
CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC POLITICAL IDEA: THE CLASH OF REFORMIST SPIRIT AND EXTREMIST-RADICAL MENTALITY*

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The main task of the present study is to reveal the nature of the intellectual and methodological transformation of contemporary Islamic political ideas and also to link them to the issues of globalization. The author discloses the nature of the interdependence between globalization and the phenomenon of modern Islamism. Moreover, he puts into the spotlight the continuing conflict between two main movements, namely the reformist and the conservative ones. The present article unveils the nature of the situation when the conservative and traditional tendencies with their various extremist and primitive forms are exposed. This, in turn, indicates the future of Islamic political thought and raises many fundamental questions related to the perspective of rational alternatives instead of the future of 'political Islam.'

The dramatic reversal in the course of unfolding of the Islamic idea and its transition from the state of the reformist idea to the most primitive forms indicates the nature of the historic crisis of Islamic political idea. It also reflects the tragedy of the reformist idea. In this case, we find an intellectual and ideological reflection of the nature of the Islamic world's historical and cultural path. We also pinpoint the attempts to break out of the dominance of the major paradigms of the religious-political stage towards modernity. In all the experiences of the nations, the fate of religious reform was not easy. Furthermore, it usually goes through violent and bloody stages. However, it denies the religious idea itself, which necessarily leads to its replacement by rational philosophical alternatives. Here lies the problematic future for the Islamic world.

Keywords: *al-Afghani, al-Banna, M. Abdo, Ali 'Abd al-Raziq, fundamentalism, globalization, Islamism, Islamic centrism, Islam reformation, Political Islam, radicalism, religious extremism, Rashid Rida, Sayyid Qutb.*

Introduction

The study of the history of Islamic political thought and of the evolution of its significant schools shows that it reflects the essence of significant shifts in the history of state and culture. A researcher may trace major trends and conceptual paradigms, key 'founding stages' of the formation of a state, Weltanschauung, and political system, the essential binary aspects such as religion and politics, that were explicitly reflected in religion, power, and society (*i.e.*, the political system), and many other phenomena.

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One of the remarkable paradoxes associated with the rise of the modern Islamist political tendency is that it emerged and prevailed at a time when the general and growing mood was of 'the triumph of the revolutionary approach,' secularism, science, and progress, of everything accumulated over the centuries of modernization. The Islamist movement surfaced as if by a magic wand. It was somewhat reminiscent of paganism, mythology claiming the gods are not easy to turn away from their goals.

From the cultural and historical points of view, contemplating the old models is nothing but clear evidence that the theoretical and practical consciousness has not overcome the remnants of the cultural and religious stage, its theological mentality in assessing the existing reality and its promises. It is not yet able to view the contemporaneity through the prism of the future, nor can it scrutinize what is to come in the light of the future. In this regard, addressing the past becomes an act that is imperative to consciousness and behavior. At the same time, it morphs into a necessary action that helps overcome the dominance of the religious-theological approach and move from it to a higher stage of the historical development of nations and consciousness. The modern Islamic phenomenon 'repeats' this conceptual course, yet practically vanquishing it as part and parcel of the level of contemporary Islamic centrism (Al-Janabi 2018: 69–85).

The unity of religion and worldly life was a dogmatic and ideological norm, dissolved and influenced in most conceptual and practical problems of Islamic political thought, which made it a universal, inevitable paradigm of Islamic history at the levels of sense and reason. Unity is inseparable from those features that accompanied the transformation of Islam into a state religion. Consequently, it was sacralized from the very beginning, becoming an ideological tool of power, used even in the most banal situations.

Historically, this was due to the peculiarity of the celebration and the spread of Islam. The triumph of Islam as a religion manifested in the possibility of the state's subsequent victory (*Caliphate*), which was a practical reflection of its spiritual, moral, doctrinal, and ideological power. Islam created the state and the nation (*ummah*) as a reality and, at the same time, as an idea. In this regard, both the state and the nation shared original historical and metaphysical features.

Globalism and Islamism

After the Cold War, the problems of the 'Islamic threat' and the 'clash of civilizations' came to the forefront of the ideological and political struggle. The emergence of the idea of the 'Islamic threat' captured the importance of Eurocentric political traditions, that is traditions that are separate from the rationalistic and humanistic cultural heritage of Europe and, in some respects, complement the irrational heritage of the same European culture.

In other words, even when realizing and rationally substantiating the barbarity of some Islamic Salafist radical movements, Europe remains in captivity of the clichés that have long been present in the Eurocentric ideological and political traditions. Hence the immediate and frightening replication of these approaches in all means of video, audio, and printed information in case of any terrorist act. Perhaps, a classic example is a reaction to the 9/11 events. Even though the number of nefarious deeds and barbaric murders committed by the U.S. and Europe over the past centuries and the last decades,

including what has been and is happening in Iraq since its occupation by U.S. troops, is thousands of times greater than the actions of Islamists (Esposito 1992).

It is not so much an artificially created phenomenon as a reflection of the essence of a distorted perception of what can be called the prospects of hidden potential alternatives to the 'Islamic world'. Thus, the lack of intuition capable of grasping and comprehending the new relations between Islam and politics through the prism of possible alternatives, and the links between political interests and possible options through the prism of their natural belonging to own historical and cultural heritage.

One may notice this concealed connection behind the ideological formula that began to spread after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the birth of the idea of 'the end of history,' that is the annoying propaganda of the American model's uniqueness. It found its 'ideological' response in the 'clash of civilizations,' which was only a private hypothesis before the dramatic events that accompanied the temporary reign of 'unipolarity,' the unfolding of various ideological models of Pax Americana. The orientalist Bernard Lewis presented several similar judgments about Islam in his article *The Roots of Muslim Rage* (Lewis 1990), as well as in his book *Islam and the West*, published in 1993 (Lewis 1993). As for Samuel Huntington, such a transformation, a slow coup can be felt, for instance, in the evolution of his views on the subject (Huntington 1991; 1993: 22–49; 1996).

In the first half of the twentieth century, the attitudes towards Islam were determined by the approach set out in the British Encyclopedia: Islam was the object and material of historical research. Like all civilizations and cultures of the past, it was considered a historical phenomenon and a part of a heritage. However, the dramatic events that accompanied the Iranian Revolution (1978–1979) forced a review of this approach (for the analysis of religious revolutions, see Grinin 2018, 2019). Islam turned into a new 'mystery,' which overnight awakened various old and modern mythological, religious-theological and scientific traditions. They mixed with powerful political and ideological traits, which were elements of a turbulent historical stage, described by the climax of revolutionary romanticism on a global scale.

Not by chance that the European term *Islamisme* was introduced in France in the 1970s–1980s (Grinin and Korotayev 2019: 37–48), dyed, however, in violet, awakening sympathy, and empathy. It was a reflection of revolutionary moods in Europe and, in particular, in France in the late 1960s, as well as in the 'third world' of that time, where leftist movements, schools of thought, and ideologies, diverse in form, content, and orientation, matured and developed. For the first time, there were signs of distinction between old Islam as a cultural heritage and new Islam as a political and ideological heritage. That viewpoint left its footprint in the demarcation between Islam (religious and cultural) and Islamism (religious and political). This led to differences in interpretation and explanation, and consequently in viewpoints and judgments. Some believed that Islam is not a political religion (Halliday 2000; Esposito and Burgat 2003), some that Islam's political and cultural components share roots.

On the other hand, others saw Islamism as a fairly common phenomenon that could be found in various regions of the world at the time: for example, the *liberation theology* in South America, militant Buddhism in Sri Lanka, and Sikh nationalism in Punjab.

However, Islam stands out by rejecting ethnic and national differences (Grinin and Korotayev 2019: 53–56).

A variety of views were also expressed on the definition of *Islamic fundamentalism*. A few thought that one of the essential features of Islamic fundamentalism was the ‘opening of the gate of ijtihad’ (Esposito 1998, 2002; Esposito and Burgat 2003). Some saw it as a private, secondary phenomenon, different from what is commonly considered Islamism, and in line with the most rigorous and conservative approaches. It focuses on the paramount importance of Sharia as the most crucial element of Islam. Several authors saw fundamentalism as more than Islamism (Pelletreau 1994: 2). The others did not find a significant difference between the two terms on the assumption that the intentions and goals of proponents of fundamentalist and of Islamist movements are identical – at least in the modern American interpretation (Kramer 2003: 65–77). Selected researchers have argued that all these are nothing more than a shell under which a wide variety of movements are hidden: fanatical and pluralistic, who value and oppose scientific knowledge, who aim at achieving humility and fear of God, and who are prone to political action, who are democratic and despotic, peaceful and aggressive.

Most interpretations have a fundamental flaw as follows: their authors psychologically seek to find the causes of existing problems and justify the prospects by building the challenge elements. The difference is that European interpretations focus on the idea of confrontation with the West, while Arab and Muslim authors shape their ideas to the existing perspectives and challenge themselves.

One can say that a huge number of various academic works, similar to the salt particles, dissolve into the sea of propaganda and information. This gradually leads to the transfer of the problem from historical and philosophical research to the arena of ideological, political, and cultural struggle. The mass media and propaganda present the complicated problem as the most obvious one, objected to questioning. Diverse in quality and level, the scientific research mixes with audio and video propaganda and information from print and electronic sources. Ultimately, this has resulted in the predominance of what may be called modern global sophistry in defining the essence, nature, and prospects of the Islamic phenomenon.

By global sophistry here, we mean nothing more than a growing immersion in a competitive search for everything supporting novelty, a renewal concerning the mysteries of the modern Islamic phenomenon – and, at the same time, an attempt to reduce it to the notion of ‘political Islam’ in such a way that it combines everything that has to do with Islam. As a result, the political aspects of Islam turn into a fundamental indicator, perhaps the only and comprehensive indicator of the *Islamic phenomenon*.

Islamism and Globalism

One of the axioms of modern academic reflections on globalization is that it is a unique global developmental stage. Globalization is an objective historical phenomenon; it is a certain manifestation of global capitalist development. Consequently, it expresses a set of aspects and depends on capitalism and its peculiarities, living, and sharp contradictions. This phenomenon embodies the history of modernity, postmodernity, and the digital revolution. Globalization is an integrated political, economic, and cultural-historical process, yet it is a ‘Western’ phenomenon in the historical sense and has a European-

American origin. It has led to the crystallization of individual samples of values and relations. Everything that has happened is done per the standards of the exceptional experience of the West. This process has led to extensive and complex problems over time due to the emergence and development of noticeable political, economic, and cultural centers. Since the European-American 'way' is based on competition and hegemony, this leads to the accumulating of contradictions and tough positions in relation to everything that seems strange by the standards of one's own values. That is evident in the relatively new Islamic circumstance, or what is called 'Islamism'. Contradictions characterize globalization, like any living and great story. It is immeasurably cruel because of the priority and domination of capital.

The problem of Islam and globalization is of great interest. A significant number of studies aim at revealing the mechanism and quality of impact of globalization on Islam and the latter's place and attitude towards globalization. These studies examine Muslims' cultural reactions to transformations, contradictions, and challenges faced by modern Islam on the way to the twenty-first century. The spread of the population, globalization of culture, and postmodernist forces have shocked the world more than ever. These events have far-reaching consequences for the Muslim world and relations between Islam and the West (Ahmed and Donnan 1994).

Benjamin R. Barber, for example, raises the Islamic concept of jihad to the level of a polar subject in modern history, associated with the global world (McWorld), that is the ongoing globalization as it looks from the perspective of the United States and Western Europe. Barber believes that the violence, tearing apart many so-called Muslim societies, means not only a severe internal crisis but also a protest that all societies, even in the West, share against the blind forces of globalization called the McWorld (Barber 1996).

Another researcher, Mohammad Arkoun, stressed that with globalization, economic, financial, and technological forces had reached the apotheosis and priority in the historical process, depriving abstract idealism of its spiritual, philosophical, moral, political, and legal values. In terms of real application, it was concluded that economic and financial globalization forces are nowadays not interested in supporting people, just like the bourgeois capitalist colonizers of the nineteenth century. They were concerned with the emancipation of women, the working class, or, even more so, the colonized peoples.

When asked whether Islam is insulated from globalization, Arkoun responds, it is clear to what extent Islam, like other living traditions of thought, culture, and belief, is vulnerable to insurmountable cyclone of globalization. Consequently, it makes no sense to view Islam as a kingdom isolated from the history of religions, cultures, and civilizations (Arkoun 2000: 179–221). Many studies have resulted from comprehending the relationship between globalization and Islam at the local levels, such as in the Arab world, Central Asia, Turkey, Indonesia, Pakistan, and other countries.

The Arab world claims that globalization is a conspiracy against Islam and Arab-Islamic culture. For many, it is a supplier of values of a morally corrupt West. Some Arab intellectuals are aware of the importance of the new world order and claim that if Arabs were prudent and rational, they could reap huge benefits and avoid negative aspects of globalization. Others argue that the problem is not whether Arabs and Muslims avoid globalization, but whether they are qualified and ready for it (Najjar 2005).

In Central Asia, Islam and globalization are seen from the perspective that all the republics face the same dilemma: how to enter into globalization and gain a place in the international arena, at the same time securing domestic stability by promoting order in a world context where 'Islamism' is perceived as the primary source of unrest. Most Central Asian states are tense and concerned about their policy of governing people belonging to religious societies.

One of the most crucial issues emerging from the problems of Islam and globalization is the issue of so-called 'Islamic terrorism' (Campbell 2002: 7–14). Simultaneously, Islam and the problem of terrorism are a complex and controversial phenomenon with its roots, functions, causes, and quality (Walton 2004: 303–312). However, after 9/11, it dissolved into a simple equation governed by the vision of media. Simultaneously, it has been considered in various and varied studies from the point of view of its scientific value, especially those related to this issue in the context of globalization.

Contrary to most expectations, globalization processes have been very violent and have generated new conflicts, hostility, and isolation worldwide. Originally, globalization was expected to expand the peace zone, providing economic prosperity that people would not want to sacrifice in conflicts. Instead, the imposition of structural adjustment, unpopular and unjust peace treaties, accompanied by the U.S. fight against terrorism, led to increased unrest and instability (Kellner 2005: 172–188).

Hence, the question arises: is it possible to have a globalized world without discrimination and aggression? The answers are different and sometimes opposed. Some think it is possible, implying readiness for dialogue and mutual understanding. Muslims are required to reapproach Islamic teachings to combat the misuse of the Quran and hadith and stereotypes and prejudice against Islam and Muslims (S. Praja 2002–2003: 39). Others believe that anti-Muslim prejudices have become a central problem in most Western societies, especially after 9/11. There is an even more serious aspect of Islamophobia: the influence of Christian fundamentalism on American foreign policy and attitude towards Israel. One of the theoretical consequences of globalization is that the difference between internal and external, both in domestic and foreign policy, disappears, and the interplay of modern societies means that political problems of one part of the world can easily 'contaminate' other countries (Roose and Turner 2016: 406).

These interpretations point to discrepancies in methodological and political positions when considering the new Islamic phenomenon. A one-sided and partial vision characterizes most of them, hence sharp contradictions and weakness of objective and scientific approach. Only a scholar's philosophical vision can resolve these contradictions in a sensible and profound way. That is what we prove through the concept of Islamic centrism. The systematic vision seeks to identify the traits and prospects of contemporary Islamic trends, their internal conflict, and the future struggle.

Islamism and Islamic Centrism

Everything that has happened and is going on in the *Muslim world* over the past two centuries is a different and heterogeneous form and level of the new natural and historical phenomenon of Islamic centrism. It is a necessary and transient one that is a link in the chain of historical evolution. Its contradictions and dynamics reflect the events of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries C.E. or fourteenth–fifteenth centuries by Muslim

chronology. Its concealed essence reflects the history of national and cultural consciousness, while in its external manifestations, it reflects the epoch of the nineteenth–twentieth centuries. Nevertheless, since the external chronological criterion is nothing more than a shell, which has no value for cultural centrism, we should talk about the value of research of our immanent development, leading to the activation of modern Islamism as one of the manifestations of new Islamic centrism.

The activation, theoretical, and practical (political) expansion of Islam reflects the activation and expansion of historical and political self-knowledge borders. This was both a consequence of the Islamic world's modern evolution and a continuation of its traditions.

Islamic centrism is not an emotional experience, not an independent state. It is an evolution that consists of unwrapping consciousness. At the same time, it represents the embodiment and perpetuation of the most sublime paradigms of historical and cultural consciousness. In this regard, it is diverse in form and content, and the phenomenon of modern Islamism is no more than one of its manifestations, one of its levels. Whether this centrism took the form of a direct political and ideological position in its conceptual consciousness, cultural and civilizational philosophy, practical counteraction, political response, or the assimilation of the ancestral heritage in a new way, it accompanied the formation of a new unity that began to accumulate as a way of survival and strengthening. Only in the conditions of such formation could the interpenetrating elements of consciousness, evaluating the course and prospects of events, take shape in the form of ideals. This inevitably forces us to look for material and moral pillars in the past to strengthen our self-confidence. That was the only justification for the present and necessary base of action. There is no self-confidence without corresponding free consciousness. Moreover, free self-consciousness emerges only through creativity, that is, through the ability to see and justify solutions and alternatives. In turn, this stimulates the tasks of reforming as a scientific and practical awareness of the return to the original principles, that is everything that eventually steers to transforming these principles into ideals or broad paradigms.

A reading of Islamic history shows that its ideals were different at different stages, from the first signs of unification to branches of the moral spirit with its endless secrets. However, barely being the object of attention of various radical schools, this diversity ceases to be a history of successive events, becoming a symbolic living whole, including its ideas, judgments, and old decisions' recipes. Objectively, this symbolic whole is identical to the Islamic whole, representing one of the forms and levels of political and civilization consciousness. It has created the latent and apparent prerequisites, both direct and indirect, for the establishment of Islamic centrism in the modern public consciousness. Moreover, since this process is not carried out through immanent self-rejection – due to long periods of decline and stagnation – to the extent that it did not turn into a major mental or moral revolution organizing it.

This explains the partial and useful meaning of chronological coincidence of the stage of modern Islamic (and national) revival with the era of European colonial conquests and counteraction. As a result, the Islamic unity has acquired the form of a spiritual and ideological paradigm for both traditional and new social forces. Gradually, this has piloted to the marginalization of the substantial unity of the Islamic whole, which

was frozen in an era of decline and chaos, thus awakening memories of forgotten achievements. This process was not harmonious in terms of its impact on social and political consciousness. As a result, the Islamic whole became the only repository of national, social, and civilization consciousness, which contributed to the 'rebirth' fueled by all movements without exception: Salafi, Reformed, and Renewed. This process has affected all forces, including the most indirect ones. Nevertheless, this was not the Islamic coherence for modern national consciousness in different Islamic world countries. It ended the dominance of Salafi Islam with its dead traditions. At the same time, the doors opened for new pluralism and diversity. Since this openness was not self-reliant but arose under external pressure, it undermined the psychology of challenge.

The rising challenge as a sufficient force, a strong dividing line between the two stories, cultures, and religious 'ummahs,' its formation in the absence of 'reasonable' parity could not fail to make a profound impact on the formation of the features of a new consciousness. The European domination, the desire to impose its civilizational norms, was supported by Europe's economic, scientific and industrial superiority, its cultural integration achieved in the course of fierce wars, breaking the traditional structure, overcoming the formation of ideological and cultural traditions of new Eurocentrism. The new confrontation between East and West, between the European colonial world, imbued with a spirit of domination, hegemony, and conquest, and the then Eastern worlds, including the Islamic world, gave the struggle a historical, cultural, and religious flavor.

If the Islamic world's military conquest was not easy, it was much harder to subjugate it in cultural and religious relations. This truth was not evident to European consciousness, generalized and colonial. In this sense, it was captivated mainly by illusions, identifying military and technological superiority with cultural and spiritual superiority. It was not aware of the truth that culture is a world with its own existence, especially if one speaks about a culture with ancient history, more ancient than European, and which has contributed to world history no less than European, and is in many ways superior to the latter in the sense that it laid the major original foundations of human culture in general.

However, in history, there are short periods when the consciousness fails to see the truth of its existence. This also happened to the European consciousness. It forgot or overlooked the historical nature of the cultural essence, which decayed in the course of evolution. But while for the European consciousness, which at the turn of the nineteenth–twentieth centuries was opposed to the world of Islam, such a situation seemed as a part of the historical game, imposed by the logic of civilizational coercion, for the Islamic cultural consciousness it seemed to be one of the vicissitudes of historical fate. In both cases, it gave rise to contradictory and opposite notions emerging in the self-awareness or in the ways of a deeper awareness of the Islamic world of its cultural identity.

This process has led to the emergence of a new Islamic world as a young political world deprived of massive culture. That process forced the traditionalist forces to retreat temporarily. However, later, with the failure of secular national projects, they brought to life the alternatives to 'political (nationalist) Islam' by calling for a return to the return to the original roots and by subordinating various parts and components to Islamic cultural history. Since then, the features of a new socio-political and cultural movement

started to take shape embodied in the Islamic forces representing a new ideological and practical element of the transitional stage to religious and political consciousness.

The Idea of Islam Reformation

From the very beginning, the Islam Reformation scrutinized itself through the criteria of rationalism and practical goals. As a result, the reformist idea was constrained by the task of a new perception of the problems of history and modernity, which obliged it to look into the horizons beyond the practical goals through the criteria of understanding cultural identity.

The reformers felt the power of decline and the weakness of cultural spirit, realized the immovability of the rational heritage and the unrestrained heritage of the traditional, everything that made it difficult to reconcile the 'militant' spirit with rationalism. This could drive both to the concentration of feelings of real politics and the filling of the attracted culture with a purely rationalistic spirit.

We should note that Islam Reformation has longstanding, comprehensive, and diverse traditions. It is related to the historical process of developing the state and culture and a number of issues of practical politics and thought. It is also connected with the real nature of Islam as a political religion. The Caliphate (an Arab state and Islamic empire) can be one of its examples and, at the same time, its implementation. The traditions of reform and reformist ideas have been varied, except for the adherents of The Hanbali School. As for the others, each of them has outstanding personalities.

A reformist idea usually emerges when the prospects of historical development are closed, and when decay and corruption penetrate all pores of social existence. The Islamic world faced this situation in the nineteenth century when anything transformed into a 'tender auction' or possible mining for European colonial centers. For instance, in the Arab world, we observe the new external and real features of reformist direction in the personalities and works of al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, al-Kawakibi, and others. In the Iranian world, they manifested themselves in the works of Muhammad Hossein Naini, in the Indian – in the works of Syed Ahmad Khan, Syed Ameer Ali, and Muhammad Iqbal. Such figures as Şihabetdin Märcani, Husain Faizhanov, Ismail Gaspirali, Musa Yarulla Bigiev, Miftahetdin Akmulla, and many others stand out in the Turkic-Russian world.

In their theoretical works and observed activities, we unveil the peculiarity of the reformist approach to the quantity and quality of social, political, cultural, and spiritual transformations in the Muslim world at the time. It is of utmost importance that these thinkers restored the binary nature of religion and secular life from a new perspective and without transforming it into a theological paradigm.

For example, al-Afghani (1838–1897) was 'manoeuvre' between two cold currents: a sick despotic Ottoman state and a strong expansionist West. Instead, he and Muhammad Abdo (1849–1905) laid the first stones in the foundation of political consciousness with its history. This process implies an awareness of the purpose and meaning of action. As a result, it was difficult for Islam Reformation to grasp the initial limits of its political rationality. The Reformation was to search the limits of cultural rationality through a continuous appeal to the preserved civilizational, literary, and scholastic heritage.

Al-Afghani shifts the meaning of political action from doctrinal and scholastic reasoning to the realm of the broadest existence of state and nation. He defines the political essence of reforms not in the context of an ideological system but in an acting capacity. Keeping this in mind, we should understand his suggestion that the obstacles facing reform are an arena of action and activity. Al-Afghani speaks about the importance of education as a prologue to political action. He traces the reformist political aspects of the Christianity, demanding 'imitation' of it, which meant nothing more than studying its trustworthy sources in Islam. Al-Afghani believes that a reformist movement that calls for free action and denies any mediation between God and people is the 'imitation of the Islamic religion' with its fundamental attitudes.

Al-Afghani tried to politically substantiate the Islamic doctrine during the ascent of reformist 'cultural Islam,' deriving strength and creative energy from this process. The legacy of Islam was linked to modernity in such a way as to justify the concepts of state and power, as well as the social, political, and cultural unity of the Muslim world.

Al-Afghani aligned the concepts of unity and power with the fundamental doctrines of Islam. He writes that consent and joint action are 'powerful pillars, strong pillars of Islamic religion, an indispensable duty of those who adhere to it' (al-Afghani 1960: 2.354). He exalts unity in views and deeds to the highest standard of Sharia, not reducing the issue to theological and legal traditions yet putting it in connection with the real activation of socio-political action (al-Afghani 1960: 2.355).

As for his standpoint on the necessity of state and its political form, he was inclined to recognize a republic, a limited monarchy, or a constitutional monarchy as acceptable forms of government. His choice of a constitutional democratic system is related to the persuasion that this system is an optimal embodiment of political virtue and a form of its social and moral realization. However, al-Afghani does not resolve to criticism of state brutality, oppression, and infamy. He sketches a fine example of a 'knowledgeable' or 'consultative' government as an ideal. There is no room for despotism in a state governed by such a government because its residents can manage their affairs (al-Afghani 1960: 80). Moreover, 'negotiation' does not equal to the traditional 'Shura'. Preferably, it corresponds to the democratic constitutional order. Nevertheless, there is still no reliance on a philosophical vision of history. There are only indications of the external features of one or another government. Still, the real prerequisites for its social and economic rejection are not considered, which was natural since the rational significance of action at that time was based only on itself. Hence, the crucial role of knowledge, reason, morality, and cultural heritage. The endless combination of all these factors in Islam Reformation's practical critical positions ushered to identifying the importance and decisive role of politics. Al-Afghani comes to this conclusion through his reflections and practical activities.

Although Muhammad Abdo's path was relatively different in his political stance, it complements and broadens the scope of reformist ideas by focusing on cultural, academic, and educational aspects. This difference is reflected in Abdo's profound elements of 'political interpretation' of Islamic history and his moral and psychological 'disgust' with politics. Answering those who find the reason for the underdevelopment of the Muslim world in its internal conflicts which, unlike in the Christian world, are related to religious and doctrinal issues, Abdo points out that conflicts and wars in Islam

have never occurred due to reasons related to religious beliefs. Ash'arites did not fight with Mu'tazilites and philosophers, and they also did not fight with others, despite intense differences. As for the conflicts and wars waged by the Kharijites, Qarmatians, and Abbasids against the Umayyads, they were fought for political reasons. Despite the aspiration to clear the old conflicts from religious and dictatorial motivations, this statement, along with its academic accuracy, reflects Muhammed Abdo's desire to present the events of Muslim history as facts of political history.

The scholar links the power of politics with the psychology of adventurism, lack of truth, and spread of vicious passions. If this formulation reflects the moral and reformatory spirit of Abduh's attitude toward the 'history of politics,' it represents a specific criticism of the Ottoman Empire. In its 'policy of spreading the ideas of passivity, obedience to fate, acceptance of myths,' he reveals not only a contradiction and even a direct antithesis to the foundations of Islam but also the way to preserve political dominance (Abdo 1987: 124). He regards it as a 'policy of oppressors and selfish people,' bringing to religion what is alien to it. As a result of such policies, Islam is not Islam, but its truncated image (Abdo 1987: 124–125).

In general, we may say that Muhammad Abdo's apparent disgust with politics, when recognizing its significance for the events of ancient history and contemporary reality is a reflection of the reformist understanding of the significance of political efficiency, or consciousness, imbued with high ethical values merged into the notion of the priority of rights and the law.

Islam Reformation: From Revolution to Salafism

Muhammad Abduh continued al-Afghani's reform, while al-Kawakibi was moving toward a purely political dimension, molding his design of reform into a primarily political sphere, serving as the ideology of the state and nation. Hence, his emphasis on the critique of tyranny in the book *The Nature of Despotism* and the establishment of alternatives in the writing *Mother of Towns*. This trio of thinkers was the source of the political and revolutionary reformist idea of that time. Meanwhile, Muhammad Rashid Rida's contribution turned into what can be called a departure from the revolutionary spirit to Salafism.

Rashid Rida's (1865–1935) ideological and spiritual formation was influenced by the frozen attitudes towards the idea of reform, which were present in Islamic thought isolated from real history turbulence. Rida calls al-Ghazali's *The Revival of the Religious Sciences* his primary source of ideas. It was only by a happy coincidence that his acquaintance with al-Afghani and Muhammed Abduh's *Al-Urwah al-Wuthqa* magazine helped him shift from the reform of Islam's old idea to the idea of a new Islam Reformation.

In his personal development, Rida turned his teacher's, Muhammad Abduh's, reformist idea into a dried-up mummy made in the dim light of the lantern, in the darkness of ascent to the foggy future of the Arabs. Rashid Rida received Abduh's consent to establish *Al-Manar* magazine ('The Lighthouse') and secured his support for the idea of interpreting the Quran. The echoes of this deal are in the ideological and political assessment given by Rashid Rida to the life and practice of Muhammed Abduh. Rida proceeds from the attitude of Evelyn Baring, 1st Earl of Cromer, the British controller-

general in Egypt, towards Abduh rather than from a holistic view of Abduh's scholar and practical activities (Rida 1934a: 276–288).

The Salafī complex, covertly present in Rashid Rida's *Weltanschauung* and attitude towards the reform, gradually modified his assessment of Abduh's content, purpose, and reformist objectives idea. Rida's political thought climax occurred with him raising the question of the Arab state and its political structure. At that time, the issue condensed around the Caliphate (Rashid Rida 1922). Rida's stance was not harmonious enough. It was based more on Salafist scholastic than on Reformation. It did not take into account the colossal coup d'état carried out by the Islam Reformation in the system of ideological and political concepts and values through al-Afghani's efforts, Muhammad Abduh, and al-Kawakibi.

The critical and rationalistic spirit of the principles of Islam Reformation is obscured and vanished. Muhammad Rashid Rida declares the enemies of the authentic Sunnah and Islam everyone, for example, opposing the Wahhabis (the Saudis) (Rida 1934b: 7). He puts an equal sign between the 'true Sunnah,' 'true Islam,' and the Salafists. Siding with the Wahhabis, Rida declares them the perfect representatives of true Islam. Moreover, by justifying this attitude to them, he revives outdated theological and legal concepts such as *bid'ah* (a reprehensible innovation), declaring them necessary components of the 'methodological' approach. As a result, Rashid Rida has to put the very idea of Islam reformation *behind* Wahhabism, and therefore – to link and push its rational and humanistic content, putting it in a subordinate position to the rigid and primitive doctrine.

In defending Wahhabism, Rashid Rida proceeds from the need to fight against heretical novelty, claiming that any such innovation is a mistake, a departure from the right path (Rida 1934b: 2). He describes the Wahhabis as 'people who hold the Sunnah of the Messenger of God.' In this regard, the philosopher appreciates Ibn Taymiyyah, describing his ideas as one of the high examples of Islamic thought (Rida 1934b: 4–5). Rashid Rida assigns merit to Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, naming him a reformer of Islam, who preached the true Sunnah. Rida also has the highest regard for the followers and descendants of Abd al-Wahhab and Nejd's emirs of the Al Saud clan (Rida 1934b: 6).

Rashid Rida's political standpoints accumulate and form the dogmatic and political chains that shackle the spirit of Islam Reformation and increasingly bind it to obsolescence and Salafism. Rida's take on the historical decline of the idea of reformation, his appraisal of Wahhabism as a dedicated advocate of Islam and the Sunnah, his high esteem of Abdulaziz ibn Abdul Rahman Al Saud as a model of the skilled state official, his perception of the Saudi Wahhabi state as an apotheosis of monotheism and independence, testifies to the hidden deformation of the idea of the reformation in general and its political vector in particular. We can mention that what he did, led to the justification of the *Neo-Salafism* trend, giving the old ideas *shine of novelty*.

In terms of their potential, Rida's ideas were a return to the most traditionalist and indirect examples of 'reformist' heritage in Islam. He was unable further to develop the conclusions of the Islam's reformers, to push the reformation to new boundaries against the background of the collapse of the Caliphate, which made his ideas a contradictory source of both the emerging trend of Islamic liberalism (Ali 'Abd al-Raziq) and the

most radical Salafist movement (Muslim Brotherhood). Rida's influence on the emergence of al-Raziq's critical ideas means that it helped the latter write his famous book *Islam and the Foundations of Rule*, which, in terms of deep motivation, was the first theoretical response to Muhammad Rashid Rida's political ideas about the (Islamic) political system.

The Last Impulse of the Islam Classical Reformation

Ali 'Abd al-Raziq's (1888–1966) book *Islam and the Foundations of Rule: Research on the Caliphate and Government in Islam* was not a political response to the Egyptian monarchy's desire to monopolize cultural and political symbols and use them for its selfish interests. Instead, it was an ideological response to Rashid Rida's Salafism and his attempt to justify 'Islamic governance theoretically.' Consequently, it was an ideological and political response to a state and cultural project to be seen behind the prospects for a new rise in the Arab world (al-Raziq 1988: 2).

The 'religious flavor' imparted to the Caliphate, as al-Raziq writes, is associated with external and accidental causes that do not stem from Islam itself. Furthermore, the religion of Islam 'doesn't align with the Caliphate, which supposedly all Muslims should recognize' (al-Raziq 1988: 123). The Caliphate does not connect with religious plans. Based on this, Ali 'Abd al-Raziq makes an ideological and political conclusion that the Caliphate, with its history, is an element of a purely political project to which 'religion has nothing to do with. It is the false traditional reverence for the Caliphate as the highest model of strengthening a weak state that determined its cultural stagnation, civilizational closure, and lack of prospects for the future.' Al-Raziq's criticism of the Caliphate and his call for a review of its historical existence meant that it was necessary to review the state's historical experience to avoid the tradition of constant reversal.

The philosopher seeks to justify legitimacy of political and ideological pluralism without imposing preference on a particular system. He connects the achievements of Islam reformation with the aspirations of the democratic liberal spirit of the early twentieth century. It served as an initial prologue to contemporary Muslim secularism, both in terms of its political and cultural spheres and the possibility of combining both within projects of promising alternatives.

Muhammad Rashid Rida's Salafism led to various Salafi movements (Muslim Brotherhood and the like). In contrast, Ali 'Abd al-Raziq's views contributed to the emergence of political and ideological schools of 'cultural Islam.' Nevertheless, we should emphasize that the historical crossroads at which Islam Reformation found itself were due to the contradictory nature of its constituent elements. It was a natural process, typical of any original course trying to renew something that can be redesigned, to combine what is compatible, responding to major changes in social and political life. Social and political life is always an axis of renewal, a criterion of realism or illusive-ness, truthfulness or falsehood, correctness, or error of ideas.

The Collapse of Reformism and the Rise of Contemporary Islamic Radicalism

Expanding his attitude towards Islam reformism, Hassan al-Banna stresses, 'Al-Afghani defined the problems and warned of them. Muhammad Abduh taught and thought. Rashid Rida was creating treatises. They are all reformers and moralists who lack a com-

prehensive Islamic vision' (al-Banna 1960: 8). The aforementioned inevitably steered to a radical denial of rationalist Islam reformism's traditions as just a vision, learning, and creating without a holistic approach and practical action.

The Muslim Brotherhood carried a complex sum of prerequisites scattered along various movements of cultural and nationalist Arabism, reformist and Salafi Islamism, Arabized and Westernized liberalism. These prerequisites were not so much part of these currents as were taken from them and combined in purely Islamist building material. Hassan al-Banna sought to combine all intentions and concerns in an experiment of the 'Islamic mind,' which was not yet fully molded at the time.

Al-Banna follows the traditions of 'true Islam' accumulated by various theological schools and Islamic theoretical thought that affirmed the identity of Islam to human nature. In this regard, al-Banna rejects any movement that diverges from Islam's 'naturalness,' regardless of their source, form, and content. He seeks to come close to the 'true naturalness of Islam' – which is evident in such fundamental mottos as *Our constitution is the Quran*, *Example for us is the Messenger*, and *Our way is jihad*.

The embodiment of ancient and modern Islamic lessons in the ideology of the '*new call*' is achieved, as al-Banna says, 'because their (the Muslim Brotherhood's) ideas will embrace all aspects of life reform.' He sees his movement as a set-up for total reform, which is designed to encompass beliefs and creeds, morals and norms of behavior, spirit and body, politics and science, economy, and social life.

The statement that Islam's teachings and institutions cover all aspects of earthly and otherworldly life and are suitable for any given time and place is nothing more than an ideological formula for realizing the significance of addressing the 'original principles.' The appeal to practical Islam is a renewed synthesis of political doctrine, a situation when Islam morphs into an independent political ideology based on its basic dogmas.

Al-Banna's views on 'Islamic governance' were a public response to the process associated with the Caliphate's collapse and the awareness of an independent state's importance, which is ingrained in Arab social and political consciousness. If Rashid Rida got ahead of him by proposing this notion for the first time, he still had it, says al-Banna, as part of purely theoretical research. Al-Banna states that for the Muslim Brotherhood's rendition of Islam, the government system is one of the main pillars. In Islam, it is not the subject of theological and legal interpretations, but one of central pillars of the main dogmas. This predetermines al-Banna's critical attitude towards Muslim reformers who did not seek power.

For al-Banna, the Islamic state is not just a guarantee of true freedom, but also a means of reconstructing Islamic existence and implementing its global mission of promoting the Islamic call. It also represents a way to achieve a fair system and social solidarity. It encapsulates the unity of the fundamental imperative that Islamic governance must embody and defend a religious idea. It is an entity in and through which various manifestations of unity and principle are embodied. The government's function is nothing more than to 'be a servant, its employee, who protects its interests.' Thus, the government is nothing more than an employee of society. Al-Banna justifies the function of the Islamic government by the criteria of Islamic 'permission and prohibition.'

These views served as a prologue for al-Banna's attitude towards the nature of Islamic governance and its political system. Thus, he Islamizes the parliamentary and

constitutional system, boldly synthesizing its foundations with what he calls the norms of Islamic governance. From a Quran-based society's contract with the ruler, he tries to construct a model suitable for a free social contract, puts parliamentary elections on a par with Shura, and views the constitution as the embodiment of the Quranic model.

Al-Banna strives to emphasize the fundamental importance of unity for the system and the system for unity, identifying pluralism with the very essence of Islam. He tries to politicize this theological prologue by claiming that differences and disputes are not a precondition for the functioning of the representative system. Disagreement on secondary issues can be used for research, studies, consultations, and the search for a reasonable compromise that is in the common interest based on an Islamic vision.

Self-sufficiency in everything but not in terms of one's own experience and vision, but only with respect to Islam and its own traditions, was an idea that held a profound conservative essence and a radical appearance. It left space for extremism, an example of which is the ideology of Sayyid Qutb, who turned his idea of *Hakimiyyah and Jahiliyyah* (God's sovereignty and ignorance) into the poles of Islamic science and action.

From Radicalism to Extremism

The paradox describing Sayyid Qutb's take on the relationship between religion and secularism and his political stance, in general, is that the standpoint is the fruit of psychology, that is, a way of thinking that allows extracting arguments and evidence from oratory, rhetoric, and poetic taste. The thinker's political reflection is a purely theological and worldview construct. It is an artificial ideology built on the priority and paramount importance of religious sentiments, free from any problems of reality and preconditions of historical existence. He calls it the 'painful gap' between religion and mundane life.

However, the actual state of affairs and real history mean nothing to Qutb compared to the speculative constructions concerning the Islamic alternative. With the confidence of a visionary, he claims that the whole world is in a state of confusion, intoxication, it is enclosed 'in the cage of knowledge, constraining its legs. And if the world wants to jump, the highest leap will be repulsed by cage's grid.' This imposes a serious responsibility on 'bearers of Islamic methods' [Qutb 2001: 84]: they must indeed 'save humanity, whose existence is endangered.' One must have a 'holistic, comprehensive view of the problem and offer non-trivial solutions arising from this new comprehensive view' (Qutb 1993: 95).

Ideological convictions, inspired by 'abstract faith,' that is faith that goes beyond rational reality, logic, truth, knowledge, and nature, become a necessary prologue to irrational utopianism, isolation from perspective. Standing on this ground, Sayyid Qutb claims that 'the future belongs to Islam.' This future will arise not from real reality (present), not from the study of the logic of actual history, not from the truths of human existence and analysis of the real state of affairs, but from memories, myths, fairy tales, favored by child psychology and senile mentality.

The 'divine method' task is to reconstruct the universe, existence, human, system, beliefs, values, and concepts. The way to achieve this is simple and uncomplicated and guarantees results. It states that 'absolute domination in the human community belongs to God, the method of God; it is unacceptable for that absolute domination to belong

to anyone created by God or to a method created by anyone but God' (Qutb 1979: 44). To achieve this, 'special environment is needed in which such a representation, with all its specific values, will exist. It must not be a *Jahiliyyah* environment' (*Ibid.*: 45). In short, an *obligation* attitude is required. Everything else is nothing as long as all the elements of existence must conform to the wishes arising from this theological representation.

However, the religious consciousness, being the most rigid embodiment of tradition and the lack of free critical reason, that is consciousness defined by the prerequisites and norms of faith, perceives nothing but what is predestined to it. Therefore, it is fascinated and limited by verbal formulas that are adequate and the simplest compensation to wishful thinking. The authentic reality becomes just addition that can be attracted and used as needed.

The methodological and practical significance of Sayyid Qutb's political idea is not in its content, but in its Hanbali modus of thinking, based on the priority of a text lacking reason but containing just psychological pressure and rhetorical coercion.

Turning to the evolution of the contemporary Islam Reformation, we are revealing that its development was inclined both in theory and practice: from al-Afghani to Muhammad Abdo, from Muhammad Abduh to Rashid Rida, from Rashid Rida to Hassan al-Banna, and from him to Sayyid Qutb. Such theoretical and practical degradation over time led to the disappearance of the Islam reformist idea from the Muslim world's historical arena. Instead, the Hanbali tradition – both old and renewed (Wahhabism and similar schools of thought), that is the most reactionary trends in Islamic history in rationalistic, spiritual, and humanistic terms – started to dominate. On the other hand, various movements and individuals who still support and follow the original, rationalistic and humanist reformation continue to emerge, expanding the rational and realistic seeds in works of al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and al-Kawakibi. New movements also reflect the nature of major historical transformations that have taken place in the Islamic world in general and in the Arab world in particular, in addition to their position on a global scale.

Conclusion

The analysis of the main directions of Islam reforms and their theoretical and practical path shows that modern Islam renewal is not feasible in itself. For major historical, cultural and methodological reasons the stage of renewal is over. The era of religious reform is also over, since the time of religious and theological culture is left behind. Religious renovation in the context of the transition from religious theological to political and economic consciousness is either a superficial criticism of others for the lack of self-consciousness or preying secular thought, its total struggle to return to the human, nature, and future.

The Islamic political thought testifies to the weakness or absence of an ideological political system, of any authentic philosophy in the word's strict sense.

NOTE

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