

The Return of Islam

Bernard Lewis

IN THE great medieval French epic of the wars between Christians and Saracens in Spain, the *Chanson de Roland*, the Christian poet endeavors to give his readers, or rather listeners, some idea of the Saracen religion. According to this vision, the Saracens worshipped a trinity consisting of three persons, Muhammad, the founder of their religion, and two others, both of them devils, Apollin and Tervagant. To us this seems comic, and we are amused by medieval man unable to conceive of religion or indeed of anything else except in his own image. Since Christendom worshipped its founder in association with two other entities, the Saracens also had to worship their founder, and he too had to be one of a trinity, with two demons co-opted to make up the number. In the same spirit one finds special correspondents of the *New York Times* and of other lesser newspapers describing the current conflicts in Lebanon in terms of right-wing and left-wing factions. As medieval Christian man could only conceive of religion in terms of a trinity, so his modern descendant can only conceive of politics in terms of a theology or, as we now say, ideology, of left-wing and right-wing forces and factions.

This recurring unwillingness to recognize the nature of Islam or even the fact of Islam as an independent, different, and autonomous religious phenomenon persists and recurs from medieval to modern times. We see it, for example, in the nomenclature adopted to designate the Muslims. It was a long time before Christendom was even willing to give them a name with a religious meaning. For many centuries both Eastern and Western Christendom called the disciples of the Prophet Saracens, a word of uncertain etymology but clearly of ethnic not religious connotation, since the term is both pre-Islamic and pre-Christ-

tian. In the Iberian peninsula, where the Muslims whom they met came from Morocco, they called them Moors, and people of Iberian culture or under Iberian influence continued to call Muslims Moors even if they met them in Ceylon or in the Philippines. In most of Europe, Muslims were called Turks, after the main Muslim invaders, and a convert to Islam was said to have "turned Turk" even if the conversion took place in Marrakesh or in Delhi. Farther east, Muslims were Tatars, another ethnic name loosely applied to the Islamized steppe peoples who for a while dominated Russia.

Even when Europe began to recognize the fact that Islam was a religious and not an ethnic community, it expressed this realization in a sequence of false analogies beginning with the name given to the religion and its followers, Muhammedanism and Muhammedans. The Muslims do not, and never have, called themselves Muhammedans nor their religion Muhammedanism, since Muhammad does not occupy the same place in Islam as Christ does in Christianity. This misinterpretation of Islam as a sort of mirror image of Christendom found expression in a number of different ways—for example, in the false equation between the Muslim Friday and the Christian Sunday, in the reference to the Qur'an* as the Muslim Bible, in the misleading analogies between the mosque and the church, the ulema and the priests, and, coming more directly to our present concern, in the imposition on Muslim history and institutions of purely Western notions of country and nation and of what goes on within them. Thus, for example, in Gibbon's fascinating account of the career of the Prophet, Muhammad and his contemporaries were inspired by patriotism and love of liberty, two concepts which somehow seem inappropriate to the circumstances of 7th-century Arabia. For many centuries, Europe called the lands of the Ottoman Empire Turkey, a name which the inhabitants of those lands did not apply to their own country until the final triumph

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* Koran is the more generally used Western transliteration.

among them of European political ideas with the proclamation of the Republic in 1923.

Modern Western man, being unable for the most part to assign a dominant and central place to religion in his own affairs, found himself unable to conceive that any other peoples in any other place could have done so, and was therefore impelled to devise other explanations of what seemed to him only superficially religious phenomena. We find, for example, a great deal of attention given by Western scholarship to the investigation of such meaningless questions as "Was Muhammad Sincere?" or "Was Muhammad an Enthusiast or a Deceiver?" We find lengthy explanations by historians of the "real" underlying significance of the great religious conflicts within Islam between different sects and schools in the past, and a similar determination to penetrate to the "real" meaning of sectarian and communal struggles at the present time. To the modern Western mind, it is not conceivable that men would fight and die in such numbers over mere differences of religion; there have to be some other "genuine" reasons underneath the religious veil. We are prepared to allow religiously defined conflicts to accredited eccentrics like the Northern Irish, but to admit that an entire civilization can have religion as its primary loyalty is too much. Even to suggest such a thing is regarded as offensive by liberal opinion, always ready to take protective umbrage on behalf of those whom it regards as its wards. This is reflected in the present inability, political, journalistic, and scholarly alike, to recognize the importance of the factor of religion in the current affairs of the Muslim world and in the consequent recourse to the language of left-wing and right-wing, progressive and conservative, and the rest of the Western terminology, the use of which in explaining Muslim political phenomena is about as accurate and as enlightening as an account of a cricket match by a baseball correspondent.

IF, THEN, we are to understand anything at all about what is happening in the Muslim world at the present time and what has happened in the past, there are two essential points which need to be grasped. One is the universality of religion as a factor in the lives of the Muslim peoples, and the other is its centrality.

"Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things which are God's." That is, of course, Christian doctrine and practice. It is totally alien to Islam. The three major Middle Eastern religions are significantly different in their relations with the state and their attitudes to political power. Judaism was associated with the state and was then disentangled from it; its new encounter with the state at the present time raises problems which are still unresolved. Chris-

tianity, during the first formative centuries of its existence, was separate from and indeed antagonistic to the state with which it only later became involved. Islam from the lifetime of its founder *was* the state, and the identity of religion and government is indelibly stamped on the memories and awareness of the faithful from their own sacred writings, history, and experience. The founder of Christianity died on the cross, and his followers endured as a persecuted minority for centuries, forming their own society, their own hierarchy, their own laws in an institution known as the Church—until, with the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine, there began the parallel processes of the Christianization of Rome and the Romanization of Christ.

In Islam, the process were quite different. Muhammad did not die on the cross. As well as a Prophet, he was a soldier and a statesman, the head of a state and the founder of an empire, and his followers were sustained by a belief in the manifestation of divine approval through success and victory. Islam was associated with power from the very beginning, from the first formative years of the Prophet and his immediate successors. This association between religion and power, community and polity, can already be seen in the Qur'an itself and in the other early religious texts on which Muslims base their beliefs. One consequence is that in Islam religion is not, as it is in Christendom, one sector or segment of life, regulating some matters while others are excluded; it is concerned with the whole of life—not a limited but a total jurisdiction. In such a society the very idea of the separation of church and state is meaningless, since there are no two entities to be separated. Church and state, religious and political authority, are one and the same. In classical Arabic and in the other classical languages of Islam there are no pairs of terms corresponding to lay and ecclesiastical, spiritual and temporal, secular and religious, because these pairs of words express a Christian dichotomy which has no equivalent in the world of Islam.* It is only in modern times, under Christian influence, that these concepts have begun to appear and that words have been coined to express them. Their meaning is still very imperfectly understood and their relevance to Muslim institutions dubious.

For the Muslim, religion traditionally was not only universal but also central in the sense that it constituted the essential basis and focus of identity and loyalty. It was religion which distinguished those who belonged to the group and marked them off from those outside the group. A Muslim Iraqi would feel far closer bonds with a non-Iraqi Muslim than with a non-Muslim Iraqi. Muslims of

* The modern Arab word for secular is *alamani*, literally worldly, i.e., pertaining to this world. Probably of Christian Arab origin, it passed into general use in the 19th century.

different countries, speaking different languages, share the same memories of a common and sacred past, the same awareness of corporate identity, the same sense of a common predicament and destiny. It is not nation or country which, as in the West, forms the historic basis of identity, but the religious-political community, and the imported Western idea of ethnic and territorial nationhood remains, like secularism, alien and incompletely assimilated. The point was made with remarkable force and clarity by a Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire who, in reply to the exponents of the new-style patriotism, replied: "The Fatherland of a Muslim is the place where the Holy Law of Islam prevails." And that was in 1917.

In the 18th century, when, under the impact of Austrian and Russian victories against Turkey and British successes in India, Muslims began to be aware that they were no longer the dominant group in the world but were, on the contrary, threatened in their heartlands by a Europe that was expanding at both ends, the only really vital responses were religious reform movements, such as the Wahhabis in Arabia and the reformed Naqshbandi order which spread from India to other Muslim countries. In the early 19th century, when the three major European empires ruling over Muslims, those of Britain, France, and Russia, were advancing in India, North Africa, and Central Asia, the most significant movements of resistance were again religious—the Indian Wahhabis led by Sayyid Ahmad Brelwi from 1826 to 1831, the struggle of Abd al-Qadir in North Africa from 1832 to 1847, the dogged resistance of Shamil to the Russians in Dagistan and the Northern Caucasus from 1830 to 1859. All of them were crushed, but made a considerable impact at the time.

Then, for a while, Muslims were sufficiently overawed by the power, wealth, and success of Europe to desire to emulate European ways. But from the middle of the 19th century onward came a further wave of European imperial expansion—the suppression of the Indian mutiny followed by the disappearance of the last remnants of the Mogul monarchy in India and the consolidation of the British Empire in that formerly Muslim realm, the rapid advance of the Russians in Central Asia, the expansion of the French into Tunisia and of the British into Egypt, and the growing threat to the Ottoman Empire itself, all of which brought a response in the form of a series of pan-Islamic movements.

The unification of Germany and Italy was a source of inspiration in Muslim lands, particularly in Turkey where many Turkish leaders thought that their country could play a role similar to that of Prussia or Savoy in the unification of Germany and of Italy by serving as the nucleus for the unification of a much larger entity. But what would that larger entity be? Not a pan-Turkish entity.

Such ideas were still far away in the future and were not even discussed at that time. The basic political identity and aspiration were Islamic, and pan-Islamism was the first and natural response to pan-Germanism and pan-Slavism. It was not until much later that pan-Turkism and pan-Arabism appeared on the political horizon and, even then, there is some doubt as to what they really signified.

The end of World War I, the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, the strains and stresses that followed and the opportunities which seemed to be offered by the collapse of Czarism in revolution and civil war also gave rise to a series of religiously inspired movements—Enver Pasha in a last throw formed the ambitiously titled Army of Islam, the objective of which was to liberate the Muslim subject peoples of the fallen Russian Empire. Some of these movements were linked with the Communists or taken over by the Communists at a time when the fundamentally anti-Islamic nature of Communism was not yet understood. Almost all were expressed in religious rather than in national or even social terms. Most significant among these movements was that which has since come to be known as the Turkish Nationalist Movement. Yet the revolt of the Kemalists in Anatolia was in its first inspiration as much Islamic as Turkish. Islamic men of religion formed an impressive proportion of its early leaders and followers. The language used at the time, the rhetoric of the Kemalists in this early stage, speaks of Ottoman Muslims rather than of Turks, and the movement commanded a great deal of support in the Islamic world. It was not until after their victory and after the establishment of the republic that, as a result of many factors, they began to lay the main stress on nationalist and secular aims.

During the 20th century, at least in the earlier decades, such movements of resistance were more commonly expressed in the fashionable form of political parties and in the fashionable language of political, more or less secular, nationalism. But neither the party organization nor the nationalist ideology really corresponded to the deeper instincts of the Muslim masses, which found an outlet in programs and organizations of a different kind—led by religious leaders and formulated in religious language and aspiration.

THE most important movement of this type in the 20th century is the organization known as the Muslim Brothers, *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*, founded in Egypt by a religious teacher named Hasan al-Banna. The early history of the movement is not clearly known, but it appears to have started in the late 20's and early 30's and to have been concerned in the first instance mainly with religious and social activities. The founder, known as the "Supreme Guide," sent missionaries to preach in mosques

and other public places all over Egypt. The Brothers undertook large-scale educational, social, charitable, and religious work in town and countryside, and even engaged in some economic enterprises. They began political activity in 1936 after the signature of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty in that year and, by taking up the cause of the Palestine Arabs against Zionism and British rule, were able to extend the range of the movement to other Arab countries. They sent volunteers to fight with the Arab armies in the war of 1948, and thereafter seem to have controlled an armed force capable of playing some role in affairs. As a result, the Egyptian Prime Minister Nokrashi Pasha dissolved the organization, confiscated its property, and ordered the arrest of many of its members. He was assassinated in 1948 by one of the Brothers and shortly afterward the Supreme Guide himself was assassinated in circumstances which have never been established. The Brothers, though illegal, continued to function as a clandestine organization. In April 1951, they were again legalized in Egypt, though forbidden to engage in any secret or military activities. They took part in actions against British troops in the Suez Canal zone and seem to have played some role, of what nature is still unknown, in the burning of Cairo on January 26, 1952. They had close links, dating back to the war years, with some members of the secret committee of the "Free Officers" which seized power in Egypt in 1952. Apart from some general similarities in ideology and aspiration, many of the officers who carried out the coup were either members or at least sympathizers of the Muslim Brothers.

At first, relations between the Brothers and the officers were intimate and friendly, and even when, in January 1953, the military regime dissolved all political parties, the Brothers were exempted, on the grounds that they were a non-political organization. Relations between the new Supreme Guide and the Free Officers deteriorated, however, and before long the Brothers were attacking the new regime for its alleged failures to live up to their Islamic ideals. A period of quiet but sharp conflict followed, in the course of which the Brothers were very active, especially among workers and students and even among the security forces. In January 1954, the government again decreed the dissolution of the Order and the arrest of many of its leaders and followers. Later, there was some reconciliation as a result of which the arrested Brothers were released and the organization allowed to function on a non-political basis. The Anglo-Egyptian agreement of October 1954 stirred up trouble again and was bitterly opposed by the Brothers who insisted that only armed struggle could attain the desired objectives. On October 26, 1954, one of the Brothers just failed to assassinate President Nasser, who retaliated by taking severe repressive measures.

More than a thousand were arrested and tried, and six, including some of the intellectual leaders of the movement, were sentenced to death and executed. The Brotherhood was now entirely illegal but nevertheless continued to function and seems to have engaged, from time to time, in conspiracies to overthrow the regime. Many arrests were made and in August 1966 three further executions took place, among them Sayyid Qutb, a leading ideologist of the Brothers. The Order continued to be active, albeit illegal, in some, and more openly in other, Arab countries. It remains a powerful if concealed force at the present day and there are recent signs of a return in Egypt.

The Egyptian Free Officers Movement in 1952 is not the only political movement with which the Muslim Brothers were connected. Another is the Fatah, the largest and most important of the Palestinian guerrilla organizations. Here, too, for obvious reasons, there are some uncertainties regarding the earlier history of the movement, but its past links with the Muslim Brothers seem to be clear. The imagery and symbolism of the Fatah is strikingly Islamic. Yasir Arafat's *nom de guerre*, Abu 'Ammar, the father of 'Ammar, is an allusion to the historic figure of 'Ammar ibn Yasir, the son of Yasir, a companion of the Prophet and a valiant fighter in all his battles. The name Fatah is a technical term meaning a conquest for Islam gained in the Holy War.* It is in this sense that Sultan Mehmet II, who conquered Constantinople for Islam, is known as *Fatih*, the Conqueror. The same imagery, incidentally, is carried over into the nomenclature of the Palestine Liberation Army, the brigades of which are named after the great victories won by Muslim arms in the Battles of Qadisiyya, Hattin, and Ayn Jalut. To name military units after victorious battles is by no means unusual. What is remarkable here is that all three battles were won in holy wars for Islam against non-Muslims—Qadisiyya against the Zoroastrian Persians, Hattin against the Crusaders, Ayn Jalut against the Mongols. In the second and third of these, the victorious armies were not even Arab; but they were Muslim, and that is obviously what counts. It is hardly surprising that the military communiqués of the Fatah begin with the Muslim invocation, "In the name of God, the Merciful and the Compassionate."

THE Muslim Brothers and their derivatives were in the main confined to the Arabic-speaking countries. But there were other parallel movements elsewhere. In Iran this trend is represented by an organization called the *Fida'iyan-i Islam*, the Devotees of Islam, a terrorist group which was active mainly in Teh-

* Another proffered explanation of the name Fatah is that it represents a reversed acronym for *Harakat Tahrir Falastin*, movement for the liberation of Palestine.

ran between 1943 and 1955 and carried out a number of political assassinations, the most important being that of the Prime Minister, General Ali Razmara, in March 1951. For a while they played some part in Persian politics, until another, this time unsuccessful, attempt on the life of a Prime Minister, Hossein Ala, in October 1955 led to their suppression and prosecution and the execution of some of their leaders. The *Fida'i-yan* had links with the Muslim Brothers in Egypt and elsewhere and exercised very considerable influence among the masses and, by terror, on politicians. They even seem to have enjoyed some limited support from the semi-official religious leadership.

In addition to these, there were many other religiously inspired movements in various Islamic countries—the Organization of Algerian Ulema, the Tijaniyya Brotherhood, and, more recently, the National Salvation party in Turkey, and one of the most interesting, the Basmachi Movement in Soviet Central Asia. The word Basmachi, which in Uzbek means brigand or marauder, is applied by the Soviet authorities to a succession of religiously inspired revolts against Russian or Soviet rule which began in January 1919 and continued until 1923 when the movement was decisively defeated, though activity by small groups of rebels continued for a number of years after that. The last Basmachi leader, Ibrahim Beg, withdrew to Afghanistan in 1926 and continued to raid into Soviet territory from there. He was captured by Soviet troops and executed in 1931. It is characteristic of Western attitudes that a search of half-a-dozen major encyclopedias failed to disclose any article on the Basmachis—probably the most important movement of opposition to Soviet rule in Central Asia.*

It is not, however, only in radical and militant opposition movements that this kind of religious self-identification and alignment are to be found. Governments—including avowedly secular and radical governments—have responded to the same instincts in times of crisis. After the Treaty of Lausanne, an exchange of population was agreed between Turkey and Greece under the terms of which members of the Greek minority in Turkey were to be repatriated to Greece, and members of the Turkish minority in Greece repatriated to Turkey. Between 1923 and 1930, a million and a quarter "Greeks" were sent from Turkey to Greece and a somewhat smaller number of "Turks" from Greece to Turkey.

At first sight, this would seem to be a clear case of the acceptance to the last degree of the European principle of nationality—Greeks and Turks unwilling or unable to live as national minorities among aliens, returned to Greece and to Turkey, to their own homelands and their own people. On closer examination, this exchange proves to have a somewhat different char-

acter. The words used were indeed Greeks and Turks—but what precisely did these words mean at that time and in that place? In the deserted Christian churches left by the Greeks of Karaman in southern Turkey, the inscriptions on tombstones are written in Turkish, though in Greek characters; among the families of the so-called repatriates, the great majority had little or no knowledge of Greek but spoke Turkish among themselves, writing it in Greek characters—just as Jews and Christians in Arabic-speaking countries for long wrote the common Arabic language in Hebrew or in Syriac instead of in Arabic characters. Script all over the Middle East is closely associated with religion. In the same way, many of the so-called Turks sent to Turkey from Crete and other places in Greece had little or no knowledge of Turkish, but habitually spoke Greek among themselves, frequently writing their Greek vernacular in the Turco-Arabic script. By any normal Western definition of nationality, the Greeks of Turkey were not Greeks, but Turks of the Christian faith, while the so-called Turks of Greece were for the most part Muslim Greeks. If we take the terms Greek and Turk in their Western and not in their Middle Eastern connotation, then the famous exchange of population between Greece and Turkey was not a repatriation of Greeks to Greece and of Turks to Turkey but a deportation of Christian Turks from Turkey to Greece and a deportation of Muslim Greeks from Greece to Turkey. It was only after their arrival in their putative homelands that most of them began to learn their presumptive mother tongues.

This occurred among two peoples, one of which is Christian though long subject to Muslim influence, and the other, though Muslim, the most advanced in secularization of all the Muslim peoples. Even today, in the secular republic of Turkey, the word Turk is by common convention restricted to Muslims. Non-Muslim citizens of the Republic are called Turkish citizens and enjoy the rights of citizenship, but they do not call themselves Turks nor are they so called by their neighbors. The identification of Turk and Muslim remains virtually total. And here it may be noted that while the non-Muslim resident of the country is not a Turk, the non-Turkish Muslim immigrant, whether from the former provinces of the Ottoman Empire or from elsewhere, very rapidly acquires a Turkish identity.

WITH Arabs the situation is somewhat more complex. In the Arabic-speaking countries there have for long been substantial minorities of Christians and Jews speaking the same Arabic language, though in

* The *Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, on the other hand, devotes a long article to discrediting them.

the past writing it in a different script and often speaking it with a slightly different dialect. When the idea of Arabism as a common nationality was first launched in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Arabic-speaking Christians played a prominent part in the movement. It was natural that they should be attracted by a national rather than a religious identity, since in the one they could claim the equal citizenship to which they could never aspire in the other. According to this view, the Arabs were a nation divided into various religions, in which Christians and even at times Jews might hope to share in the common Arabism along with the Muslim majority.

From the beginning, Christians played a leading role among the exponents, ideologists, and leaders of secular nationalism. As members of non-Muslim communities in a Muslim state, they occupied a position of stable, privileged, but nevertheless unmistakable inferiority, and in an age of change even the rights which that status gave them were endangered. In a state in which the basis of identity was not religion and community but language and culture, they could claim the full membership and equality which was denied to them under the old dispensation. As Christians, they were more open to Western ideas, and identified themselves more readily in national terms. The superior education to which they had access enabled them to play a leading part in both intellectual and commercial life. Christians, especially Lebanese Christians, had a disproportionately important role in the foundation and development of the newspaper and magazine press in Egypt and in other Arab countries, and Christian names figure very prominently among the outstanding novelists, poets, and publicists in the earlier stages of modern Arabic literature. Even in the nationalist movements, many of the leaders and spokesmen were members of Christian minorities. This prominence in cultural and political life was paralleled by a rapid advance of the Christian minorities in material wealth.

In recent decades, this prominence has ceased to be tolerable. Partly through measures of nationalization adopted by socialist governments, partly through other more direct means, the economic power of the Christian communities has been reduced in one country after another and is now being challenged in its last stronghold, the Lebanon. Christian predominance in intellectual life has long since been ended, and a new generation of writers has arisen, the overwhelming majority of whom are Muslims. There are still Christian politicians and ideologists, but their role is much circumscribed in a society increasingly conscious of its Muslim identity, background, and aspirations. Among the various organizations making up the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Fatah is overwhelmingly though not exclusively

Muslim. On the other hand, many of the extremist organizations tend to be Christian, for in the radical extremism which they profess Christians still hope to find the acceptance and equality which eluded them in nationalism.

As the nationalist movement has become genuinely popular, so it has become less national and more religious—in other words, less Arab and more Islamic. In moments of crisis—and these have been many in recent decades—it is the instinctive communal loyalty which outweighs all others. A few examples may suffice. On November 2, 1945, demonstrations were held in Egypt on the anniversary of the issue by the British government of the Balfour Declaration. Though this was certainly not the intention of the political leaders who sponsored it, the demonstration soon developed into an anti-Jewish riot and the anti-Jewish riot into a more general outbreak in the course of which several churches, Catholic, Armenian, and Greek Orthodox, were attacked and damaged. A little later, on January 4-5, 1952, demonstrations were held in Suez, this time against the British in connection with continuing occupation of the Canal Zone. The demonstrators looted and fired a Coptic church and killed a number of Copts. Catholic, Armenian, and Greek Christians had nothing whatever to do with the Balfour Declaration, and the Copts are not English; indeed, there is none more Egyptian than they. One may go further and say that no attack or harm to the Copts was sought or desired by the nationalist leaders. Yet, in the moment of truth, the angry mob reacted instinctively to a feeling that the Copts—native Egyptian, Arabic-speaking, yet Christian—were on the other side, and treated them accordingly.

In such incidents there are no doubt local causes which may help to explain the actions of the mob.* But in both cases, and in others which could be quoted, they reflect a more fundamental attitude summed up in the tradition ascribed—probably falsely, but this makes no difference—to the Prophet, "*Al-Kufra millatun wahida*"—unbelief is one nation (or one religio-political community). The world is divided basically into two. One is the community of the Muslims, the other that of the unbelievers, and the subdivisions among the latter are of secondary importance.

The Lebanese civil war in 1958 and the struggle in Iraq between nationalists and Communists in the spring of 1959 also assumed a strongly religious character. On March 17, 1959, a prayer was recited in Egyptian mosques and published on the front pages of the Egyptian papers, for those who had been killed in Mosul:

* Local official inquiries decided that these actions had been instigated by "foreign agents." If so, the agents knew which themes to evoke, and how to direct the response.

God is great! God is great! There is no might and no power save in God! May He strengthen the martyrs with His grace and ordain them everlasting life in His mercy and abase their enemies in shame and ignominy! God is great! God is great! There is no victory save in God! Whoever offends, God will crush him; whoever exalts himself by wrongdoing, God will humble him! Consider not those who are killed in the cause of God as dead, but as living, with their Lord who sustains them.

O God Almighty, All-powerful! Conquer Thine enemy with Thine omnipotence so that he returns to Thee! O God, Almighty, All-powerful, strengthen the community of Thy Prophet with Thy favor, and ordain defeat for their enemy. . . . In faith we worship Thee, in sincerity we call upon Thee, the blood of our martyrs we entrust to Thee, O merciful and compassionate One, Who answers the prayers of him who prays—our innocent martyrs and pure victims for the sake of Thy religion. For the glory of Thy religion they shed their blood and died as martyrs: believing in Thee, they greeted the day of sacrifice blissfully. Therefore place them, O God, as companions with the upright and the martyrs and the righteous—how good these are as companions! [Qur'an, iv, 69.]

The religious passion and fervor are unmistakable and did not fail to alarm the Christian minorities in Lebanon and elsewhere as indicating a resurgence of Islamic feeling.

Since then the regimes of the various Muslim states have become more, not less, self-consciously Islamic both in the respect they accord to their own religion and in their treatment of others. This is particularly noticeable in the so-called radical and revolutionary states which are intellectually and socially far more conservative than the politically conservative states, and find themselves obliged to show greater deference to popular sentiment. The treatment of Christians, though still falling well short of persecution, has changed for the worse and has led to a growing number of Christian emigrants, some to Lebanon, others to countries abroad. A Christian Arab writer has described the feelings of these emigrants as follows:

Christians [they say] have no future in a country which is becoming all the time more socialist and totalitarian. Their children are indoctrinated in the schools, where the syllabus is devoted more and more to Islam and their faith is in danger. Debarred increasingly from public office and from nationalized societies [*sic*, the writer presumably means companies or corporations], robbed of the property of their parents and unable to engage in profitable business in a society where almost everything is under state control, how can they survive?*

An interesting side-effect of these changes is the evolution of attitudes among the groups who are now called Arab Americans. These consist over-

whelmingly of Christians of Syrian and Lebanese origin. At the time of their arrival in the United States, they were, apart from a very small circle of intellectuals, virtually unaffected by Arab nationalism, which was in any case still in its infancy even in their countries of origin. At the time that they left their homelands and migrated across the ocean, they, like their neighbors, still thought in unequivocally communal terms. They were first and foremost Christians, and their feelings toward their old homelands resembled not those of American Jews toward Israel but rather those of American Jews toward the countries in Central and Eastern Europe from which they had come seeking a better and freer life in America. For a long time the development of the Palestine conflict left the American Arab Christians unmoved. Their recent involvement is a reflection not of their Arabism but of their Americanism, for in this way they are conforming to a common American pattern of ethnic identity, loyalty, and lobbying. Recent developments such as the suppression and expropriation of Christian schools in Syria, the pressure on Christian communities, and, above all, the current struggle in Lebanon seem already to be leading to a reassessment of their position and, among some of them, a return to earlier attitudes.

THE growth of Islam's political effect can be observed in two respects—in the field of international politics, and in internal affairs. The attempt to exploit the sentiment of Islamic brotherhood for international political purposes dates back to the 1870's, when the Ottoman government under Sultan Abdulaziz, and then more actively under Sultan Abdülhamid, tried to mobilize opinion all over the Muslim world in support of the faltering Ottoman state and to provide it with the alliances which it needed at this time of weakness and impoverishment. This policy came to be known by the name of pan-Islamism—a reflection in Islamic terms, as was noted above, of such European movements as pan-Germanism and pan-Slavism.

From the beginning, pan-Islamism was of two kinds—one official and promoted by one or another Islamic government in pursuit of its own purposes; the other radical, often with revolutionary social doctrines, and led by a more or less charismatic religious figure, with or without the sponsorship of a government. The counterpart of Abdülhamid was the popular activist Jemal al-Din, known as Al-Afghani. Neither Abdülhamid's official pan-Islamism nor Jemal al-Din's radical pan-Islamism produced much by way of political results, though both undoubtedly heightened the common Muslim sense of identity. This was further helped by the rapid improvement of com-

* In *Religion in the Middle East*, edited by A. J. Arberry (Cambridge, 1969), Volume I, p. 415.

munications—the press, the telegraph, and, in more recent times, radio and television.

Radical pan-Islamism of various types appeared during the interwar period—at first from left-wing and, indeed, frequently Communist, sources, and later from right-wing, nationalist, and sometimes fascist sources. The most noteworthy example of the latter was the pan-Islamic activities of the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husayni, who enjoyed Nazi sponsorship and eventually spent the war years in Hitler's Germany.

The postwar period brought several new forms of pan-Islamic activity. None came to much until the convening of the Islamic Congress of Mecca in 1954. From the first, the most important initiative in the Mecca Congress was that of the Egyptians whose intentions can already be seen in Nasser's booklet, *The Philosophy of the Revolution*.

There remains the Third Circle [the first two were the Arab and African circles]—the circle encompassing continents and oceans which, as I have said, is the circle of our Brethren-in-Islam who, wherever their place under the sun, turn with us toward the same Qibla, their lips solemnly saying the same prayers.

My faith in the magnitude of the positive effectiveness that could result from strengthening the Islamic tie that binds all Muslims grew stronger when I accompanied the Egyptian mission to Saudi Arabia to offer condolences on the death of its great king.

As I stood before the Kaaba, with my thoughts wandering 'round every part of the world which Islam has reached, I fully realized the need for a radical change of our conception of the Pilgrimage.

I said to myself: The journey to the Kaaba should no longer be construed as an admission card to Paradise, or as a crude attempt to buy forgiveness of sins after leading a dissipated life.

The Pilgrimage should have a potential political power. The world press should hasten to follow and feature its news not by drawing attractive pen pictures of its rites and rituals for the delectation of readers, but by its representation as a periodical political conference at which the heads of all the Islamic states, leaders of opinion, scientists, eminent industrialists, and prominent businessmen assemble to draw up at this world Islamic Parliament the broad lines of the policies to be adopted by their respective countries and lay down the principles ensuring their close cooperation until they have again gathered together in the following session.

They assemble demure and devout, but mighty strong; unambitious of power, but active and full of energy: submissive to Divine Will, but immutable in difficulties and implacable with their enemies.

They assemble confirmed believers in the Life to Come, but equally convinced that they have a place under the sun which they should occupy in this life.

I remember I expressed some of these views to His Majesty King Saud.

His Majesty assented saying, "Truly this is the real purpose of the Pilgrimage."

Truth to tell, I personally cannot think of any other conception.

As I contemplate the eighty million Muslims in Indonesia, the fifty million in China, the few millions in Malaya, Thailand, and Burma, the hundred million in Pakistan, the well-nigh over a hundred million in the Middle East, the forty million in the Soviet Union, and the millions of others in other remote and far-flung corners of the earth—as I ponder over these hundreds of millions of Muslims, all welded into a homogeneous whole by the same Faith, I come out increasingly conscious of the potential achievements cooperation among all these millions can accomplish—cooperation naturally not going beyond their loyalty to their original countries, but which will ensure for them and their Brethren-in-Islam unlimited power.*

Under the skillful and energetic leadership of Anwar Sadat, who had been appointed Secretary-General, the Islamic Congress, thus conceived, served as a useful adjunct to Egyptian policy, along with such parallel organizations as the Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference and the Arab League. But it was no doubt this kind of use which also led to its failure. Like the previous attempts by other Muslim governments, this new Egyptian-sponsored pan-Islamism was too obviously related to state purposes and failed to arouse the necessary response from elsewhere.

But there is, perhaps, a deeper reason for the persistent weakness of official pan-Islamism. In the first century and a half of the Caliphate, Islam was indeed one single world state. But at that early date, it ceased to be so, and was never reunited again. Thus, while the political experience of Muslims, the shared memories of the past which they cherish, condition them to a sense of common social and cultural identity, they do not bring them any tradition of a single Islamic state, but rather one of political pluralism combined with socio-cultural unity.

ATTEMPTS at international pan-Islamism have produced limited results. They have, however, already gone very much further than anything comparable within the Christian world, and have occasionally had diplomatic consequences, as for example when the Arab states as a bloc voted for Pakistan against India's candidacy for the Security Council—and this despite India's devoted and selfless service to the Arab cause. Similar choices may be discerned in the support given to Muslims in the Philippines, Eritrea, and some African countries when they

* Gamal Abdel Nasser, *The Philosophy of the Revolution*, Cairo, n.d., pp. 67-68.

find themselves in collision with non-Muslim majorities or governments. But caution has so far prevailed concerning the position of Muslims in the Soviet Union, in Eastern European states, and in China.*

Islam has shown its strength much more clearly in the internal politics of Muslim countries. Here two examples may serve, both of them in countries under autocratic rule. The first case was in Tunisia, where in February 1960 President Bourguiba put forward the interesting idea that the month-long fast of Ramadan with the resultant loss of work and production was a luxury that a poor and developing country could not afford. For a Muslim ruler simply to abolish or disallow a major prescription of the holy law is unthinkable. What President Bourguiba did was to try to justify its abolition in terms of the holy law itself. This law allows a Muslim to break the fast if he is on campaign in a holy war, or *jihad*. Bourguiba argued that a developing country was in a state of *jihad* and that the struggle to obtain economic independence by development was comparable with a defensive war for national independence. In pursuit of this argument he proposed to abolish the rules whereby restaurants, cafés, and other public places remained open at night during the month of Ramadan and to oblige them to keep normal hours. In support of this new interpretation of the law, he tried to obtain a *fatwa*, a ruling, from the Mufti of Tunis and other religious authorities. The religious authorities refused to give him what he wanted. The great mass of the people observed the fast despite the President's dispensation, and Bourguiba was finally compelled to beat a more or less graceful retreat. Even an autocratic socialist head of state, in pursuit of so worthy an end as economic development, could not set aside a clear ruling of the holy law.

A more striking illustration of the religious limits of autocracy occurred in Syria in the spring of 1967. On April 25 of that year, the Syrian official army magazine, *Jaysh al-Sha'b*, the Army of the People, published an article by a young officer named Ibrahim Khalas entitled "The Means of Creating a New Arab Man." The only way, according to this article, to build Arab society and civilization was to create

a new Arab socialist man, who believes that God, religion, feudalism, capitalism, and all the values which prevailed in the pre-existing society were no more than mummies in the museums of history. . . . There is only one value; absolute faith in the new man of destiny . . . who relies only on himself and on his own contribution to humanity . . . because he knows that his inescapable end is death and nothing beyond death . . . no heaven and no hell. . . . We have no need of men who kneel and beg for grace and pity.

This was the first time that such ideas had been expressed in print in any of the revolutionary and radical Arab states, and the response was immediate and violent. Until that point an apparently cowed population had passively acquiesced in a whole series of radical political and economic changes. The suppression of free speech, the confiscation of property evoked no response—but a denial of God and religion in an officially sponsored journal revealed the limits of acquiescence, the point at which a Muslim people was willing to stand up and be counted.

In the face of rapidly mounting tension and violence, the government took several kinds of action. One was to arrest a number of religious leaders; another was to confiscate copies of the journal containing the offending article and to arrest its author and the members of the editorial board. On May 5, the author and editors were imprisoned and on the following day the semi-official newspaper, *Al-Thawra*, "The Revolution," proclaimed the respect of the Syrian regime for God and religion. On May 7, Radio Damascus announced that

the sinful and insidious article published in the magazine *Jaysh al-Sha'b* came as a link in the chain of an American-Israeli reactionary conspiracy. . . . Investigation by the authorities has proved that the article and its author were merely tools of the CIA which has been able to infiltrate most basely and squalidly and to attain its sinful aims of creating confusion among the ranks of the citizens.

The resistance, it was later announced, had been concerted with the Americans, the British, the Jordanians, the Saudis, the Zionists, and Selim Hatum (a Druse opponent of the regime). On May 11, the author and editors were sentenced by a military court to life imprisonment.

EVER in Nasserist Egypt, Islam continued to provide a main focus of loyalty and morale. Thus, in the manual of orientation of the Supreme Command of the Egyptian forces, issued in 1965, the wars in the Yemen and against Israel are presented in terms of a *jihad* or holy war for God against the unbelievers. In reply to questions from the troops as to whether the classical Islamic obligation of *jihad* has lapsed or is still in force, orientation officers are instructed to reply that the *jihad* for God is still in force at the present time and is to be interpreted in our own day in terms of a striving for social justice and human betterment. The enemies against

* A different kind of exception is the refusal of some Arab and some other Muslim countries to support Turkey on the Cyprus question. One element in this is residual resentment against former rulers; another is disapproval of the policies of Westernization and secularization pursued by the Turkish Republic since its inception.

whom the *jihad* is to be waged are those who oppose or resist the achievement of these aims, that is to say imperialism, Zionism, and the Arab reactionaries.

In accordance with this interpretation of the mission of Islam and in accordance with this understanding of the *jihad* we must always maintain that our military duty in the Yemen is a *jihad* for God and our military duty against Israel is a *jihad* for God, and for those who fight in this war there is the reward of fighters in the holy war for God. . . . Our duty is the holy war for God. "Kill them wherever you come upon them and drive them from the places from which they drove you." [Qur'an, ii, 191.]

That is to say, the war is a holy war, and the rewards of martyrdom as specified in scripture await those who are killed in it. Similar ideas are found in the manual of orientation issued to Egyptian troops in June 1973, and it is noteworthy that the operational code name for the crossing of the Canal was Badr, the name of one of the battles fought by the Prophet against his infidel opponents. Incidentally, the enemy named in the manual is not Zionism or even Israel but simply "the Jews." One of the major contrasts between Syrian and Egyptian orientation literature is the far greater stress laid by the Egyptians on religion as contrasted with the more ideological approach of the Syrians.

There have been two recent wars in which Muslims fought against non-Muslims—the Turkish landing in Cyprus and the subsequent fighting, and the Syrian and Egyptian war against Israel in October 1973. Both in Egypt and in Turkey, the language, the rhetoric accompanying the offensives, were strikingly religious. Popular legend, of the kind that flourishes in wartime in all societies, also assumed an overwhelmingly religious character, with stories of intervention by the Prophet and the angels of Allah on the side of the Muslims—i.e., the Egyptians against their enemies. A writer who complained of this in the press, pointing out that it devalued the achievement of the Egyptian armed forces, was bitterly denounced. Not all the Egyptians are of course Muslim. An important minority is Christian, and these too fought in the army and, indeed, number several senior officers among them. This fact is recognized in the guidance manual of the army which invokes Christian as well as Muslim religious beliefs. Yet, at the moment when news got through of the Israeli crossing to the west bank of the Canal, a rumor immediately appeared ascribing this penetration to the treachery of a Coptic officer. There was of course no truth whatsoever in this story, and the Egyptian government took immediate steps to discount and deny it. It was probably not entirely coincidental that a Coptic general was promoted to an army command at that moment. Even more striking is the appearance of religious language

among the secular Turks who in the fighting in Cyprus used numerous Islamic terms to describe themselves, their adversaries, and the struggle between them.

In recognizing the extent to which communal loyalty remains a significant force in the life of Muslim countries, one should not fall into the opposite error of discounting the degree of effective secularization. Particularly in the more developed countries, changes which are probably irreversible have already taken place, especially in the realms of social and economic life and in the organization of the law and the judiciary. In some countries, such as Turkey, Iran, and Egypt, geography and history have combined to give the inhabitants a special sense of separate identity and destiny, and have advanced them on the path toward secular nationhood. But even in these Islam remains a significant, elsewhere a major, force. In general, the extent of secularization is less than would at first appear. In education, for example, ostensibly secular schools and universities have to an increasing extent been subject to religious influences. Even in radical states like Syria, the net effect of secularization seems to be directed against minority religions much more than against Islam. A Syrian government report published in October 1967 states that private schools, meaning for the most part foreign-based Christian schools, would be obliged to use Ministry of Education textbooks on Christianity and Islam in which the teaching of the two religions was unified "in a manner which would not leave room for confessionalism . . . incompatible with the line of thought in our age."

FROM the foregoing, certain general conclusions emerge. Islam is still the most effective form of consensus in Muslim countries, the basic group identity among the masses. This will be increasingly effective as the regimes become more genuinely popular. One can already see the contrast between the present regimes and those of the small, alienated, Western-educated elite which governed until a few decades ago. As regimes come closer to the populace, even if their verbiage is left-wing and ideological, they become more Islamic. Under the Ba'thist regime in Syria, more mosques were built in the three years after the *Jaysh al-Sha'b* incident than in the previous thirty.

Islam is a very powerful but still an undirected force in politics. As a possible factor in international politics, the present prognosis is not very favorable. There have been many attempts at a pan-Islamic policy, none of which has made much progress. One reason for their lack of success is that those who have made the attempt have been so unconvincing. This still leaves the possibility of a more convincing leadership, and there is ample evidence in virtually all Muslim countries

of the deep yearning for such a leadership and a readiness to respond to it. The lack of an educated modern leadership has so far restricted the scope of Islam and inhibited religious movements from being serious contenders for power. But it is already very effective as a limiting factor and may yet become a powerful domestic political force if the right kind of leadership emerges.

In the period immediately preceding the outbreak of the Six-Day War in 1967, an ominous phrase was sometimes heard, "First the Saturday people, then the Sunday people." The Saturday people have proved unexpectedly recalcitrant, and recent events in Lebanon indicate that the priorities may have been reversed. Fundamentally, the same issue arises in both Palestine and Lebanon, though the circumstances that complicate the two situations are very different. The basic question is this: Is a resurgent Islam prepared to tolerate a non-Islamic enclave, whether Jewish in Israel or Christian in Lebanon, in the heart of the Islamic world? The current fascination among Muslims with the history of the Crusades, the vast literature on the subject, both academic and popular, and the repeated inferences drawn from the final extinction of the Crusading principalities throw some light on attitudes in this matter. Islam from

its inception is a religion of power, and in the Muslim world view it is right and proper that power should be wielded by Muslims and Muslims alone. Others may receive the tolerance, even the benevolence, of the Muslim state, provided that they clearly recognize Muslim supremacy. That Muslims should rule over non-Muslims is right and normal.* That non-Muslims should rule over Muslims is an offense against the laws of God and nature, and this is true whether in Kashmir, Palestine, Lebanon, or Cyprus. Here again, it must be recalled that Islam is not conceived as a religion in the limited Western sense but as a community, a loyalty, and a way of life—and that the Islamic community is still recovering from the traumatic era when Muslim governments and empires were overthrown and Muslim peoples forcibly subjected to alien, infidel rule. Both the Saturday people and the Sunday people are now suffering the consequences.

* The same concept finds expression in the Muslim law of marriage, which allows a Muslim man to marry a non-Muslim woman, but categorically forbids a marriage between a non-Muslim man and a Muslim woman. The rationale is that in a marriage the man is the dominant, the woman the subordinate, partner—and Islam must prevail.