heterogeneity, maturity and activism. Civil society is seen to play an important role in forming values and norms which lead to transition and an opening up of the system. The term is not eurocentric but refers to specific historical events which are common to Eastern Europe and the Arab world. The term "civil society" as understood by Arab intellectuals held expectations of a development which would enhance individual participation in decision-making or, to put it more cautiously, enable pressure to be exerted on the political agenda by leading individuals and small interest groups. At the same time the term covers very different interests: "The Europeans have a more instrumentalist orientation towards civil society. Its only raison d'être is its ability to reform the state. US thinkers have a more fundamentalist view of civil society. It is good in itself because it is in civil society that democratic norms are lodged."[4]

With the changes in Eastern Europe, societal groupings in the Middle East began to gain growing attention from political scientists who had formerly been more concerned with questions of stability, institutions and statehood, and regarded the lack of intermediary institutions between society and state as partly responsible for the enduring authoritarianism and military rule in the Arab world. Now, however, a number of publications on the Middle East and North Africa started to focus on issues like human rights, good governance, democratisation and liberalisation. Social movements thus came to be examined much more closely and to be viewed as an important force in bringing about change.

In this context, Morocco is regarded as a model case since economic and political liberalisation has been slowly but steadily implemented there since the mid-1980s. Egypt, on the other hand, is commonly regarded as having had its economic and political phase

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[4] Hyden 1996: 7.

of liberalisation during the mid-seventies under Sadat. If one were to assess the degree of democratisation and liberalisation in the Arab world, one may well come to the conclusion that no such development has occurred. Elections do not reflect the will of the people. Laws have not undergone substantial change (e.g. the family status law in Morocco) and opposition parties are hindered from participating in elections or from even forming in the first place (e.g. the case of *Al-Wasat* in Egypt). But change *is* happening on the level of political culture, with the state and both Islamist and secular groupings fighting to implement their respective sets of values.

International dialogue

Within the logic of the "soft state"—weak in the face of external pressure, strong when confronted with internal demands—it is obvious that Arab regimes are responding much more quickly and flexibly to a shift in international policy, donor orientation, and the demands of globalisation, than to identical demands over the last forty years from within their own countries. The states' reaction is a mixture of co-option, funding control and an opening up of the system. The regimes know that a successful mastering of free trade agreements with the EU is only possible with employees who are well-skilled and well-informed. This clearly means people who have access to controversial information and who have the courage to speak out. It is obvious, however, that such an ability cannot be restricted to the technical area.

After the end of the Cold War, international donor agencies ceased their unequivocal support for authoritarian regimes in the Arab world and began to promote human rights and other issues. Forty years after decolonisation, it had become evident that using the state as a means of social engineering had not produced the desired results. While education was a priority in the various projects of independence, it was an education based on obedience and authoritarianism, on repetition and a distortion of historical fact. It is now recognised that individuals must be strengthened in their capacity to make up their own minds. This requires access to pluralistic information, the breaking of taboos, the ability to reflect freely and voice one's opinion and the fostering of decisional competence. Such developments can in turn help to re-conceptualise public issues.

In its MED-Campus, MED-Media, MED-Democracy and MED-Urbs programmes, the EU is seeking to address the most important pillars of civil society—university professors, students, journalists, NGOs—and to promote their active participation. Democracy is no longer regarded as incompatible with economic growth in European development theory. On the contrary, strengthening the market economy is now seen as one way of delegating authority to individuals and organisations outside the realm of the state.[5]

The success of civil society groups is also evident on an international level. Beginning with the Earth Summit in 1992, NGO forums have attended major UN conferences (Population and Development Conference in Cairo, Fifth Women's Conference in Beijing, Social Summit in Copenhagen) where their input has become as important as that of the national governments. They have played an important role in the process of preparing for the conferences, discussing the national agenda with the governments and proposing alternatives. Indeed, on many occasions they were more thoroughly prepared than government representatives and had access to relevant information through their well-established international networks.

Reviving civil society

Heterogeneous interests have begun to organise themselves in the demand for civil rights, accountability and transparency, not only through the classical institutions of democracy such as political parties and trade unions, but also through associations whose political will is often manifested in a creative manner. Parties have lost their post-colonial legitimacy and are held largely responsible for the stagnation of society. Expectations of rising living standards, a more equal distribution of wealth and better access to political decision-making remain unfulfilled. This has provided fertile ground for the growth of Islamist parties and Islamist NGOs. Secular NGOs, on the other hand, tend to represent specific interests rather than comprehensive world views. They have the character of lobbying groups and therefore lack a mass basis. But they are extremely important in introducing modern values into society. However, it would be unrealis-

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[5] Hyden 1996.

tic to expect the developing NGO sector to have the ability to sud-
denly democratise society. If civil society groups succeed in influencing
the national political agenda and raising interest in topics such as
AIDS prevention, protest against the second Gulf war, misuse of
power by police officials, the reform of family status law and dia-
logue with Israel, then this in itself is a considerable success over
political apathy and lack of organisation, and may be viewed as the
cautious emergence of a local civil society.

The issue of corruption became so widespread in the 1980s that
it prompted a dramatic response from civil society in many coun-
tries, with the result that national leaders are now willing to public-
ly discuss the issue. For the citizens of many developing countries,
corruption means the destruction of the trust and accountability which
they demand. As long as the people have grounds for cynicism about
their governments, attitudes will remain difficult to change. The
Algerian case became the writing on the wall for many corrupt Arab
regimes. Civil society was hindered in its quest to find a legal means
of condemning the corruption of the state elite. Religious groups,
drawing on their traditional audience in the mosques and relying on
their traditional means of communication, filled the void. The Al-
gerian government recognised too late that promoting civil society
could be a major pillar on which to stabilise the country and to
legitimise itself. It is not surprising that artists, journalists, musicians
and writers, who clearly rub salt in the wounds of Arab societies,
are major targets of oppression.

In Egypt, several film directors have produced remarkable films
since the early 1990s, which portray the heterogeneity of Egyptian
society and the right to self-representation ("Against the Govern-
ment," "Citizen Masri" and "The Captain"). These films reflect the
growing individualisation which is taking place parallel to the growth
of advocacy groups.

The NGOs, in co-operation with the artistic world, legitimately
carry the expectation of transforming political culture by demonstrat-
ing the heterogeneity of Arab societies. They focus on the life of
marginalised individuals and promote the values of civil society, i.e.
heterogeneity, tolerance and non-violence. The gradual growth of
participation and political liberalisation can only continue because
it is also of benefit to the authoritarian regimes. In a severe crisis of
legitimacy, the flourishing advocacy groups have helped to create a
new kind of legitimacy. The regimes have found new outlets through

the NGOs to effectively articulate societal interests, a development which was important, for example, during the second Gulf war.[6] These pluralistic outlets counteract the devastating effects of the brain drain and enable the overburdened state to delegate tasks. At the same time, however, this logically means delegating authority.

Setting an example

It is important that the Arab liberal current be encouraged to assume positions of leadership within society. Fundamentalist movements, having recognised the liberal bourgeoisie's failure to stand up and defend its own values openly, are now engaging in symbolic practices such as naming mosques after patriots. When a Palestinian suicide bomber dies in Israel, it is only a matter of days before a mosque is named after him. The importance of this type of practice lies in publicly rewarding such behaviour and openly condoning the values proposed by *Hamas*. There is no liberal equivalent to this in the Arab world. People like Rafiq Hariri who awarded scholarships to Lebanese and Palestinian students to study at the best international universities are rare and receive little acknowledgement. The concept of philanthropists and private foundations supporting artists independently of state patronage is not favoured by the (rich) liberal upper strata, who view investment in human capital as a threat to their own status within the hierarchy.

In Morocco, streets and public buildings are named after either Hassan II or Mohammed V, but not after ordinary citizens. Civil associations have begun to change this. One example is the *Association Marocaine de Solidarité et de Développement*, an association which named its library after the sociologist Mohammed Salahdine, who focused on women in his research. It is a very small step in the right direction but many such symbolic practices are emerging.[7]

At the same time the state is also setting its own examples. In January 1997, there was a clamp-down on some 80 Egyptian youngsters who had been listening to heavy metal music and were accused of involvement in a satanic cult. The youths were taken into custody and accused of being infidels, a charge which theoretically car-

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[6] Hudson 1991.
[7] Hegasy 1997.

ries the death penalty. In the end, it was officially confirmed that satanic cults do not exist in Egypt, but young people had been traumatised and warned where to draw the line: at heavy metal music, black clothes and long hair, in other words, at any expression of their individuality. Government policy tries to suppress the idea that legitimate individual preferences exist, to say nothing of different political attitudes and different religions. The heterogeneity of society is simply not recognised and cases of individual expression are promptly subdued. A Cairo University student who won a prize in 1996 dedicated it to his professor who was in prison at the time. This resulted in the student's disappearance from campus. Civil society needs courageous individuals who are prepared to stand up for their rights in public, such as the Chinese student who confronted a tank on Tiananmen Square in 1989, and the writer Vaclav Havel.

Public concern at work

The widening of people's choices is restricted to a limited elite in the Arab world. While the interests of the resource-rich upper classes predominate, the middle class faces great difficulties in promoting its concerns. As a result, many opt for emigration, which in turn causes a massive brain drain and has a negative effect on the development of human capital. The middle classes do not see their efforts at participation rewarded, either financially or otherwise. In many Arab countries, upward mobility is still not related to achievement. However, some people are attempting to establish their own niche and to develop a space for free expression. This stratum of society could be a major factor in bringing about a change in the elite in the future. Once the opportunity for participation is awarded not merely on the basis of inheritance or in return for absolute loyalty, the well-educated, politicised middle and upper classes will no longer be tempted by emigration. Their quality of life has a great deal to do with freedom of expression, be it oral or artistic. Internal factors such as growing individualisation are, therefore, as important as external factors for the building of a viable civil society and for the implementation of liberal values and non-hierarchical decision patterns.

Civil associations have been instrumental in the emergence of an alternative political culture in the Arab world. The "Université de

Printemps," for example, was organised in Rabat from March 24 to 31, 1995, by the *Association Democratique des Femmes du Maroc* (ADFM). In her opening speech, Nezha Skalli referred to Alvin and Heidi Toffler, two American sociologists who argue that access to knowledge will be the major battleground for power in the twenty-first century. The main aim of the university was to strengthen public opinion on gender issues and to train civil rights activists, journalists, and teachers from high schools and universities. Public lectures were held in the mornings and working groups met in the afternoons to develop methods of integrating gender issues into their respective fields. The working group for NGO representatives dealt with a discourse analysis by a female Iranian MP and an active female Egyptian Islamist. How do these women justify polygamy, temporary marriages and the veil? How do they convey their so-called truth? How does their rhetoric work? Creating an awareness of the issues confronting women in their daily work was as important as the discussion among the participants themselves. These conferences are not closed shops. They are confronted with Islamist men and women attempting to influence the sessions and claiming to know the one true interpretation of the Koran. But in dealing with one another, the participants were also made aware of the right to differ. Learning was not a one-way process. Participants had to voice their criticism as well as listen to criticism, a social pattern non-existent in the traditional schools and universities. Such encounters must be seen as significant in shaping citizens, and as evidence of the very different political culture that prevails in the non-profit sector.

Another example of successful non-governmental activity is the association *Transparency Maroc* (TM). In the summer of 1995, a group of interested citizens decided to establish an NGO to combat corruption. TM was the first association of its kind in the Arab world. In the initial phase of its existence, most members had a strong background in human rights, women's rights, law, journalism, etc. The state watched the first meetings with some scepticism and kept a close eye on developments. But the association was not suppressed or banned. Like most associations in Morocco, TM never got an official receipt of registration, which is theoretically necessary in order to function. This means that the government has a legal argument at its disposal to disband such associations at will.

TM initiated a national anti-corruption day, which was held for the first time on January 5, 1997. The topic was taken up by the

media as well as by the government, even though sudden anti-corruption purges usually have more to do with eliminating political enemies than with uprooting corruption. The association continued its activities and on January 5, 1998, it was recognised by the Moroccan authorities. As well as being an important victory for the association from an organisational point of view, this was also a major success in the representation of interests.[8]

Civil society and Arab-Israeli peace

In January 1997, a group of Egyptian intellectuals went to Copenhagen to participate in the establishment of an Arab-Israeli peace initiative. The treatment they received upon returning illustrates the assumptions outlined above concerning the political culture of Arab countries, and demonstrates how difficult it is to voice opinions which conflict with the official line.

Abdel Munaim Said from the *Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies* in Cairo pointed out that one of the major deficiencies of the peace process to date was the fact that it was a government-to-government affair. Egyptian, Israeli, Palestinian, Jordanian and European intellectuals had been prompted by the stalemate following the Oslo initiative to go to Denmark to found the *International Alliance for Arab-Israeli Peace.* Their aim was to enhance popular participation in managing the political process of the Arab-Israeli conflict. While Egyptian leaders had been talking to their Israeli counterparts for twenty years and Egyptian businessmen had set up joint ventures, contacts between members of civil society were still frowned upon.

A storm of indignation broke out when the Egyptian intellectuals returned from their meeting with the Israelis. Opponents stressed that the Alliance was alien to the majority of the Egyptian people. It became apparent that the majority of writers and artists still lacked

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[8] In addition, this example shows how important, but at the same time how difficult the manoeuvring space is for international donors. In this specific case, many donors were simply too afraid to even contact the association. The heads of the German *Goethe Institute* and the *Friedrich-Naumann Foundation* proved to be up to the challenge and helped the association to find a meeting place. Civil society depends wholly on such individuals and their personal ethics. In general, one can say that the truly controversial NGOs are not a creation of international co-operation and are very much on their own as far as support is concerned.

the civil courage to talk to the Israelis. Their reactions were quite fierce. Egyptian participants of the Alliance were threatened with expulsion from the journalists' syndicate, while Lutfi al-Khuly left the *Tagammu* party. They were not regarded as having acted on their own behalf, i.e. as individuals, but as representatives of their professional functions (although they had explicitly stressed their independence.)

Without going into detail about the timing, activities and results of the initiative, one can argue that it was an important step for civil society for three reasons:

1. Personal contacts are a major pillar for peace in the region and can only be strengthened by individual initiatives.

2. Arab citizens receive distorted information on Israel. The Alliance tried to supply alternative information.

3. The novel idea of popular involvement in a highly sensitive issue was openly advocated.

While civil society contacts with Israel are still kept secret, the Alliance of Copenhagen enabled a number of Arab liberal intellectuals to openly express their personal opinions on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Mohammed Sid Ahmed, a renowned political commentator (who ultimately opposed the Alliance), noted that the positive contribution of Copenhagen lay in triggering a debate on alternative strategies vis-à-vis Israel. Ahmed Fakhr, Director of the *National Center for Middle East Studies* in Cairo, observed that both the advocates and the opponents of Copenhagen could see that increasing popular participation in the peace process is a goal worth striving for. Responding to accusations that the initiative represented a Mossad trap, Abdel Munaim Said replied: "We are not investigating the background of participants to find out which intelligence apparatus is behind them." He added that speculation on the possible Mossad connections of David Kimche (one of the founders of the Alliance on the Israeli side) was irrelevant, "because if a Mossad man agrees to a Palestinian state, that is the kind of response we want." This represents a powerful challenge to the predominant political culture in the Arab world. It should not be forgotten that Egypt is a country where the film "Schindler's List" is banned and that Israeli publishing houses do not exhibit at the annual international book fair in Cairo. It still requires civil courage to change public opinion regarding Israel.

"Copenhagen" is also a good illustration of the current relation-

ship between state and society. The Copenhagen declaration was well-received by the Egyptian government and by the governments of all participating countries. While it may have played into government hands and become part of its foreign policy, this should not discredit the honest attempt to lift the ban on dialogue.

Conclusions

What we are witnessing today is a period of slow opening-up and, first and foremost, a change in the political culture of several countries in the Arab world. Within the last fifteen years, citizens have succeeded in establishing institutions capable of keeping a watchful eye on government and providing society with alternative information (cognitive liberation) despite government efforts to the contrary. The space for expression has widened and many topics such as torture, drug consumption and female genital mutilation can now be discussed openly, a situation which would have been unthinkable in the mid-eighties. State authority is being widely questioned. This process should be given close attention by Western institutions because it depends on international acknowledgement, encouragement and media coverage for survival.

One should not conclude that the development of civil society is not worth striving for because it benefits the state on an international level. This development is a dialectical process which aims to create a new reality in the Arab world. It is impossible to predict what will ultimately play the role of catalyst, but none of these societies are as static as one might conclude from the fact that their leaders have been in power for thirty or forty years. While an in-depth study on the effects of the changes in political culture in the Arab world lies beyond the scope of this essay, some trends have become apparent in the last two years. The growth of NGOs, which seemed to be a marginal and externally incited development and was initially regarded as a peripheral process in countries with high illiteracy rates, has produced a new political elite. In Morocco this became clear in 1998 when the late Hassan II gave the opposition a share in the government for the first time in Moroccan history. The new Minister for Justice Omar Azziman was a founding member of the first independent human rights organisation, the *Organisation Marocaine des Droits de l'Homme*, and the current Secretary for Human

Rights also has a background in non-governmental work. Abdallah
Saaf, the political scientist and editor of the "Revue marocaine de
sciences sociales," has become state minister in the Ministry of
Education, while Aicha Belarbi, one of the two women in the new
government, was a leading figure in the women's movement.

As part of the transfer of power to his eldest son Mohammed VI,
Hassan II decided to back him with reform-oriented people from civil
society. They gained their political experience not only through
dealing with the government and the media, but also through their
NGO work with international organisations. The NGOs provided
them with the opportunity of participating at major UN conferences.
They were obliged to give interviews on delicate issues and had to
learn how to present an illegal organisation within the context of
national politics. These citizens espouse a political culture which
redefines the relationship between state, society and the individual.
The Egyptian President, on the other hand, is currently trying to
avoid the question of succession and the transfer of power to the next
generation. He is using every opportunity to emphasise the limita-
tions of civil society, as evidenced by the new NGO law and the
banning of several newspapers. In Palestine a number of local politi-
cians are likely to come from the NGO background if local elections
are held there.

In all of the countries examined in this article, the NGOs have
filled the vacuum that originated from blocking the emergence of a
younger elite. The renewal of the elite was systematically prevented
in an atmosphere where any kind of opposition was regarded as
disloyal and a threat to the holders of power. What we are current-
ly seeing is an extremely timid process of confidence-building be-
tween government and civil society. The imaginary traffic lights are
constantly changing (land reform, Gulf war, human rights, relations
with Israel, press law, NGO law, family status law) from red to yellow
to green and back again. The young elite has a very limited room
for manoeuvring—a dangerous situation since they have the finan-
cial and academic means to live rewarding professional lives outside
the Arab world. These activists come from well-known, venerable
families whose parents have long been politically active, but whose
involvement in political parties has stagnated. Their sons and daugh-
ters symbolise a non-corrupted, modern mode of government.
Whether they will implement this mode once they are in a position
to do so remains to be seen, however.

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SECULARISM AND ISLAMISM IN TURKEY

Erhard Franz

Turkey, like the Arab world and Iran, has shaped popular perceptions of Islam in Europe. Yet such perceptions are based less on concrete facts than on a superficial understanding of Turkish guest workers and their families. A stereotypical view of Muslim Turks prevails, which ignores the variety of behavioural patterns and attitudes to Islam amongst Turkish immigrants. Such attitudes, however, reflect the fundamental contradictions that have divided Turkish society since the days of Kemal Atatürk.

Mustafa Kemal Pasha, later Atatürk, who created the Turkish Republic from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire in 1923, regarded traditional Islam and its representatives as a major obstacle to modernisation. He believed that the separation of religion and politics, or "laicism," would help transform Turkey into a Western state. While his aim was to "Westernise" all spheres of life, from science and technology to society and even clothing, tactical considerations persuaded him to proceed gradually. In 1924, he abolished the caliphate, which was the supreme religious authority for *Sunni* Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. At the same time he dissolved the Ministry of Religious Law and replaced it with a Department of Religious Affairs with fewer areas of responsibility. Muslim (religious) courts were replaced by secular courts, and a school system based on European models took the place of the *medreseler*, which were founded on Koranic principles. In 1925, dervish lodges and cells were outlawed, and in 1928 the National Assembly deleted the 1924 constitutional article establishing Islam as the official state religion. Religious instruction subsequently disappeared from the school curricula in both the cities and countryside between 1936 and 1938.

Atatürk recognised that the comprehensive transformation of Turkish society could only succeed if the Ottoman identification with the world of Islam was replaced by a new ideology. The chivalrous virtues of a stylised proto-Turkish ideal were invoked in the hope of furnishing a re-discovered Turkish identity with new moral values. These included advancing the position of women, who were equal to men in the legendary Turkish nomadic society of old. Women's

equal status was enshrined in law in 1934, when female suffrage was introduced and co-education was established in state schools.

After the death of Atatürk in 1938, the Kemalist understanding of laicism began to change under the influence of the Turkish sociologist, Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924). Gökalp distinguished between culture and technological civilisation, and classified religion as an aspect of culture. In the case of Turkey, Islam was accepted as part of the national culture, and in combination with the new Turkish identity, a "Turkish-Islamic synthesis" developed. Eleven years after Atatürk's death, a number of political developments attested to the Kemalists' altered understanding of laicism. Semsettin Günaltay, Prime Minister from 1949 to May 1950 and a member of Atatürk's *Republican People's Party* (RPP), initiated the change of direction. During his period in office, religious instruction was reintroduced as an elective subject in schools, and a Faculty of Theology—the only one in the country at the time—was established in the new university in Ankara. After a resounding victory in the 1950 general election, the *Democrat Party* replaced the RPP in government and Adnan Menderes was appointed Prime Minister. One of the first measures introduced by the Menderes government was to change the Islamic call to worship (*esan*) from Turkish back to Arabic. 1951 saw the foundation of *Imam-Hatip* schools, which evolved from the official preacher courses launched in 1949.

The Menderes government was ousted in a military coup in 1960. A new constitution was drawn up in 1961 which made the Department of Religious Affairs (now known as the *Presidency of Religious Affairs*) a government authority, a move designed to create a closer link between Islam and the state. A further law in 1970 gave members of the presidency civil servant status. In 1982—following another military coup—the Republic's third constitution was drawn up. This reaffirmed laicist principles and stipulated that the religious presidency should avoid considerations of a political nature. It was required to limit its concerns to issues of national solidarity and national integration, and was precluded from commenting on possible inconsistencies between the Islamic code and the secular state. With the aim of integration in view, the presidency also had the task of supervising the union of different, non-conformist varieties of Islam.

By attempting to control Islam in this way, the government's objective was to counter the radical Islamic forces which were threatening to undermine the state system. Indirectly, it was also seen as

a way of exploiting Islam for political purposes. Today, the *Presidency of Religious Affairs* has extensive powers: it has approximately 84,000 employees and pays the salaries of prayer leaders and preachers. It is responsible for around 72,000 mosques in the cities and it appoints religious superintendents (*müftü*) in provincial areas. Moreover, its also selects religious attachés for Turkey's embassies and consulates abroad.

The resistible rise of Necmettin Erbakan

The 1982 constitution stipulates that the social, economic or legal foundation of the state should not be based either partly or wholly on religious norms. Nevertheless, Turkish politicians have used, and continue to use, Islam for their own interests. Necmettin Erbakan, for example, regarded the establishment of an Islamic state as a basic democratic right. In 1970, he made an attempt to unite Turkey's conservative and fundamentalist Islamic forces into one party, the *National Order Party*, which was subsequently banned by the constitutional court because of its anti-laicist tendencies. In 1972, Erbakan founded the *National Salvation Party* (NSP), which won forty-eight out of 450 parliamentary seats in the 1973 general elections. The third-strongest faction in the land, the *National Salvation Party* subsequently participated in several coalition governments, and Erbakan was appointed deputy Prime Minister on a number of occasions. In 1981, however, the military government abolished all established political parties and in the following year, the top officials of the abolished parties were barred from politics for a period of ten years. This decision was later reversed by referendum and in 1983, the NSP re-emerged as the *Welfare Party* (*Refah Partisi*). Erbakan was reinstated as party leader in 1988.

The *Welfare Party* began to grow in popularity in 1991, and during the 1994 communal elections the party won the mayorship in several big cities including Ankara and Istanbul. In the December 1995 parliamentary elections, it emerged as the strongest parliamentary faction with 158 seats out of a total of 550. Erbakan's first attempt to form a government failed at the beginning of 1996 due to the reluctance of Tansu Çiller of the *True Path Party* and Mesut Yilmaz of the *Motherland Party* to enter into coalition with him. Finally, in 1996, he secured the support of the Turkish parliament to form a

coalition government with Çiller. For the first time in history, Turkey had an Islamist Prime Minister.

By entering into this coalition, Erbakan proved that he was not the "mister clean" of Turkish politics, an image projected by him during the election campaign. In order to become Prime Minister, he had joined forces with a rival against whom he had previously tabled several motions in parliament accusing her of malpractice and corruption, and whom he had privately sued for defamation.

The *Welfare Party's* election victory was mainly due to the failure of the Çiller government to solve the country's socio-economic problems. A combination of inefficiency, party wrangling, corruption, personal hunger for power, mismanagement and economic decline had caused 21.4 per cent of the electorate to opt for an alternative previously untried in Turkey. The party's electoral support was derived both from the masses of rural migrants living in the *gecekondu*, or poor districts, on the periphery of big cities, and from small traders, civil servants and public employees in the cities of Anatolia. The city of Konya in south-central Anatolia continues to be the stronghold of the *Welfare Party*, followed by the eastern regions of central Anatolia.

In his election campaign, Erbakan promised to resolve the country's social and economic problems by introducing a "just Islamic order." This would become a reality in an "Islamic" state with Islamic laws and a leadership faithful to Islam. Turkey's plight, he argued, was brought about by the forces of Western imperialism which were attempting to corrupt the country and transform it into a consumer society, dependent on the West and incapable of developing its own independent economy and industry.

Having become Prime Minister, Erbakan whittled down his anti-secular and anti-Western rhetoric. Now that he had achieved his objective and become head of the Turkish government, many observers questioned whether such rhetoric over the previous 25 years had merely been a means to an end, or whether he was veiling his true intentions in order to remain in government, believing with the Jesuits that "the end justifies the means." Islam recognises the validity of *taqiya*, which allows for a dispensation from religious stipulations when under duress or in cases of danger. The question of whether Erbakan was engaged in *taqiya* became the concern of the constitutional court in May 1997, when the prosecutor general

applied to have the *Welfare Party* banned on the basis that it was anti-constitutional.

In January 1998, the *Welfare Party* was outlawed and Erbakan, together with five leading functionaries in the party, lost his parliamentary status and was banned from politics for a period of five years. At the end of 1997, when the ban was already foreseeable, a close confidant of Erbakan founded the *Virtue Party*, which came to replace and absorb the *Welfare Party*. Most former *Welfare* delegates joined the *Virtue Party*, and like its predecessor it has become the strongest parliamentary faction.

The *Virtue Party*, like the *Welfare Party* before it, continues to adhere to the democratic framework laid down in the constitution and the legal code. Radical Islamic fringe groups, on the other hand, aim to fundamentally change the system and reject the notion of peaceful internal renewal. They support the idea of armed struggle, and include local *Sunni*-fundamentalist varieties of *Hizbollah* (the *Party of God*) under a number of different names. The *Islamic Movement*, for example, was founded in Istanbul at the end of 1992. It is said to have direct links with Iran and to be in regular contact with the Iranian embassy in Ankara. The *Movement* has been blamed for the murder of secular journalists and is believed to have been involved in abducting and assassinating politically active Iranian dissidents in Turkey. The *Islamic Great East Raiders Front*, on the other hand, is extremely anti-Iranian and anti-Shiite in ideology. Its objectives include the establishment of a united Islamic state in the "East" and to this end, it plans to launch the Islamic revolution in Turkey.

The Alevis—religious minority or true secularists?

Erbakan contended that the Turkish people, who are 99 per cent Muslim, have a natural right to live in an Islamic state. 15 to 25 per cent of Muslims in Turkey disagree with him, however. They belong to different branches of the *Shia*, but their exact number is unknown because censuses held regularly since 1990 do not distinguish between Shiites and *Sunnis*. The majority of the country's Shiites are *Alevis* (Ali's followers), who adhere to tenets of Twelver *Shia*. The *Alevi* faith has been influenced by Mystic Islam (Sufism), as well as by Christian, Gnostic and Old Iranian beliefs and elements of Central Asian Shamanism. It is also subject to regional variations resulting

from historical developments in geographically distinct areas. The *Alevis* believe that religious life takes place internally, and they do not recognise formal religious practices (the so-called "five pillars" of Islam). Their ceremonies include nightly gatherings of men and women and communal dances, causing their *Sunni* neighbours to slander them as promiscuous.

The leaders of a community, known as *dede* or *pir*, come from "holy families," in which the religious tradition is passed on orally from one generation to the next. These families make up a separate endogamous caste who do not enter into marriage with lay people, who in turn are not allowed to marry followers of other faiths (although this rule is no longer universally adhered to). Language barriers generally rule out marriages between Turkish-speaking, Kurdish-speaking and Arabic-speaking *Alevis*.

The *Alevis* differ from the Shiites of Iran in their religious views. Orthodox *Sunni* Muslims, for their part, believe the *Alevis* have deserted the true faith with their "unorthodox" interpretations of Islam. When the new Turkish Republic was established, the *Alevis*, like other religious minorities, hoped that laicism would protect them from discrimination and persecution at the hands of *Sunni* Muslims. They consequently became loyal advocates of the Kemalist system of society. The *Alevi* youth were exposed in the universities and trade unions to egalitarian and revolutionary ideas, which reinforced the principles of equality and self-determination enshrined in their religion. As a whole, the *Alevi* community came to be linked to left-wing liberalism and was said to be sympathetic towards communism.

At the end of the 1960s, the *Alevis*' "leftist" image entangled them in civil-war type disputes with radical Turkish nationalists, anti-secular Islamists and revolutionary left-wing radicals. At the same time, the *Sunni* majority's old feelings of resentment against the *Alevi* population flared up again. In late 1978, *Sunni* Muslims killed over 100 people in the *Alevi* quarter of Maraş (Kahramanmaraş). This was not the last pogrom of its kind. In July 1993, well-known *Alevi* authors and writers gathered in Sivas to commemorate an *Alevi* poet who had been executed in the sixteenth century. The most prominent guest was the publisher and satirist, Aziz Nesim, who had begun to publish parts of Salman Rushdie's "Satanic Verses" in Turkish. *Sunnis* became emotionally roused during the Friday sermon and set fire to the hotel where Nesim and other writers were staying. Thirty-seven people died. Nesim himself survived, and died of natural causes in

1995 at the age of eighty. Following the assault in Sivas and a further attack by extremist *Sunnis* on the *Alevi* quarter in Istanbul in March 1995, the *Alevis* began to demand a truly secular and democratic system of government for Turkey. They called for the removal of religion as a subject in state schools and an end to the practice of state payment to *Sunni* clerics. They also argued that the existence of the religious presidency with its exclusive responsibility for *Sunni* Muslims contravened the democratic principle of equality.

Under the eye of big brother. The military as guardian of laicism

In Turkish society, the highest echelon of the military leadership, the officer corps, forms a separate professional group with a distinct and elitist class consciousness. New recruits tend to include the relatives of regular officers and are educated from the age of thirteen or fourteen in special military schools, followed by military academies. The military leadership consequently remains largely untouched by general processes of transformation in society.

Up until 1945, the armed forces formed an integral part of the one-party system. The officer corps was inculcated with the new state ideology of Kemalism and with a profound sense of mission and a deep commitment to political conformism. When the new multiparty system was introduced in 1945, control over the military passed into the hands of the civil government in accordance with the constitution. The officer corps did not become depoliticised, however, and continued to see itself as the guardian of laicism and Kemalism. The Menderes government's emphasis on Islam was interpreted as a threat to Atatürk's ideals of state, and in 1960 the military seized power. Following the coup, the incumbent commanders within the military government made it clear that the function of the military was to keep a discrete but watchful eye on the state.

The military's informal supervisory role was demonstrated in the March Memorandum of 1971, which was read out on Turkish radio, and which amounted to an ultimatum to the government by the armed forces. The serving Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel resigned immediately, but the civil government remained in place. At the end of the 1970s, the military perceived a renewed threat to the Kemalist state in the shape of communism and, to a lesser extent, Islamism—especially following the Islamic revolution in Iran which act-

ed as a signal to Islamist circles in Turkey. The Western powers, and the USA in particular, were also understandably concerned at Turkey's susceptibility to growing anti-American and anti-Zionist Islamist tendencies in the Middle East. Erbakan and his *Welfare Party* demonstrated their strength, however, and in August 1980, after Israel had announced its intention to declare Jerusalem its capital, Erbakan organised and led a protest rally in Konya at which demonstrators demanded the reintroduction of Islamic law.

In September 1980, the military seized power once again. Its intentions were as clear as they were ambitious: to shape the political order of the country according to its own ideas. Before authority was handed over to an elected representative body, a hand-picked assembly drew up a new constitution. Two paragraphs in particular reveal the conflicting ideologies of Islamism and laicism. On the one hand, "religious and moral instruction" was introduced as a compulsory school subject in the spirit of "Turkish-Islamic synthesis." At the same time, the constitution refers to state-controlled family planning. What was meant by this became clear in 1983, when the military government passed Turkey's second family planning law, which replaced the 1965 law and legalised abortion under state supervision until the tenth week of pregnancy. In practice, the Ministry for Health now provides abortion free of charge in the state's hospitals and maternity homes.

Erbakan's election success in late 1995 alarmed the military leadership who expressed in no uncertain terms its opposition to an Islamist takeover. During the following months, Turkey's politicians reacted to the military's viewpoint. Erbakan toned down his anti-Western statements with a view to assuming power, while Tansu Çiller and Mesut Yilmaz ignored their personal rivalries and agreed a coalition between their two parties. Shortly afterwards, the government collapsed, and in the summer of 1996, Çiller and Erbakan formed a new coalition. Erbakan, the Islamist, who had been sworn in on the laicist constitution, was granted six months grace by the military command and was then called to order by the National Security Council *(Milli Güvenlik Kurulu)*.

The Security Council, which was established in 1936, is a legal instrument used by the military to gain a say in politics. It was incorporated into the constitution in 1961 and its position was reinforced in 1982, when the new constitution laid down the composition of the Council (Art. 118). Under the chairmanship of the

President, it consists of the Prime Minister, the Chief of Staff, the Minister for Defence, the Minister for the Interior and the Foreign Minister, as well as the commanders of the land, sea and air forces, and the commander in chief of the gendarmerie (four civilians and five military, assuming that the President is neutral). The Security Council informs cabinet of its opinions on all matters relating to national security, and cabinet is obliged to implement as a matter of priority all recommendations of the Security Council on questions of national security, the unity and indivisibility of the country, and the preservation of law and order.

The beginning of 1997 saw the start of a power struggle between the *Welfare Party* and the military over the controversial issue of Islamism versus secularism. One example of many was the "Jerusalem Night" in Sincan, a suburb of Ankara. On January 31, Sincan's *Welfare Party* mayor organised a mass rally to demonstrate against Israel and in favour of Islam. The guest speaker at the rally was the Iranian ambassador, who called on the Turkish people to reject secularism and opt for *Sharia* as the foundation of the state. Three days later, the military demonstrated its omnipresence in Sincan. In the early hours of the morning, tanks rolled into the main street, followed by troop formations on their way to a "manoeuvre."

In late February 1997, the Security Council called on the government to take decisive action against radical Islam, arguing that all actions against secularism and against the country's orientation towards the West represented a danger to peace and security in Turkey, and would only lead to renewed tension and sanctions. The term "radical Islam" as used by the military command referred to all Islamist currents and movements in the country whose goal was to transform the secular Turkish Republic into an Islamic state. The warning issued by the Council applied not only to militant Islamist groupings, but also to the *Welfare Party* under Erbakan's leadership.

The Council recommended a number of measures against the Islamists, including reform of the school system. The five years of junior school were to be extended to eight years and middle school was to be abolished; the number of *Imam-Hatip* (prayer leader/preacher) schools would be reduced to a minimum; and the Koran schools run by private Islamic institutions would either be closed or put under the control of the education ministry.

The military leadership accused the Islamists of using the religious schools to cultivate electoral support and train the devoted civil

servants of tomorrow. In five to ten years, it was feared, the religious schools would be so successful in spreading the National View, i.e. the ideology of the *Welfare Party*, that the party could win an absolute majority in parliament. It would then be in a position to change the system according to its own ideas. Roughly 500,000 students attended the 561 schools, which were originally conceived as professional schools for future *imams* and preachers. While there were approximately 53,000 graduates per year, only 2,300 *imams* and preachers were required by the *Presidency of Religious Affairs*. By and large, the surplus graduates of the *Imam-Hatip* schools studied political science in the universities and colleges, qualifying in this way for a career in the civil service.

Erbakan's delaying tactics allowed the military to organise the "unarmed forces" (media and trade union bosses, entrepreneurs, professional associations). After 355 days in office, he gave into the pressure and resigned from his post. The leading generals of Turkey's security forces may have won the power struggle, but it was a Pyrrhic victory paid for with continuing domestic instability. Erbakan's successor, Mesut Yilmaz, led a minority coalition, and did not succeed in fulfilling all of the recommendations of the Security Council. He also had to consider the Islamist wing of his own *Motherland Party*. In early summer 1997, the deputy Chief of Staff described the Islamists, with the *Virtue Party* at their helm, as the number one threat to Turkey. Yilmaz' reaction was to demand that the military keep out of politics. In response, the military leadership pointed out that nobody, not even the Prime Minister, should attempt to undermine the military's defensive preparedness. Underlying this puzzling observation was the military's fundamental conviction that politics lies within its defensive remit, and that members of the armed forces are superior to those involved in political life. The Islamism/secularism controversy is a manifestation of the power struggle between the politicians and the military, which began in 1945 and has yet to be resolved. In the meantime, neither the Islamists as representatives of the politicians, nor the military as the supporters of secularism, are willing to promote democratic parliamentarianism in Turkey.

Turkish Islam and international politics

The role played by Islam in Turkey's external affairs frequently departs from its function on the domestic front. When Turkey joined NATO in 1952, for example, it was under the Menderes government, which placed a strong emphasis on Islam in its domestic policies. While the 1980-83 military government was committed to laicism, its policies were increasingly directed towards the Islamic world and in 1981, Prime Minister Bülend Ulusu, a military appointee, attended the *Organisation of the Islamic Conference* in Taif. Turkey had been one of the twenty-nine founding members in 1972, but this was the first time the head of a Turkish government participated in a summit meeting. In 1982, Kenan Evren (who had led the military coup as Chief of the General Staff) stated at the annual general meeting of the *Islamic Bank* in Istanbul that Turkey was an integral member of the Islamic world. He even expressed approval for the system whereby the *imams* sent to Europe by the religious presidency in order to supervise Turkish mosque associations there, are financed by the *Muslim World League*. (The League is based in Jidda and is committed to the (re-)introduction of Islamic law to all countries populated by Muslims.) The military leadership had its own reasons for emphasising Islam in its foreign policies: the country needed new sources of income. Turkey had lost credibility with its Western allies as a result of the coup and the European Community had frozen all financial aid to the country.

Turgut Özal, who was Prime Minister from 1983 to 1989 and President from then until his death in 1993, continued to focus on the Islamic world in Turkey's external affairs. His depiction of Turkey as a natural bridge between the West and the Near and Middle East was motivated by a combination of economic and security interests. While membership of NATO and the 1964 association treaty with the EEC placed Turkey firmly in the Western camp, it was also linked with a number of Islamic countries through regional military and economic alliances. The *Central Treaty Organisation*, for example, consisted of Turkey, Pakistan and Iran until it was dissolved in 1979. The civil successor to the CENTO military alliance was the *Economic Co-operation Organisation* (ECO), which was founded in 1985 and was considerably expanded in 1992 with the admission of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and five other former Soviet republics in Central Asia.

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Turkey was eager

to be seen once more as a "bridge." It presented itself as the main link between the West and the Central Asian Turkic nations, hoping to be a channel for the West's economic interests in Central Asia and—in a modern version of the Silk Road—to funnel economic relations between Central Asia and the West through Turkey, while bypassing Russia. At a time of considerable economic competition from Russia and Iran, Turkey emphasised to the new Turkic republics their common linguistic and religious roots.

Erbakan went a step further and pushed for the establishment of a D8 (Developing Eight) group, which would bring together the eight most developed Islamic countries (Turkey, Egypt, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria and Pakistan). This was conceived as the counterpart of the G7, which consists of the world's seven leading industrial nations. The D8 was officially launched in Istanbul in June 1997, four days before Erbakan's retirement from office. After his departure, little was heard from the D8.

The example of Israel demonstrates clearly that Islam in Turkish politics is not regarded as an ideological end in itself. It is nothing more than a foreign-policy tool, to be employed according to the dictates of the domestic situation. During the boycott of Israel in the 1970s, for example, Turkey sided with the Arab countries. It did an about-face, however, when new economic perspectives began to open up as a result of the Middle East peace process, which envisaged a free trade zone for the Near East and an expansion of the EU to the south. In February 1996, Turkey agreed a military co-operation alliance with Israel.

Turkey's policies on Israel also demonstrate the inability of the Islamist Erbakan to steer a new foreign-policy course. Contrary to his election promises, he did not honour the February agreement. Instead, two new agreements were drawn up with Israel, one in late August 1996, in which the two countries decided to co-operate on armaments, and a second in December of that year, when it was agreed that Israel's armaments industry would upgrade Turkey's F-4 fighter planes. In spite of his initial hesitation, Erbakan was forced to endorse the latter agreement by the military leadership, who were keen to advance military co-operation with Israel. In February 1997, the Turkish Chief of Staff visited Israel to discuss further co-operation on military technology, in addition to the possibility of joint manoeuvres and the exchange of secret service information. The reception given to the Chief of Staff by Israel's Prime Minister *and*

President was not only unusual, it was a clear affront to the Islamist Erbakan. When the Israeli Foreign Minister visited Ankara at the beginning of April to clarify a number of economic issues, Erbakan agreed only at the last minute to receive him. He did not shake his hand, however. At the beginning of May, the deputy Turkish Chief of Staff travelled to Israel to discuss with the Israeli Minister for Defence and officers from the USA a joint manoeuvre between the three countries in the eastern Mediterranean. This occurred only two days after the Turkish Minister for Defence had returned from Israel and announced that there would be no joint Turkish-Israeli manoeuvres. A news embargo on all Israeli-Turkish military co-operation was imposed by the generals. The decisive factors for the Turkish military leadership in its co-operation with Israel were the Kurdish and Cypriot questions. On the Cypriot question, it hoped to benefit from Israel's weapons technology; on the Kurdish question, from Israel's experiences in southern Lebanon and its treatment of recalcitrant national minorities. In October, under the new Turkish government, the military began to negotiate over the joint production of Israeli long-range missiles, a venture designed to compensate Turkey for the planned installation of Russian S-300 missiles in Cyprus.

The supreme commanders of the Turkish forces were still willing to fulfil their duty, as they understood it, to defend and protect the country. But they had proven their ability to learn from their mistakes, and rather than organising a coup against the Islamist Prime Minister, they attempted to thwart his domestic and foreign policy objectives by political means. The question of whether they were acting within the constitution and legal code must remain unanswered here. The USA, who had feared that Turkey under Erbakan would drift into the anti-American Islamic camp, views the Turkish military as the guarantor of the country's loyalty to the Western alliance. The military's position, while it is certainly not conducive to the process of democratisation, does further the country's international credibility in an ongoing situation of domestic instability.

Islam and the Turkish immigrant community in Europe

With the export of labour to Europe, the domestic conflict in Turkey between secularism and Islam also shifted abroad. Yet the eth-

nic and religious identities of the 2.4 million Turkish citizens living
in Europe (of whom 1.9 million are settled in Germany alone) do
not accurately reflect the situation in Turkey. Minority groups are
more likely to emigrate, with the result that the proportion of reli-
gious and linguistic minorities is greater amongst the immigrant
community than in Turkey itself. Thus, Islam has come to a very
different form of prominence in the country's external affairs.

Most Anatolians came to Europe completely unaware of the
cultural environment in their host countries. Culture shock led to
disorientation, and linguistic barriers proved a further obstacle to
integration. Some of the migrants consciously turned to Islam and
Islamic norms to compensate for their sense of disorientation and
succeeded in this way in retaining at least part of their cultural and
national identity.

When the migrants' families joined them after the initial wave of
recruitment came to an end in 1973, the Islamic movements, which
were not tolerated in Turkey, began to assume responsibility for their
religious care. Prayer courses, Koran classes and Mosque associa-
tions were organised, and support for the movements grew amongst
the expatriate Turkish community. In Germany today, between 10
and 20 per cent of the Turkish population belong to such clubs.

The associations of the *Milli Görüş* (*National View*), which were linked
to the *Welfare Party* in Turkey, and pursued the party's legal goals
by peaceful means, united to form the *Islamic Community*, the most
successful organisation of its kind in Germany. In 1995, the *Europe-
an Mosque Support Society* assumed administrative control of their as-
sets with an estimated value of 60 million marks. Two radical Is-
lamist groups, who also aim to transform Turkey into an Islamic state,
advocate the use of physical force to achieve their goals. One is the
Association of Islamic Communities, which was established in Cologne
in 1984 by Cemalettin Kaplan. Kaplan, a former *müftü* in Turkey,
earned a reputation as the "black voice" or "Khomeini of Cologne"
and declared himself the caliph of (Turkish) Muslims in 1994. Fol-
lowing his death in 1995, his son Metin assumed control of the
organisation. The other group is the *Islamic Movement* which has been
in existence since 1989 and adheres strictly to the Iranian line, as it
does in Turkey.

That Islamisation has found supporters amongst the Turkish
immigrant community is a reflection of developments in Turkey. It
is also a consequence of the ongoing political and cultural isolation

of Turkish immigrants in Europe. The so-called Euro-Islam of Turkish immigrant communities has many guises. In general it is non-violent; in rare cases it is extreme; and taken as a whole, it is a reflection of the situation at home and in the host country. Any interpretation of Islam which ignores these complex processes is by definition one-sided and incomplete.

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NEITHER A RELIGIOUS WAR NOR ETHNIC HATRED BOSNIAN MUSLIMS BETWEEN PARTITION PLANS, THE SUPERPOWERS AND ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY

Catherine Samary

The war which ravaged Bosnia-Hercegovina is sometimes referred to as a religious war. While acknowledging that hostilities also divided Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats, is it correct to interpret the Bosnian war as a massive collision between Christianity and Islam? The "Islamic manifesto" drawn up by Alija Izetbegovic in 1970 and reissued by him in 1990 clearly outlines the religious and political goals of Bosnia's President, which were to win back souls for Islam with the ultimate aim of political supremacy. But is this sufficient reason to believe in the existence of the fundamentalist threat outlined by Serbian propaganda and further emphasised by the Belgrade-backed leader of the Bosnian Serbs, Radovan Karadzic? Does it justify Serbian policies in Bosnia-Hercegovina, or the forced secession of the Republic Srpska and the attendant practice of "ethnic cleansing"? Can it, finally, excuse the destruction of cultural and religious symbols dating back to the Ottoman era?

Like his Serbian counterpart, the Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, supported the "ethnic cleansing" of the Muslim population of Herceg-Bosna. He promoted the annexation of the Croatian-Muslim federation by Croatia as a means "of assimilating Muslims into Europe." Serbia and Croatia joined forces in attempting to convince the international community that the division of Bosnia-Hercegovina along ethnic lines would protect the Christian West against the eventuality of a Muslim state in Europe.

While several Islamic states came to the aid of Bosnia-Hercegovina, this does not fully explain either what was at stake or the ambiguity of each "camp." The Bosnian President Izetbegovic had to defend, at least on an official level, not only an Islamic polity and the Muslim victims of the war, but also the multinational state of Bosnia. A general fixation on what was allegedly a religiously motivated "civil war" diverted attention from the socio-economic and political causes of the crisis.[1] The war which ravaged Bosnia—and

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[1] Malcolm 1994.

which could flare up again at any time—was not a religious war. Religion was manipulated in order to deepen divisions and to justify plans to partition the country. Nor were the hostilities the product of some deep-seated ethnic hatred. Such enmity was fed on fears arising from past wounds and present uncertainties in order to copper-fasten partitions. The resulting war was the worst consequence of the crisis in the former Yugoslav federation.

While an in-depth analysis of the Yugoslav one-party system is not possible here,[2] it can be said that, despite Tito's attempts at decentralisation, the system displayed all the usual failings of real existing socialism: officialdom, a corrupt government elite, a wasteful use of resources linked with a lack of transparency, and an absence of pluralistic control over decision-making processes. Individual ethnic groups secured national rights, thereby encouraging nationalist forces and demands, which were in turn manipulated by those in power. The 1980s was a period of economic, spiritual, political and institutional stagnation. Privatisation and the stringent cost-cutting programmes enforced by the *International Monetary Fund* dealt the final blow to the social foundations of the system, increasing the gap between richer and poorer republics and leading ultimately to the dismemberment of the communist Yugoslav federation.

Religion and the genesis of national identities under the Ottomans

Tito's recognition of the Muslims as a separate nation in 1968 continues to arouse general disbelief. It should not be forgotten, however, that religion has always been an essential ingredient in national identification both in Yugoslavia and in the rest of the Balkans. Language also plays a role, for example in the distinction between Slovenes and other South Slavs. But the most important factor for all those who speak one of the varieties of Serbo-Croatian has always been their religious orientation.

A number of factors contributed to the rapid Islamisation of Bosnia's Slavic peoples, who came under Ottoman rule in the fifteenth century. There were three Christian faiths in Bosnia at the time, each with limited influence: Orthodox, Catholic and the so-

[2] Samary 1995.

called Bosnian—or "heretic"—Church. Allegiance to the dominant
religion of the Turkish Empire was linked to certain privileges—
exemption from tax, for example, and ease of access to positions of
power in the provinces—and many people converted to Islam, irre-
spective of whether they belonged to the Orthodox, Catholic or
Bosnian Church. Followers of the latter faith were further drawn to
the religion of their new rulers by the prospect of protection from
persecution by the rival Christian Churches. At the same time, all
three faiths were granted religious freedom, and a certain degree of
autonomy in matters of justice and education under the "millet"
system. This combination of rights and privileges led to a classifica-
tion of people along religious, professional and cultural lines and even
to differences in apparel and housing. Like all religions, the Churches
in Bosnia forbade mixed marriages and were more influential in rural
areas than in the cities.

Religious differences were reinforced by political and social fac-
tors. Those who remained true to the Orthodox faith under Turk-
ish rule developed a separate Serbian identity with subordinate so-
cial status. When Bosnia-Hercegovina came under Austrian rule in
1878, 90 per cent of the landowners were Muslim, while an equal
proportion of serfs belonged to the Orthodox religion. The war which
eventually destroyed Bosnia was to some extent a peasants' revolt:
Orthodox peasants took their revenge on the Muslim population, who
for so long had represented the oligarchy. It should not be forgot-
ten, however, that industrialisation had also created an ethnic mix,
altering ethnic consciousness to such an extent that many Muslim
and Serbian intellectuals living in the cities of Bosnia today feel a
stronger affinity with one another than with their brothers in rural
areas.

In the context of the nineteenth century, when the international
superpowers were confronted with the rise of nationalism, the na-
tional identity of the different Bosnian communities became an is-
sue involving not only the big empires, but also Serbia, Croatia and
the various occupying forces in Sarajevo. The declaration of Ser-
bian independence in 1830 was viewed positively by the Bosnian
Serbs. Likewise, the Bosnian Croats welcomed the granting of a
certain degree of political autonomy to Croatia within the Austro-
Hungarian empire. At the same time, many Bosnian Serbs and
Croats, together with the Muslim intelligentsia, were attracted to the
ideal of Yugoslavism. But Muslim enthusiasm was to wane when the

first Yugoslav state turned into a Serbian-dominated "unitarian" dictatorship. As a reaction to its intolerant and centralist orientation, many Muslim deputies declared themselves Croats, only to be faced by new identity conflicts under Croatian Ustasha fascist rule during the Second World War.

Who are the Bosnian Muslims?

The end of the first Yugoslav state came about when German and Italian troops invaded the country during the Second World War. What followed was a combination of civil war and the struggle for national liberation. The different ethnic groups engaged in a fierce and bloody struggle, fomented by a number of different political forces with their own state-building plans. As was the case in the recent conflicts, political forces tried to manipulate existing differences between the communities, fanning the flames of hatred in order to implement the political project of "ethnic states."

This is what happened in the newly created Croatian state, which was headed by the extreme right-wing and nationalist leader Ante Pavelic. While formally independent, it was in fact a Nazi puppet state. "Greater Croatia" included Bosnia-Hercegovina which even today is considered "historically Croatian" by Croatian nationalists, in the same way as it is considered "historically Serbian" by Serb nationalists. The Ustasha regime defined as "Croat" followers of the Catholic faith and those who had converted to Islam from Catholicism or the heretic Church. All others—Orthodox Serbs, Jews and Gypsies—were forcibly assimilated, driven into exile or killed. Even the Nazis regarded the "ethnic cleansing" perpetrated by the Pavelic regime as particularly savage and ruthless.

Many of those persecuted under Ustasha rule were attracted to the communist-led resistance movement. The appeal of Tito's "Partisans" can be explained in part by the loathsomeness of the alternative "Chetnik" resistance group. Predominantly Serbian and heavily armed, the Chetniks supported the exiled Serb government in London, and were both anti-fascist and anti-communist. They stirred up ethnic hatred by holding entire ethnic groups accountable for historical aberrations. They blamed (and continue to blame) all Croats for the atrocities committed by the fascist Ustasha, while the Bosnian Slavs, who were Islamised during the centuries of Ottoman rule,

were (and still are) seen as Orthodox Serbs who converted to the religion of the Turkish oppressors and betrayed their Serbian identity. In the recent conflict, Radovan Karadzic, leader of the "Republika Srpska," translated the "historical revenge" on the "Turks" into bloody action, in the tradition of Chetnik ideology.[3]

Tito and his Partisans made Bosnia-Hercegovina the centre of their multi-ethnic resistance movement. The growing popularity of the Partisans was due to a number of factors. *Firstly,* their ideology of brotherhood and mutual recognition united all of Yugoslavia's peoples in a common struggle against fascism; *secondly*, they were extremely critical both of the old unitarian Yugoslav state and of the nationalist claims of different ethnic groups. They established a new, federative Yugoslavia in the liberated territories with a People's Army comprising several hundred thousand fighters from all ethnic groups. *Thirdly*, and finally, the communists secured the support of the impoverished peasants by giving them land and by paying their debts.

These unifying factors far outweighed the religious and ethnic divisions which had become more pronounced over the centuries. They were also stronger than the hatreds which had been incited by a number of competing forces. Nevertheless, the new Yugoslavia was marred from the beginning by congenital defects and inherited wounds, compounded by emerging problems. Tito attempted to stabilise the fledgling state and undermine the forces of nationalism through a combination of repression and genuine reform. The latter included a system of self-management, a marked improvement in living standards up to the end of the 1970s, and recognition of a number of different identities and nationalities.

By distinguishing between Yugoslav citizenship and an individually chosen, ethnic-cultural "nationality," it was hoped to preserve ethnic diversity while creating a feeling of solidarity common to all Yugoslavs. In a communist country like Yugoslavia, such solidarity could only be established on the basis of secular, anti-clerical structures. When the *Communist Party* came to power, it separated church and state, and opposed all religious ideologies. The hard line it adopted towards the churches was in part a result of the latter's opposition to the new regime and their willingness to come to an accommodation with the occupying forces during the war. Islamist

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[3] The term "Turk" is a reminder of the position of power held by Bosnian Muslims during the Ottoman era.

organisations were also banned as was the veiling of women. Izet-begovic was prosecuted for belonging to an organisation of young Islamists in the 1950s. (He was convicted again at the beginning of the 1980s for his "Islamic manifesto.") However, religious freedom was recognised as a basic right of the individual. With the growing consolidation of the regime, relations with the different church leaders were normalised with a view to integrating the churches into society.

Bosnia's Muslims had conflicting feelings (as Islamised Slavs) about their national identity. During the period of their association with Turkish rule, they called themselves "Turks"—but they also defended their specific interests within the Ottoman empire. Following the demise of the empire, some adopted the label "Serbs," others referred to themselves as "Croats," while many more resisted all attempts at assimilation into either nationality. While they were attracted to Yugoslavism, they rejected its unitarianism. Under Tito, they were free to choose between Serbian and Croatian nationality or to identify their nationality as "undetermined." Most opted for the latter alternative.

The decentralisation introduced from 1960 onwards was an expression of the Titoists' abandonment of their initial hope of merging the different nationalities into one Yugoslavian people. The Muslims were recognised as a distinct nationality for the first time in 1968, and this was enshrined in the constitution in 1974. The term "Muslim" was no longer used to designate members of a religious community, however. Rather it represented a distinct ethnic and national identity. This was in line with Tito's policy of "non-alignment" and was an important signal to the Islamic world. The new approach provided for equal treatment for the three Bosnian communities, who, while speaking the same language, belonged to different religious cultures.

Thus Bosnia-Hercegovina—like Yugoslavia—was defined as a multinational state which distinguished between Bosnian citizenship and the following nationalities or peoples: Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims, known as *Bosniaks* today. The three groups were treated as equal, notwithstanding their numeric inequality. In 1990, 43.7 per cent of Bosnians identified themselves as Muslim in the ethnic-national sense, but only 16.5 per cent in the religious sense. 31 per cent were Serbs (but only 20 per cent were Orthodox) and 17.3 per cent were Croats (but only 15 per cent Catholic). 46 per cent of the Bosnian population did not belong to any faith. None of these eth-

nic groups had their own distinct settlement areas. A map showing the population distribution in Bosnia-Hercegovina from the year 1990 resembles a leopard skin, which would only be transformed into a uniform fabric as a result of war and mass expulsion.

Crisis in the "artificial" Yugoslav state

Federal structures in Yugoslavia preserved (a) a diversity of identities and a balance between the communities and (b) a multinational state which protected private ownership of land combined with social ownership (belonging to every citizen and no one in particular) in industry and services. The collapse of the federation and the uncertainties of the "transitional period" were to have a catastrophic effect on the key question of transforming ownership. The population was consumed by a growing fear of being on the wrong side of the fence, deprived of state protection for their land, their work, their identities and their very lives.

When the Party began to decline, the main beneficiaries in each of the republics were the nationalist parties. They manipulated already existing fears, identified scapegoats for the crisis and offered their own form of protection to their communities, who were invariably defined as victims of "the other." The crisis of the federation nurtured plans to transform Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia into separate nation states. However, the leaders of Bosnia-Hercegovina and Macedonia did everything in their power to prevent the disintegration of Yugoslavia. In this they had the support of Turkey. Contrary to the "Islamic conspiracy" theory, Ankara was anxious to maintain regional stability,[4] particularly as the two republics—Bosnia and Macedonia—had begun to come to the attention of expansionist forces in neighbouring countries. When the nationalists rejected the "artificial boundaries" created by Tito, they also began to question the legitimacy of the "artificial peoples." The weakest and most threatened of these were the Bosnian Muslims, who were targeted by the Serbian and Croatian nationalist parties of Bosnia-Hercegovina and also by Belgrade and Zagreb, who had plans to expand Serbia and Croatia and to carve up Bosnia-Hercegovina between them. This began as an external offensive, arranged before the war between the

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[4] Gallagher 1995.

Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and the Croatian President, Franjo Tudmann. Before long, they were joined by warlords within Bosnia who sought to expand their territory and increase their control.

The Muslim population, confronted by such Serbian-Croatian plans, had no territory to call their own. The only state they possessed was Bosnia-Hercegovina. For a long time they hoped for military action by the international community. But "there was no oil" in Bosnia, and the Western governments had no significant or immediate strategic reason for intervening in Bosnia. Nor was there a definitive answer to the question of who or what should be defended and to what end. Many observers saw the division of Bosnia-Hercegovina as a matter of fate, while many more focused on containing the war and obviating the "fundamentalist threat."

The superpowers and a "Palestine in the heart of Europe"

The international community did not have a common policy on the crisis in Yugoslavia and Bosnia. During the 1980s, most powerful countries (with the exception of Germany) were in favour of the continued existence of the Yugoslav state, yet they gave their full backing to policies which would eventually corrode this society. With the threat of war in the Balkans, the United Nations deployed troops to Macedonia, and Albania became NATO's main base in the region. But President Izetbegovic's requests that troops be stationed in Bosnia-Hercegovina before the conflict could spread were ignored. This amounted to an unscrupulous act on the part of the international community, if not an implicit endorsement of the Serbian-Croatian destruction of Bosnia-Hercegovina.

When the Yugoslav federation finally fell apart, the Western governments agreed on a number of issues: to avoid being drawn into a war in the Balkans; to combat Islamic fundamentalism; and to retain some form of partnership with Russia. But their policies were also influenced (at least at the beginning of the crisis) by their specific interests and their respective "historical alliances" with the various nations involved in the war.

France and Great Britain agreed with the Serb President that a strong Serbia was needed to counteract German influence in the Balkans. The Muslim cause was further weakened by the identifica-

tion of "Muslims" with "fundamentalists," and by the confusing merging of Muslim nationality and Muslim religion. Ultimately it was hoped that an alliance between Milosevic and Tudjman would provide a solution. Bosnia-Hercegovina was eventually carved up by the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic and the Bosnian Croat leader, Mate Boban, who established the Republic Srpska and the Republic of Herceg-Bosna respectively. The leaders of these states took part in international negotiations. And it was their conquests which determined the relentless logic of the "peace plans," leading to the initial "cantonisation" and the ultimate dismemberment of Bosnia-Hercegovina.

Under these conditions, the Muslims were forced to crowd together in a rump state, which consisted of "safe havens"—similar to the "Bantustans" in South Africa—declared as such by the UN, who did not, however, defend them. Understandably, the Islamic countries displayed solidarity with the Muslim victims of a conflict which came to be seen as a modern-day Crusade by the Christian West against the Muslim population of Bosnia-Hercegovina.[5] It was common in the Islamic world to compare the war to the situation in Palestine and to liken Western support for Serbia with its backing of Israel. Serb propaganda encouraged this interpretation, invoking an actual and imagined, past and future, "anti-Serbian genocide." The Serbs referred to themselves as the "Jews of the 21st century" in order to justify "the re-conquest in self-defence" of all "historical territories" including Serbia's "Jerusalem," Kosovo.[6]

The perception of the war as a Christian Crusade was strengthened when the Muslims were forced to fight on two fronts in 1993 and again in spring of 1994. At a time when UN aid convoys were permanently blocked and the besieged Muslim population was often forced to survive for weeks on donations from Islamic charities, it became increasingly apparent that more Muslims were attending the mosque and more Muslim women were wearing the veil. Later on, the Islamic world had renewed cause for outrage when besieged Muslim enclaves were not only left undefended by UN troops, but were actually disarmed by UNPROFOR forces. At the same time,

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[5] Gallagher / Khan 1994; Mitri 1993.

[6] The first Serbian state came into being in the Middle Ages in Kosovo, where 80 per cent of the population today is Albanian. On this point see the writings of the former Yugoslav President and Serb author Dobrica Cosic, published by Editions l'Age d'Homme, Lausanne.

media footage from Chechnya showed a Muslim population being butchered while the Christian West looked on in indifference.

The reaction of the United States to the Bosnian crisis was influenced by a number of factors. The US agreed with Germany that the war was a manifestation of Serb aggression and it correctly believed that the isolation of the Bosnian Muslims would strengthen, rather than diminish, the fundamentalist threat. Foreign policy considerations included defending America's diplomatic interests and spheres of influence in the Arab and Islamic world, and appeasing Russia (and Yeltsin in particular). Domestic considerations were coloured by the "Vietnam and Somalia syndrome," which favoured foreign-policy isolationism and a perception of the war in Bosnia as a purely European affair. At the same time, public outrage at the horrific footage of the war gave rise to demands for immediate intervention. When the US called for a removal of the arms embargo against the Bosnian army, it gained a lot of favour—particularly with the *Organisation of the Islamic Conference* (OIC), which had been pushing for the same thing. At the same time, however, the US had gone over the heads of Russian and European negotiators and endangered the latter's troops on the ground.

The Bosnian question became an issue in the US election campaign, with the Republican opposition taking credit for the removal of the one-sided arms embargo. Clinton for his part was determined to secure a diplomatic success at all costs by ending the martyrdom of the Muslim population and reinforcing the USA's position of leadership (with the aid of NATO).

Rather than ending the arms embargo on the Sarajevo government, Washington opted for a different policy. It reinforced the Croatian army (thus enabling it to fulfil its project of cleansing Croatia of its Serbs) and it forced President Tudjman to form the Croatian-Muslim bloc advocated by Turkey and Iran,[7] further increasing the paranoia of the Bosnian Serbs fighting for a secessionist line. The Dayton agreements counterbalanced these developments by consolidating the role of the Serb President Milosevic against his former ally, Radovan Karadzic, and by recognising both the "sovereignty" and the ethnic division of Bosnia. Thus Dayton did not put an end either to the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia or to the bilateral fronts (be they Croatian-Serbian and anti-Muslim, or Croatian-Muslim and

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[7] Gallagher 1995.

anti-Serbian) which continue to destroy the country's multinational reality today.

What do the Bosnian Muslims want now?

Izetbegovic's *Party for Democratic Action* (SDA) was the loser at Dayton. The party's objectives included the continuing existence of Bosnia-Hercegovina, but under its own dominance—an objective which contributed to the destruction of Bosnia. The SDA was a composite of different elements, and had splintered on several occasions. While it may not have committed as many crimes as the Serb and Croatian nationalists, it did behave like the former *Communist Party* and like all nationalist parties, setting itself up as a mini-state in which party members reaped the economic and political benefits. (This explains its appeal to former members of the communist nomenclature and to businessmen like Fikret Abdic, who later fought against the army of Sarajevo for the secession of Bihac). Within the SDA, there were two separate factions: the religious and the *Bosniak*-nationalist. The former aimed to establish an Islamic state and to re-Islamise the Muslim population who were spending more time on "Western" pleasures than in the mosque. It oriented itself to the Islamic world, and Iran in particular, and was personified by Izetbegovic. The other faction represented the secular *Bosniaks* who had become more detached from their religious faith. Although it was intent on creating a laicist Bosnian state, it was often more interested in recapturing the "occupied" territories than in convincing the population that multiethnic coexistence was possible. This became obvious during the existence of the Croat-Muslim federation: its 200,000 Serbs were treated as second class citizens. The laicist group looked toward the USA and Turkey and was generally associated with the former Prime Minister Haris Siladzic, who later broke with the SDA to form the *Party for Bosnia*. Alija Izetbegovic's contradictory position may be summed up by the fact that he represented the *Bosniaks*—and within that the Islamist faction—at a time when he was President of the multiethnic state of Bosnia-Hercegovina and was entering into weak alliances with the non-nationalist opposition and with Haris Siladzic.

The ambiguity of the "Muslim cause" has aroused confusion in the Islamic world. Most *Bosniaks* were more interested in protecting

Bosnia's cultural diversity than in retaining their own religious identity. What they wanted was recognition as Europeans. Consequently, the assistance offered by the Islamic countries was politically inopportune, while the response of the Western powers left them feeling betrayed.

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OSLO: A MODEL FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST? ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Alexander Flores

Israel's conflict with the Palestinians and the other Arab peoples is often seen as paradigmatic for the relationship between the West and the "Islamic" Middle East. The first Zionists saw themselves as pioneers of a superior Western culture in a supposedly stagnating Orient and claimed to be taking over the "outpost of culture in a barbaric world." (Herzl) Their attitude did not differ greatly from that held by most Europeans at the time vis-à-vis the rest of the world. As the conflict unfolded, it continued to be interpreted and depicted in this light by most Zionists, Israelis, Europeans and Americans. Even today, many sections of Western public opinion regard Israel as an outpost of the West in an impenetrable and potentially hostile region. Similarly—albeit from a different vantage point—it is not uncommon for Arabs to view Israel as a bridgehead of the Western world, created intentionally by the forces of imperialism in the heart of the Arab world in order to control it and exploit its wealth.

The West is inclined to view the relationship between the two world regions from the perspective of its own alleged superiority, which, it claims, corresponds with the predominance of a modern, progressive, humanistic catalogue of values in the Western world. The vast majority of the Israeli people perceive the relationship between their society and that of their Arab neighbours in a similar vein. "They have different values," the argument goes. This perspective lends weight to the "Huntington paradigm," i.e. the theory that certain timeless characteristics such as differing value catalogues, cause different world regions—or "civilisations"—to disagree, and in some cases to collide.

Attempts have been made to explain the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and, by extension, Arab-Israeli hostilities as a manifestation of one such cultural collision. According to this interpretation, Israel is an integral part of the West, while the Palestinians and Arabs belong to an Islamic culture whose traditions make it impossible for them to coexist with this alien element and inevitably lead to confrontation. Is this interpretation tenable? And how should recent

developments in the conflict affect our understanding of the relation-
ship between the two world regions which are the subject of this book?

A *conflict* sui generis

The perception of Israel as an integral part of the West is in need
of modification. Zionism and the state of Israel were never spine-
less tools in the hands of Western interests. On the contrary, the
Zionist movement and the Israeli leadership were guided at all times
by their own clearly-defined objectives which were: to unite as many
Jews in Palestine as possible; to found a Jewish state there; and,
subsequently, to consolidate that state's position in the region. These
goals were to determine their attitudes to the Arab inhabitants of
Palestine and, particularly after 1948, to the Arab countries. Zion-
ist aims in mandatory Palestine could only be achieved by suppressing
and displacing the Palestinian people. This is what happened in the
1948/49 war. The Palestinians naturally opposed the implementa-
tion of the Zionist project, but they could not prevent it. It was also
rejected by the Arab states, who attempted to halt the partition of
Palestine by military force and, when this failed, refused to recog-
nise the state of Israel.

It was Zionist goals therefore and the pre-existing conditions in
Palestine, rather than the relationship between the West and the
Islamic world, which caused the conflict and determined its nature.
However, it should not be viewed in isolation from other political
developments both in the region and on an international level. The
Zionist movement needed the support of powerful states who were
influential in the Middle East. Left to its own devices, it could never
have asserted itself in Palestine or withstood Arab hostility and the
Arab boycott following the establishment of the state of Israel. Such
support was forthcoming: England backed the Zionist project dur-
ing much of the Mandate's existence, followed by other Western states
and more recently by the USA. In order to secure the support of
the West, Israel has always endeavoured to portray itself as a par-
ticularly reliable ally and as the spearhead of Western interests in
the Middle East. It has done so in every international configuration,
whether it be the West's dealings with the Third World, the conflict
between East and West or, when that ceased, the "clash of civilisa-
tions" between the Western and Islamic worlds. Israel's immediate

adversaries, the Palestinians, have consistently reacted by attempting to elicit the support of the West's opponents. While their efforts in this regard have generally been successful, the Israelis' overriding strength has precluded any real improvement in their political situation.

Thus, while the Palestine conflict came about as a result of specific pre-conditions and can only be properly understood in relation to these, it is also embedded in an international context which has further influenced the course of the conflict. For a long time after 1948, the situation remained static. Israel was isolated in the region, yet support from the West meant it did not suffer serious security problems or material disadvantage. The Arab states, on the other hand, secure in the knowledge that the Eastern bloc and the non-aligned states had guaranteed them support, refused to recognise Israel and resisted pressure from the West to join the Western pact system. At the same time, they avoided military conflict with Israel, recognising the military imbalance and having been persuaded by their allies to exercise moderation. The Palestinians, for their part, were disorganised and did not pose a real danger to Israel. Nor could they induce the Arab governments to support their interests. As a result, the Palestinian dimension of the conflict was largely perceived as distinct from—and less significant than—the Arab dimension.

The consequences of the Six-Day war

The Palestinian factor gained in significance around the time of the 1967 Six-Day War. The new Palestinian resistance movement had contributed to the escalating tensions prior to the outbreak of hostilities, while the war itself greatly enhanced its standing—at least in the eyes of the Arab public for whom the Arab forces' catastrophic defeat was in stark contrast to the Palestinians' staunch refusal to lay down arms. When Israel occupied territories formerly under Arab control and populated by Palestinians, it brought together the two dimensions of the conflict—the Arab and the Palestinian—and added a territorial component to Arab-Israeli enmity. The aforementioned stalemate came to an end: widespread demands for an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories led to repeated international intervention aimed at resolving the conflict. Israel, for its part, saw

an opportunity to finally gain Arab recognition in return for withdrawing from the occupied territories.

There has been widespread international agreement since 1967 that any settlement of the Palestinian question should focus on the territories occupied in that year. Resolution 242 of the UN Security Council outlines the following elements of a settlement: 1. an Israeli withdrawal; 2. a termination of the state of war and mutual recognition of all states in the region within secure boundaries; and 3. a just settlement of the refugee question. The Arab states, unwilling to reward Israel for its recent acts of aggression by recognising its legitimacy, did not initially concur with this international consensus. After 1970, however, they gradually abandoned their reservations. Israel's reluctance to withdraw from all of the occupied territories represented a further difficulty, which was exacerbated by Israeli moves to consolidate its position in some of the territories, e.g. Greater Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley and the Golan Heights, immediately after the Six-Day War. Another complication was the fact that the Palestinians—now represented by the PLO—had become a force to be reckoned with. As the people most affected, the Palestinians also found it most difficult to recognise Israel and accept the outcome of the 1948/49 catastrophe. Their struggle was initially directed against the state of Israel as such, which they aimed to replace with a "Democratic state of Palestine." This was the main tenet of the PLO's basic document, the "Palestinian Covenant," in its 1968 version.

After the 1973 October War, which tipped the balance in favour of the Arab governments, the Palestinians gradually began to adopt the idea of a two-state settlement. While they continued to demand the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territories it had occupied in 1967, and the establishment of a Palestinian state, they began to accept that this state could exist *alongside* Israel, rather than in its stead. The Palestinian change of course was acknowledged by the Arab countries and on an international level by increased recognition of the PLO. It also laid the foundation for improved relations between the PLO and the Palestinians of the occupied territories, whose main goal—ending the Israeli occupation—was now given greater prominence in the policies of the PLO.

The PLO now had the support of the Palestinian diaspora and the population of the occupied territories; it had the backing of the Arabs and it had a broad international consensus behind it. Along

with the PLO's willingness to renounce its old irredentist demands, this should have facilitated the fulfilment of Palestinian aspirations. However, an appropriate Israeli response failed to materialise. Every Israeli government since 1967 has actively tried to secure its hold on the occupied territories. Since 1977, when the *Likud* party assumed power, the building of settlements has been enforced with the declared intention of precluding an Israeli withdrawal. Israel was unwilling to enter into a process which would necessitate any kind of concession. And it was particularly loath to negotiate with the PLO.

What was the cause of Israel's intransigence? The following three reasons were given by Israel itself for its refusal to withdraw from the occupied territories: economic advantage, military considerations and the nationalist-religious conviction that the old Jewish settlement area of the West Bank should be populated by Jews and remain under Israeli control. While these considerations certainly influenced the Israeli standpoint, the strongest factor for most Israelis was force of habit: after twenty-five years of occupation, they had become used to seeing the territories as an integral part of Israel. Every Israeli government since 1967 has reinforced this conviction, ruling out any question of withdrawal through the building of settlements.

Oslo: a turning point

Nevertheless, the Palestinians continued to pursue their goals with growing intensity and clarity. The PLO leadership formed a closer relationship with the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, which had become its most important remaining base. They presented their demands with a hitherto unknown urgency and transparency in the *Intifada* and in the resolutions of the 19th *Palestinian National Council* (1988), which proclaimed the state of Palestine while explicitly recognising Israel. The prospect of coming to an understanding with the Palestinians on the basis of a two-state settlement was also gaining popularity within Israel, but it took a dramatic political transformation on the world stage to end the stalemate. This happened with the collapse of the Eastern bloc, the end of the bipolar world order and the 1991 Gulf war, which left many people in the Arab world frustrated. After the war, the USA, conscious of its own position of strength in the "New World Order," began to push for a final settlement to the Palestinian conflict. US diplomatic

efforts gave rise to the Arab-Israeli peace process, which began in October 1991 with the Conference of Madrid.

While the two sides still had widely diverging objectives, the process eventually led to the "Oslo accords," which resulted not from the negotiations in Washington, but from secret talks between Israel and the PLO. In the "Declaration of Principles on Interim Self Government Arrangements," which was signed in Washington on September 13, 1993, the two sides stated their intention to resolve their conflict jointly through negotiation. Before the Declaration was signed, the PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, and the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin exchanged letters in which the two parties recognised each other. The PLO agreed, furthermore, to a number of conditions including a renunciation of violence and a revision of the Palestinian Covenant. The process embarked upon in Oslo provided for a transitional period of five years which, it was hoped, would help to bridge the gap between the two sides. Only those points on which there was consensus were contractually settled, while other issues were excluded and postponed until later permanent status negotiations.

The following are the most important points enunciated in the Declaration of Principles:
1. the withdrawal of the Israeli army from the Gaza Strip and a small area around Jericho (Art. XIV)
2. the establishment of a Palestinian Authority (Art. I); the transfer of authority to the Palestinians for most areas of responsibility in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area, and civil power for five portfolios in the rest of the West Bank (Art. VI).
3. the election of a Palestinian Council by the population of these territories (including East Jerusalem) which would then replace the Palestinian Authority (Art. III).
4. the eventual extension of the territory in which the Council was given responsibility for civil affairs and the security of Palestinians (Art. VII).
In this and all subsequent agreements, Israel explicitly retained responsibility for foreign relations, external and internal security, public order in the Jewish settlements and for Israelis. Issues such as Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, foreign relations and "other issues of common interest" were deferred to the negotiations on permanent status (Art. V).

The agreements laid down in the Declaration of Principles

amounted to what may be described as barter between Israel and the PLO. Israel gained the removal of the last remaining obstacles to its acceptance in the region. While most of the Arab states had been slow to make peace with Israel as long as the people most affected by the conflict—the Palestinians—had not done so, the PLO's agreement to recognise Israel and the two sides' declaration of their intention to resolve the conflict by peaceful means meant an end to the Palestinian veto. The Palestinians, on the other hand, gained Israeli recognition of the PLO and a renunciation by Israel of direct control over a small part of the occupied territories—with the promise of more to come in the future.

By entering into the agreements, the PLO remained true to policies it had hitherto pursued, namely to achieve US and Israeli recognition of the organisation as the mouthpiece and representative of the Palestinian people in return for far-reaching concessions. It agreed to renounce violent methods, to give up—or revise—the Palestinian Covenant, to accept the interim arrangements with no guarantees regarding permanent status, and to exclude important points like Jerusalem, refugees and even the settlements from the agreements. For many Palestinians these concessions went too far, and they rejected the accords wholesale. In order to correctly appreciate Palestinian decision-making, it must be remembered that the PLO had entered the process from a position of extreme weakness.

The Oslo accords signalled a change of course by the Israeli government with regard to issues it had officially declared non-negotiable, such as discourse with the Palestinians or a withdrawal from any of the occupied territories prior to a peace settlement. Israel was partially motivated by its desire to end the Palestinian veto. It had also become clear during the course of the talks that an agreement with the Palestinians necessarily implied dealing with the PLO. Indeed, the PLO leadership proved to be more prepared to compromise than the Palestinian delegation who came directly from the occupied territories.

Before the objectives outlined in the Declaration of Principles could be implemented, detailed agreements were required. These were concluded in the aftermath of Oslo. The most important were: the "Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area," which was signed in Cairo on May 4, 1994, and provided for the withdrawal of the Israeli Army from the two territories and the transfer of responsibility for civil affairs to the Palestinian Authority; the "Prepa-

ratory Transfer Agreement," which was signed in Erez on August 29, 1994, and arranged for the transfer of power to the Palestinian Authority for education, culture, social welfare, direct taxation and tourism; and the "Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip," (Oslo II) signed in Washington on September 28, 1995, which set forth all the arrangements for the two territories for the entire interim period. An important section of the Gaza-Jericho Agreement was the "Protocol on Economic Relations," which was signed in Paris on April 29, 1994. It dealt with economic relations between Israel and the Palestinian territories for the duration of the interim period, and was adopted unchanged into the Interim Agreement.

None of the above agreements altered the status of the occupied territories. On the contrary, they took the status quo as their starting point, never referring to it explicitly and certainly never describing it as illegitimate. Any adjustments that were made were within narrow, clearly-defined limits. The Israeli Civil Administration, which had governed the territories to be transferred to the Palestinian Authority, was to be dissolved; the Israeli military government, on the other hand, was to be merely "withdrawn." The military government was to retain responsibility for areas Israel had earmarked for itself and for issues reserved for permanent status negotiations. It retained the legislative, judicial and executive powers required for this purpose (Interim Agreement Art. XVII, 4b). Existing laws and military orders were to remain in force, unless the Palestinian Council amended or annulled them. While it was within its authority to do so, the Interim Agreement stipulated that any move of this kind required the agreement of Israel (Art. XVIII, 4-6). Responsibility for most spheres of civil affairs was transferred to the Palestinian Council, but its activities were closely monitored by Israel. The close-meshed net of liaison committees and veto clauses ensured continuing Israeli control, a fact which was made particularly obvious in the detailed security arrangements. And continuing close ties between the Palestinian territories and Israel in the economic sphere were ensured by the relevant protocol on economic relations.

The time-table drawn up in the Declaration of Principles for the negotiation and implementation of the interim period agreements has not been adhered to. Each step has been delayed—in some cases considerably. The Gaza-Jericho Agreement was to be completed by December 13, 1993—it was actually signed on May 4, 1994. Elec-

tions for the Palestinian Council were to be held by July 13, 1994—
in fact they took place on January 20, 1996. The redeployment of
the Israeli army in the West Bank, i.e. its withdrawal from populat-
ed areas, was defined in the Declaration of Principles as a pre-req-
uisite for the holding of elections; yet the continued existence of all
Jewish settlements was used to justify the presence of the army for
the purpose of protection. To date, the Israeli government has not
removed even the smallest of the settlements. Redeployment has been
postponed pending the building of roads around larger Arab towns
and the implementation of security arrangements detailed in the
Interim Agreement.

    Nor has the Israeli army withdrawn from the Gaza Strip, as agreed
in the Declaration of Principles. Rather it has been redeployed in
such a way as to allow its continuing presence in military installa-
tions at the border as well as in the settlement blocks for the pur-
pose of protection. The Interim Agreement divided the West Bank,
which has many more settlements and settlers than the Gaza Strip,
into three zones under varying degrees of Palestinian control: Zone
A (the larger cities), which is entirely under the authority of the
Palestinian Council; Zone B (clusters of Palestinian villages), in which
the Council and the Israeli army share responsibility for security; and
Zone C (all other areas) in which the army's authority remains
unchallenged. The result is a patchwork of different zones under
varying degrees of Palestinian and/or Israeli control—and a poten-
tial source of conflict. Further redeployment by the autumn of 1997
was to extend the Palestinian Council's territorial authority over most
of the West Bank—with the exception of as yet undefined military
installations. It is a well-known fact that the Netanyahu government
failed to meet these commitments. The Israelis refused to undertake
any further redeployment and it was only when considerable pres-
sure was brought to bear that the Hebron Agreement was conclud-
ed (January 17, 1997) and a limited redeployment agreed to in the
Wye River Memorandum (October 23, 1998). Israel's tactics have
led to further delays in the implementation of the time schedule for
the interim period. Negotiations on the permanent status of the
territories have also been blocked as a result. May 4, 1999, which
was to have marked the beginning of permanent status, has come
and gone and an agreement between the two sides is no closer. They
continue to threaten each other with unilateral action, while main-

taining a certain level of co-operation in practical questions of ev-
eryday life.

Israel has failed to comply with some of its Oslo undertakings, and
has delayed the implementation of others, e.g. the creation of safe
passages between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, the release of
prisoners and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Hebron. Israel's
immediate reaction to the slightest provocation is (and always has
been) to seal off the occupied territories. This tactic is now being
employed for increasingly protracted periods of time, and while the
intention may be to calm the Israeli people, the effect is also to impose
severe restrictions and economic hardship on the Palestinians.

The peace process: problems

The Oslo accords and their implementation have been hampered
by many problems. Such difficulties, which quickly became appar-
ent as the introduction of limited Palestinian self-rule was delayed,
ultimately derived from the contradictions and ambiguities in the
Declaration of Principles itself. When the negotiations on permanent
status finally begin to focus on the deferred issues, the emerging
contradictions will prove even more difficult to bridge. The emo-
tionally-charged question of Jerusalem and the competing claims to
the city is one such matter. The refugee problem (dating from 1948
and 1967) another. A further thorny issue is the eventual international
status of the Palestinian territories. And arguably the most impor-
tant problem of all is the Jewish settlements and their future. The
continued existence of most of these settlements would appear im-
possible under any kind of independent Palestinian rule. This reveals
once again the short-sightedness of Israel's occupation and settlement
policies: a status quo has been created which cannot easily be re-
versed, even if the will to change were there. Whether such a will
exists at all must, in fact, be questioned in light of Israel's intransi-
gence since Oslo.

Up until 1993, while Israel had unlimited control over the Pales-
tinian territories, its behaviour revealed a confidence in its own
position of superiority. Security was its main concern and the slightest
sign of insurrection was crushed, often ruthlessly. Collective punish-
ments and preventative measures, such as forcible house searches and
curfews, were commonplace. The Israeli army subjected the entire

Palestinian population to rigorous controls, gross bullying and generally contemptuous treatment. This might have been expected to change following the Declaration of Principles with its expressions of mutual respect, yet there has been no alteration in the Israeli military's mindset or behaviour. While violent clashes are not as common as they once were, the army's reaction to them is as uncontrolled as ever. In February 1994, for example, a Jewish settler, Baruch Goldstein, massacred praying Muslims in Hebron. The widespread protests provoked by this action were brutally suppressed by the army, who killed more people than Goldstein himself. One can only suppose that the army's instructions on the use of firearms against the Palestinian population have remained largely unchanged. Leading Israeli politicians continue to make disparaging remarks about their Palestinian negotiating partners. As one of them commented: "We must twist Arafat's arm without breaking it, because then he could no longer fight *Hamas* for us." Israel appears to interpret its relative strength and ongoing international support as a licence to persist with this approach in the same way as it continued its occupation of the territories prior to this.

The Gaza-Jericho Agreement established a Palestinian Authority, which was replaced by an elected Palestinian Council following elections on January 20, 1996. The chairman of both bodies was Yasser Arafat. The Council is in a weak position, its authority limited by the agreements with Israel. While it has large-scale autonomy with regard to internal Palestinian affairs, any decision representing a departure from the status quo is subject to Israeli approval. Under the Declaration of Principles, the Council is not only responsible for law and order for the Palestinians and for combating terrorism, it also has the enormous task of solving the territories' considerable infra-structural, economic and social problems. Many of the Council's leading politicians spent time in exile, where they became accustomed to authoritarian structures which they are now attempting to uphold. Arafat himself is endeavouring to monopolise the decision-making powers (which the agreements allow him to do). He is under intense pressure from Israel and the West to take a hard line against the opposition forces—especially the Islamists—yet the Western powers seem less concerned that Arafat remains within the limits of the law and respects international human rights standards. He is also the subject of increasing criticism from many Palestinians, not only as a result of his compliance with the accords,

but also because of the nature of his government. Many of the inhabitants of the Palestinian territories learnt during occupation to defend themselves against suppression and are slow to accept his authoritarian style of government and any curtailment of their rights and freedom.

The Palestinian opposition directs its criticism partly against the conditions laid down in the Declaration of Principles and partly against the Palestinian Authority itself. The strongest opposition force is *Hamas* (*Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya*), an Islamist resistance movement which is strongly anti-Israeli in ideology and fundamentally opposed to the peace process. Many of its supporters are attracted not so much by its specific Islamist ideology, but by its ability to express their frustration at the ongoing impasse. Despite their apparent fanaticism, the leaders of *Hamas* are level-headed politicians with a clear understanding of the pragmatics of the situation. They have adapted to the conditions of Oslo, they have negotiated with the Palestinian Council on occasion, and they are even prepared to enter into talks with Israel.

Elements of *Hamas* have perpetrated several terrorist attacks in Israel, in which innocent civilians have been killed. Even apart from the inhumanity of such actions, their immediate effect is to further alienate the Israeli population. Israel's response to such incidents is to impose tough measures on the entire Palestinian population—such as sealing off the territories—and to step up pressure on the Council to take action against *Hamas*. While the Council generally complies, its response tends to be unfocussed, with sweeping arrests of all likely members and sympathisers. Yet such indiscriminate suppression of the population only heightens the tension.

The foundations of the peace process and its practical implementation are certainly open to criticism, as is Arafat's high-handed style of government. The opposition has a legitimate case, therefore, and it should not be the object of ruthless suppression. Nor should it be branded as hostile to the peace process as such. Arafat is confronted by a dilemma: while Israel continues to urge the ruthless suppression of the opposition, compliance with Israel's wishes would further divide his society. This was made clear in the "tunnel war" at the end of September, 1996, when the Israeli authorities opened a tunnel for tourists near the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem. The Palestinian people staged mass protests, while the police—apparently supported by Arafat, whose popularity with his own population soared

following the incident—engaged in fierce gun battles with Israeli soldiers.

Terrorist attacks are unacceptable in human terms and destroy any possibility of the mutual trust which is a precondition of real peace. The attacks at the beginning of March 1996 may also have contributed to the election victory of Benjamin Netanyahu. Nevertheless, the widespread view that the extremists, or "enemies of the peace," pose the only threat to the peace process is erroneous. As stated above, most of the problems which have marred the Oslo process have their roots in the status quo. Where the agreements deal with them at all, it is in an ambiguous and half-hearted fashion. The frustration and insecurity felt by so many Palestinians and Israelis are open to exploitation by extremist forces—with extremely dangerous consequences. The extremists are not the *cause* of the problems, however, and suppressing them is not the panacea it is frequently proclaimed to be. It would be much more constructive to tackle the problems hindering the process and to persist with the work of understanding—at least on the basis of mutual respect, if the goal of equality remains so elusive.

Oslo has proved to be less of a turning point than originally expected. The Palestinian territories are still almost entirely dependent on Israel and all of the Jewish settlements remain under Israeli control. This will continue to be the case until the end of the interim period, and even then there is little hope of radical change. All that has been achieved since Oslo is an end to the direct military and administrative suppression of part of the Palestinian population by the Israeli army, and the establishment of the Palestinian Council.

The unsatisfactory results and perspectives of the peace process to date result from a number of factors: the unequal balance of power between the two main parties to the conflict; the resulting bias towards Israel in the agreements; and the persistence of entrenched Israeli attitudes and behavioural patterns towards the Palestinians. The unequal balance of power, which is evident in the adversaries' differing positions of strength on the ground, is further exacerbated by the international context of the conflict: the Palestinians on their own would be in a weak position, but they are part of an Arab world, which is more fragmented and dependent today than at almost any other time in its history. Israel, on the other hand, is intrinsically powerful *and* it has the almost unconditional support of the West under the leadership of the USA. It therefore succeeded in persist-

ing with its occupation of the territories and the attendant policies, which even the USA had declared to be in violation of international law. This also explains why it still has the whip hand today and continues to pursue its policies from a position of superior strength. In many respects Israel is part of the West, while the Palestinians belong to a hopelessly demoralised Arab world.

The Palestinians feel let down by these developments. Most of their land was taken away from them in 1948. Since then, they have officially renounced all claim to it. While they were involved in an uneven struggle with Israel since 1967, they were protected from the humiliation of unconditional surrender by the bipolar world order. When the era of the two superpowers came to an end, an opportunity to end the conflict seemed to present itself. Yet it has been settled in a way that is unsatisfactory to the Palestinians. The New World Order, with the USA at the helm, is clearly to the advantage of the Israelis, who are now attempting to exploit their position to further Israel's integration in the region without fulfilling the basic territorial demands of the Palestinians. The Palestinians may have had little prospect of solving their basic problems in the old world order, but the new reality seems unlikely to bring about more than a marginal improvement in their position. Against this background, Oslo can hardly be seen as a model of conflict resolution. At the core of the problem is the relationship between the two different worlds to which the adversaries belong, a relationship which is characterised not so much by cultural differences, as by dependency resulting from an unequal balance of power.

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IRAQ AS A GOLEM. IDENTITY CRISES OF A WESTERN CREATION

Henner Fürtig

The relationship between the West and Iraq might be described as an archetypal example of the complicated relations between an inventor and his creation, between Rabbi Löw and his Golem. Since its inception as a consequence of Western, and particularly British colonial policies, the Iraqi state has gone through almost all the development stages of an artificial creation: exploitation, insurrection, successful rebellion, self-assertion and an ambivalent love-hate relationship with its more powerful creator. The West, having established a national framework called Iraq, was eventually forced to grant its independence, only to enter into military conflict with it in the second Gulf war. This confrontation proved portentous for the country between the Euphrates and Tigris, causing the West to fundamentally question the wisdom of its creation.

The West's role in the birth of Iraq

Like many other modern states in the Middle East and North Africa, Iraq emerged from the territorial ruins of the Ottoman Empire, which collapsed at the end of the First World War. In the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, Britain and France had agreed to divide their conquests in the Ottoman Empire in the event of victory. By 1917, British-Indian forces had occupied the Ottoman provinces of Baghdad, Basra and Mosul, and when the Ottoman Empire surrendered in Mudros, Great Britain placed the three provinces under its protection. While the eventual fate of the oil-rich province of Mosul continued to cause hostilities with Turkey until the mid-1920s, the *League of Nations* confirmed British control over the former Ottoman provinces in the form of a mandate in April 1920 in San Remo. This marked the birth of modern Iraq.

The local population did not accept these developments unchallenged. While they felt little affinity with the newly-established state, having had next to no involvement in its foundation, they did ob-

ject to the smooth transition from one form of foreign rule to an-other. Great Britain eventually saw no alternative but to agree to the formation of a "national government" and decided furthermore on the establishment of a monarchy. On August 23, 1921, the Brit-ish government installed its main Arab ally from the First World War, Faisal Ibn Hussein, son of the Sharif of Mecca, on the Iraqi throne.

Under the Anglo-Iraqi treaty of October 10, 1922, the British High Commissioner remained the highest authority in the mandated ter-ritory. Through their continued opposition, the Iraqi people even-tually brought about a new bilateral agreement, signed on June 30, 1930, which promised to establish the independence of the mandate, while at the same time reserving special long-term rights for the British government and its local representatives. On this basis, Iraq formally gained independence on October 3, 1932, when it was also admitted into the *League of Nations*.

These developments did not bring British influence to an end, however. Every Iraqi government was contractually obliged to seek London's approval for foreign-policy decisions and, in the case of war, Britain was to assume control over the entire infrastructure and could establish military bases on Iraqi territory. In addition, British companies' access to Iraqi oil reserves remained unchallenged. Iraq entered the Second World War on the side of the British and in 1955, during the Cold War, the country was integrated by London into the pro-Western Baghdad Pact. It is not surprising, therefore, that the majority of the Iraqi population, who were dissatisfied with what was no more than formal independence, regarded British tactics as duplicitous, or, at best, as intended to stall progress.

In the decades of struggle against foreign, in particular British dominance, the Iraqi people developed a more pronounced sense of their national identity. But they also had to grapple with the negative effects of foreign interference in the foundation of the state. The revolt against British rule took place within territorial borders which had been drawn up by Britain itself. At the same time, rejec-tion of British rule and Western influence did provide a common denominator for a population that is extremely diverse in its social, ethnic and religious make-up: the liberation of Iraq came to repre-sent a form of self-liberation.

Independence and the construction of a state

Efforts to liberate Iraq from foreign rule finally bore fruit on July 14, 1958, when nationalist officers, led by General Abdel Karim Qasim and Colonel Abd al-Salam Arif overthrew King Faisal II and brought to an end the last pro-British regime in Iraq. A republic was proclaimed and a process of social and political transformation began, which was directed primarily against the beneficiaries of British rule. Innovations included agrarian reform, a new constitution and the legalisation of political parties and trade unions.

Almost inevitably, the construction of an independent state proved problematic. Plans for an autonomous Iraqi nation did not exist and the task of establishing a sovereign state within externally-defined territorial borders was fraught with difficulty. When it drew up Iraq's frontiers at the beginning of the 1920s, Britain may have considered the interests of neighbouring spheres of influence, such as Kuwait, but it had not created optimal conditions for future developments should either state gain independence. As a result, Iraq in 1958 was confronted on its southern border with the problem of gaining un-restricted access to the sea and was at the same time involved in an ongoing border dispute with Iran over the vital Shatt al-Arab river. Yet even in these adverse circumstances, the Iraqi people were re-quired to identify a new impetus for the development of a sovereign national identity—a tall order for a people who were accustomed to seeing significant decisions being taken in Istanbul and, since 1918, in London.

The country remained divided into three parts. While the demar-cation lines no longer followed the borders of the Ottoman prov-inces, the population remained deeply divided along ethnic and religious lines. About 55 per cent of the Iraqi population are Shiite Muslims, who live mainly in the south of the country. Of the remain-ing 45 per cent *Sunni* Muslims, the majority are settled in the north and define themselves ethnically as Kurdish. Only 20 per cent of the Iraqi people are *Sunni* Arabs. They live in central Iraq, where the capital Baghdad is located, and have traditionally formed the ma-jority of the upper-classes. Such inequity is part of the legacy of Ottoman rule, (which only granted followers of the Shiite faith re-ligious freedom in 1908) and remained in evidence long after the establishment of the Iraqi state. In 1946, for example, the Iraqi diplomatic corps consisted with two exceptions entirely of *Sunni*

Muslims; conversely, only three out of eighty staff field officers were Shiites, while nine out of ten soldiers belonged to the Shiite faith.

National independence was perceived by the Shiites as an opportunity to end discrimination against them. The Kurds, for their part, hoped for an extension of their national rights. To fulfil these aims, both groups needed the support of the new rulers as well as substantial financial resources. Given the country's promising financial situation, such aspirations now seemed attainable.

In the decades following the Second World War, the increasing use of oil as a universal raw material contributed in no small way to the rapid economic upturn of the Western world. Iraq's international economic significance grew accordingly. It is part of the Gulf region where, by recent estimates, 63 per cent of the world's oil reserves are located, which are, moreover, incomparably easy to tap. Such resources, exploited fairly and effectively, could have become the most important material catalyst for national integration. The country was to be denied this opportunity, however.

Mindful of the substantial profit margins, the West had retained control over the country's valuable resources when granting independence to the formerly dependent territories. General Qasim, having witnessed the negative experience of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh whose attempts to nationalise Iran's oil industry between 1950 and 1953 led to his US-assisted overthrow, avoided direct confrontation with Western oil companies during his term in office. He focused instead on solving the country's border problems to the south by military means.

On June 25, 1961, following the declaration of Kuwaiti independence, Qasim declared Kuwait an integral part of Iraq. The first international crisis surrounding the Emirate ensued. Great Britain guaranteed to protect Kuwait's independence, the Arab League also intervened and Qasim was eventually forced to yield to international pressure. At the same time, his influence at home had started to wane. When Colonel Arif departed from the Republican regime in November 1958, Qasim adopted an increasingly dictatorial and autocratic style of rule. Growing internal opposition after 1961 was fuelled by the Iraqi failure in Kuwait, as well as by abortive attempts to enforce national unity and subjugate the Kurds by military force, embroiling the country in a pointless and ruinous civil war. Qasim's days in power were numbered. On February 8, 1963, he was replaced by his former comrade-in-arms, Arif, who also vainly attempted to

enforce an autocratic style of rule. Following his accidental death in a helicopter crash, he was succeeded on April 13, 1966, by his equally unsuccessful brother, Abdel Rahman.

The rule of the Arif brothers came to an end on July 17, 1968, when the *Baath* party assumed power. Under the name *Arab Resurrection (Baath)* party, it had come to prominence after 1947, particularly in the eastern Arab countries. Its motto, "unity, freedom, socialism" reflected a broad spectrum of political ideas and expectations. "Unity" stood for the pan-Arab aim of *resurrecting* a united Arab empire, "freedom" for the rejection of foreign rule and "socialism" for the construction of an alternative to the Western system of society which had been imposed on the Arab world from without.

Socialist experiments

The new President Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr introduced extensive nationalisation measures. Most significantly, the Iraq Petroleum Company was transferred to state ownership in 1972 and Iraq's oil reserves placed under state control. Were it not for the Cold War, this step alone could have advanced the process of developing a national identity. However, Iraq, having rebelled against the West, was in effect forced into the arms of the Eastern bloc. In 1972, al-Bakr signed a Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union, which was to have a marked influence on Iraqi politics and set the tone in military matters. Iraq's new mentor also ensured the adoption of socialist structural models for the country's domestic affairs. In 1973, the *Baath* party joined forces with the *Communist Party* and a number of Kurdish politicians to form the *Progressive National Patriotic Front*, in which the *Baath* party was the predominant force. In all of this, Iraq was no different from other states on the periphery of the East-West divide: the process of nation-building and developing an autochthonous identity was intensified—and also distorted—by external pressure. Once again, foreign models determined the state's political affairs: dissociation from the West was simply offset by friendship with the East.

Despite having almost complete control over its own oil resources, the Iraqi state did not succeed in ending its new dependency. While the dramatic increase in oil prices after 1973 did bring about a rapid improvement in Iraq's financial position, the leaders of the *Baath*

failed to ensure that the entire country profited from the nation's wealth. They became progressively more interested in expanding and consolidating their political power and lining their own pockets and those of their cronies. Their allegiance to the Eastern bloc grew less pronounced in the process: as needs required, the *Baath* leaders attempted increasingly to play off the ambitions of the East against those of the West.

The reign of Saddam Hussein

This trend became more pronounced after Saddam Hussein assumed power on July 16, 1979. Whereas the new ruler paid lip-service to the continued rule of the *Baath*, the beneficiaries of Iraq's wealth and political power were ever more limited to the new ruler's extended family from his birth place, Takrit, and to his collaborators in the ousting of Ahmed Hasan al-Bakr. The development of Iraq as a unified nation state came to be determined less by either Western or Eastern influences and more by the particular interests of this group. Rhetoric and propaganda may have emphasised the primacy of the nation's interests, but the main beneficiaries of Saddam's domestic and foreign policies were in all cases himself and his cronies—as a rule *Sunni* Arabs.

An agreement with Iran in 1975 had temporarily settled the Kurdish problem. The Shiites were finally profiting from the oil boom. Instead of reinforcing these trends and advancing the construction of the Iraqi nation, Saddam Hussein did the opposite. Only one year after entering office, he unleashed a war against the neighbouring country of Iran.

The Gulf wars

Iraq suffered enormous human and material losses in its eight years of armed encounter with Iran. About 200,000 of its citizens did not survive the war. Material damage came to a total of more than 450 billion dollars. The opportunity to grow together as a nation afforded by the country's favourable financial situation had been squandered. The war also destroyed the fragile relationship among Iraq's religious and ethnic groups. Saddam Hussein, convinced that the Shi-

ite majority would side with the revolutionary, pioneering Islam of
Ayatollah Khomeini, became even more rigorous in his "preventa-
tive" suppression of the country's Shiite population. He also suspected
large sections of the Kurdish population of fraternising with the Kurds
in Iran. Military reprisal actions and preventative measures were
commonplace between 1980 and 1988, reaching new heights in 1987,
when the Iraqi airforce used chemical weapons against Kurdish
civilians in the Iraqi village of Halabja.

Shortly after the end of the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq,
the Eastern bloc disintegrated. As a result, Iraq was able to rid itself
simultaneously of a whole range of constraints on its foreign and
economic policies. No longer burdened by war, the country finally
seemed in a position to focus on its own interests. Yet, primarily as
a consequence of the war, a renewed rapprochement took place with
the West and the USA in particular.

The 1979 Iranian revolution was viewed by the Americans as a
sensitive strategic defeat. Only two years previously, President Carter
had declared the Gulf region to be of vital importance for the USA.
The fall of the Shah, America's main ally in the region, coupled with
the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, kindled fears that US influence
in the region was diminishing. Without intervening directly in the
Gulf war, therefore, Washington took considerable diplomatic and
economic measures to bolster Iraq with a view to preventing a fur-
ther spread of the Iranian revolution, and in 1987, officially acting
as protector of Kuwait's tanker fleet, the USA began to intervene
directly in the fighting on the Iraqi side.

These developments may help to explain a serious miscalculation
on the part of Saddam Hussein. He interpreted the actions of the
US and other NATO states as an indication of their willingness to
grant him a permanent function in the region equal in every way to
that of the Shah. What he failed to recognise was that, following the
elimination of the threat posed by the Eastern bloc, the West led by
America was primarily interested in securing the flow of oil to its
own economies.

The USA had been correct in its calculation that Saddam Hus-
sein would weaken Iran, but it had not predicted his new position
of strength as commander of the strongest military power in the Gulf
region. Iraq had good reason to expect a dominant role in the re-
gion, at least in the short-term, following the defeat of Iran: it had
the second largest oil reserves in the region after Saudi Arabia; its

population was comparatively large with a relatively high standard of education; and it had extensive tracts of arable land with plentiful supplies of fresh water. Israel, however, regarded Iraqi ambitions as a threat to its strategic interests, while the conservative monarchies on the Arabian Peninsula, whose previous support for Iraq derived only from their perception of Iran as an elementary threat, now showed little inclination to recognise Iraq as a leading power.

Nor did the American government regard Saddam Hussein as the guarantor of its long-term interests in the region, and it readily acted upon these fears and aspirations. American attitudes to Iraq underwent a radical reversal as compared with its stance during the last years of the first Gulf war, and in 1988, the American Senate imposed economic sanctions on the Land of the two Rivers.

Iraq's President took insufficient cognisance of this change, however. The media continued to celebrate his triumph in the war and to depict him as the future leader of the Arab nation. In April 1990, he issued a threat to Israel, announcing the possession of binary chemical weapons. Yet notwithstanding all the propaganda, the reality was that extensive war damage had resulted in an extremely alarming situation. Saddam Hussein was increasingly unable to fulfil the high expectations of his people: following eight years of war they hoped to enjoy the fruits of their country's "resounding victory" over Iran without further delay. In the face of bankruptcy and the population's growing dissatisfaction, the Iraqi regime opted once again to go on the offensive.

Saddam Hussein set his sights on neighbouring Kuwait's vast financial reserves, which totalled 100 to 120 billion dollars in foreign assets alone. Access to these funds would facilitate the immediate payment of Iraq's war debts and still leave enough to tackle ambitious domestic and foreign policy projects. The invasion of Kuwait also held the promise of 195 billion barrels of oil, representing 20 per cent of all known oil reserves worldwide. Iraq's President already saw himself as the second largest oil producer in the world, with control over a quarter of all petroleum extraction in the Near and Middle East. This, he believed, would also provide an impressive economic foundation for Iraq's hegemonic ambitions.

When Saddam Hussein sent his troops into Kuwait on August 2, 1990, hoping to transform his vision into reality, he immediately paid the price for his misjudgement of the West. The unique importance of oil as the energetical and functional bedrock of the industrial

nations made it inconceivable that the West would grant Saddam Hussein a key function of the kind he aspired to. On the contrary: the Iraqi offensive against Kuwait provided the USA and its allies with the opportunity to make good the defeat of 1979 by re-establishing direct influence in the world's most important oil-producing region without regard to the strategic interests of the Eastern bloc.

The West used its weight with the United Nations to enforce an Iraqi withdrawal. The Security Council drew up several resolutions demanding a return to the status quo prior to August 2, 1990, and threatening Iraq with extensive embargoes should it fail to comply. When Saddam refused to capitulate, the UN Security Council, instead of waiting for the embargoes to take effect, passed resolution 678 in November 1990, at the particular instigation of the USA and Great Britain. This authorised the international alliance forming against Saddam Hussein to use all means necessary to re-establish the independence of Kuwait. Under the code name "Desert Storm," the allies launched their military offensive against Iraq on January 16, 1991, and by February 28, Saddam had been forced to capitulate.

The effects of the defeat proved catastrophic for Iraq. Not only had it reverted in economic and military terms to a position far inferior to that prevailing before the first Gulf war, but previously suppressed ethnic and religious differences also re-surfaced. American President George Bush and the British Prime Minister John Major now made it clear that ultimate victory would consist in ridding the country of Saddam Hussein. They did not see themselves empowered by the UN mandate to take an active role in his demise, however.

Encouraged by voices from abroad, the Shiites in southern Iraq rose up against the dictator in Baghdad on March 3, 1991. A few days later, the Kurds followed their example. Leaders of an anti-Saddam opposition group met in Beirut in mid-March to agree a plan of action for the period immediately following his downfall. It soon became apparent, however, that the Iraqi President's rash capitulation had enabled key formations of his army, particularly the Republican Guard, to survive. With his back to the wall, Saddam used this potential to brutally suppress the rebellions. Even the Shiite holy cities of Karbala' and Nadjaf did not escape destruction. Artillery, combat tanks and planes were used to drive the Shiites in the

south into inhospitable marshlands and to force thousands of Kurds in the north over the borders into Turkey and Iran.

After decades of oppression, the insurgents had relied too heavily on support from abroad and were unable to create the necessary conditions for victory following the spontaneous outbreak of hostilities. Numerous attempts to unite the rebels under one leadership ended in failure. Not only were the ambitions of the Kurds and the Shiites at variance with each other, *within* these groups there was a myriad of objectives, ranging from the establishment of separate Shiite and Kurdish states through union with other states, e.g. Iran, to more autonomy within Iraq.

The West was confronted with a dilemma. Direct support for the rebels would have amounted to a perpetuation of its earlier intervention policies. At the risk of losing credibility, it opted for humanitarian aid and military action, which stopped short of direct intervention. In mid-April 1991, the allies declared their intention to create a security zone for the Kurdish population under Western protection north of the 36th parallel. Furthermore, on August 25, 1991, President Bush established a no-fly zone to protect the Shiites south of the 32nd parallel. Yet Saddam Hussein remained in power.

Saddam's potential for extending his power had been severely curtailed, however. He stubbornly refused to fulfil all the requirements of the UN Security Council, with the result that the country remained in the firm grip of international boycotts. The suffering of the civilian population, who since 1980 had either been at war or recovering from the effects of war, re-intensified. To this day, the economy and the infrastructure reveal largescale destruction, while supplies, even of the most essential goods and services, remain at a critically low level.

Iraqi state propaganda continues to attack the USA and the West as the begetter of the nation's misery. It wisely conceals the fact that the boycott would be eased, if not lifted, were the Iraqi President to change his policies. However, it must be acknowledged that Western policies have also oiled the propaganda machine. More than nine years after the end of the second Gulf war, it is time for the West to weigh up the costs and effects of its boycott policies. The defeat of Saddam Hussein cannot be bought with the long-term deprivation of an entire people. The West could make its point without quintupling child mortality in Iraq, by differentiating between the individ-

ual embargoes and retaining a comprehensive boycott of military
goods, while at the same time relaxing the economic sanctions.

The entire country of Iraq is being held liable for the actions of
Saddam Hussein. In April 1995, the UN Security Council finally
passed resolution 986, which allows Iraq to sell 2 billion dollars worth
of oil every six months in order to buy food and medical supplies,
but it took until May 20, 1996 to draw up a contract detailing the
implementation of the resolution. While such moves may ease the
most life-threatening supply problems, they certainly will not elim-
inate them.

At the end of the nineties the West, particularly the United States
and Great Britain, finds itself in an obvious trap. Every day which
passes with Saddam Hussein still in power, weakens the West's ability
to demand international acceptance of the UN Security Council
resolutions. Certain Arab countries, along with Russia, China and
France, have begun to question the political ends of the continuing
embargoes against Iraq. The West's helplessness has resulted in a
number of political mistakes, some, minor (misusing UN Arms Con-
trol institutions for espionage activities) and some of a graver nature:
the joint American and British air strikes in December 1998 under
the code name "Desert Fox," for example, whose only effect was to
give Saddam Hussein the opportunity of posing as a mixture of hero
and martyr.

Full circle

Once again, large sections of the Iraqi population have come to view
the West as the country's arch-enemy—albeit under different con-
ditions and on a different level. We appear to have come full circle:
the contemporary relevance of Iraqi history is obvious. A different
type of cycle is evident in the division of the country. Following the
second Gulf war, the three-way partition of Iraq was, in effect, re-
established. The Kurds in northern Iraq formed their own admin-
istrative bodies, they held elections and went so far as to proclaim
a Kurdish State in October 1992. Little is known about the Shiites
in the south of the country. Sporadic reports reveal catastrophic living
conditions and the unrelenting efforts of the regime to cut off sup-
ply lines.

National cohesion is also hanging by a thread. The search for a

common Iraqi identity, i.e. the equal definition of the country's citizens as Iraqis *and* as Kurds or Arabs, *Sunnis* or Shiites, has suffered irreparable damage. We currently have the paradoxical situation where the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein is all that is holding the country together. His demise—which will inevitably be violent—is likely to lead to a civil war and to deal the final blow to national unity.

Yet neither the West nor the main protagonists in the region favour the disintegration of Iraq. Turkey and Iran are uneasy at the prospect of an independent Kurdish state, while the West is concerned at the potential disappearance of a bulwark against the Islamic revolution of Iran. Only the Israeli government has, on occasion, indicated its approval of the division of Iraq.

At the same time, within Iraq, the Kurdish people and their political organisations are deeply divided. The Shiites, for their part, define themselves not only in religious terms, but also in terms of their ethnicity, i.e. as Arabs. Their "incorporation" into the Islamic Republic of Iran is extremely unlikely: even during the first Gulf war, Iraq's Shiites were reluctant to allow themselves to be exploited for Iranian interests.

All that is clear is that neither Islamism nor an ethnically defined nationalism can function as catalysts for the maintenance of Iraqi national unity or for the creation of a common identity. The solution clearly lies in the free and democratic self-determination of the Iraqi people, ideally culminating in the introduction of a liberal and secular constitution. It remains to be seen whether this opportunity will ever be granted to the Iraqi people—and if so, whether it will be used.

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ATHEISTIC MUSLIMS. SOVIET LEGACY AND ISLAMIC TRADITION IN CENTRAL ASIA AND THE CAUCASUS

Rainer Freitag-Wirminghaus

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, world opinion became aware of the Caucasus and Central Asia as a region of the world which is populated by Muslims and had not previously appeared as an independent actor on the world stage. While Islam may not have had a decisive influence on the twentieth-century development of the new states of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, their affiliation to the Islamic world is undeniable. The emergence of these countries has helped to make Islam the emotionally-charged topic it has become since the end of the Cold War. The relative ignorance surrounding the status of Islam in Central Asia, coupled with the enigmatic synthesis of Soviet and Islamic culture there, has stirred the imaginations of Western observers, whose interest in the area was first awakened by the emergence of potential new spheres of influence in the region.

Prior to this, Central Asia was little more than a grey area on the world map as far as most Westerners were concerned. During the Soviet era, it was seen as part of the Soviet Union or as an extension of Russia. Western politicians regarded the southern Soviet republics as the "soft belly" of the Soviet Union, due to their geographical location, their function as a buffer zone and the weak link they represented in the Soviet system. As late as 1993, US policies displayed a bias of this kind, focusing exclusively on Russia and ignoring the interests of the new Central Asian nation states.

Studies carried out in the West during the Soviet era did little to overcome this ignorance. Western scholars, limited as they were to Soviet sources and unable to carry out their own empirical research, were forced to concentrate almost exclusively on questions of linguistic or historical interest. Even when they finally started to focus on the "forgotten Muslims" during the 1980s, a distorted picture of reality emerged. Underground Islamic movements, it was suggested, represented the most serious internal threat to the Soviet Union and were ultimately capable of destroying it. The depiction of Is-

lamic Sufi orders as a dangerous conspiratorial force was certainly influenced by Soviet research findings.

It is an established fact that the Muslim Soviet republics did not, in fact, contribute in any way to the collapse of the Soviet Union. With the exception of Azerbaijan, where estrangement from Moscow began with the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, the majority of the population, like their leaders, remained staunch supporters of the Union to the end. Nationalism only became a factor when independence was suddenly granted and the new states emerged into the arena of international politics.

All Western interpretations of the new situation were influenced to a greater or lesser degree by a fear of the growth of Islam, or to be more exact, by a fear of a political and extremist form of Islam. Whereas academic studies of the region started to include viewpoints from the fields of Slavist, Soviet, Middle Eastern and Oriental studies, leading to different readings of the situation, Central Asia was depicted in many scenarios as an extension of the Islamic "arc of crisis." This interpretation was reinforced by the debate on nuclear proliferation. Kazakhstan's independence signalled the emergence of a new nuclear power, arousing fears regarding the transfer of nuclear technology to other Islamic countries and the development of an "Islamic bomb."

The fear of an alleged spread of Islamic fundamentalism is a common concern shared by Russia and the West. It has given rise to fears that Central Asia will develop along the same lines as Iran and Algeria. It also explains why the USA tolerated Russian interference in Tajikistan and the reinstatement of the communist leadership there, while keeping a low profile on developments in Chechnya. The US stance on Iran caused an exaggerated view of the struggle between the Turkish and Iranian models to gain ground. Central Asia tended to be perceived solely in terms of competition between Turkey and Iran, while the all-important Russian factor was ignored. The new Muslim republics, it was suggested, had to choose between the Western secular system of Kemal Atatürk and Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic theocracy. Western support for Turkey and Turkish activities in the region was motivated by a desire to prevent the export of the Islamic revolution. The Central Asian states, for their part, remained unimpressed by this apparent alternative, preferring to co-operate with both countries to their own advantage. The benefits of this approach have proved to be few, however, with

the "Turkish model" unsuitable for transfer to Central Asia, and Iran pursuing a policy of non-intervention and co-operation with Russia.

Other interpretations tend to sensationalise the situation in the Caucasus and Central Asia. It is true that the collapse of the former Moscow-centred trade structure has caused a colossal economic downturn. Nor can it be denied that ecological destruction has been appalling and in some cases irreversible. Nevertheless, it would be mistaken to depict the region as a disaster area, torn apart by ethnic conflict and devoid of orientation and perspective. Apart from anything else, such a view does not take regional variations into account. The West's interest in resource-rich countries like Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan shows that Central Asia is far from being a grey area on the world map without importance to the West. While ethnic conflict continues to be a possible danger, the situation is more stable than predicted, with the exception of the still unsettled situation following the civil war in Tajikistan and the unsolved conflict in Karabakh.

Several questions remain unanswered. Is Central Asia the peripheral edge of the *umma*, the Islamic community? Does it belong to the Near East despite its unique historical development? Is it first and foremost a Russian sphere of influence and part of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), or does it constitute an independent bloc? Is the Caucasus region actually part of Europe? This lack of clarity is due in part to the ignorance of Western observers, but is also an expression of the uncertainty of the people themselves with regard to their own identity.

One of the main issues is the extent to which the post-Soviet Muslim republics have, in fact, become independent nation states. Russia's influence continues unabated, and the Muslim CIS states are characterised by unstable political, ethno-demographic and economic structures.[1] Strong Presidents with impressive control mechanisms do not conceal the fact that these societies are still in a process of transformation and have yet to develop structures of independent statehood. This is particularly obvious in the military sphere: with the exception of Azerbaijan, the officer corps in each country consists predominantly of Russians. Apart from Azerbaijan, which was a republic from 1918 to 1920, the Central Asian states

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[1] Halbach 1994.

did not have a pre-communist national tradition and have never experienced the internal processes of a developing nation state. In their present form, they are merely the products of Soviet rule and remain subject to Russian influence.

It has always been characteristic of Central Asia that sub-national structures like family and tribal relations play an important role in all aspects of political life. This was particularly true during the period of Soviet rule, when party secretaries generally surrounded themselves with followers from their own regions. In Tajikistan, such fragmentation helped to destroy the cohesion of the newly independent nation state. Of all the Central Asian republics, Uzbekistan is the most developed and most stable nation state. While a member of the Tajik minority in Buchara might be more likely to identify with the region of Buchara than with the Uzbek nation, the development of a national consciousness is far more advanced there than in the fragmented societies of Turkmenistan or Kazakhstan for example. The north of Kazakhstan, which is populated by Russians, is not seen to belong to that country by Russian nationalists. These examples serve to demonstrate that Central Asia is anything but a monolithic bloc. Consequently, the idea of a united Turkestan, popular though it may be among some intellectuals, is little more than a visionary dream. Despite developments such as the formation of a union between Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, which might seem to suggest the contrary, a united Turkestan it is quite simply not on the agenda.

Social structures in all of the Muslim CIS states evolved from a combination of traditional Islamic values and norms, Soviet modernisation processes and Russian-Western culture. Characteristic of all the regions is a blind trust in authority. In each republic, there was a seamless transformation of the party cadre into the national ruling elite. The new personality cults surrounding the Presidents of Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan are modelled along Stalinist lines and help to further national integration. Saparmurad Niyasov, who calls himself "Turkmenbashi," the leader of the Turkmen people, secured his position until the year 2004 in a plebiscite in which he received the support of 99.9 per cent of the electorate. It is difficult to assess the psychological effects the Soviet system continues to have on the process identity building. With its particular blend of traditionalism, modernisation and secularisation, national identi-

ty in post-Soviet Central Asia represents an entirely new phenom-
enon.

Islamic renaissance?

The West's understanding of Islam in Central Asia and the Cauca-
sus tends to be based on a monolithic view, which has been influ-
enced by the civil war in Tajikistan and the Islamic opposition in
Chechnya. However, Chechnya is by no means representative of the
region, and in general the reality of Islamic life displays consider-
able local variation. Even though nearly all of the 60 million Mus-
lims in the CIS are *Sunnis* and follow the *Hanafi* rite (with the ex-
ception of Azerbaijan where 75 per cent of the population are Shiite
Muslims), there are significant differences with respect to the timing
of their conversion to Islam and the intensity with which this hap-
pened. For example, the nomadic steppes in Kazakhstan and Kyr-
gyzstan were Islamised at a relatively late date and the effects of this
are still evident today.

   The term "Muslim" stands for the cultural affiliation of different
ethnic groups, rather than allegiance to a closed and unified Islam-
ic world, as an analysis of the status of Islam following seventy years
of atheist Soviet rule illustrates. Once a thriving centre of Islamic
learning with the legendary medieval cities of Samarkand and Bu-
chara, the area between the Syr Darya and the Amu Darya was
driven into economic and cultural isolation as a result of the Mon-
golian invasions and, from the seventeenth century onwards, global
trade adjustments following the disintegration of the classical Silk
Road. Such was the situation when Russian invaders descended upon
the territory in the nineteenth century, with the aim of exploiting it
economically. Brutal repression by the Soviets, particularly in the
1920s and 30s, destroyed the existing Islamic infrastructure. As a
result, there is still a surprisingly widespread ignorance of Islamic
teachings in Central Asia today. In most cases, those calling them-
selves Muslims are as unfamiliar with the rules of ritual prayer as
the people of Azerbaijan are with the difference between Shiites and
Sunnis. An Islamist newspaper in Turkey was moved by this wide-
spread ignorance to ask despairingly whether it is easier "to press
water out of a stone than to explain Islam in Central Asia."[2]

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   [2] Bezanis 1995: 32.

Nevertheless, it would be mistaken to suggest that Islamic culture has disappeared completely from Central Asia. While the people may only have a rudimentary understanding of Islamic doctrines, a fragmented system of rituals bearing little relation to the conscious experience of religious faith, continues to be passed down from one generation to the next. Unorthodox and folk Islam have proved resistant to change, as have the dervish orders which are often linked to the veneration and cult of sacred places. All played an important role in undermining the influence of Soviet culture, and helped to uphold a specifically Islamic identity. It was to Islam that people turned for support and protection in their private lives, with each of life's steps from birth and circumcision, to marriage and death marked by Islamic rituals and Islamic festivities. The combination of religion, patronage and guaranteed solidarity in the village community, or in the case of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in the district community (*mahalla*), was at once a means of control and a defence mechanism which helped to secure the survival of a unique Central Asian identity.

In the 1980s, it was common for Western scholars to differentiate between "official Islam," i.e. the institutionalised spiritual administration of Islam, and the "parallel Islam" of the *Sufi* orders. Such a distinction is only partly accurate, however. The influence of the *Sufi* "*shaykhs*" tended to be exaggerated and the fact that the destruction of Islam also had negative repercussions for them was overlooked. Their power is at its strongest in northern Caucasus, but reliable information about the area is not readily available. The religious leaders appointed by the government formed another integral part of this particular variety of "Soviet Islam." The juxtaposition of multiple identities has always been a distinctive characteristic of this form of Islam. In other words, it is not unusual for one and the same person to be identified as an atheist and—in an ethnic and cultural sense—as a Muslim. For this reason, it was not a contradiction in terms for Muslims to become communists during the Soviet era. It also explains why communist leaders, some of whom had in private been practising Muslims, presented themselves to the public following independence as pilgrims to Mecca.

The re-Islamisation of public life in the Central Asian republics since the 1970s, often referred to as an "Islamic renaissance," represents an attempt to consolidate cultural identity. One manifestation of this is the construction of religious networks. New mosques,

Koran schools and Islamic centres have mushroomed everywhere. In most cases, these projects have been financed from abroad, due to the absence of funds and the lack of state support at home. In spite of the supranational orientation of Islam, Central Asia has not become more uniform as a result, however. As was the case during the Soviet era, the national religious administrations are an instrument of the state, the only difference being that they are now controlled by the nation state instead of by Moscow. In Uzbekistan in particular, where streets are called after famous figures from the country's Islamic past, "secular" Islam is used to promote national integration. The leadership is particularly interested in restricting the renaissance of Islam to this kind of "secular Islamism" in order to further the building of the nation and the state.[3]

Attempts at pan-Islamic integration also failed as a result of state repression. In any case, the radical political Islamism of the early 1990s remained confined to local centres such as Tajikistan and the Fergana Valley (Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan). Fundamentalist currents do not possess any degree of strength or organisation in Uzbekistan following the suppression of the national and Islamic opposition movement there. And political Islam is unlikely to expand in the coming years, since Islam does not have a strong mobilisation basis in Central Asia and Azerbaijan. Furthermore, the political elites view themselves as secular in orientation in accordance with the new national constitutions, and regard Iran as more of a warning than a model to be emulated. Tajikistan is something of an exception, although the simplistic and schematic interpretation of the civil war as a clash between the communist nomenclature and fundamentalist opposition forces does not give due consideration to the regional and clan-related causes of the war. The domino theory whereby events in Tajikistan could spread to the rest of Central Asia tends to be exaggerated by the Russian and Uzbek leadership, which does not mean, however, that the conditions for the growth of political Islam might not alter in the future.

While the existing authoritarian regimes have all the appearances of stability, this may not last in the event of an extended economic crisis. The very repression which undermined political Islam at the beginning of the 1990s might then cause the opposition to adopt a stronger Islamic orientation. At present, the new Muslim republics

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[3] Halbach 1996.

continue to orient themselves towards the West, but under condi-
tions of a "merciless" market economy with the attendant impover-
ishment and unemployment, the focus could shift to the Islamic world.
This is less true of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan than it is of Uzbeki-
stan and Azerbaijan. The Uzbek leadership's fear of radical Islam
and its attempts to use Islam as a means of identification with the
state and the regime demonstrate this. The situation in Azerbaijan
is exacerbated by the unsolved refugee problem following the Nagor-
no Karabach war and the potential for Iranian propaganda and
influence there. Much will depend on whether the political leader-
ship in each country can overcome the widespread corruption, and
use the expected profits from the sale of raw materials to create
employment and social infrastructures.

Nationalism represents the second cornerstone in the ethno-reli-
gious identity of the new Muslim republics. Feelings of national pride
are a new phenomenon in the region, and governments consciously
invoke the teachings of the Jadidists, Muslim reformers at the turn
of the century, who held that love of one's country is based on re-
ligious faith. While national symbols had to be more or less artifi-
cially created in Central Asia—Tamburlaine has become a symbol
of the union of Islam and secular rule in Uzbekistan, for example—
the Karabach conflict in Azerbaijan served as a catalyst in the pro-
motion of nationalism. The cultivation of nationalism in order to
advance the building of the nation and the state runs counter to
comprehensive ideologies of political integration such as the idea of
a united Turkestan and other forms of pan-Turkism.

External interests in Central Asia and the Caucasus

Pan-Turkism also plays an important role in Western perceptions
of Central Asia. Although it is viewed with some caution, it has been
used by the West to support the "Turkish model" against alleged
Iranian attempts at infiltration. The vision of Turkey as a bridge is
based on the close ethnic and linguistic ties that exist between it and
Central Asia. Turkey itself saw the disintegration of the Soviet Union
as an opportunity to enhance its strategic importance as the would-
be leader of the new states. However, Ankara's plans to establish an
economic community of all the Turkic states were rejected by the
Central Asians. They recognised the limitations of Turkish aid and

were unwilling to hinder their new potential by renewed constraints. Another factor was the re-orientation of Russian foreign policy away from the West in 1992/93, when the doctrine of the "Near Abroad" identified the CIS as Russia's natural sphere of influence.

Turkey's common ethnicity with the Central Asian republics also tends to be overemphasised. The transnational ideology of pan-Turkism aims to establish a united "Turkic" world, but ignores the considerable differences between Turkey and the Turkic-speaking republics of Central Asia (only Tajikistan is Persian-speaking). Developments since the collapse of the USSR have shown that despite the underlying similarities, each country has its own particular set of problems. What the peoples of Central Asia do have in common is also what distinguishes them from Turkey: the cultural legacy of Soviet rule. Their lifestyle has been shaped by Soviet influence and not by a vague ethnic tradition. Even before the genesis of the Soviet Union, the peoples of Central Asia belonged not to the Ottoman but to the Tsarist Empire. Thus the term "Turkic world," which according to Süleyman Demirel stretches from the Adriatic Sea to the Chinese border, must be called into question. It is only in Azerbaijan that a majority of the population regard the Turkish element as the most important factor in their self-definition.

The decision to adopt the Latin alphabet in Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan is a sign of those countries' orientation towards the West, rather than to Turkey. In fact, neither the West nor the Central Asian states need Turkey as a bridge. Turkey's importance in Central Asia tends to be either over- or underestimated. Unlike when they first gained independence, the Turkic republics do not view Turkey as their most important link with the rest of the world. However, in the long term (with the exception of Kazakhstan) they will distance themselves from Russia and draw closer to their Islamic neighbours.

Although the future of the CIS is far from certain, the current balance of power compels each of the new states to give priority to Russia in its foreign-policy orientation. Against this background, Ankara is often seen as a counterweight to Moscow and as a potential ally should circumstances permit. Thus, Turkey's relationship with the Turkic-speaking republics is not a relationship between "free sister peoples." Rather it is an eternal triangle which also includes Russia.

The clash over transport routes and the control of oil from the

Caspian Sea is often referred to as the new "great game." The area from Kazakhstan and the Chinese Tarim Basin in the north to the Caspian Sea (and potentially Uzbekistan) is likely to become one of the world's most important oil producing regions in the next century. In recent years, the attention of world opinion has been directed towards Central Asia and Transcaucasia primarily by Western oil companies' exploration of off-shore oil reserves in the Caspian Sea. Thus, oil has replaced ethnic wars and conflicts as the predominant topic in news coverage of the area.

The most important assets of the post-Communist states in terms of economic improvement and political re-orientation are their oil and gas resources. Because the new states are currently embarking on a process of national genesis and transformation, external influence will have a decisive effect on their future shape.

International perceptions of the Caspian region are now registering "the birth of a new region." The Sea, which in our understanding of the area used to divide the Caucasus from Central Asia, is now seen to unite the two parts into a larger Euro-Asian economic area, with the Caspian region at its centre. The region's international significance has grown, while the widely predicted descent into a "grey area" of world politics has not occurred. External interference and the perception of the region as an American sphere of interest have caused a new balance of power to emerge. This development is accompanied by a strong renaissance of geopolitical thought, the effects of which reach from the Balkans to China. This has given rise to some exaggerated notions such as when the former American security advisor, Brzezinski, compared the Caspian region to a chessboard on which the battle for global supremacy will be fought.

The West's interest in Central Asia's oil potential is motivated by a desire to secure new sources beyond the Persian Gulf and to extend its political influence in the CIS. Russia, for its part, is concerned to prevent the growth of Western influence in the region and to halt its dominance of the oil and gas sector. It is striving to use the already existing pipelines to guarantee its continuing political control over the CIS. The case of Azerbaijan demonstrates, however, that oil-wealth can enable a country to avoid returning to a situation of military and political dependence on Russia.

While the 1994 "contract of the century" between Baku and an international consortium called the West's one-sided focus on Russia into question, it is clear that Moscow will continue to influence

western relations with the Caucasus and Central Asia. The West has to perform a balancing act between its own economic interests in the new states and the political sensitivities of Moscow. Much will depend on how Russia deals with its own disturbed relationship with Central Asia. If it wants to be a global power, it will have to dominate the "Near Abroad." Russia's ambivalence towards Eurasian and Western culture also characterises its relationship with Central Asia. Its attitude to the new Muslim republics is determined by an almost paranoid fear of pan-Turkism and Islam. While some Russian politicians regard Islamism as the greatest threat to Russia, others believe that Islamism's opposition to the West means that it does not, in fact, represent a danger to Russian interests. Their "Eurasian" understanding of the situation is based on the belief that the Orthodox Church shares a certain affinity with Islam and that Central Asia should be seen more in terms of its Soviet culture than its Islamic legacy. Both positions come to the same conclusion: that Russia alone can succeed in stabilising the Eurasian continent and holding it together. Thus, the CIS is seen less as a community of equal states with independent identities than as an instrument of Russian politics in the "Near Abroad."

Western interests

In the West's list of perceived threats to global stability, the unpredictability of the Russian situation, Chinese isolation and militant Islam predominate. Central Asia lies at the cross-roads of all three. The Western world might therefore be expected to regard stability in the region as a political priority. Yet, it was only when the oil and gas potential of the new states became evident and Russia began to pursue a more aggressive policy, that the West's interest in the area was awakened. The USA and Europe have had to come to terms with the fact that the desire for stability is often incompatible with demands for democratisation and human rights. While the new states have officially accepted the principles of law and order and democracy by joining the OSCE, and while their constitutions formally adhere to international standards, they are no closer to becoming democratic constitutional states. The old power structures have remained in place, and national integration is pursued on the basis of autocratic rule, while claiming that "Western democracy cannot be

imposed on Central Asian conditions." For this reason, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan appear to be the most stable of the new republics. In all of the states, the President has almost unlimited powers.

Interestingly enough, the President's position is much stronger in Azerbaijan than in the two Christian states of the Caucasus—Armenia and Georgia. The majority of the Azerbaijani population does not regard this as a shortcoming. On the contrary, Soviet socialisation, a marked system of favouritism and the failed attempt by the nationalist movement to hold the country together without the former communist elite, have generated a firm belief in the necessity of strong leadership. There is little understanding of the importance of parliamentary elections, which is not surprising, considering the political powerlessness of parliament and the experience of Soviet elections. In the republic's first parliamentary elections in November 1995, it was common for men to vote for other family members, even though this contravened electoral law. Nevertheless, it is the express wish of the political leadership and of the majority of the people to become part of Europe. Only a minority seem to be aware that the political status quo in the country is at variance with such an aspiration.

While the fact that Europe continues to be seen in an idealistic light is open to criticism, it is true that Azerbaijan can only assert itself politically against Russia if it receives the support of Europe and the USA. Things have already started to move forward: the OSCE has agreed to mediate in the complex Karabakh conflict, and the international oil consortium in Baku has gained considerable influence. Uzbekistan can be compared to Azerbaijan in the intensity of its efforts to achieve independence from Russia and the CIS. Both states have consistently refused to join alliances within the CIS such as the Customs Union between Russia, Belorussia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Turkmenistan, for its part, has received UN recognition as a neutral state. All three countries—Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan—are emphasised in European policies on the region. The European Union supports the construction of a new Silk Road, by-passing Russia to the south, and running from Georgia and Azerbaijan via the Caspian Sea and Turkmenistan as far as Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. The new states of Central Asia will only succeed in consolidating their independence if they can improve their economic and social infrastructures. This in turn will depend on their ability to sell raw materials on the international market via

new transport routes and pipelines, for which they will require the assistance of the West. Western aid is of course never entirely altruistic and the West's growing importance in the region is bound to represent a challenge to Russian interests and demands. This is not to say, however, that the region is predestined to become a new crisis area.

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PAKISTAN'S "ISLAMIC" ATOM BOMB

Munir D. Ahmed

In 1998, Pakistan joined the group of nations who possess the nuclear bomb. The other countries on this list are the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (USA, Russia, Great Britain, France and the People's Republic of China) together with India and Israel. South Africa, Brazil, Argentina, and North and South Korea are "threshold" nuclear powers in the process of developing weapons of mass destruction. While Germany and Japan have "voluntarily" abstained from building the bomb, they and other European industrial nations have the technological know-how to "go nuclear" at any time. And even though they do not possess the bomb, they do enjoy nuclear protection from the USA and NATO. Viewed in this way, more countries belong to the nuclear club than an initial reading of the situation might suggest.

That Pakistan has joined this exclusive circle is of interest insofar as it is the first Muslim nation to do so. It is significant that the Pakistani bomb is the only one to have been given an epithet, namely the "Islamic" bomb. Why is there no mention of the "Jewish," the "Hindu" or the "Christian" nuclear bomb? Is a nuclear bomb in Muslim hands more dangerous than one in the hands of other religious communities? Or is there an inherent mistrust of Muslims and their ability to deal responsibly with the nuclear bomb?

It is, in fact, absurd to suggest that the bomb can be dealt with in a responsible fashion. The atom bomb has been used twice to date—at the end of the Second World War by the "responsible" USA. It is still unclear whether Japan's capitulation and the subsequent end to the Second World War were, in point of fact, a result of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan's resistance had already been broken and everything pointed to imminent capitulation. The bombing of Nagasaki was certainly unnecessary. Nevertheless, the nuclear bomb was used—probably to test, and demonstrate, under real conditions just how harmful its effects are. During the Cuban crisis in 1962, President John F. Kennedy contemplated using the nuclear bomb—was this responsible behaviour? Israel, furthermore, is alleged to have threatened Egypt with a nuclear strike during the

first phase of the October war in 1973, when it became clear that its armed forces were facing imminent defeat. In truth, no nation on earth knows how to treat the bomb responsibly. That it was not used during the Cold War may be attributed to a macabre logic which determined that possession of the bomb by both sides acted as a deterrent. According to this logic, the only way to prevent the bomb being used is to possess it. In crisis regions where only one side has the bomb, the opposing side, according to this way of thinking, must attempt to acquire nuclear capability if it wants to live in freedom and peace.

India used this argument when it conducted its first nuclear test in 1974. New Delhi defended the acquisition of nuclear technology by pointing to its northerly neighbour, the People's Republic of China. It denied any plans to build or possess the atom bomb and assured the world that nuclear technology would be used purely for peaceful purposes, such as agriculture technology and medical advancement. Apart from the obvious fact that such aspirations do not necessitate a nuclear explosion, India has yet to demonstrate the relevance of nuclear technology to development projects. Indeed, it is suspected of having amassed enough fissile material since then for a hundred bombs.

Pakistan's fear of Indian hegemony

The 1974 nuclear test was met with consternation, particularly in Pakistan, where there was widespread alarm at Indian hegemonic ambitions in South Asia. Only three years previously, massive military intervention by India had led to the political secession of Bangladesh. At the time of the nuclear explosion, India was still holding 93,000 Pakistani soldiers as prisoners of war. Pakistan's concerns regarding India's plans to build the atom bomb actually date back to the 1960s. In 1965, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Zulifakar Ali Bhutto commented on India's nuclear ambitions with the words: "If India builds the bomb, then we will build our own bomb, even if it means we have to eat grass."

Indian-Pakistani hostilities go back to 1947, when British India was divided into two successor states. To this day, the Hindu Revisionists have refused to accept the existence of a separate Muslim state on sacred Indian ground, and dream of the day when "mother

India" will be re-united. The two states have gone to war on a number of occasions. Shortly after independence, war broke out over Kashmir, the former principality to which both states laid claim. While the UN brokered cease-fire of 1949 is still in place, the conflict remains unresolved. A second war took place in 1965, which involved the most extensive tank battle to be fought since the Second World War. In 1971, India won an important victory over Pakistan when it sided with Bengali separatists in East Pakistan and entered into an armed conflict with Pakistan, resulting in independence for Bangladesh. Only international mediation prevented the two states going to war over Rann of Katsch. And in the last decade, hundreds of soldiers have been killed in the mountain regions of Karakorum, where the two sides have been engaged in an armed struggle over control of the Siachen glacier.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Pakistan felt threatened by its more powerful neighbour. Shortly after the new state came into existence, it began to look for allies, with whose aid it hoped to retain its territorial integrity. Pakistan became a member of the *South-East Asian Treaty Organization* (SEATO) and of the Baghdad Pact, which later became the *Central Treaty Organization* (CENTO). It also signed a military agreement with the USA. The fledgling state regarded these developments as a way of protecting itself against the Indian threat. Washington may have been more interested in containing the communist bloc with Western military alliances, but in Pakistan, all eyes were fixed on India. Soviet support for the latter, particularly on the question of Kashmir and in India's armaments programme, represented a serious security problem for Pakistan. Thus, when India forged ahead with its nuclear research and carried out an explosion in 1974, Pakistan reacted with alarm and President Bhutto turned to Pakistan's military ally, the USA, for nuclear protection. The latter, unwilling to antagonise India, refused. Bhutto's attempts to persuade the United Nations to declare South Asia a nuclear-free zone were equally unsuccessful. With the exception of India, all the states of South Asia (who shared a common concern at India's hegemonic aspirations) expressed their support for the move. In the end, the Pakistani leadership assumed it had no option but to react to the Indian challenge by building its own bomb.

From the end of the 1960s, Islamabad was in no doubt as to India's nuclear ambitions. At the time, Pakistan possessed nothing more than a light water reactor, supplied by the USA, for research purposes

(swimming pool type PARR). This was subject to the security controls of the *International Atomic Energy Agency* and was part of the *Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology* (PINSTECH) in Nilore, near Islamabad. In 1972, Pakistan's only nuclear reactor, the *Karachi Nuclear Power Plant*, built by the *Canadian General Electric Company* near Karachi, came into operation. The construction of a reprocessing plant for nuclear fuels in Chashma (Mianwali District) was commissioned in 1973 and negotiation began with suppliers in France. When India conducted its nuclear explosion in May, 1974, the international community was alarmed. India had succeeded in carrying out the test under the eyes of international controllers, despite an agreement with their suppliers—again, the *Canadian General Electric Company*. The Canadian government suspended all co-operation with both India and Pakistan, and France came under pressure from Washington, which was concerned that Pakistan would emulate India's example and conduct its own tests. US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger called for the annulment of the supply contract signed by the governments of Pakistan and France in March 1976 and approved by the Vienna-based *International Atomic Energy Agency*. Under pressure from the US, France revoked its original contract and produced a revised version which ruled out the production of weapons-grade plutonium. The People's Republic of China then stepped in, undertaking to build the *Chashma Nuclear Power Plant* (CHASNUPP) with a capacity of 300 megawatts and a completion date of 1998. The Federal Republic of Germany was also forced to cancel a contract to supply a heavy water reactor. During a visit to Islamabad in August 1976, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger is said to have warned Bhutto that his country would face serious consequences if it did not renounce its nuclear programme. In the document "If I am Assassinated..." which was smuggled out of Bhutto's death cell and published in New Delhi in 1979, Bhutto refers to Kissinger's alleged threat: "We will make a horrible example of you."

Bhutto realised early on that technological progress would not be bestowed on Pakistan from without. Pakistani scientists would have to acquire the necessary expertise, and hundreds of students were sent abroad to study technology and science at foreign universities. Among their number was Abdul Qadeer Khan. He studied at the Technical University in West Berlin and the Technological University in Delft (Holland), before receiving a doctorate in physical

metallurgy from the University of Louvain (Belgium). Khan gained practical laboratory experience at *Vereinigde Metaalfabrieken Werkspoor*, the Dutch industrial giant which specialises in metal alloying in the area of reactor technology. The young scientist was employed for a total of seventeen days in the uranium centrifuge in Almelo, which is run by the Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain and the Netherlands, producing uranium fuel for the whole world. While there, he was allegedly chosen for his linguistic skills to translate top secret documents and construction plans, and is also said to have had access to a comprehensive list of suppliers for the Almelo project. Subsequently, when director of the Pakistani centrifuge in Kahuta, Khan was accused of industrial espionage and theft of secret documents. On November 14, 1983, he was sentenced in absence by a court in Amsterdam to four years imprisonment. Shortly afterwards, he was acquitted by a court of appeal and the judgement against him was quashed; there was insufficient proof to support the charge of espionage.

The construction of a uranium centrifuge in Pakistan

The decision to build a uranium enrichment facility in Kahuta was taken in July 1976, after Pakistan's foreign contract partners had suspended the delivery of nuclear fuel to Pakistan's reactors. The Pakistanis had no experience to draw on and were forced to begin construction of the centrifuge using local expertise. However, when the BBC transmitted a film report entitled "Project 706—The Islamic Bomb," it unwittingly alerted supplier firms to the existence of the project. A deluge of letters and telexes descended on the operation from Western suppliers with experience of equipping nuclear plants like Almelo and Capenhurst. The Pakistanis bought what they needed but prevented foreign technicians from entering the uranium enrichment plant, declaring it a protected security zone. Several foreigner observers, including the then French ambassador to Islamabad, attempted in vain to gain access to the plant. Israel, having attacked Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981, is alleged to have suggested to India that they take common action against the Pakistani plant, which is located a short distance from the border of the Indian state of Kashmir. Reports of this nature were taken very seriously in Pakistan, as evidenced by the warnings issued by Pakistan's armed forces,

who threatened to reduce India's nuclear reactors to rubble in revenge.

Following his undiplomatic behaviour towards Bhutto, Henry Kissinger alleged that he had merely wished to protect Pakistan from the consequences, should the US Congress pass an amendment to the "US Foreign Aid Authorisation Bill." This amendment, initiated by Senator Stuart Symington, stated that no economic aid could be given to any country operating a reprocessing plant which was not subject to international inspection. The "Symington Amendment" seems to have been directed exclusively at Pakistan, however, as it has never been implemented against either India or Israel, both of whom reject any kind of international supervision of their reprocessing plants. At the same time, Pakistan's contract with France was approved by the Vienna-based *International Atomic Energy Agency*, and international controls were contractually fixed. When Pakistan rejected the annulment of its contract with France, the USA suspended project aid in April 1977, and in September of the same year, all economic and military aid was cancelled. President Jimmy Carter expressly declared that the US had acted in the spirit of the Symington Amendment, yet at the same time he approved the delivery of 16.8 tons of enriched uranium to India against the advice of the *Nuclear Regulatory Commission*. The *World Bank*, under pressure from Washington, also withdrew its support for Pakistan. At this difficult time, several Islamic countries, led by Saudi-Arabia, came to Pakistan's aid, a move which continues to be regarded by Pakistan's opponents as proof that Islamabad manufactured the atom bomb on behalf of its Islamic financiers and would be prepared to put it at their disposal if requested to do so.

Pakistan on the front line

Notwithstanding its reservations concerning Pakistan's nuclear plans, the USA recognised the country's geo-strategic importance as one of the cornerstones, together with Iran, in the defensive pact system of the Gulf region and South Asia. Nevertheless, Washington's reaction to the ousting of the Afghan President Daud Khan by the communists in April 1978 displayed a marked lack of concern for Pakistan's security. This came as a shock to Islamabad. Washington declared that the coup was an internal affair and did not represent

a threat to security in the region. The US government simply ignored the threat of Soviet expansion in South Asia and the fact that Pakistan was now on the front line. Unconcerned, Washington continued to play with the idea of destroying Pakistan's centrifuge in Kahuta by commando action, as reported in the *New York Times* on August 14, 1979.

When the US embassy in Islamabad was attacked by demonstrators on November 21, 1979, alarm bells finally began to ring in Washington. The USA was in the process of losing a friend and ally in South Asia, a reliable partner in questions of security. Pakistan was already giving shelter to over a million Afghan refugees and the first Pakistani-backed *mujahidin* units had begun their armed struggle against Kabul. Only after Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan at the end of December, 1979, did America finally begin to revise its policies on South Asia and Pakistan in particular.

President Carter offered Pakistan 400 million dollars in military and financial aid, which was rejected as "peanuts" by Pakistan's military ruler, General Zia ul-Haq. It certainly was not sufficient to meet the Soviet threat on Pakistan's border. Accepting US aid would, moreover, have provoked the ire of the Soviet Union. Assistant Secretary of State Warren Christopher referred to the Symington Amendment which, he said, prevented his government from giving financial or military aid to Pakistan as long as it persisted with nuclearisation. His suggestion that Pakistan suspend its nuclear programme as a precondition for the granting of aid was steadfastly rejected. Twenty-two months after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the US government under President Reagan finally admitted that its attempt to blackmail Pakistan had failed. In October 1981, the Symington Amendment was suspended for six years. "In the national interest of the United States" Pakistan was granted military and economic aid to the tune of 3.2 billion dollars. Congress approved the decision with the proviso that aid would cease immediately if Pakistan transferred nuclear weapons to a non-nuclear state, received weapons itself or conducted a nuclear test.

The Soviet Union had taken on more than it bargained for in sending its troops to Afghanistan. Pakistan's role in the proxy war which ensued between the USSR and the USA was to "make the Soviets pay dearly for invading Afghanistan," as Zbigniew Brzezinski, security advisor to President Carter, put it. It soon emerged that Soviet troops would remain in Afghanistan for longer than anticipated. This meant extending financial and military aid to Pakistan

beyond the original six years. Before Congress could decide on this, Pakistan was required to sign the CTBT (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty). The Pakistani leadership took refuge behind India, stating that it was prepared to sign the agreement if and when India did. Islamabad was, of course, fully aware that India had no intention of signing. In 1985 the US Congress decided on a step which has gone down in the annals of the House of Representatives as the "Pressler Amendment." This required the American President to confirm annually that Pakistan did not possess the atom bomb and that the continuance of US financial aid would ultimately ensure a complete renunciation of nuclear weapons by Islamabad.

Pakistan's nuclear programme is temporarily halted

The US was aware that Pakistan was experimenting with uranium enrichment in Kahuta. A simplified method developed by a Pakistani scientist and registered with the American Patent Office was used. In December 1981, President Zia announced that his country had the capacity to enrich uranium. Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan admitted in an interview in February 1984 that the 90 per cent enrichment level of the Kahuta plant was suitable for use in nuclear weapons. When Islamabad refused American requests to inspect its nuclear plants, President Reagan increased the pressure on Pakistan, letting it be known that he was no longer prepared to issue the confirmation required by the Pressler Amendment. Washington had received information that Pakistan was about to build the atom bomb and demanded that it "freeze" all nuclear research. Eventually Pakistan surrendered to this pressure. According to a report published by the *Carnegie Endowment*, this is said to have occurred in July 1991, during the rule of Nawaz Sharif (1990—1993). Others suggest that the programme was suspended in 1989. In any case, Sharif claimed before he left office in April 1993 that his country had not developed a nuclear bomb, despite having the know-how to do so. Later, as leader of the opposition, he abandoned his caution, stating that Pakistan had in fact built the bomb.

   That Sharif's claim was not pure fabrication became clear on May 28/30, 1998, when Pakistan carried out six nuclear tests in the Chaghi mountains in Baluchistan. This followed five tests by India on May 11, 1998, which took world opinion by surprise and aroused feel-

ings of doom in Pakistan. Opposition politicians, who were informed of Pakistan's nuclear capability, demanded that Islamabad carry out its own tests, in order to signal to India that Pakistan was in a position to make a nuclear response to a nuclear threat. A few days after India had successfully carried out its tests, the Indian Home Minister I. K. Advani threatened to seize and annex Azad Kashmir. This was interpreted in Pakistan as a sign of India's intentions to pursue its hegemonic ambitions by force of arms. The Pakistanis felt subjectively threatened and wanted their government to respond immediately to India's nuclear tests. (It must be doubted, however, that Pakistan has actually become more secure through possessing the bomb.)

To date, neither India nor Pakistan is in a position to accurately judge the nuclear intentions and potential of the other. It is not known, moreover, whether the two countries' defence structures include commando and control systems designed to prevent the outbreak of nuclear war as a result of an error or misunderstanding. Confidence-building measures of the kind which stood the test during the Cold War between East and West, have yet to be introduced. The USA continues to call for such measures and is prepared to withdraw the international economic aid on which both countries depend if its demands are not met. That such tactics can be effective became clear when the two countries declared their willingness to sign the CTBT (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty) following the suspension of economic aid immediately after the nuclear tests. They have also agreed to participate in negotiations for the FMCT (Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty). Furthermore, Pakistan has declared that it will not conduct further nuclear tests. It is quite conceivable that Pakistan and India will soon be willing to co-operate in controlling and banning nuclear weapons, if only because they have no alternative.

The declared intention of the USA is to force Pakistan to dismantle all nuclear research plants. Pakistan, for its part, claims it would be prepared to undergo a general inspection of its plants, but demands that India receive similar treatment. Provided India did the same, Islamabad claims that it would, in principle, be willing to sign the NPT (Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty). By taking this line, Pakistan is merely evading the issue, however, as India is known to be unwilling to sign the pact until all other nuclear powers agree to destroy their nuclear arsenals. In any case, Pakistan will be forced

to sign the NPT with or without India. Washington simply has too much influence and will use all the means at its disposal to exert pressure on Islamabad. The bias with which the US pillories Pakistan on the nuclear question is nothing short of remarkable.[1]

Is it true, after all, that the "Islamic" bomb alone is evil and that we have no reason to fear a "Jewish" atom bomb, for example? Interested parties have repeatedly spread reports, most recently in 1995, alleging that Iran's Ayatollahs have set their sights on the bomb. The Iranian government is said to have offered Pakistan a large sum of money for it. There was a time when Muammar al-Gaddafi's name also appeared frequently in this context. The falsifiers of "news" have found it less easy to link him to the financing of the bomb in recent times, however, as relations between Pakistan and Libya are known to have been less than friendly over the past decade. In the West's perception, and that of the USA in particular, Iran has replaced Libya as a sinister power striving to annihilate Western civilisation by all available means.

In general it must be said that the notion of an "Islamic bomb" is misleading. It suggests that Pakistan's nuclear programme is an integral part of a religious and cultural struggle. Such allegations are without foundation. Pakistan did not manufacture its atom bombs on the instructions of other Islamic states, nor has it shared its technological know-how with them. Its arms programme reflects security considerations and international power politics, particularly as regards its relations with India. The Pakistani atom bomb is not a weapon in the hands of religious fanatics—which is not to deny that all nuclear armament is accompanied by incalculable risks.

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[1] See Klaus Natorp's leading article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December, 1990.

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