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6 Egypt

Cradle of Islamism

SINCE THE ARAB CONQUEST Egypt has played a central role in Islamic history. Generations of Egyptian Muslims have fervently believed in the Qur'anic verse in which God bestowed upon their country a special blessing as a land of "safety and plenty."¹ Indeed, Egypt has occupied a unique position in the Islamic world as the home of al-Azhar and as the fountainhead of reformist and revolutionary ideologies and movements springing from a milieu of pervasive religiosity and mysticism.

In a "hydraulic society" with a tradition of centralized power, Egyptian Islam has been characterized by an abiding conformity to both religious and political authority. The pattern of conformity to traditional Islam was first broken by the reformist al-Salafiyyah movement in the late nineteenth century, while the tendency of acquiescence to political authority was first questioned by the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1930s.

The Society of Muslim Brothers, more than any other organization, has been the ideological and institutional epicenter of fundamentalism in the Arab sphere and the Islamic world. The Brotherhood has survived recurrent state suppression and internal conflicts for over fifty years. The essential dynamic of the Brotherhood's survival is rooted in the bedrock of Islamic faith and culture where the psychospiritual character of most Egyptians is embedded. Despite the Brotherhood's Egyptian origins, its spiritual and political influence has been evident in all Arab countries and beyond. Indeed, it is impossible to comprehend contemporary Sunni Islamism and its Arab manifestations with-

out a firm understanding of the origins and evolution of the Brotherhood.

The Genesis of the Brotherhood

The Brotherhood was founded in 1929 by Hasan al-Banna in Isma'iliyya. It emerged from the confluence of powerful social forces and the charismatic personality of Banna.² Egypt during the interwar years was the focus of conflicting social, economic, political, and ideological pressures, which provided a favorable milieu for the rise of the Brotherhood. This crisis environment, which preceded Banna in the second half of the nineteenth century, was characterized by European political, cultural, and economic penetration under British hegemony and the nonindigenous Muhammad 'Ali dynasty. Two main currents of Egyptian ideological response developed within this crisis environment. The first was Egyptian nationalism, symbolized by the revolt of Ahmad 'Urabi Pasha (1881) against the khedive and his European patrons, and the struggles led by Mustafa Kamil, Muhammad Farid, and Sa'ad Zaghlul against the British. The second was the movement of Islamic reformism (Salafiyyah) under the aegis of Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh. These interrelated nationalist and Islamic responses, along with variants of socialism, liberalism, and fascism, found fertile soil during the interwar years in the midst of the triangular confrontation between the monarch, the British, and nationalist politicians led by the Wafd Party. However, in the Egyptian perception, these intellectual and sociopolitical movements had failed to liberate Egypt from the British yoke, the corrupting cultural and economic influences of the West, and the misrule of the palace and the politicians. Nor had the Egyptian leadership been able to synthesize an ideological formula to shape the process of nation building and socioeconomic development. Furthermore, there was no institutional framework to capture the loyalties of the Egyptian Muslims after Ataturk's abolition of the caliphate in 1923. Banna's reaction to the protracted crisis milieu was to advocate a return to the basics of Islam—the call to fundamentalism. Banna's *da'wah* was a direct descendant of earlier revivalist movements in Islamic history.

Banna: The Avatar of Islamism

Hasan al-Banna, more than any other individual, can be considered the avatar of twentieth-century Sunni revivalism. He was the

unique embodiment of the Sufi spiritualist, Islamic scholar, and activist leader who possessed a rare ability to evoke mass support by translating doctrinal complexities into social action. Banna's movement possessed certain characteristics that set it apart from earlier revivalist movements: (1) an activist ideology, (2) an organizational structure, (3) charismatic leadership, (4) a mass following, and (5) a pragmatic orientation. While the Brotherhood lacked the philosophical depth of the Salafiyyah, it succeeded in galvanizing and organizing a mass following as no other Islamic movement had done in recent centuries. Banna was singularly unconcerned with ideological intricacies because he was committed to revival of the Islamic community without regard to sectarian or political divisions. In promulgating the Brotherhood's ideology, Banna relied on the Qur'an and the six canonical treatises of *hadith*. In addition, Banna used the precedents of thought and action established by the leading exponents of fundamentalism, including Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Hazm, Nawawi, and a host of other theorist-activists and heroes in Islamic history.³

In keeping with the universal pattern of Islamist leadership, the Brotherhood constituted the organizational extension of Banna's charismatic personality and the institutional reflection of his vision. Banna's emergence typifies Weber's charismatic leader who appears in times of crisis with a message of social-spiritual salvation. As a product of Egypt's conflictual milieu, Banna faced a personal crisis that he sought to resolve by projecting it to the level of society. Thus, Banna also exemplifies Erikson's inspirational leader whose quest for personal salvation is transformed into a mission to return society to "the straight path." In Banna's case, the salvational message was directed at the Egyptian faithful seeking solutions for their psychospiritual, social, and economic problems. Hence, the "fit" between the charismatic's message and the society in crisis, as increasing numbers of Egyptians joined the Brotherhood under the banner of Islamic puritanism.

The Brotherhood in a Revolutionary Setting

From its modest beginnings, the Brotherhood had become by the late 1930s one of Egypt's most powerful organizations. It attracted members from a cross-section of society—bureaucrats, professionals, students, workers, small shopkeepers, and some peasants. Banna established an effective organization and propaganda apparatus and increasingly strove to play a political role in Egyptian affairs. The war

years brought Banna into conflict with the British authorities and the Egyptian government. He was repeatedly arrested as the organization continued its anti-British agitation and underground activity centering on *al-Nizam al-Khass* (the Special Organization), otherwise known as *al-Jihaz al-Sirri* (the Secret Apparatus). Meanwhile, Banna had promulgated the objectives of the association. His classic statement underlines the anomalous relationship between Islamism and civil society and reflects the world view of many fundamentalist Muslims toward social reality:

My brothers you are not a benevolent society, nor a political party, nor a local organization having limited purposes. Rather, you are a new soul in the heart of this nation to give it life by means of the Qur'an; you are a new light which shines to destroy the darkness of materialism through knowing God; and you are the strong voice which rises to recall the message of the Prophet. . . . You should feel yourself the bearer of the burden which all others have refused. When asked what it is for which you call, reply that it is Islam, the message of Muhammad, the religion that contains within it government, and has one of its obligations freedom. If you are told that you are political, answer that Islam admits no such distinction. If you are accused of being revolutionaries, say "We are voices for right and for peace in which we dearly believe and of which we are proud. If you rise against us or stand in the path of our message, then we are permitted by God to defend ourselves against your injustice."⁴

Banna's declaration that his group was not a political party did not prevent him and his followers from engaging in intensive lobbying, demonstrations, and even electoral politics. At the end of World War II, the society had reached its apogee as it struggled against the palace, the Wafd, and the British. Meanwhile, Banna had built an organization of a million followers with an elaborate apparatus covering virtually all aspects of social existence—propaganda, labor, peasants, students, professions, family life, athletics, legal services, the press, publications, and financial and economic affairs. Unlike Egypt's political parties, the Brotherhood emphasized its commitment to a moral order transcending politics. True to its Islamist creed, the society had attempted to build an *ummah*—an Islamic state within the Egyptian state. By late 1948, the Brotherhood was perceived as the most formidable threat facing the monarchy. Early in December, the government dissolved the society, fearing an imminent revolution after the Brotherhood's involvement in street violence and the assassination of several prominent figures. Banna's personal efforts to negotiate with Nuqrashi

Pasha's government were unsuccessful, and the prime minister proceeded to unleash the full powers of the state against the Brethren. On December 28, 1948, Nuqrashi was assassinated by a Muslim Brother—an act that brought a reign of terror against the society, leading to Banna's assassination on February 12, 1949, by government agents.

The period of repression was brought to an end by the accession of the Wafdist government in January 1950, when the Brotherhood regained its legal status. In October 1951, Judge Hasan al-Hudaybi was elected General Guide, as the society's guerrillas began to fight the British in the Suez Canal Zone. On January 26, 1952, massive rioting broke out against the British presence, culminating in the burning and destruction of Western-owned establishments in the heart of Cairo, including the Shepherd's Hotel. The Brotherhood's complicity was suspected but never proven. On July 26, 1952, King Faruq was overthrown by a military junta led by General Muhammad Naguib and Lieutenant Colonel Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser, without the active participation of the Brotherhood and its leadership.

During the Revolution's first year, the Brotherhood's relations with the military regime were cordial and often friendly. However, by mid-1953, it became apparent that the Nasser-led Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) was moving toward a secular state rather than an Islamic polity.⁵ Thus, in the ensuing Nasser-Naguib power struggle, the Brotherhood supported the latter by joining the outlawed parties in demonstrations calling for a civilian regime. These manifestations of opposition were crushed by the junta, as hundreds of Wafdist, leftist, and Brethren sympathizers were purged from the officer corps. By April 1954, Nasser had consolidated his power within the RCC and the army. The RCC-Brotherhood conflict, however, did not intensify until Nasser's conclusion of an agreement with Great Britain on July 19, 1954, providing for the evacuation of the Canal Zone. The Brotherhood rejected the agreement as "treasonable" in an attempt to rally Egyptian and Arab opposition against Nasser. An uneasy coexistence marked the summer and early fall, broken by an assassination attempt (October 26, 1954) against Nasser, which was blamed on the Brotherhood. This triggered a massive repression of the society and the arrest of its leadership and over four thousand members.⁶ The proud leaders of the Brethren were tried by a People's Tribunal consisting of RCC officers Gamal Salim, Husayn al-Shafi'i, and Anwar al-Sadat. Six of the defendants were executed, and Hudaybi was imprisoned for life; twenty-six years later an offshoot of the Brotherhood—Tanzim al-Jihad—assassinated President Anwar al-Sadat, on October 6, 1981.⁷

The cardinal hallmark of Islamic fundamentalism and its embodi-

ment in the Brotherhood is the ability to regenerate itself after periods of remission. The military regime, which had systematically destroyed the Brotherhood's apparatus by late 1954, proceeded to capture the loyalties of the Egyptian and Arab masses in the emerging charismatic popularity of Nasser. Moreover, Nasser's Pan-Arabist and socialist ideology had co-opted a significant portion of the Brotherhood's *da'wah*. For over a decade Nasser was able to offer the Arabs, in a secular context, much of what the Brotherhood had promised—dignity, unity, popular participation, defiance of the West, and a semblance of socioeconomic justice. It was not until the early 1960s that Nasserism became encumbered with the Syrian secession, the Yemeni War, and economic problems, setting the stage for the Brotherhood's reemergence in 1964. In that year Nasser freed the Brethren—presumably to counter the communists. But once again, the society became embroiled in a conspiracy against the regime. The plot was effectively uncovered by the security forces in mid-1965, leading to widespread arrests. Three prominent Brethren, including the society's theoretician—Sayyid Qutb—were hanged, and over one hundred members were jailed. Significantly, many of the conspirators were relatively young members of the new middle class—engineers, chemists, scientists, and students.⁸ This pattern of Islamic militancy among young individuals with scientific specializations would become a salient membership characteristic of Islamist groups during the 1970s. The gloomy life in prison became the crucible that shaped the future course of the Islamic movement in Egypt. The intensity of repression produced painful soul-searching among the Brethren and a reassessment of their situation. There were wide-ranging debates within the prison walls, leading to fights and factionalism. Among the younger members there was deep disillusionment with the senior leaders of the Brotherhood, who engaged in petty controversies and lacked the fortitude not to break down under torture.⁹

A new opportunity for the Brotherhood's return presented itself in the aftermath of the June 1967 war. The magnitude of the debacle created a profound legitimacy crisis engulfing Arab leaders and institutions, including a significant diminution of Nasser's charismatic appeal. The defeat sent tremors through Arab society, triggering a wave of self-criticism and introspection unmatched in recent history. It was generally recognized that the ideological solutions of the past were inadequate in remedying the multiple ills of Arab society; hence, the call for *taghyir al-'aqliyyah*—a change of mentality or psychospiritual transformation.¹⁰ While the future direction of this moral and behav-

ioral change could not be ascertained in the tumultuous wake of the June war, in retrospect the evidence indicates an ideological reversion to Islam among large sectors of the Egyptian/Arab population. In the face of defeat and pervasive identity crisis, the retreat of the masses from the Pan-Arab ideological model did not focus on Socialist, Western, or Marxist revolutionary alternatives but on the only remaining and genuinely nativistic moral-behavioral framework—Islam in its fundamentalist expression.

Paradoxically, the postwar reemergence of revivalism at the mass level was tolerated and even encouraged by the authorities in Egypt and other Arab states. In the face of the legitimacy crisis brought on by defeat, Arab leaders attempted to broaden their formulas of self-legitimation by co-opting Islam to neutralize the Islamists and to maximize popular support. The mass media and the speeches of leaders were laced with references to Allah, the Prophet, and the Holy Qur'an. A case in point was the media coverage of President Nasser's presence, two days after the June war, at mosque services commemorating the birth of the Prophet. Moreover, in a skillful propaganda maneuver, the regime used Islamic fatalism to escape responsibility for the defeat. Thus, the hand of God was seen in Egypt's defeat so that its people would awaken. According to this logic, "Israel had been faithful to its religion and therefore victorious; but we were defeated because our faith was not strong enough."¹¹ The Brotherhood agreed with the government about the need to return to God but blamed the regime for its lack of godliness. Furthermore, the Brethren saw the defeat as Allah's revenge upon the Nasser regime for its suppression of their association: "Those who fight or persecute soldiers of God (the Brethren), will be defeated, as the Pharaoh was defeated by Moses."¹² Consequently, the Brotherhood found the postwar political and ideological vacuum propitious for its revival. Meanwhile, new Islamist groups were being formed, particularly by a younger generation of angry militants.

Egypt under Sadat: Islamism Ascendant

The death of Nasser on September 28, 1970, removed a major obstacle to the full-scale emergence of Islamic fundamentalism; and the accession of Anwar al-Sadat provided the Brotherhood with a singular opportunity to reassert its presence in Egyptian life. As president, Sadat faced two immediate challenges: the consolidation of his power at

home and confrontation with Israel in the Sinai. Internally, Sadat faced a legitimacy crisis because he lacked the charisma of his predecessor; nor did he possess a secure base in the Egyptian power structure dominated by his Nasserist rivals. To counterbalance the latter he progressively liberated the Brothers from jail and encouraged their entrenchment in the student unions and elsewhere in society. By setting the Brethren against the Nasserists, Sadat successfully exploited their historic enmity. The process of de-Nasserization was accelerated by Sadat's purge of his opponents during May 1971 and after the October 1973 war, which began in the holy month of Ramadan under the code name "Badr"—the place of Muhammad's victory over the Mak-kans. The relative success of Egyptian arms in the war prompted the regime to proclaim Sadat *batal al-ubur* (Hero of the Crossing), in an effort to maximize his personal legitimacy. On the basis of this dubious claim to self-legitimation, Sadat proceeded to take three interrelated policy initiatives:

1. De-Nasserization of Egyptian society, centered on the partial dismantling of the socialist public sector.
2. Institution of *al-infitah*—opening to the West—based on expectations of foreign, particularly American, investment and economic assistance to create a large private sector.
3. Rapprochement with the United States and the concomitant weakening of political, military, and economic ties to the Soviet Union.

Sadat's quest for legitimacy also involved increasing reliance on Islamic themes as a partial substitute for the ideological vacuum that he had created by progressively jettisoning Nasserism. Thus, the 1971 Constitution made Islam the official religion of the Egyptian state, while the *shari'ah* was declared as a source of legislation. Despite Sadat's attempts to derive legitimacy from his pro-Islamic policies and his wartime role, the regime was shaken in April 1974 by an attack directed at the Technical Military Academy. Led by the Islamic Liberation Party, the attack had been triggered partly by Sadat's conclusion of a disengagement agreement with Israel. Also, Sadat's military and diplomatic moves during and after the war were opposed by some prominent people, including Muhammad Hasanain Heikal and Chief of Staff General Sa'ad al-Din al-Shazli, who was dismissed and sent abroad as ambassador.¹³

The mid-seventies found Sadat pursuing a three-tiered policy in the Islamic sphere:

1. The placation of the Islamic establishment to obtain the support of Egypt's clerical leadership, centered in al-Azhar University and large government-supported mosques.
2. The appeasement of the Brotherhood to neutralize the Islamist opposition and to utilize the society's organizational power against the Nasserists.
3. The suppression of the militant Islamist groups whose propensity to violence threatened the regime.

The policy of repression that was prompted by the April 1974 attack on the Technical Military Academy continued until May 1975, when the regime moved against the Takfir wal-Hijrah group. Meanwhile, there were evident signs of cooperation between the regime and the Brethren. In 1976, Sadat allowed publication of two monthly journals, *al-Da'wah* and *al-Itisam*, which represented the Brotherhood's views. Furthermore, in the 1976 elections, the Brotherhood joined other political groups to marshal its followers to elect the pro-government majority in the People's Assembly. Such cooperation placed the Brethren in an awkward position during the Nasserist-led mass riots of January 1977, although some Islamist elements participated in the destruction of the proliferating nightclubs and bars. Continued support of President Sadat would have placed the Brethren in a position of compromising their ideology and losing mass support. Consequently, the year 1977 brought a parting of the ways between the two sides, soon to be reinforced by Sadat's rapprochement with Israel. The Brotherhood attacked the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty, the "open door" policy, and Sadat's pro-Western cultural outlook, particularly regarding women. Moreover, it accused Sadat of supporting the Coptic Christian minority in the ongoing Muslim-Coptic sectarian dispute. Finally, the success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran gave the Brotherhood increased confidence in pursuing its goal of establishing an Islamic order in Egypt.

The January 1977 riots set off a period of protracted crisis for Sadat, which culminated in his assassination in October 1981. Sadat's response to the growing opposition to his economic and foreign policies was to intensify his pursuit of Islamic legitimacy. The regime introduced a series of bills on Islamic penalties for usury, apostasy, theft, adultery, and drinking, most of which were withdrawn after protests by both Copts and liberal Muslims.¹⁴ In March 1980 the *shari'ah* was made the main source of legislation through a plebiscite. The centerpiece of Sadat's quest for legitimacy was his overt practice of Islamic lifeways on the domestic front, which coincided with his emer-

gence as a world statesman seeking Arab-Israeli peace. Despite Sadat's virtuosity as a politician, his determination to play these mutually contradictory roles was to prove fatal. Indeed, Sadat's two roles and their cultural underpinnings were incompatible—the pious Muslim president versus the co-opted member of the West's fraternity of leaders, displaying alien cultural traits in the midst of conspicuous opulence. Yet, despite this manifest clash of roles and identities, Sadat continued to project publicly his personal piety upon an acutely cynical and skeptical audience. In attempting to placate the Islamist constituency, Sadat was treading a dangerous path, which had been followed by other Muslim leaders with mixed success. Sadat's predicament centered on his inability to convince the Islamists that he was fully committed to Islam. Consequently, Sadat's Islamic initiatives, however sincere, were found wanting because of his foreign and domestic policies as well as the inherent inflexibility of the fundamentalist creed. Indeed, there could be no middle path for the Islamist radicals.

Yet the Egyptian media continued to depict Sadat as *al-Ra'is al-Mu'min* (The Believer President), who extolled the traditional values of the village and the patriarchal family. Sadat saw Egypt as one big family of which he was *kabir al-ʿaṭlah* (head of the family), whose judgments would be obeyed by his children without objection. Such assertions were not well received, given Egypt's deteriorating socioeconomic conditions.¹⁵ Presidential manifestations of piety were reinforced by the appearance of Islamic slogans in government buildings and official declarations, and in Sadat's speeches, which typically began with *Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim* (In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful) and ended with a Qurʾanic quotation.

To those who knew him well, Sadat was a truly devout Muslim who sought to translate the noble maxims of his faith into constructive and effective domestic and foreign policies. The tragedy of Anwar al-Sadat was that despite his best intentions large segments of the public harbored misgivings about the man from Munufiyya. Some Egyptians could neither forget Sadat's reported absence from his assigned post on the night of the 1952 Revolution nor overlook his ingratitude toward Nasser, whose political legacy Sadat sought to erase. By the late seventies, there was a vast cultural gap between Sadat and his people. The great attention showered upon him by Western leaders and the media as statesman, peacemaker, and "best-dressed man," combined with his accommodating policies toward Israel, the shah, and domestic corruption, made Sadat the focal point of intense criticism. The regime responded by selective repression against socialists, Nasserists, and

Islamist militants, along with propaganda stressing Islamic themes such as *iman* (faith), *asalah* (genuineness), *sabr* (patience), *muhibbah* (love), *amal* (hope), *tawfiq* (God-given success), and *hidayah* (God-given guidance). The thrust of government propaganda was to convince the people to accept their lot and hope for a better future. This entreaty was preposterous, given the worsening socioeconomic condition of the great majority of Egyptians. The ideological vacuum created by de-Nasserization had now been partially filled by Islamism, rendering Sadat's leadership incongruous with the prevailing criteria of Islamic legitimacy. Under the circumstances, the move in the People's Assembly to declare Sadat as the fifth Rightly Guided Caliph was an act of political ineptitude bordering on sacrilege.¹⁶ The president is known to have decried this initiative and disassociated himself from its authors.

The plain fact was that many Egyptians did not regard Sadat as their "father" and resented being called "his children" amid the frustrations engendered by the president's economic and foreign policies. Meanwhile, the Brotherhood and other Islamist groups had become an important force throughout society. On university campuses the militants harassed Christian students and secularist faculty with impunity.¹⁷ It appears that only in mid-1981 did Sadat realize the potential danger from the radical groups in the context of the Muslim-Christian communal clashes and rioting. In a preemptive move the government arrested over 3,000 people in September 1981 and took direct control of all mosques. While most of the detainees were Islamists, in a balancing act the regime also imprisoned prominent Nasserists, socialists, and Coptic leaders, including Pope Shenouda III. The suppression was accompanied by a warning from Sadat that he would arrest 5,000 additional opponents if they did not behave. Less than a month later, Sadat was assassinated by members of Tanzim al-Jihad, a militant Islamist group based in Upper Egypt. In the wake of the assassination, there was sporadic fighting, mainly in Asyut between Islamist militants and security forces. The policy of repression continued under Husni Mubarak, although the new president pointedly refrained from Sadat's mistakes by assuming a low profile and instituting some reforms. After a lengthy trial, Lieutenant Khalid al-Islambuli and four others involved in Sadat's assassination were secretly executed and over three hundred al-Jihad members were tried and jailed. President Mubarak's decision to carry out the executions was condemned throughout the Islamic world and some Islamist groups called for his assassination or overthrow.¹⁸

In conclusion, the policy lessons of the Sadat era may be summarized as follows:

1. Not to underestimate the potency of Islamism in terms of its widespread influence, ideological commitment, and organizational capabilities.
2. Not to employ "the religious weapon" by co-opting Islamic ideology incrementally and superficially, for the purpose of achieving political objectives not consonant with the fundamentalist ethos.
3. To pursue foreign and domestic policies that are to some degree congruent with the dominant religiocultural value system and responsive to popular socioeconomic needs.
4. To project a new vision of hope, possibly based on an ideological synthesis of Islamic humanism and modern liberalism, which would serve as an alternative to Islamism to guide political socialization and socioeconomic development.

Three Militant Societies

During the 1970s, Egyptian political life was shaken by the violent activities of three Islamist groups: Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami (Islamic Liberation Party), Jama'at al-Muslimin (The Society of Muslims), and Tanzim al-Jihad (Jihad Organization). The Islamic Liberation Party is also known as the Technical Military Academy Group, and the Society of Muslims as al-Takfir wal-Hijrah (Denouncement and Holy Flight). The group known as al-Jihad is sometimes referred to as the "New Jihad." All three groups were born in the Egyptian crisis setting after the 1967 war. In ideological and organizational terms, these societies were the direct descendants of the Muslim Brotherhood, except in the latter's eschewal of violence.

Sayyid Qutb: The Crucial Link

In retrospect, Sayyid Qutb stands out as the indispensable link between the Brotherhood and the ILP, al-Takfir, al-Jihad and other radical groups. Indeed, as a radical ideologue, Qutb presided over the generational transition from the Brotherhood's atrophied fundamentalism to the youthful activism of the 1970s. Three attributes characterized Qutb's pivotal role and influence on the new militants: (1) as a theoretician, Qutb exercised a powerful influence on the regeneration and redirection of Islamist ideology; (2) as a notable member of the

old Brotherhood, Qutb provided organizational continuity between the Brethren and their recalcitrant offshoots; and (3) as an activist, Qutb defied the state, and his death provided the younger militants with a model of martyrdom to emulate.

Qutb had been instrumental in leading the Brotherhood's reemergence in the early 1960s. With the support of the militant wing of the Brotherhood inside and outside Egypt, the primary focus of Qutb's opposition was the Nasser regime. His conspiratorial activities and advocacy of *jihad* were in sharp contrast to the more passive Islamism of Hasan al-Hudaybi, the Brotherhood's General Guide, who had resigned himself to preaching.¹⁹ The government's suppression of the Brotherhood's radicals in 1965 and 1966 brought far-reaching changes in Islamist ideology and action. In the incubational environment of the prison, Qutb had been the dominant ideological influence, which eventually shaped the Islamist movement of the 1970s. Despite his preeminence, Qutb had failed to ameliorate the violent disagreements and fights among the Brotherhood's factions in jail. A more abiding influence upon the young militants both inside and outside the prison walls was to be found in his writings. Qutb perceived social reality as a perpetual dialectic between the Islamic path and *al-jahiliyyah*. His ideological formulations may be summarized as follows:

1. The dominant sociopolitical system of the contemporary Islamic and non-Islamic world is that of *al-jahiliyyah*—a condition of sinfulness, injustice, suffering, and ignorance of Islam's divine guidance.²⁰
2. The duty of the faithful Muslim is to revive Islam in order to transform the *jahili* society through proselytization (*da'wah*) and militant *jihad*.²¹
3. The transformation of *jahili* society into a genuinely Islamic polity is the task of a dedicated "vanguard" (*tali'ah*) of Muslims.²²
4. The ultimate aim of committed Muslims should be the establishment of *al-Hakimiyyah*—the reign of Allah's sovereignty on earth to end all sin, suffering, and repression.²³

Qutb's ideas and style betrayed the unmistakable influence of earlier Islamist theorists. For example, in his opposition to philosophical abstractions and emphasis on the literal interpretation of Islamic precepts, Qutb followed the precedents established by Ibn Hazm and Ibn Taymiyyah and his disciples. Among twentieth-century writers, Hasan al-Banna and Abu al-A'la Mawdudi were particularly influential in shaping Qutb's theories. His concept of *al-Hakimiyyah*—Allah's sov-

ereignty on earth—was criticized by Hudaybi because it lacked Qur'anic foundations.²⁴ Qutb derived the idea of *al-Hakimiyyah* from the larger notion of *al-Uluhiyyah*, meaning divine power or sovereignty, and from the related concepts *al-Rububiyyah* and *al-Rabbaniyyah*, both meaning divinity or Lordship.²⁵ In these formulations, Qutb was attempting to revive the fundamentalist theology of Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, the crisis theorists of the fourteenth century.²⁶

The importance of Ibn Taymiyyah lay in his differentiation between the Muslim faithful and "marginal" Muslims, who had knowledge of Islam but chose to transgress its laws.²⁷ Ibn Taymiyyah had denounced the Tatars as apostates because they had failed to fully accept and implement the *shari'ah*. Consequently, a ruler should not be obeyed simply because he claims to be a Muslim; unless he fully obeys and implements the law of Islam, he should be fought, because as an apostate, he will lose his moral authority or legitimacy to rule. In short, Ibn Taymiyyah had provided Qutb with the rudiments of a theory of revolution—a divinely sanctioned right to overthrow *jahili* rulers.

In effect, Qutb had reversed the historical pattern of conformism to authority that characterized much of Sunni political theory. With the singular exception of mahdist ideologies, Sunni political theory had lacked an explicit doctrine of revolution. Except in rare instances, the Sunni '*ulama*' had counseled obedience to the state, while limiting *jihād* to fighting non-Muslim foes. This patrimony could well explain the reticence of Banna and many of his followers to engage in outright revolutionary action. Unlike his older colleagues, Qutb was no dilatory revolutionary.

Qutb's ideological task was to create modalities to heighten Islamic consciousness for the purpose of establishing God's sovereignty on earth (*al-Hakimiyyah*). To attain this objective, it would be necessary to form a "vanguard" of dedicated Muslims prepared to undertake *jihād* against the existing sinful society. Hence the need to differentiate between the Muslims belonging to the vanguard and those who remain outside it—a problem that Qutb did not fully resolve, thereby opening the way to divergent interpretations of his teachings.

Indeed, the controversy involved nothing less than the unity of the Islamist movement in Egypt. The roots of the conflict went back to the Prophet's flight (*hijrah*) to Madinah and the attainment of *walayah* by the Muslims who accompanied him, as distinct from those who stayed

behind in Makkah. Some of Mawdudi's and Qutb's writings appear to favor the legitimacy (*walayah*) of those who joined the *hijrah*.²⁸ This interpretation could be taken to suggest that Qutb considered the vanguard of activists as the possessors of greater legitimacy than the Muslims still living in *jahili* society. Yet, Qutb did not explicitly question the piety of all Muslims in the *jahili* framework who had remained outside the Islamist societies. However, he considered it imperative that the Muslims emulate the Prophet's *hijrah* by separating themselves from *jahili* society to constitute a strong vanguard as a prelude to final victory—the establishment of God's sovereignty on earth.

Qutb's formulations generated conflicting interpretations among his disciples centering on several key issues: the role of the vanguard, the attributes of its members and leadership, the nature of separation from society, and the relations between the vanguard and the Muslim faithful living under the *jahili* system. Disagreement on these questions produced a split among Qutb's followers.²⁹ A sizable group of young Brethren, led by Shaykh Shukri Ahmad Mustafa, believed in a narrow interpretation of Qutb's views and proceeded to separate itself from *jahili* society and its members, against whom they leveled the charge of "unbelief" (*takfir*).³⁰ This group, which called itself the Society of Muslims, later known as al-Takfir wal-Hijrah, was joined by some members of the Jama'ah al-Tabligh, while others formed similar groups based on the concept of separation from society. Among the latter were al-Jama'at al-Harakiyyah, Jama'at al-Uzlah al-Shu'uriyyah, and Jama'at al-Takfir of Alexandria. Others involved in the controversy included members of al-Jihad and the ILP. Both groups rejected Mustafa's insistence on establishing a community of believers patterned after the Prophet's *ummah*, which would exist in total separation from society.³¹ In fact, the ILP and al-Jihad shared Qutb's recognition that the replication of the first Islamic community was impractical because of the needs of modern life.

Thus, during the early 1970s, Egypt's emerging Islamist movement was in a state of factionalism. The Brotherhood's old guard had been released from jail to counteract the Nasserists and the leftists. Meanwhile, the younger militants had declared *jihad* against the regime. The battle was joined prematurely with the abortive attack of the Islamic Liberation Party on the Technical Military Academy in April 1974. This triggered a massive crackdown by the regime, leading to the arrest of several hundred ILP, al-Takfir, and other militants. Once again, the pattern of intergroup conflict and ideological polemics surfaced in the

confines of the infamous Abu Za'bal prison.³² These quarrels crystallized the significant differences and similarities between these groups in terms of ideology, leadership, organization, and tactics.

Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami and al-Takfir wal-Hijrah

Two radical groups, Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami and al-Takfir wal-Hijrah, which emerged from a common sociopolitical and ideological milieu, suffered similar fates in their suppression by the authorities.³³ Because of differences in ideology and leadership, the two societies became rivals. Indeed, despite their common opposition to the state that they regarded as idolatrous and despotic (*taghut*), these groups could not form a united front against the regime. It appears that the exclusivist nature of al-Takfir's ideology and the uncompromising personality of Shukri Mustafa had been instrumental in aborting effective cooperation between al-Takfir, the ILP, al-Jihad, and the lesser Islamist groups.

Ideology and Leadership. As offshoots of the Brotherhood, both the Takfir and the ILP shared Banna's and Qutb's Islamist ideals in their radical form. They advocated strict adherence to the Five Pillars of Islam as an irreducible minimum. In addition, the "good" Muslim was called upon to join others in creating a righteous community as outlined in the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, because the Egyptian ruling order was regarded as being corrupt and humbled by the West, Israel, and the Soviet Union.

While the ILP centered its attack mainly on the government, the Takfir condemned both the regime and the whole of society as being in the stage of *jahiliyyah*.³⁴ In the economic realm, both communism and capitalism were rejected as ungodly and inhuman. Both groups believed that the government's legitimacy should be based on its ability to provide social justice according to the principle of *al-'adl asas al-hukm*—"justice is the foundation of rule." Other criteria of rulership included election by the faithful, piety, rationality, and obedience to the *shari'ah*. Elected assemblies (*shura*) would check the rulers and remove them in case of failure in their duties to Allah and the Islamic community. Both groups opposed the government-appointed *'ulama'* as being proregime bureaucrats, although the Takfir viewed them with greater hostility and advised its members not to pray behind them in the mosques.³⁵ While the Takfir advocated the strict recreation of the Prophet's community, the ILP appeared to be adaptationist in terms of borrowing modern practices to achieve its aims. Al-Takfir was far more

ideological in its orientation than the ILP; it advocated a radical and total restructuring of society.

In leveling the charge of *takfir* (unbelief) against everyone in society, Shukri Mustafa claimed that there was no salvation for the Muslims unless they joined his group in a conscious social-spiritual separation from the existing sinful social setting. The real author of this separationist doctrine was 'Ali 'Abduh Isma'il, an obscure shaykh from al-Azhar University, who sought to pattern the Takfir's beliefs and activities after the Prophet's example during the early Makkan period.³⁶ Thus, at its inception, when the community was weak and vulnerable, the Prophet had refrained from armed *jihad* in favor of strengthening and expanding his *ummah* through spiritual and physical separation from the larger pagan setting. Similarly, at the present stage of Islamic weakness (*'ahd al-istid'af*), the Muslims were enjoined by Shaykh Isma'il to practice spiritual separation (*mufasalah al-shu'uriyyah*) to strengthen their allegiance (*wala'*) to Islam through the Takfir organization. Meanwhile, they would desist from waging *jihad* until the group acquired sufficient strength.³⁷ This strategy would necessitate joining the society with complete loyalty to its ideology and leadership, because a truly Islamic life could be achieved only within the group. Indeed, al-Takfir members believed that all Islamic communities since the Prophet's and that of the first four caliphs consisted of unbelievers.³⁸ In 1969, while still in prison, Shaykh Isma'il renounced his own doctrine of *takfir*, thereby returning to the Brotherhood's mainstream ideology. Shukri Mustafa, however, remained a devout exponent of separationism.

The ILP was led by Salih Siriyya, a Palestinian with a doctorate in science education, who had been a member of the Islamic Liberation Party of Jordan, a faction of the Muslim Brotherhood. After the 1967 war, Siriyya joined various Palestinian groups, worked for the Libyan and Iraqi regimes, and spent some time in jail. In 1971, he settled in Egypt to work for the Arab League and began to establish underground cells (*usar*) in Cairo and Alexandria.³⁹

The founder of al-Takfir, Shukri Mustafa, was also a member of the Brotherhood. He was arrested in 1965; while in prison he became disillusioned with his older colleagues and their infighting.⁴⁰ After his release in 1971, Mustafa began to expand his movement, which was based on the separationist doctrine. Like Siriyya, Mustafa had received a modern education with a baccalaureate in agriculture. Both leaders were said to possess charisma, religious knowledge, courage, and piety. While Siriyya was loved by his followers, Mustafa elicited

fear with his piercing eyes. Clearly, the different leadership styles of the two men were reflected in the nature of their organizations. Siriyya presided over a twelve-member executive council that deliberated fairly democratically through consensus (*ijma'*). It is reported that Siriyya was overruled in his decision not to challenge the Sadat regime during its period of popularity following the October war; hence, the abortive attack on the Military Academy. Siriyya was executed in November 1976. Mustafa, in contrast, was an autocratic *amir al-mu'minin* (commander of the faithful) who made all the final judgments.⁴¹ He was regarded as the *mahdi* whom the members obeyed through the act of *bay'ah* (oath of allegiance).⁴² Thus, in sharp contrast to the ILP, the Takfir possessed the attributes of a messianic movement.

Membership. Both groups recruited mainly from students and recent college graduates. The Takfir relied on kinship and friendship ties, while the ILP recruited young worshipers especially from the numerous popular mosques (*ahli*). Most ILP members came from Cairo, Alexandria, and the Delta, while the Takfir recruited predominantly from Upper Egypt. A significant portion of recruits were recent arrivals to the big cities from small towns and rural communities, representing middle- and lower-middle-class backgrounds. On the average, they were well educated, particularly in technical and scientific fields, and imbued with deep conviction, sense of mission, and readiness for martyrdom.⁴³ In several respects, the Takfir was unique. Its members included many youngsters, women, craftsmen, and poor people. It provided a total environment of activity for its members, who were kept occupied in prayer, study, athletics, propaganda, and work in the Takfir's enterprises. Thus, the membership was insulated from society and made dependent on the group for all its needs. Errant members would be excommunicated and suffer physical punishment.⁴⁴ If a member left the society, he would be considered a *kafir* (infidel) because there could be no salvation outside the group.⁴⁵

Strategies and Tactics. The ILP's political strategy differed significantly from those of the Brotherhood and Takfir. The Brotherhood advocated a gradualist strategy to build an Islamic order, while the ILP's immediate objective was to establish an Islamic state. Thus, the ILP engaged in detailed planning for a takeover of power. It infiltrated the police and the army, and, except Siriyya, its membership was psychologically oriented toward an early coup. In sharp contrast, Mustafa pursued a long-range strategy based on building a powerful nu-

cleus of believers, patterned after the Prophet's community. The society would move against the authorities in *jihad* only when the membership of its cells had increased sufficiently to pose a credible challenge. This plan was aborted when the security forces began to arrest members of the Takfir in the aftermath of the ILP's suppression. The government accused the Takfir group of kidnapping Shaykh Husayn al-Dhahabi, a former minister of religious affairs, and for killing him after demanding the release of its members from prison. After fighting between the militants and the security forces, over four hundred members were arrested and five al-Takfir leaders, including Mustafa, were executed in March 1978. Once again the state prevailed, as the media branded the Takfir organization as "the Khawarij of the twentieth century."⁴⁶

The Jihad Organization

The Jihad Organization (*Tanzim al-Jihad*) was first uncovered in 1978 as a consequence of its involvement in anti-Coptic activities. However, its full potential was not revealed until the assassination of President Sadat. The organizational strength of this group centered in Asyut, Upper Egypt, where its members engaged the security forces in several days of intense fighting soon after Sadat's assassination. During the next months three thousand Islamists were arrested, mostly belonging to al-Jihad and al-Takfir wal-Hijrah groups.

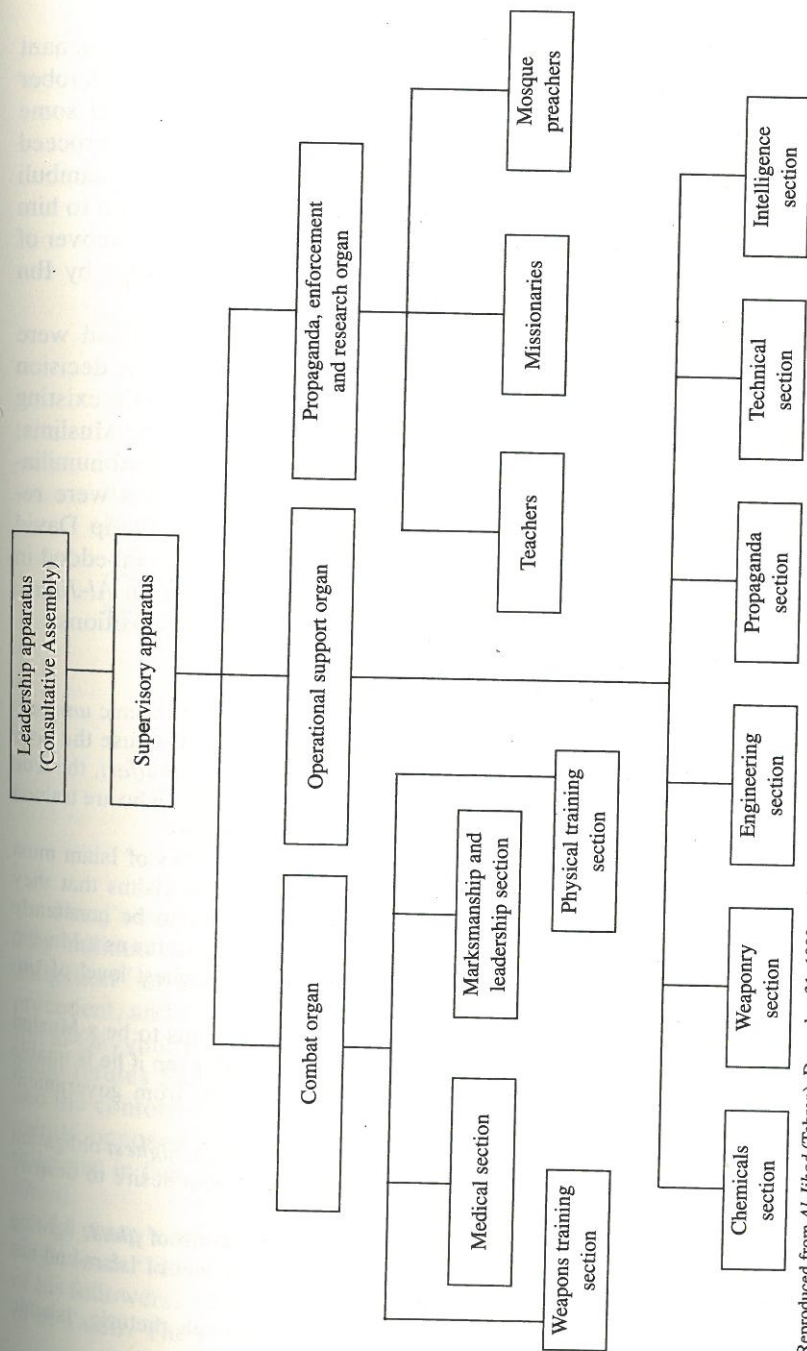
In contrast to al-Takfir, al-Jihad was prone to infiltrating the military, the security services, and other governmental institutions rather than separating itself from society. In this respect, the Jihad was far more dangerous than the Takfir. Moreover, the Jihad was led by a collective leadership rather than by charismatic personalities like Mustafa and Siriyya. This feature accorded the Jihad group a certain flexibility in decision making and implementation.

Structurally, the organization (*tanzim*) was headed by a leadership apparatus (*al-jihaz al-qiyadi*) and a supervisory apparatus (*jihaz al-taqyim*). The leadership apparatus was charged with overall administration, planning, and policymaking. It included a ten-member *majlis al-shura* (consultative assembly) headed by Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd al-Rahman, a blind professor at Asyut Theological College, who issued *fatwas* (legal opinions) based on Islamic law and historical precedent to legitimize the Jihad's policies and actions. Thus, the leadership apparatus would decide on specific targets of terroristic action only after

seeking "clearance" from the *majlis* as legal justification and sanction. The actual operation of the organization was entrusted to the supervisory apparatus, which guided the activities of three separate organs. The first conducted propaganda, recruitment, research, and enforcement of religious laws. The second provided operational support in technology, engineering, arms procurement, intelligence, and other specialized tasks—printing of propaganda booklets, falsification of government seals and documents, transportation, and explosives. The third was the combat organ, charged with training in martial arts, marksmanship, medical support, and weaponry (see figure 5). Also, the combat organ sent emissaries to garner support and financial aid from members residing abroad and supervised al-Jihad's domestic communication network. The members of the organization operated as parts of an indeterminate number of groups (*majmu'at*) and cells (*'anqud*) interspersed throughout the larger society. Each revolutionary cell or *'anqud* (literally, a bunch of grapes) was self-contained and semiautonomous. Thus, if one was plucked from the main bunch, the other *'anquds* could not be discovered readily by the security services.⁴⁷

The foregoing *tanzim* or organizational structure of al-Jihad was replicated in the governorates of Minya, Asyut, Suhaj, and Qina. Uniting all the regional *tanzims* was a supreme *majlis al-shura*, which served as an umbrella organization. While in theory the Jihad system reflected the Leninist principle of "democratic centralism,"⁴⁸ in practice its operations were decentralized and flexible. The group that assassinated Sadat possessed a chief ideologue, Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Faraj, and a military chief, Lieutenant Colonel 'Abbud 'Abd al-Latif Hasan al-Zumur, who was in operational command. As ideological and military functionaries, Faraj and Zumur were in charge of implementing the decisions of the *shura* to which they belonged. The group lacked an *amir*, as Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman had declined the position. However, he had agreed to issue legal opinions (*fatawa*) in response to requests from al-Jihad members concerning general issues such as political legitimacy and justice. These opinions were later used by the Jihad leadership to justify their decision to assassinate Sadat without seeking 'Abd al-Rahman's specific authorization.⁴⁹

In an *'anqud* meeting during January or February 1981, Faraj and Zumur initiated the process that culminated in Sadat's assassination by Lieutenant Khalid al-Islambuli and his two associates. Faraj and Zumur had considered several scenarios of assassination, which had been rejected as tactically and logistically unfeasible in view of the high



Reproduced from *Al-Jihad* (Tehran), December 31, 1982, p. 150.

Fig. 5. General structure of the Jihad Organization.

probability that Sadat would escape death. It was not until Lieutenant Islambuli's appointment by his superiors to participate in the October parade that he conceived the idea of killing the president. After some deliberation, the *'anqud* leaders considered it propitious to proceed with Islambuli's plan. A primary source of inspiration for Islambuli was Juhayman al-'Utaybi's book *Saba' Rasai'l*, probably given to him by his brother Muhammad, who had witnessed the Ikhwan takeover of the Grand Mosque in Mecca. Islambuli had also read books by Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Kathir.⁵⁰

The specific goals and ideological motivations of al-Jihad were revealed during the trial. Islambuli gave three reasons for the decision to kill the president: (1) the inconsistency between Egypt's existing laws and Islamic Law—a fact that brought suffering upon the Muslims; (2) Sadat's peace with Israel; (3) the arrest, persecution, and humiliation of Islamists in September 1981. Clearly, the assassins were reacting to the prevailing socioeconomic conditions, the Camp David accords, and state oppression.⁵¹ These motivations were embedded in an ideological framework provided by Faraj, as outlined in *Al-Jihad: The Forgotten Pillar*. It can be summarized in eleven propositions:

1. The duty of every Muslim is to strive for the Islamic *ummah*. This is a duty ordained by Allah and his *shari'ah*. Because the laws of the Muslim countries are the laws of unbelievers (*kuffar*), the true Muslims must declare war (*jihad*) against their leaders who are trained in the West by Christians, communists, and Zionists.
2. Muslim leaders or groups who reject the laws of Islam must be considered apostates (*murtaddun*) despite their claims that they are Muslims. In other words, "Muslimness" has to be constantly validated because a sinful individual shall lose his status as a Muslim if he persists in his sinfulness. Apostasy is the highest level of sinfulness.
3. Cooperation with an infidel ruler who claims to be a Muslim is sin. The punishment for such a leader is death even if he is unable to defend himself. True Muslims should refrain from government work and military service.
4. Perpetual *jihad* against an infidel state is the *highest* obligation (pillar) and *only* solution for all true Muslims who desire to destroy *jahili* society and revive Islam.
5. Armed struggle is the *only* acceptable form of *jihad*; fighting external foes should be done only under the banner of Islam and not in pursuit of nationalistic aims.
6. *Jihad* pursued by peaceful means through rhetoric, Islamic

parties, or emigration (*hijrah*) is considered cowardice and stupidity. Islam can succeed only through the force of arms as it did in the past, when a small group of earnest believers (*saffjadd*) were able to spread the message through conquest. Thus, true Muslims should engage in *jihad*, even if they are few in number.

7. First fight the internal infidel (the Egyptian state), then the external infidel (the non-Muslim world).

8. *Jihad* can be learned by every Muslim without great effort or education. Thus, the lack of knowledge is no excuse to abstain from *jihad*; nor is it necessary to seek parental consent, because *jihad* is an individual duty similar to fasting and prayer.

9. Leadership in Islam must be granted to the strongest among the believers, who also has more fear (*taqwa*) of Allah. He must be chosen by consultation (*shura*), and once chosen, must be given an oath of allegiance (*bay'ah*) by individual members, binding them until death. An arrogant and haughty religious scholar should not be a leader.

10. Abstaining from *jihad* is the main reason for the sorry situation of the world's Muslims today—humiliated, degraded, disdained, and divided.

11. Allah has designated five periods in Islamic history:

- a. The *ummah* under the Prophet.
- b. The *ummah* under the Caliphs.
- c. The *ummah* under the Kingdoms.
- d. The *ummah* under dictatorships.
- e. The Islam of our time, when dictatorship and tyranny will be overthrown, and the *ummah* shall be controlled by a system similar to the Prophet's community; and peace will reign.⁵²

Faraj's book is clearly written and well reasoned. It is an unabashedly militant work, which makes the resort to violence the "sixth obligation" of Islam on the basis of Qur'anic interpretation, historical precedent, and the writings of Ibn Hazm, Ibn Taymiyyah, Qadi 'Iyadh, Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn Kathir, Nawawi, Qutb, and others. Faraj systematically refutes Sufi spiritualism, the Brotherhood's political gradualism and the conformity of the Azharite shaykhs. Furthermore, he is vehemently opposed to any kind of cooperation between Islam and other religions; in fact, he regards Jews and Christians as polytheists (*mushrikun*).

In sharp contrast to al-Takfir, the Jihad group did not possess a single leader like Shukri Mustafa, who commanded the total allegiance of his followers. Thus, al-Jihad's ideology was not as messianic as that of al-Takfir. The Jihad group was not led by a *mahdi*, although it did

not deny the eventual advent of a *mahdi*. Nor did the Jihad share al-Takfir's concept of withdrawal from society and the postponement of *jihad* until a more propitious time. Instead, it posited a new doctrine of "Muslimness," which, in its ultimate logic, could be achieved only through permanent *jihad*. The failure of the Muslims and their leaders to meet these obligations of Islam would make them infidels, undermine their legitimacy, and condemn them to destruction. As a case in point, Faraj mentions only one leader by name—Anwar al-Sadat.⁵³

The Smaller Societies

In its organized expression contemporary Islamism continues to feed on the ideological, spiritual, and organizational legacy of Banna's Muslim Brotherhood. However, the Brotherhood's influence receded with the proliferation of Islamist groups in the 1970s and 1980s. While groups like al-Takfir, al-Jihad, and the ILP, which sprang up in the early 1970s, were the direct descendants of the Brethren, the connection between the newer Islamist groups and the Brotherhood appears tenuous. A total of forty Egyptian Islamist societies are identified in the appendix. These range from the large Muslim Brotherhood to medium-size groups like al-Takfir, the ILP, and al-Jihad, and a plethora of smaller societies, such as al-Faramawiyyah, Jama'at al-Ahram, Junud Allah, Jama'at al-Mufasalah al-Shu'uriyyah, Junud al-Rahman, Jama'at al-Muslimin lil-Takfir, al-Mukaffaratiyyah, Qif wa Tabayyin, al-Jama'ah al-Harakiyyah, and al-Qutbiyyin. Most of the latter were militant groups that operated clandestinely. However, none possessed the size or the violence potential of al-Takfir or al-Jihad. It appears that new groups are being formed continually, as frustrations intensify, especially among the youth and the unemployed. A pattern of appearance and disappearance characterizes these societies as they are unearthed by the government, then suppressed or contained, only to return to Egypt's omnipresent underground. In 1982 the Egyptian authorities placed the total number of Islamist groups at ninety-nine, while a Kuwait-based fundamentalist periodical put their number at sixty.⁵⁴ Notable among the new radical groups are al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah, al-Hilal, al-Ukhuwwah al-Islamiyyah, and al-Najun min al-Nar.

Two types of Islamist groups can be identified on the basis of geography. The first are those located in the small towns of Upper Egypt and the Delta, which recruit from the educated and semieducated elements of society, including the sons of provincial bureaucrats,

college students, blue-collar workers, and lower-middle-class peasants. Such groups exhibit a certain primitivism in view of their remoteness from urban centers and foreign influences. Thus, they become politically threatening only when their leadership decides to relocate in the capital city, as was the case with Shukri Mustafa. The second type of militant group is found in the large cities, particularly in the massive slums of Cairo. These urban groups consist of students, unemployed graduates, blue-collar workers, soldiers, and low-ranking officers. Many of these social elements lack family roots in the cities and have few prospects of finding a useful niche in society that is commensurate with their training and aspirations. Some have tried to "make it" in Egypt's freewheeling private sector without success, at a time when their friends and relatives have enriched themselves, often by corrupt means. Moreover, many of the provincial recruits are from underdeveloped areas like Upper Egypt, where they face competition from the large Coptic minority.

Another type of Islamist group consists of friends and acquaintances from the same neighborhood brought together in the local mosque. Such groups may begin as loose benevolent associations, or Qur'anic study societies that periodically meet to discuss the Holy Book as well as local and national issues. In time, these groups become radicalized in response to some *fitnah*—a crisis brought on by government provocation, injustice, oppression, or foreign policy initiative. Because the law prohibits public meetings, these groups take refuge in mosques, especially during the first (*fajr*) and the last (*'asha'*) prayers. After the *salah* (prayers), the faithful sit in clusters on the mosque floor and begin conversing. These group discussions can involve the apportioning of functions to be performed by each person within the self-help societies active in the neighborhood—sending food to needy families, a doctor to visit the sick, or a lawyer to represent a client in court. Alternatively, the groups may discuss political matters, planning public demonstrations, and even violence, as *'anquds* (cells) of a larger organization. In order to coordinate with other mosque networks, representatives from the cells would circulate throughout the day by attending successive prayer services in different mosques of the neighborhood and beyond. This modality of intercell communication creates vast neighborhood networks that may be mobilized effectively in a short time. The mosque groups have already demonstrated their effectiveness as self-help societies, which the government regards with caution in view of their potential organizational-ideological utility for

insurrectionary activity. Yet the same government appears to lack the means or the will to perform these social services that are desperately needed by the people.⁵⁵

Islamism in the Military

Clear manifestations of religious resurgence have been evident in the Egyptian military, particularly among the higher noncommissioned officers and the lower and middle ranks of the officer corps. Religious fervor has also been evident among cadets in military academies. A case in point is the Air Force Academy where, instead of attending movies and games during recreation periods, groups of cadets gather to pray and discuss religious literature. Commanding officers at the higher echelons are known to bend backwards to accommodate these manifestations of revivalism that might involve departures from military routine. Such accommodation is prompted by the fear that any disciplinary response toward Islamist practices might trigger defiance of military discipline and even insurrection.

There can be no doubt that the Islamist groups have members and sympathizers in the military and even in the state security services.⁵⁶ Purges of the military were instituted after Sadat's assassination because two of the main accomplices—Islambuli and Zumur—were army officers. It is virtually impossible to block Islamist influences from the military, because the latter is a part of society. The Islamist groups often proselytize and recruit among relatives in the large extended families that invariably include members serving in the armed forces.

The regime has attempted to draw a line between strictly religious activity and Islamist activism. While Islamic education, worship and practice are institutionalized within the military structure, the formation of religious groups (*jama'at*) is prohibited as are unauthorized meetings and preaching (*da'wah*). In keeping with the government's overall policies to accommodate the pervasive revivalist sentiment, the High Command has attempted to provide institutional means of Islamist expression in order to control and monitor the radical elements. The function of providing Islamic guidance is entrusted to the Department of Moral Orientation (*Idarat al-Tawjih al-Ma'nawi*), headed by high-ranking officers knowledgeable in Islamic doctrine and Azharite shaykhs attached to the military. The task of supervising the moral guidance of the troops is assigned to religious guidance officers (*zubbat al-wa'az*), whose educational background combines theological and

Table 6
Egypt: Percent Shares of Income

Household	1960	1964/65	1970	1975	1976	1979
Top 5%	17.5 ^a	19.2 ^b	—	21.0 ^c	—	22.0 ^a
Top 10%	—	31.9 ^b	—	33.0	58.55 ^d	—
Top 20%	—	43.0 ^e	—	49.0 ^e	—	—
Middle 30%	—	40.2 ^b	—	—	21.52 ^d	—
Lowest 60%	—	28.7 ^b	—	—	19.93 ^d	—
Lowest 40%	—	14.1 ^b	—	13.9 ^c	—	—
Lowest 20%	6.6 ^a	4.6 ^b	—	5.2 ^c	—	5.1 ^a

^a World Tables (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1980), 463, for rural households.

^b Shail Jain, *Size Distribution of Income* (Washington, D.C.: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 1975) table 21.

^c World Economic and Social Indicators (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, July 1978); M. S. Ahluwalia, N. G. Carter, and H. B. Chenery, *Growth and Poverty in Developing Countries* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1978); G. Sheehan and M. Hopkins, *Basic Needs Performance* (Washington, D.C.: International Labor Organization, 1978).

^d See R. Eckaus and A. Mohie-Eldin, *Consequences of Changes in Subsidy Policy* (Cairo: DRTPC, Cairo Univ., 1980). See also R. Eckaus, D. MacCarthy, and A. Mohie-Eldin, *General Equilibrium Policy Models for Egypt* (Cairo: Cairo Univ./MIT Technology Adaptation Program, 1978).

^e Social Indicators of Development 1988 (Washington, D.C.: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank), 77.

military studies. The themes of Islamic orientation are set out in the military's monthly magazine *al-Mujahid*.⁵⁷

The Infitah: A Critical Catalyst

The increasing maldistribution of income as a consequence of President Sadat's policies of economic liberalization (*al-Infitah*) has been frequently cited as a primary catalyst of Islamist militancy. Indeed, the available evidence points to a growing income gap between rich and poor. This is manifest in table 6, which represents an aggregation of comparable data from seven different sources. In 1964–1965, the top 5 percent of Egyptian households received 19.2 percent of the income, while by 1979 their share had increased to 22 percent. During the same period, the income of the poorest 20 percent had increased slightly, by 0.5 percent. The income distribution gap becomes more pronounced when the figures for 1964–1965 under Nasser's socialism are compared with those of 1976, when liberalization was in full swing. During these eleven years, the income of the lowest 60 percent of the population declined precipitously, from 28.7 percent to 19.93 percent. Meanwhile, the middle 30 percent experienced an almost 50 percent income loss, from 40.2 percent to 21.52 percent. An equally significant finding evidenced by the figures in Table 6 was the growing affluence

of the upper classes under al-Infatih: the income of the richest 10 percent increased dramatically from 31.9 percent in 1964–1965 to 58.55 percent in 1976—almost a doubling of the wealth of Egypt's economic elite.

Despite the limitations of income distribution data, it is evident that the trend is toward greater income disparity and potential class conflict. In terms of political stability, the most disconcerting development is the substantial reduction of middle-class incomes as well as those of the lowest 60 percent of the population. It is no accident that these classes constitute a primary recruitment source of Islamist activists. Intense feelings of relative deprivation generate animosity toward the regime and its Westernized allies in the private sector who profited under Sadat's policies. While lower-middle-class elements find it difficult to gain entrance into the middle class, many members of this class have progressively lost their economic status and regressed into the lower middle class. There is no evidence that these patterns have been reversed in recent years.

State Responses

The Egyptian authorities and the media commonly refer to the youthful Islamic radicals as the "lost generation" (*al-jil al-da'ir*). This is a correct description of reality because the Egyptian polity has failed to properly socialize large numbers of idealistic youth in the post-Nasser era. However, it appears that the "lost generation" includes not only the youth but also the older and more settled occupational categories like workers, shopkeepers, military and police officers, engineers, professors, doctors, and even landowners. This is partly revealed in the published reports on the occupational background of 303 al-Jihad members arrested before Sadat's assassination. The detainees represented a cross-section of Egyptian society (table 7).⁵⁸

Since the early Nasser era, Egyptian policy toward Islamism has combined coercive and co-optative measures to deal with this persistent challenge to state authority. Nasser's success in dealing with the Brotherhood was the consequence of his extraordinary charismatic appeal, combined with an unusually effective intelligence service. The charismatic appeal had substantially undermined the Brotherhood's ideological potency. Sadat could find no substitute for charisma; nor was he capable of developing his own ideological formulas to educate and socialize millions of Egyptian youth. Consequently, the ideological vacuum, which Sadat himself helped to create through de-Nasseriza-

Table 7
 Tanzim al-Jihad Members: *Occupational Background*

Occupation	Number
College and university students	112
Workers	41
College and university graduates	31
Employees and bureaucrats	26
Fugitives	21
Secondary school students	17
Military, police, and intelligence officers	11
Businessmen and shopkeepers	10
Engineers	7
Unemployed	7
Landowners	6
Physicians	6
Professors	4
Teachers	3
Journalists	1
Total	303

tion, was partially filled by the Islamist *da'wah* of the Brotherhood and its offshoots, to the detriment of the Egyptian state. The tragedy of Egypt was that neither Sadat nor his associates were principally concerned with the indoctrination-socialization process to educate the youth in becoming loyal citizens. Thus, Sadat's tactical move to let loose the Islamists against the Nasserists proved dysfunctional. All Sadat could offer the average Egyptian was the tenuous promise of joining the new private sector, with the hope of acquiring instant affluence. While some succeeded admirably, for millions of ambitious aspirants Sadat's utopian promises proved deeply disappointing. His call to Egyptian patriotism, after the moderate success of October 1973, sounded hollow in the absence of an "honorable" Arab-Israeli peace and the ever-growing gap between the conspicuous millionaires and the middle and lower classes. The periodic arrests and executions of militant leaders were not useful in promoting long-range stability, in view of the regime's lack of ideological, spiritual, and material incentives to capture the loyalties of the people. Moreover, Sadat was reluctant to institute major reforms to contain the illegal practices of some relatives and associates. His purge of the Lawyer's Syndicate and promulgation of the "Law of Shame" were designed to stifle the opposition through legal means. Also, the regime mobilized the religious

bureaucracy of Azharite shaykhs to unleash propaganda campaigns through the media and the mosques against the Islamist groups. This elaborate counterpropaganda of the religious establishment was intensified in the wake of Sadat's assassination. In order to discredit the Jihad group, the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Shaykh Jad al-Haq, unearthed an obscure *hadith* where the Prophet is reported to have advised the faithful to obey a Muslim government even though its members might engage in theft and adultery.⁵⁹ The shaykh called upon the people to obey the authorities because the Mubarak government had promised to initiate reforms to correct the injustices of the past. Indeed, some of these reforms were soon implemented, focusing on a limited democratization of political life that further strengthened the Islamist trend in Egyptian society.