Islamism and Totalitarianism
The Comparison Vulnerability
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This paper is an analysis of the parallels between the ideology of radical Islamism and the European totalitarian ideologies of the 20th century. It explores how a comparison between the deeper intellectual underpinnings of Islamism with those of historical western totalitarianisms may allow us a point of entry to deconstructing the ideology. A neutral research endeavour on the points of similarity would establish the nature and extent of the parallelisms, and to what extent these are due to contacts or simply parallel trajectories of thought that express deeper instincts. It would at the very least establish that the Islamist intellectual infrastructure does not represent a pure, unmingled standalone Truth, as its exponents claim, but is rather to be seen as a typical product of a broader spectrum of human ideological speculation.

A N ASSOCIATION of political totalitarianism with Islam is neither unknown nor particularly new. As far back as 1920 Bertrand Russell was intrigued by the parallels with the nascent Bolshevism. "Among religions" he wrote,

> Bolshevism is to be reckoned with Mohammedanism rather than with Christianity and Buddhism. Christianity and Buddhism are primarily personal religions, with mystical doctrines and a love of contemplation. Mohammedanism and Bolshevism are practical, social, unspiritual, concerned to win the empire of this world.

Russell went on to observe that

> Bolshevism combines the characteristics of the French Revolution with those of the rise of Islam....Marx has taught that Communism is fatally predestined to come about; this produces a state of mind not unlike that of the early successors of Mahommet … what Mohammedanism did for the Arabs, Bolshevism may do for the Russians.[1]

In similar vein, Carl Jung and Karl Barth were making comparisons with fascism in the late 1930s: "We do not know whether Hitler is going to found a new Islam" wrote Jung, "He is already on the way; he is like Muhammad. The emotion in Germany is Islamic, warlike and Islamic. They are all drunk with a wild man".[2] Barth's view was that "it is impossible to understand National Socialism unless we see it in fact as a new Islam, its myth as a new Allah, and Hitler as this new Allah's Prophet."[3] In 1937 Edgar Alexander Emmerich published *The Hitler Mythos* in which he compared National Socialism with 'Mohammedanism' and found similarities between them, although he stated that his interest in the comparison was on external organizational forms, mass psychological effects and militant fanaticism.

Historically the parallelism has been employed as a criticism of these totalitarian systems, not of Islamism. "Communism," wrote Jules Monnerot in the 1950s, was "the Islam of the 20th century" in that it was both 'a *secular religion*' and a '*universal state*.'[4] In 1963 Manfred Halpern noted how the Islamist ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood and its reconstruction of society through the "spiritualization of politics" was not in itself a unique phenomenon. It was, instead, a

> Middle Eastern version of fascism ... stamped ... by a kinship with certain religio-political movements which spread in Western Europe at the beginning of its modern age.[5]

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[1] Bertrand Russell, *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism.* London: George Allen and Unwin, 1920 pp.5,29,114.

[2] The Collected Works, Volume 18, *The Symbolic Life,* 1939, Princeton, Princeton University Press p. 281.

[3] K. Barth, *The church and the political problem of our day*, N.Y., Scribner, 1939.

[4] Jules Monnerot, *Sociology and Psychology of* Communism (*Sociologie du communisme tr.* Jane Degras and Richard Rees), London: Allen & Unwin, 1953.

[5] Manfred Halpern, *The Politics of Social Change in the Middle East and North Africa,* USAF Project RAND, September 1963, p.136.

At the time such a parallel was not recognised, since there was no compelling evidence of an expansionist programme of Islamist totalitarians on which to base the comparison, while contemporary developments in the emergent Islamist politics were still far below the horizon and of interest to only a few Orientalists. The Orientalist and former communist Maxime Rodinson at the time considered Monnerot's views as 'paradoxical, almost heretical', but later came to believe that with respect to its 'coercive orthodoxy' "Islam and communism display an astonishing similarity." Monnerot's work is now increasing in relevance, but with his argument inversed: Islamism is now the 'communism of the 21st century.' Similarly, as Walter Laqueur illustrates, Manfred Halpern's analysis of the fascist nature of the neo-Islamic totalitarian movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, was not considered at the time, since they appeared on the wane. They were, however, "to some extent prescient."[6]

The comparison of Islamism and totalitarianism is not without its critics. The association with Fascism has been particularly controversial, but much of the criticism has had to do with superficial understanding of the ideologies of both Fascism and Islamism, so that the issue became irrelevantly bound up with the historical manifestation of Nazism, of race exclusivism[7] and charismatic leadership. How, for instance, can a fully totalitarian conception of society be compared with Islamism's category of *dhimma* status for those who do not wish to participate fully in the ruling ideology?[8] And where, critics could ask, does self-sacrifice fit in?[9]

With Communism the association has fared little better, with objections raised that there is in Islamism no ideology of 'the state', yet if Islamists eschew loyalty to an existing state, this does not prove that they are anti-statist. In fact the preoccupation of forming an Islamic state, voiced by al-Qā'ida and the Taliban, contradicts this objection. Indeed the formation of the Islamic state is a prerequisite for fulfilling the goals of a supra-state designed to embody the supremacy of the Islamic faith. Both Communists and Islamists aim to create totalitarian supra-states and believe that the interests of the individual should be subordinated to the interests of this state. In both ideologies, this state is considered to be a temporary phase serving a further purpose. Far from an ideology of no state, therefore, Islamism actually maintains an ideology of *one sole permitted state*.

Attempts to associate Islamist movements with these 20th century totalitarianisms have tended to focus on the organizational aspects of the parallelism, or the mere fact of political alliances. For instance, references to Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Bannā's modelling of his movement's organizational structure on Mussolini's Blackshirts, or the close relations between Palestinian Mufti Hajj Muhammad Amin al-Husseini and Adolf Hitler, while interesting in themselves, do not prove conclusive influence on the deeper ideological level. For the purposes of countering the ideology, these are less illuminating than investigating the *intellectual* processes that are paralleled between the systems. For it is this type of comparison, one that goes beyond the manifestation in political

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[6] Walter Laqueur, *The Origins of Fascism: Islamic Fascism, Islamophobia, Antisemitism,* Oxford University Press, October 2006.

[7] While fascist systems are consistently chauvinistic, not all resemble the German National Socialists' focus on a purity of lineage. Fascism is better understood in this feature as a form of cultural and spiritual tribalism. Islamism can be considered to share this form of tribalism provided this is understood in the sense of its 'exclusive universalism', as if Islam and its values (which admit of no external influence or competition) constituted an overarching super-tribe. Such a conception resolves the conundrum of Islamism as a call to freedom for all mankind (as opposed to the exclusiveness of Nazi fascism, or the call to domination), but a freedom which is not based on psychological, individualised freedom, but rather on a gradated freedom, with Muslims at the top. The primacy is cultural, and is open to all to accede to. But it is no less exclusivist in the sense that it tolerates no free market-place of ideas, and prescribes severe sanctions against those who attempt to take the openness of access in the opposite direction.

[8] Due to Islamic historical and legal tradition, the cultural totalitarianism (as opposed to hegemony) of the 'ruling class' of Muslims in this layered society-to-be applies to everything outside this *dhimma*. The totalitarian control is over the external fabric of the Sharī'a-ruled state, but the exclusivity operates by exclusion, disadvantage and disenfranchisement. The issue is whether one can conceive of an enforced category of inferiority, such as that which the *dhimma* represents, as constituting a negation of totalitarianism, or merely another one of its permutations.

[9] While statistically less significant, there is evidence of self-sacrificial acts perpetrated in the cause of political totalitarianisms. For instance, under communism the self-image of the protagonists was that they were fighting for what they conceived was a cosmic good. David Satter notes that 'During the Second World War, this attitude was regularly manifested as Soviet soldiers volunteered for suicide missions and threw themselves under tanks, shouting "For Stalin!"' (David Satter, 'The Key to Defeating Radical Islam', in *FrontPage Magazine*, 20 October 2009). Whereas in Jihadism dying for the cause is based primarily on the deferred reward, nevertheless, the cause of the martyr is equally invested in the prospect of an Islamic nation on earth.

programs, that can highlight how the Islamists and European totalitarians follow parallel mental trajectories, and answer to parallel – human – pre-occupations.

By observing these common mental trajectories the discussion can examine the implications of this commonality for the claims made by the Islamists to a divinely-sanctioned legitimacy for their ideology. This type of discussion is key to a successful counter-ideology since, unlike any other approach, it argues by using the terms of reference of the extremists themselves. Within these terms of reference it specifically targets the following claims:

- The uniqueness of the Islamists' model for an Islamic society;

- The divine origin of the doctrines underpinning the ideology;

- The uniqueness of the political applications of their ideology.

That is, it penetrates to the vitals of Islamist extremism and its militant expression in jihadism: the pretension to an unassailable Islamic 'authenticity'.

The importance of authenticity

Why is this targeting of authenticity important? First of all, any targeting of the ideological infrastructure of Jihadism has major implications for a counter-ideology response in that while military reverses can be explained away by the appeal to a struggle that is taking place on a long-term scale, ideological justification cannot brook defeat at any point. Secondly, and more importantly, one of the basic building blocks of that justification – a *Leitmotif* in the vast corpus of their literature and a core formula for jihadist resilience – is *authenticity*. This is the arbiter of their moral authority on all matters, the yardstick for determining what constitutes for them, and for their propaganda message, the difference between true or counterfeit Islam. The authenticity pre-occupation is therefore key to Islamism and the resilience of the jihadists.

To understand why this is so we should look at what constitutes the intellectual cradle of Islamism. In response to what they see as a progressive globalization of ideas that conflict with some fundamentals of Islamic belief, Islamist radicals claim to be providing the 'true model' for a Muslim to live his life. Their claim is that their model of Islam is the authentic one, because it is based on the words and deeds of *al-salaf al-sālihūn* (the 'virtuous predecessors'), that is, the earliest Muslim community. The behaviour of these predecessors is considered to set the pattern to be emulated, precisely because they are 'authentic' and pre-date the compromises made in Islamic medieval and modern history with the practical exigencies of mundane power. This is the position of the *Salafiyya,* those who follow the practices of the *Salaf*, and is the spectrum of thought from which the *Salafiyya-Jihādiyya* school derives (the school to which al-Qaeda associates itself) and which it sees itself as perfecting.

The authenticity pre-occupation grants the *mujāhidīn* considerable resilience. It allows them to justify their ideological standpoint – the reactivation of militant jihad – on the grounds that:

- as Muslims they are commanded to imitate the Prophet and the early community, and given that the Prophet and the early Companions waged *jihad*, their argument is made for them;

- since they are therefore simply following the Prophetic precedent as outlined in the Hadīth and *sīra* literature – their behavior and example is more authoritative. This means that in a contest over what constitutes true Islam, if fought over with the text, the Jihadists are likely to win;

- since they are returning to a pristine template they are not obligated to follow (*taqlīd*) the directions of the legal schools which clearly have abandoned the template through corruption over the course of history. Anti-radical scholars are therefore collaborators with the *jāhiliyya* ('the Age of Ignorance')[10] and thus have no authority over them.

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[10] Originally a term referring to the era of pre-Islamic paganism, but used by contemporary Islamists to constitute no longer a historical but a *qualitative* definition of Disbelief, a state of 'ignorant depravity').

If authority depends on authenticity as understood by the Salafist precedent, it spells out immunity to alternative streams of Islamic thought, a fact that goes some way to explaining why de-programming initiatives have to date yielded mixed results. For without any challenge being mounted to this authenticity the jihadists can retain an unassailable resilience. The problem is, if the *mujāhidīn* do have the scriptural texts behind them – at least to their own satisfaction – what is it that could damage their claims to authenticity?

Behaving like the infidel

The one arena of debate which overrides the hermetically sealed, logocentric mental universe of the Islamists, in which they feel themselves supremely confident, may be summed up by the legal principle *al-shabīh bil-munkar makrūh* – 'that which resembles something forbidden is loathsome.' This is a general Islamic principle, but under the more orthodox and uncompromising stipulations of the doctrine of *al-walā' wal-barā'* ('Loyalty and Renunciation') the 'true Muslim' does not assimilate into the enemy's society or imitate its ways on even the most trivial level, even to the point of speaking, dressing or eating and drinking like the infidel, since according to the Prophet's saying: "*anyone who associates with a polytheist and lives with him is like him*"[11]– let alone sharing their intellectual political conceptions. In the Islamist system, expelling as far as practically possible every element of western cultural influence is therefore a basic instinct.

This basic instinct is of considerable value for a counter-ideology initiative. If the political program of the Islamists is claimed to be a uniquely divinely sanctioned endeavour, it should be fairly well Islamic from *Alif* to *Yā*. Therefore, if it can be conclusively established that the mindset and the tendencies of Islamists lack this uniqueness, and if it can be conclusively proved that the ideology of Islamism demonstrates identical patterns of thought to man-made infidel political systems unconnected with Islam, or even with religious faith at all, then the claim to their endeavors being 'in God's path' is severely, if not terminally, compromised. The question that the Islamists must answer is why a divinely ordered system should end up resembling so closely some mid-20th century European, infidel totalitarian collective ideologies, such as those represented by the Italian or German Fascisms or Marxism-Leninism.[12]

By calibrating the parallels (and differences) by means of a comparative approach we may be able to draw a sharper focus on these claims to uniqueness and Islamic authenticity. The comparison can be applied by degrees:

- *on the parallels with sacralized political totalitarianisms,*

- *on the parallels with fascistized religious movements,* and

- *on the parallels with doctrinally absolutist non-Muslim religious movements.*

As is in the nature of comparisons the fit will not be seamless on all fronts. But since theirs is a movement that strenuously defines itself as *authentic, uniquely Islamic* and *divinely sanctioned*, Islamists are obligated to engage in the discussion and demonstrate why the comparison *at any level* is inappropriate.

Ultimately, the aim of this approach is to replace the understanding promoted by Islamists of a Clash of Cultures with one that may be more appropriately seen as a *Clash of Chronologies*, that is, an issue of civilizational development, sharing features held in common with the political and religious development of other, non-Muslim, societies.

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[11] من جامع المشرك وسكن معه فإنه مثله (Sunan Abī Da'ūd: Book 14, Hadīth 2781).

[12] Where Islamism, among these parallels, demonstrates greater strength is in the common totalitarian preoccupation with authenticity and the appeal made to the restoration of 'true, pristine values.' As opposed to the weak cultural embedding of Fascism or Marxism-Leninism, the ideology of Islamism can call upon a long doctrinal tradition extending over a millennium from which to extract elements that underpin the movement. This makes for a much stronger case for indoctrination and adds considerably to the ideology's resilience.

The propriety of the comparison

At the outset we should remove the reticence to group totalitarian ideologies and religious belief in the same discussion. A religious belief is no more immune than any other system to being passed through a totalitarian filter by believers who have their own preconceptions on how it should be practiced and applied. To demonstrate this it would be useful to take a look at some core terms employed in the comparison.

Firstly, a baseline definition for totalitarianism:

> The term 'totalitarianism' can be taken as meaning: an experiment in political domination undertaken by a revolutionary movement, with an integralist conception of politics ... it seeks the subordination, integration and homogenisation of the governed on the basis of the integral politicisation of existence, whether collective or individual.[13]

By directly mobilizing the 'people' or working through an élite who speak for the 'true' members of the community, the task of the new breed of revolutionaries is to achieve cultural hegemony for their new system of values. From this position, the aim is to control the channels of opinion and education for the ultimate purpose of bringing about the total rebirth of the nation (however this is conceived) from its present decadence. This rejuvenation or re-birth of the nation, conceived as an organic total, constitutes the 'mythic core' to this political ideology in all its various permutations.

Secondly, due to some controversies registered on the subject of Islamism's relation to the fascist expression of totalitarianism, it is worth establishing some background.

'Fascism' originally referred to the corporatist society promoted by Benito Mussolini in Italy, to describe a system whereby the state would function as one organic whole. As a result of the priorities of Marxist academics, writings on fascism have tended to stress its elements of nihilism, reaction, deviant pathology, personal megalomania and the lack of a cohesive ideology, along with a muddled re-configuration of national history and myth. Beyond that broad definition there is a lack of unanimity between theorists of fascism as to what constitutes the core, defining elements of the term.[14]

Given that there were considerable divergences between the authoritarianisms of Hitler, Mussolini and Franco it is not surprising that the attempts to make parallels between fascism and Islamism have excited controversy and opposition. But since the early 1990s comparative studies in fascism as an international phenomenon, one that takes fascism as a *movement* rather than as a series of geographically defined political struggles, have coalesced theories of a generic fascism, one that can be taken as a type of mentality[15] or a series of intellectual tendencies, with some consistent features identifiable in each of its political manifestations. For instance, the Italian author and academic Umberto Eco in his essay *Ur-Fascism* argued that one could eliminate from a fascist regime one or more features, and it would still be recognizable as fascist:

> Take away imperialism from fascism and you still have Franco and Salazar. Take away colonialism and you still have the Balkan fascism of the Ustashes. Add to the Italian fascism a radical anti-capitalism (which never much fascinated Mussolini) and you have Ezra Pound. Add a cult of Celtic mythology and the Grail mysticism (completely alien to official fascism) and you have one of the most respected fascist gurus, Julius Evola.[16]

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[13] Emilio Gentile, *Fascism, Totalitarianism and Political Religion: Definitions and Critical Reflections on Criticism of an Interpretation,* in Roger Griffin (ed): *Fascism, Totalitarianism and Political Religion,* Routledge, 2005, p.33.

[14] For instance, the Italian historian Renzo De Felice insisted that there was no connection or valid comparisons to be drawn between Italian Fascism and German National Socialism, which he saw as being a completely different political ideology. He also argued that there were two types of fascism, fascism as a *movement* and fascism as a *regime,* arguing that Mussolini's system was an example only of the latter, that is, a superstructure for his dictatorship and personal power.

[15] Cf. Giovanni Gentile and Benito Mussolini : "Il fascismo, oltre a essere un sistema di governo, è anche, e prima di tutto, un sistema di pensiero." ('More than a system of government fascism is also, and above all, a system of thought'). From 'La dottrina del fascismo' in *Enciclopedia Italiana* (1932), Section 5 of *Idee Fondamentali.*

[16] Umberto Eco, 'Ur-Fascism', in *New York Review of Books*, 22 June 1995.

For Roger Griffin[17], such an approach that pares down the analysis to intellectual mechanisms

> arguably has other merits too as a heuristic device. It highlights the existence of the mythopoeic matrix which determines how the ideology of a particular form of fascism has often been synthesized from a bewildering range of ideas, both left and right, conservative and anti-conservative, national and supranational, rational and anti-rational.[18]

Therefore, more than a matter of charismatic leaders, mass rallies and militarism, a common baseline denominator suitable for defining the ideology of fascism may be given as *'palingenetic populist ultra-nationalism,'*[19] that is:

> a revolutionary form of nationalism, one that sets out to be a political, social and ethical revolution, welding the 'people' into a dynamic national community. The core myth that inspires this project is that only a populist, trans-class movement of purifying, cathartic national rebirth (*palingenesis*) can stem the tide of decadence.[20]

Thirdly, the relationship between these political systems and religious belief. That there was a religious dimension to politics was overtly claimed by totalitarian thinkers themselves. *"Il fascismo è una concezione religiosa"* according to Benito Mussolini and Giovanni Gentile writing in 1932, without their intending any metaphor. For these, a human was defined by his relation to a "superior law, an objective Will that transcends the particular individual and elevates him to becoming a conscious member of a spiritual society."[21]

The last fifteen years has seen the study of totalitarianism theory adjusting its focus in this very direction, towards theories that penetrate deeper into fascism's core motivation as a 'political religion.'[22] As the noted historian of fascism Professor Emilio Gentile[23] explains:

> The concept of political religion does not refer solely to the institution of a system of beliefs, rites or symbols; it also relates to other fundamental aspects of the totalitarian experiment, that is, to the conquest of society, the homogenisation of the society formed by the governed, an anthropological revolution.[24]

The characteristic of the totalitarian political religion, he maintains, is the extremist and exclusive nature of its historical mission:

> Political religion does not accept coexistence with other political ideologies and movements; it denies the autonomy of the individual while affirming the primacy of the community; it sanctifies violence as a legitimate weapon in the struggle against those it considers internal and external enemies.

This violence is employed to force the process of transformation as an instrument of a collective regeneration:

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[17] Professor Roger Griffin is a British academic political theorist whose major work *The Nature of Fascism* (1991) established the first new theory of generic fascism for over a decade, a theory that continues to have an influence on the 'new consensus' now emerging in fascist studies among political scientists and historians.

[18] Roger Griffin, 'The palingenetic core of generic fascist ideology' in Alessandro Campi (ed.), *Che cos'è il fascismo? Interpretazioni e prospettive di ricerche*, Ideazione editrice, Roma, 2003, pp. 97-122.

[19] Roger Griffin, *ibid*.

[20] Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), p. xi.

[21] Giovanni Gentile and Benito Mussolini: "Il fascismo è una concezione religiosa, in cui l'uomo è veduto nel suo immanente rapporto con una legge superiore, con una Volontà obiettiva che trascende l'individuo particolare e lo eleva a membro consapevole di una società spirituale." From 'La dottrina del fascismo' in *Enciclopedia Italiana* (1932), Section 5 of *Idee Fondamentali*.

[22] The phrase 'political religion' has not yet become established, and competes with 'secular religion', 'religious politics' and 'civil religion' for the same semantic space. There are also some claims on the field made by terms such as 'millenarianism', given its signifier rôle as the belief in a coming major transformation of society. However, though being an eschatological doctrine it generally lacks the element of 'forcing the pace' of the awaited transformation understood by the theorists of totalitarianism.

[23] Professor Gentile is known for his interpretation of fascism as a 'political religion' and has written several works on this theme, including *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy* (Harvard University Press), *The Origins of Fascist Ideology, 1918-1925* (Enigma), and the aforementioned 'Fascism, Totalitarianism and Political Religion: Definitions and Critical Reflections on Criticism of an Interpretation.'

[24] Emilio Gentile, *op.cit.*, p.35.

... it imposes obligatory observance of collective regeneration; it imposes obligatory observance of its commandments and participation in the political cult.[25]

These elements – the rebirth of a new type of individual subordinated to a homogenized collective purpose, in a society that is conceived as spiritual, one which has been imposed by conquest and which denies legitimacy to all other forms of belief or social structure – form the basis of this renewed focus on the core generic features of totalitarianism.

Since the raw material for this type of study is largely European, there is naturally yet to develop a comparable body of literature focusing on its manifestation beyond this cultural arena. However, as renewed studies of totalitarianism (and fascism in particular) converge like this with the study of political religion,[26] it would seem logical that a study of a similar convergence in the modern ideology of radical, politicized Islam should find a broader acceptance that it currently enjoys.

Generic parallels with totalitarianisms

Given the problems with defining the exact contours of the totalitarian systems, it will therefore be more useful to take their more common generic elements in order to illustrate any parallels that exist with Islamist ideology. Taking as starting point the ideology of Islamism, and its overt militant expression in jihadism, a number of features stand out, features such as:

- the withdrawal and disengagement from contemporary culture and social relations;

- the promotion of a single, supreme ideology as a universal explanation and filter, through which all phenomena are interpreted and processed;

- the goal of transforming not only the political and social order but the very intellect of the individual in the new order;

- the promotion of communal over individual rights and the gradation of rights based on loyalty to a belief-system;

- the demotion of universal rights, the suppression of diversity and the vehement opposition to democracy, pluralism and liberal thought;

- the calls for an expansionist supra-state.

Many who look at these features, particularly in Europe, soon become aware of broad similarities with political experiments familiar from their recent history. The salient points of resemblance between Islamist, and European, totalitarian ideologies – taken on the deeper level, and stripped of their geographical or cultural particularities – may be listed as follows:

- the crisis of the contemporary world;

- a global, universalist cause;

- 're-birth' and the 'anthropological revolution';

- the sacralisation of community and state;

- no separation between private and public life;

- collective (not individual) rights;

- the top-down process of empowerment.

We may take these generic parallels and examine them in some more detail:

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[25] Emilio Gentile, *op. cit.* p.35.

[26] An indication of this emerging convergence is the inauguration in 2005 of a new academic journal, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions,* which has established itself 'as an important crossover journal for history, the humanities and the social sciences in probing a wide range of topics in revolutionary movements and regimes, and in the analysis of fascism, communism, totalitarianism, political religion, and many other related subjects.' (Roger Griffin, Preface to *Fascism, Totalitarianism and Political Religion*, Routledge, 2005).

The crisis of the contemporary world

The common feature of totalitarian ideology is its response to an existential crisis, born of what are perceived to be the failed values of the liberal society, one that is atomized, pluralistic, and 'purposeless'. The fascist totalitarian's conception of the crisis and its cure has a familiar ring:

> Fascists promise that with their help the national crisis will end and a new age will begin that restores the people to a sense of belonging, purpose, and greatness. The end result ... they believe, will be the emergence of a new man and new woman. This new man and new woman will be fully developed human beings, uncontaminated by selfish desires for individual rights and self-expression and devoted only to an existence as part of the renewed nation's destiny. [27]

The verdict of history is that of inexorable decline, due to the essential anomaly of western liberalism from the true nature of Man. For Sayyid Qutb "the phase of the white man is now ended"[28], its power is an illusion and the world stands "on the edge of the abyss", at a point of transition from darkness to the light of truth. This tone was explicitly set by the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood Hasan al-Bannā' in his 1947 work *Toward the Light:*

> We assert that the Western civilization, which was for a long time brilliant by virtue of its scientific perfection subjugating the whole world with the products of this science, is now in ruin ... Strange ideologies and widespread revolutions are undermining its social foundations. Its people are at a loss as to the cure and have strayed far of the path ... All of humanity is tormented, wretched, worried and confused, having been scorched by the fires of greed and materialism.

To remedy this crisis entails more than reform, it means a total abolition of the failed system and the cultural values that support it. It is these structures of the repudiated civilisation, its institutions of repression, that are keeping Mankind in slavery. To create, therefore, one must first destroy, but in the logic of rebirth it is a 'creative destruction' of false behavioural habits and cultural identities to something more universal, and eternally 'true'. Hasan al-Bannā' elaborates the salvific role of the warriors of the new order:

> They are in dire need of the sweetness of True Islam to wash from them the filth of misery and to lead them to happiness.... all it requires is a strong Eastern power to exert itself under the shadow of Allah's banner, with the standard of the Qur'an fluttering at its head, and backed up by the strong soldiers of unyielding faith; then you will see the World living under the tranquillity of Islam ... This is not in the least a product of the imagination: It is no other than the true verdict of history.[29]

A global, universalist cause

The cause is therefore one of universal salvation. Marxism-Leninism in particular emphasized the conception of *a global struggle* or cause,[30] a call for world domination as a form of universal emancipation. Fascism too, despite common perceptions, had its sense of a universal renewal for all humanity. Much as Islamism's beacon of a renewed Islamic state was to liberate Muslims and subsequently all mankind, Mussolini's fascism, with its core myth of imminent cultural renewal, was to herald

> the renewed flowering of the Italian creative genius which had produced the Roman Empire and the Renaissance, turning Italy into the heartland of a new type of civilization which would act as a lodestar to other modern nations of the world which found themselves so mired in crisis.[31]

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[27] Roger Griffin, *What is Fascism?* http://encarta.msn.com (18 Apr. 2002).

[28] تقف البشرية اليوم على حافة الهاوية ... لقد انتهى دور الرجل الأبيض Sayyid Qutb, معالم في الطريق ('*Milestones on the Way'*) Minbar al-Tawhīd wal-Jihād, مقدمة, 2.

[29] Hasan al-Bannā', *Toward the Light,* 1947.

[30] It is best illustrated by Sayyid Qutb's call for the fulfilment of "a mission that, whether the distance be near or far, will accede to the leadership of humanity." Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones,* p5.

[31] Roger Griffin, 'The Sacred Synthesis: The Ideological Cohesion of Fascist Cultural Policy.' in *Modern Italy.* Vol. 3, No. 1 (1998), pp5-23

The parallels of Communism with the Islamist goal of re-establishing a trans-national Caliphate go in deep: in the conception of the corruption and illegitimacy of current state structures; in the illegitimacy of having any humans holding sovereignty over any other; in the need to begin by seizing power in a single state (but with the aim of ultimately destroying all states)[32]. But of these features it is perhaps the emphasis on the illegitimacy and need for the dismantling of all state structures (not their reform) where the Islamist shows the strongest parallel with the Marxist revolutionary.

In the cultural field the parallels are also strong. The Soviet Union, for example, was a country based on an ideology which claimed to be a system of values and universal explanation. It had an imperative to propagate a universal 'truth.' Much as Islamism has a historical metanarrative to explain the unfolding of history that has led to their contemporary role, what mattered to the Communist was that he felt he was part of a great historical enterprise, and his role in the revolution in world history gave him a sense of purpose and his life a meaning.[33] Most conspicuous of all, however, is the assertion common to both Islamism and Marxism-Leninism that human nature must be transformed in order to pave the way for a glorious this-worldly paradise. This was a feature that gave Marxism an air of pseudo-religiosity, and it is one which in turn makes the parallels, and even cross-fertilization, with Islamism all the more cogent.

'Re-birth' and the anthropological revolution

The remedy to such a crisis of failed values, of an atomized, pluralistic, and 'purposeless' society, must be radical, a comprehensive cultural and ethical renewal. This renewal demands an 'anthropological' as much as a political, social or intellectual revolution, through which the individual undergoes what Roger Griffith and Emilio Gentile refer to as a *palingenesis,* a 're-birth' into a new being. Only through this process can a new age begin which will restore the people to a sense of belonging, purpose, and greatness. The end result of this revolution is the emergence of a new *type* of man.

It requires the transformation of society at the levels both of society and of the individual, who is to experience a re-birth as a new type of human being. Although such a transformation should again coincide with the innate logic of things, in practice it is a process that must be forced through. As Emilio Gentile explains, it requires

> the conquest of society, the homogenisation of the society formed by the governed, an anthropological revolution.[34]

For the Communist this new type of being in this anthropological revolution is a formula for all humanity. For the Fascists the new *homo fascistus,* as Roger Griffin explains, is one

> who voluntarily lived not for himself as liberalism intended, or for the whole of humanity as communism intended, but for the greater good and higher destiny of the nation.[35]

But the new man, as he is conceived in the Islamist system, interestingly sits somewhere between these fascist and communist models: it is a being who struggles for the Nation, the *Umma*, but whose struggle is for a Nation commanded and destined to reign universally supreme.

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[32] Thus al-Nabahānī: "While we should consider the Muslim countries as one indivisible society and as a target for the *Da'wah*, we must concentrate our scope of work to one province or specific provinces where we undertake to educate people with Islam so that it springs to life within themselves and so that they live by it and for it… As for the duty of the Muslims, they should work towards turning their land where Islam is not implemented, and which is considered as *Dar al-Kufr* into *Dar al-Islam.*" Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabahānī, *The Islamic State*, Al-Khilafah Publications, p.238.

[33] For an interesting comparison of the issues of empowerment, universalism and culture shared between Bolshevism and Islamism, see the articles by Frederick Kagan: 'The New Bolsheviks, Understanding Al Qaeda,' *National Security Outlook,* November 2005 and David Satter, 'Soviet Threat is One of Ideas More Than Arms', *Wall Street Journal*, 23 May 1983.

[34] Emilio Gentile, *op.cit.*, p.35.

[35] Roger Griffin, 'The Sacred Synthesis': *ibid*.

The sacralisation of the community – the Corporate State

The two-way traffic of the language of religion and politics leads to a 'sacralization' of the community and of the state, and of the person's rôle in it as part of the enfolding of a grand project. His re-birth is equally the *palingenesis* of the group and in this new type of community the state's function is sacralised, where the individual is 'raised to become a conscious member of a spiritual society' which takes on

> all the manifestations of the moral and intellectual life of man. Its functions cannot therefore be limited to those of enforcing order and keeping the peace, as the liberal doctrine had it. It is no mere mechanical device for defining the sphere within which the individual may duly exercise his supposed rights. The Fascist State is an inwardly accepted standard and rule of conduct, a discipline of the whole person.[36]

All systems that attempt to accommodate the diversity of individual Will, as under liberalism, are therefore to be repudiated. The people when rightly guided are one, and they will live the collective identity, an indivisible entity that thinks as one. One People, One Nation, One Leader. For Sayyid Qutb the nation must be liberated through a similar sacralization, through its transformation into a system that amounts to something more than a construction of man:

> This miserable state that mankind suffers from will not be alleviated by minor changes in the minutiæ of systems and conditions. Mankind will never escape it without this vast and far-reaching transformation - the transformation from the ways of the created to the way of the Creator, from the systems of men to the system of the Lord of men, and from the commands of servants to the command of the Lord of servants.[37]

The extra refinement for the Islamists is that when they argue for the 're-sacralization' of society they claim to be able to adduce the Divinity directly into the argument. For their claim is that democracy as an expression of positive law is *a direct negation of religious truth,* and so the concept of legislation by the voice of the people therefore constitutes a false, competing *religion*.[38] It is important to resist the temptation to see this as metaphorical language. In his work *Al-Dīmuqrātiyya Dīn* ('Democracy is a Religion'),[39] the jihadist ideologue Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi takes the reader through the logic that awakens the believer's consciousness to his unwitting *jāhiliyya* in acquiescing to pluralism and identifies the false god: God is the only Legislator – democracies impiously legislate by other systems in place of the Sharī'a as given to mankind by God – this means they arrogate to themselves the functions of God Almighty – they therefore invent and serve another 'god'.

Fundamentalist discourse amply supplies the language of sacralisation to the state, and replaces individualized identity with 'The Nation' as a single, unchanging mass identity. The slogan of the *Umma* is a mantra for this expression.[40] The generically totalitarian purpose of this, according to Emilio Gentile, is:

> to regenerate the human being and create the new man, who is dedicated in body and soul to the realisation of the revolutionary and imperialistic policies of the totalitarian party, whose ultimate goal is to create a new civilisation beyond the Nation-State.[41]

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[36] "Riassume tutte le forme della vita morale e intellettuale dell'uomo. Non si può quindi limitare a semplici funzioni di ordine e tutela, come voleva il liberalismo. Non è un semplice meccanismo che limiti la sfera delle presunte libertà individuali. È forma e norma interiore, e disciplina di tutta la persona." Giovanni Gentile and Benito Mussolini, 'La dottrina del fascismo' in *Enciclopedia Italiana* (1932), Section 12 of *Idee Fondamentali*.

[37] Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, Chapter 10: نقلـة بعيـدة ('Far-reaching changes'), 97.

[38] "Now, if these ministers deem by their majority opinion that alcohol should be permitted then this would be accepted as law. In addition if people deem that prostitution, gambling, paedophilia, killing Muslims (as in the wars on Afghanistan, Iraq and the ongoing war on Islam), homosexuality, permissibility of same-sex marriages etc. is beneficial for the people, then through the process of majority voting, these and other motions would be accepted and implemented as law, such that the people will live and judge by them." Abu Osama, *The Plague of the West*, 3.

[39] Abū Muhammad al-Maqdisī, الديمقراطيّة دين Minbar al-Tawhīd wal-Jihād al-Tawhīd wal-Jihād, n.d.

[40] Abd al-Hakim Murad has wittily referred to this preoccupation as '*ummatolatry*', See his *Contentions*, VIII,40: 'Ummatolatry: from Islam to Izlam.'

[41] Emilio Gentile, *op.cit.,* p.34.

This corporate identity is most evident in the dictum that there should be no separation between private and public life. Islamists express disdain for such a separation as a hallmark of liberalism and its pandering to the rebellious nature of Mankind. The disdain is fully encapsulated in these comments by Dr. Muhammad Al Alkhuli in his work *The Need for Islam:*

> Islam is a religion, but not in the western meaning of religion. The western connotation of the term 'religion' is something between the believer and God. Islam is a religion that organizes all aspects of life on both the individual and national levels. Islam organizes your relations with God, with yourself, with your children, with your relatives, with your neighbor, with your guest, and with other brethren. Islam clearly establishes your duties and rights in all those relationships. Islam establishes a clear system of worship, civil rights, laws of marriage and divorce, laws of inheritance, code of behavior, what not to drink, what to wear, and what not to wear, how to worship God, how to govern, the laws of war and peace, when to go to war, when to make peace, the law of economics, and the laws of buying and selling. Islam is a complete code of life.[42]

Sayyid Qutb apparently thought that this comprehensiveness, this all-embracing demand on the life and thought of the individual was a unique badge of Islam's belief system. Indeed, the absence of this seamless spectrum of faith and the practical life, in his conception, had caused *al-fisām al-nakid*, the 'hideous schizophrenia'[43] that afflicted western civilization and forced it into a permanent *jāhiliyya* that the Christian church had proved itself incapable of rectifying.

Yet the uniqueness is illusory. National Socialists and Leninists shared the disdain for the separation of public and private lives, as a hallmark of repudiated liberalism. They argued just as vehemently for their systems as constituting complete ways of life, which perforce must enter into every area of human activity. Hitler's visionary fanaticism called specifically for the *Gleichschaltung* (coordination) of every possible aspect of life in Germany, for the purpose of eliminating individualism by forcing everybody to adhere to a specific doctrine and way of thinking, and controlling as many aspects of life as possible.

Even if this core slogan of *dīn wa-dawla* ('faith and state' together) it is not considered strictly speaking to be a straight borrowing from the European ideologies – since it is an ancient mechanism – it can be demonstrated to be the typical product of reactionary, totalitarian thinking, and one that is necessarily shared with profane political ideologies. "It would accomplish nothing to remind them," writes Samir Amin,

> that their remarks reproduce, almost word for word, what European reactionaries at the beginning of the nineteenth century (such as Bonald and de Maistre) said to condemn the rupture that the Enlightenment and the French Revolution had produced in the history of the Christian West.[44]

The radical Islamist theorist Abu al-'Ala al-Maududi actually made a comparison to other totalitarian ideologies in this respect explicit, when he wrote that the Shari'a-ruled state:

> "cannot restrict the scope of its activities, its approach is universal and all embracing… in such a state … no one could regard any field of his affairs as personal and private. Considered from this aspect the Islamic state bears a kind of resemblance to the Fascist and Communist states."[45]

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[42] Dr.Muhammad Al Alkhuli, *The Need for Islam,* published on *Islamway* on August 21ˢᵗ 2008 and republished at: http://www.islamic-life.com/introducing-islam/article-islam-complete-life.

[43] Sayyid Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam,* p.42. Qutb's argument is that the Church gave up the struggle to show society how to incorporate faith into everyday life by turning to monasticism and separating itself from society. For Qutb, the Protestant Reformation represented the final surrender, and the acceptance of the concept that religion could not act as a system of life.

[44] Samir Amin, *Political Islam in the Service of Imperialism*, NewAgeIslam.org, 16 Aug 2009. De Maistre in his *Essai sur le principe générateur des constitutions politiques et des autres institutions humaines* ('Essay on the Generative Principle of Political Constitutions and other Human Institutions,' 1809), argues that constitutions are not artificial products but come from God. For Isaiah Berlin (*Freedom and Its Betrayal*) his writings are 'the last despairing effort of feudalism...to resist the march of progress,' and in his essay, 'Joseph de Maistre and the Origins of Fascism,' Berlin accounts de Maistre the earliest precursor of the Fascist vision of the universe. Bonald was a French counter-revolutionary philosopher and politician and one of the leading writers of the theocratic or traditionalist school. His conservative *Theorie du pouvoir politique et religieux* was condemned by the Directory.

[45] Sheikh Abul Ala Maududi, *"Islamic Law and Constitution,"* Chapter: *The Political Theory of Islam,* 9th edition, Lahore 1986, p146-147). The use of this citation has aroused the ire of Islamist activists and media watchers, who see such internal parallelism of Islamism with totalitarianism as highly compromising. See, for instance, the objections by the Muslim Council of Britain

Against the criticism that atheistic Communism could not be properly compared with a belief system focused on an otherworldly Creator, Jules Monnerot argued that the analogy was pertinent since it was founded upon the fact that the Qur'ān was held by Muslims to constitute an indivisible religious, political and social code, and that for both Communism and Islam there was no separate entity that was entrusted with matters spiritual, such as the Church. The result of this deficit was a total conflation of the political with the sacred.[46]

Collective (not individual) rights

Point 24 of the *Nationalist Socialist Party Program* underlined that it "fights against the Jewish materialistic spirit within and around us and is convinced that a permanent revival of our Nation can be achieved only from within, and only on the basis of: Public Interest before Private Interest."[47] Under this system the people are conceived as a monolithic, un-individualized entity that behaves as one, and expresses the Common Will. Similarly, Benito Mussolini defined his new fascist system as one whereby the state would function as one organic whole consisting of interrelated parts that possessed value only to the extent that they contributed to the integral message of the whole. The new man in this system devotes himself, as a new de-individualised entity, and uncontaminated by selfish desires for individual rights and self-expression, exclusively to an existence as part of the renewed nation's destiny, to a fulfilment of a single creative purpose. Sayyid Qutb reproduces Mussolini's definition of the corporatist society almost to the letter, when he argues that his vision of a reformed society cannot come into existence if it does not

> become an active, harmonious and cooperative group, with an independent presence in itself, whose members, like the members of a human body, work together for its existence, its deep rooting, its expansion, and for the defense of its essence against all those factors which attack it, carrying this out under a leadership which is independent of the leadership of a *jāhilī* society, one that organizes its activity, marshals it and directs it efforts towards the deep rooting and expansion of its Islamic character, to combat, rise up and abolish the other, *jāhilī* entity.[48]

The leader of this society is their 'interpreter', who is the voice of the un-individualized people. Needless to say democracy, in this scheme, with all it suggests of divergent, fissiparous views that harm the claimed consensus, has no place. Like the Fascists, the Jihadist antipathy to democracy is visceral:

> "Muslims should reject [democracy] entirely, for it is filthy; it is the rule of a tyrant, it is *Kufr* ['Disbelief'], with *Kufr* ideas, *Kufr* systems and *Kufr* laws, and has nothing to do with Islam."[49]

The method of empowerment

Political totalitarianisms provide the model for the *methodology of empowerment* – the vanguard of an élite, who alone can think for, and guide, the unenlightened masses. The 'top-down' approach of empowerment as a response to the immense problem of consciousness-raising is the distinguishing badge of the totalitarian and it was in this tactical element that analysts first identified the parallels with Marxism-Leninism. Maududi's *Jama'at* is an "organizational weapon" in the Leninist tradition,

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(http://www.mcb.org.uk/media/responsetobbc.pdf) and the 'Islamic Human Rights Commission' (http://www.ihrc.org.uk/show.php?id=1497) to a BBC Panorama documentary aired in August 2005.

[46] Jules Monnerot, *Sociology and Psychology of* Communism (*Sociologie du communisme tr.* Jane Degras and Richard Rees), London: Allen & Unwin, 1953.

[47] "Sie bekämpft den jüdisch-materialistischen Geist in und außer uns und ist überzeugt, daß eine dauernde Genesung unseres Volkes nur erfolgen kann von innen heraus auf der Grundlage: Gemeinnutz vor Eigennutz." 25-Punkte-Programm der NSDAP, Munich, February 24, 1920.

[48] Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, Section III, *The Characteristics of the Islamic Society*.

[49] Abd al-Qadim Zallum: الديمقراطية نظام كفر يحرم أخذها أو تطبيقها أو الدعوة إليها (*Democracy is a Kufr System, which it is Forbidden to Adopt, Apply or Promote'*), p.22, Hizb al-Tahrir Publications, May 1990.

devised to project the power of an ideological perspective into the political arena.[50] Sayyid Qutb gave it the same name – *talī'a* ('vanguard') – that the Leninists employed. Much as the Leninists maintained, the fact that the majority of the masses may or may not support or understand the transformation was not important:

> "It is necessary that there should be a vanguard," he states, "which sets out with this determination and then keeps upon the path, passing through the vast ocean of *Jāhiliyya* striking its roots over the entire world."[51]

It was for this 'vanguard' – "a waiting reality about to be materialized," Qutb stated, that his famous work *Milestones on the Way* was written.

Parallels specific to Fascism

From the foregoing it can be seen that the ideology of Islamism shares enough of the features of generic totalitarianism to compromise the claims made to its authenticity and uniqueness. But some of the features of the ideology parallel more specifically totalitarianisms of the fascist stamp. Moreover, these features are more closely bound in with the doctrinal fabric of the ideology and its relation to scriptural authenticity, and hence are embedded more thoroughly within the orthodox tradition. These features may be listed as:

- the call for 'authenticity' and the restoration of lost vigor;
- the cult of tradition;
- cultural purity and fear of diversity;
- the conspiracy obsession;
- the hero and the permanence of the struggle.

This doctrinal fabric to Islamism's ideology, and its deep embedding within the historical legacy of Islamic thought (dominated as it is by medieval norms), adds to Islamism's resilience and presents a greater challenge to any counter-ideology program that seeks to isolate the political ideology from issues of religious practice and identity. It is therefore worth examining these parallels in some more detail:

The call for 'authenticity' and the restoration of lost vigor

The 'anthropological revolution' mentioned earlier is a feature common to all manifestations of fascism and is closely tied in with the impulse towards a restoration of a pristine virtue. For the Italians it meant restoring their ancient Roman vigour. For Germany it demanded the re-Aryanization of European civilization and the purging of the tribal outsider. For Marxists, the coming New Man would be one that was devoid of the accumulated vices of modern capitalism, and devoted to building selflessly the new society.

What links this impulse to the Islamist model is the *authenticity* principle of the Islamists, among whom the *palingenesis* idea is explicitly stated in terms of a rebirth out of the prevailing *jāhiliyya* as a new, renewed, *mujāhid* Muslim. The impulse is entirely one of 're-authentication', that is, a drive towards regaining the formula that once brought Muslims their divinely ordained primacy but which now has been withdrawn from them, causing them to lose their vigor. This winning 'formula' is explicitly described as the Prophetic template in all its facets: that is, the Prophet's opinions, his words, his acts and the historical emergence of the early Muslim community – since all of these are physical manifestations of God's favor and purpose.

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[50] "That the Jama'at's and Lenin's ideas about the "organizational weapon" were similar confirms that the relation of ideology to social action in Maududi's works closely followed the Leninist example." Sayyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution,* I.B Tauris, 1994, p.13-14.

[51] Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, مقدمة , p.5.

This shadow of primordial Islam – progressing from Muhammad's preaching (*da'wā*) of the new faith in an age of ignorance (*jāhiliyya*), to his withdrawal (*hijra*) to Yathrib, to his foundation of the new Muslim state (*umma*) and its militant struggle (*jihād*) – permeates the consciousness of the Islamist, who will speak of his own '*jāhiliyya*' and recount his renunciation and withdrawal from its influence and his struggle for primacy over evil and all its contemporary intellectual, political and social institutions.

In jihadist militant Islamism this shadow even extends to replicating the *da'wā – hijra – jihād* template in the field. The founder of the radical movement *Takfīr wal-Hijra*, Shukri Mustafa, actively put the model into practice by forming communities in caves away from the sinful *jāhili* cities of Egypt. Bin Laden's career is conceived by *mujāhidīn* sympathisers as conforming to the pattern of *da'wā* (sermonizing repudiation of the infidel Soviets and American*s)* – *hijra* (migration to Sudan and Afghanistan) – *jihād* (militant campaigns against Soviets and Americans), while Ayman al-Zawahiri in his work *"Knights Under the Banner of the Prophet"*, interprets his own curriculum vitae according to this pattern.[52]

The template for the time of vigor is provided by *al-salaf al-sālihūn* who are held to comprise the first three generations of Muslims, the companions of the Prophet Muhammad and the two succeeding generations after them (the *tābi'ūn* and the *taba'at al-tābi'īn*).[53] The ultimate authenticators are therefore these 'righteous ancestors':

> who were recommended by Allāh and His Messenger for their piety and understanding of the Faith. We cherish them and those who cherished and loved them and we hate those who hated and despised them, and curse those who cursed them ... Whoever attacks them is attacking the Faith, the book of God and the lord of the Prophets and Messengers [Muhammad] ... Consequently, he who follows their way and method and holds to their understanding of the Faith is the one who is rightly guided and saved. But he who contradicts them and follows a different method and path than theirs, he will be going astray ... After that comes the century of the *Tābi'īn*, and then those who followed the *Tābi'īn*. These are the three best generations in Islām. After that, lying becomes widespread.[54]

Underpinning this is the belief that the political and cultural decline of the Islamic world is not a matter of history or politics, but a *religious* issue – the abandonment of core aspects of the faith through neglect and intellectual corruption, one that has culminated in the Enlightenment and its 'desacralization' of reality. The key to reclaiming the ancient primacy is therefore to re-establish religious authenticity. This is what makes the Islamist call for reform up-ended, one where the dynamic is to take the ancient order as the starting point and adjust modernity to *its* contours.

The cult of tradition

There is a fascinating conflict in the Islamists conception of tradition. On the one hand they make constant appeal to authenticity yet, as Karen Armstrong noted, they share the common fundamentalist contradiction of claiming to be restoring tradition and orthodoxy, but all the while creating a new version of an existing religion based on a mythic and romanticized past.[55] Precisely the same ambiguity affected the fascist ideologies, as Roger Griffin noted:

> Due to its peculiar modernising and palingenetic thrust, fascism is at bottom anti-traditional and hence anti-conservative ... fascism is thus a radical rejection of 'traditional' authority. What blurs this point in

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[52] For more on this see S. Ulph, *Towards a Curriculum for the Teaching of Jihadist Ideology*, Part III, Chapter 4: *The Ideology of Expansion*. The Jamestown Foundation. Available online at http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/Ulph_Towards_a_Curriculum_Part3.pdf .

[53] They derive this principle from the following *hadith*: *"The people of my generation are the best, then those who follow them, and then those who follow the latter."* (Bukhari 3:48:819 and 820 and Muslim 31:6150 and 6151). The entire period assumed by this therefore extends from the revelation of the Prophet Muhammad (c. 610) to about the time of Ahmad ibn Hanbal's death (855 CE), each generation understood as approximating some eighty years.

[54] Abu Baseer al-Tartousi, هذه عقيدتُنا وهذا الذي نَدعُو إليه (*"This is our Creed and this is what we call for"*), www.abubaseer.bizland.com, March 10th 2002.

[55] Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2001).

practice is that fascism often draws on traditional values and may even have recourse to religious discourse and symbology to create the 'spiritual' climate it believes conducive to the new order.[56]

However, the deeper implication of the cult of tradition is that

> there can be no advancement of learning. Truth already has been spelled out once and for all, and we can only keep interpreting its obscure message.[57]

This feature is closely paralleled by the normative centrality among the Islamists of the Qur'ān and the Hadīth, which in their Salafist training admit of no explanatory context in their interpretation. The sounds, the phonemes, the literal renderings, all are fixed for all times, places and peoples. This untouchability of the Text – in the sense of historical or allegorical interpretation – permeates the literature and illustrates eloquently the Salafist mental cradle of the Islamist, one where the settled facts of the Text and the Law, and their pedigree, are heavily prioritized over any active speculation on theology and ethics. Radicals of all stamps seek authority to this priority in the person of Ibn Hanbal who championed the cause of the Text with his claim that

> whoever involves themselves in any theological rhetoric is not to be counted amongst the Ahl us-Sunnah, even if by that he arrives at the Sunnah, until he abandons debating and surrenders to the texts.[58]

By contrast, the Indonesian Muslim scholar Ulil Abshar-Abdalla ridicules this logocentric universe of the Salafist whose

> theological insight which supports this 'scripturalism' depends upon a rather silly assumption as follows: the more textually we comprehend God's word, the closer we are to His true will; while the more careless we are in *'ta'wīl'* or non-literal interpretation, the further we are from His true will.

Nevertheless there is an inherent and dangerous strength in this logocentric focus, for under this conception being *amoral* can be presented as ethically superior state to being *atextual.* The case of the 'scripturalist' is that while there can be no doubt about the aptness of the Text in an absolute sense, irrespective of context or purpose, a man's moral judgement is essentially a mortal's product, and therefore *a priori* flawed. The effect is to license acts which a common universalist ethics would find abhorrent. The Golden Rule is removed and the schematic gradation of the worth and legal rights of an individual. The Textual argument may have ultimately dubious underpinnings, but it is a very effective means of ring-fencing the cult of tradition from challenge and protecting the moral élitism.

Cultural purity and fear of diversity

Related to this is the concept of cultural purity, the rejection of the idea of foreign cultural influence as an infiltrating contaminant. For the Nazis the culprits were Jewish intellectuals and their 'degenerate arts', and their goal was to create a harmonious community whose values were unsullied by differences of culture and deviant ideologies. For the Islamists the contaminant is more widespread and their blanket rejection of philosophical, historical and cultural influences from outside the Islamic tradition comes closer to a full-blown cultural autism. Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabahānī (the founder of *Hizb al-Tahrīr*) illustrates this instinct well. He rejected the concept promoted 'by Orientalists' of significant foreign influence, arguing that the idea that the Islamic culture was affected by non-Islamic cultures "comes from the deliberate distortion undertaken by the non-Muslims with respect to changing the meanings of things." The 'core' of Islamic culture – its jurisprudence – is instead pristine and untouched:

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[56] Roger Griffin, 'Staging the Nation's Rebirth: the Politics and Aesthetics of Performance in the Context of Fascist Studies,' in *Fascism and Theatre: The Politics and Aesthetics of Performance in the Era of Fascism,* ed. Günter Berghaus, Berg, Oxford 1994.

[57] Umberto Eco, 'Fourteen Ways of Looking at a Blackshirt,' in *New York Review of Books,* 22 June 1995, pp.12-15.The obscurity of the message is its strength and accounts for its versatility. "If you browse in the shelves that, in American bookstores, are labeled New Age" argues Eco, "you can find there even Saint Augustine, who, as far as I know, was not a fascist. But combining Saint Augustine and Stonehenge -- that is a symptom of Ur-Fascism."

[58] Ibn Hanbal, أصول السنة (*'The Foundations of the Sunna'*), Ch. 10 (p.169) ed. A. Zumarlee, April 1991.

> The Muslims themselves were not affected by any other culture, neither in terms of their way of thinking or in their understanding of Islam. The mentality of the Muslims remained a pure Islamic mentality.[59]

Islamists immediately come up here against the record of history, and project equally contradictory results. If some appeal to the essential Islamicness of all knowledge,[60] and argue for the Islamic origins of western science and the European Renaissance, others repudiate the implied intermingling. "There were some individuals affected by foreign rational disciplines", argues al-Nabahānī,

> New thoughts emerged amongst them ... Muslims whose minds were confused by the study of foreign philosophies, which led them to make mistakes in understanding some of the concepts of Islam or fall into misguidance in their intellectual discussions ... These are the Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Sina, al-Farabi, Ibn Rushd and their peers. [Theirs] is not considered as Islamic culture.[61]

The downgrading of the importance of rationalism is revealing. Under both the communistic and fascistic systems, the proponents of Reason were considered subversive, and constantly under suspicion of conspiratorial activity to undermine the unity, unanimity and Will of the people. For the Islamists, the threat to unity is all the stronger, since it is a challenge to the greatest of all Wills, the Will of God. The Rationalists, be they medieval Arabs or modern Europeans, are merely Greek intellectual interlopers.

For an Islamist such as Shaykh Samīr al-Mālikī the lionizing of 'atheist philosophers' – whether they be Avicenna, Rhazes or equally Salman Rushdie and Taslima Nasreen – is something which has to be resisted at all costs. Given that the non-religious sciences as a whole "are founded upon libertinism",

> the view that everything the Infidel achieve in the sciences must be learned and mastered by the Muslims is mistaken, since what is incumbent upon man is that he places all his concern in the afterlife, not in the pleasures and sciences of this world.[62]

This ideological conditioning of knowledge is a common feature of totalitarianism since the fear of analytical criticism is a fear of disagreement as an act of treason. Communism, for instance, even 'sacralized' science, raising it to the level of an ideology and in so doing falsified it. But actually the impulse to sacralize science is far more acute – and complicated – in the universe of the Islamist, since it conflicts with the problem of technological inferiority. The solution is vintage totalitarian doublespeak: if the study of rational sciences is "obligatory if it is a question of the means to wage war on the infidel", it should be undertaken for a specific ultimate purpose:

> the modern man has to be addressed in his own language [of science and philosophy] and using his own logic ... conquered ... This is the greatest striving (Jihad) of the present times ... This will enable the Ummah ... to confront with all vehemence and power the onslaughts of the impostor culture.[63]

This 'epistemological jihad' is to embrace a wholesale, Quixotic, enterprise to pass all rational methodologies through a corrective cultural 'filter,' whereby

> all scientific methods are carried out in the framework of the service of Islam, so that the goal is not purely one of science ... but to link these sciences with Islam and purge them of suspicious elements.[64]

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[59] Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabahānī, الشخصية الاسلامية Part One, Hizb al-Tahrir Publications, Dar al-Umma, Beirut, 6th ed. 2003, pp.273-284. Tr. *The Islamic Personality*, pp. 153-8.

[60] Cf. the Islamist thinker Ismail al-Faruqi, for whom one of the essential features of *tawhīd* is that it "provides a unity to nature, person-hood, and truth that subordinates them to God and, in turn, resolves any concern about a conflict between religion and science", and "legitimates the need to rediscover the Islamic dimension of all knowledge through a process of Islamization." See J. Esposito and J. Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam,* Oxford, 2001, p30.

[61] Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabahānī, *ibid*.

[62] Shaykh Samīr al-Mālikī, الرد على من عظم الفلاسفة الملاحدة، ابن سينا، الرازي، الفارابي ... وأشياعهم ('A Response to Those Who Extol the Atheist Philosophers, Ibn Sina, al-Razi, al-Farabi and their Followers') n.d. Section 'On Learning he Mundane Sciences', p.17. أما فالأصل فيه الإباحة... الظن بأن كل ما وصل إليه الكفار من علوم فان على المسلمين تعلمه والبراعة فيه فهذا ظن خاطئ إذ الواجب على المرء أن يجعل الآخرة همه لا الدنيا ومتاعها وعلومها .

[63] Sheikh Mohammed Shihabuddin Nadvi, *Rise and Fall of Muslims in Science* [http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/Books/SN_science/default.htm]

The fear of contamination leads to an outright fear of the outsider and a desire to minimise contact on any level. While Lenin expressed the dictum "we must hate, hate is the basis of communism" [65] it is the fascist ideologies that are more characterised by this culture. In exercising this facet of the totalitarian scheme Islamists possess the advantage of a fully elaborated doctrine of *al-walā' wal-barā',* the practice of 'Loyalty and Renunciation,' mentioned earlier, that is held to mark the true believer from the hypocrite, and which draws its authority from sources deep within the orthodox tradition.[66] "If the hate at any time extinguishes from the heart" Bin Laden stated,

> this is great apostasy! . . . since battle, animosity, and hatred – directed from the Muslim to the infidel – is the foundation of our religion."[67]

Conversely, the attitude of the foe, with its religious and social tolerance is to be suspected as malevolent, since it is nothing other than a conspiracy to subvert Islam from within by lowering the Muslims' guard:

> "...for the turmoil that will ensue to their faith and [the fact that they will] absorb the habits of the polytheists' and [develop] familiarity with them which will lead in time to [ties of] affection, which God forbids. And their children will grow up associating with their children and pick up their many corrupt and disgusting habits."[68]

The conspiracy obsession

The conspiracy theme is another hallmark of totalitarianism, and has a particular place in the ideology of fascism. "To people who feel deprived of a clear social identity" Umberto Eco explains,

> the only ones who can provide an identity to the nation are its enemies. Thus at the root of the Ur-Fascist psychology there is the obsession with a plot … the followers must feel besieged.

The conspiracy matrix is in fact very highly developed among the militant Islamists (*see appended table*). Top of the list, as we can see, are the Jews who for the fascists fulfilled the all-important role of the internal plotter since "they have the advantage of being at the same time inside and outside." Islamists locate the internal threat of the Jews to the very beginnings of Islam and the chequered relations of the Prophet with the Jewish tribes of Arabia that ended up with the divinely ordained massacre of the Banū al-Qurayza.[69] Taking an historical approach the parallels here, of course, with German fascism's obsession with the Jews are at their most patent. Sayyid Qutb's highly popular work: *Our Struggle with the Jews* lists the crimes and conspiracies in a tone familiar to readers of German tracts of the 1930s, and indeed Qutb claimed that Allah had sent Hitler to earth to 'punish' the Jews for their evil deeds.

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[64] العمل على أسلمة المناهج بحيث تصب كل المناهج العلمية في إطار خدمة الإسلام، وبحيث لا يكون الهدف العلمي البحت... بل يربط هذه العلوم بالإسلام وينقيها مما فيها من الشوائب from (*Gift of the Monotheists on the Most Important Questions concerning the Fundamentals of the* تحفة الموحدين في أهم مسائل أصول الدين *Faith')* compiled in Gaza by the 'Jurisprudential Committee in the *Jamā'at al-Tawhīd wal-Jihād'*, 2009, pp71-72.

[65] V. I. Lenin, "Defeat of One's Own Government in Imperialist War," 1915, *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers), vol. 5, 147.

[66] While historically there were voices that opposed it as a heterodox concept it became doctrinally indigenised among Sunnis once Ibn Taymiyya treated it as a means to counter heterodoxy. By the 18th and 19th centuries Ibn Taymiyya's approach developed under the influence of Hanbali scholars into a fundamental demonstration of *tawhīd*, and consequently an article of faith. While the textual sources are plentiful, the Islamist ideologues found their argumentation for *al-walā' wal-barā'* mostly on *sūras* III (*'Imrān*), 28-29, 118-120, LVIII (*Al-Anfāl*), 14-22 and the *Sūrat al-Mumtahana* [Qur'ān, LX,4]: "Verily, we are free from you and whatever you worship besides Allah, we have rejected you, and there has started between us and you hostility and hatred for ever, until you believe in Allah alone."

[67] Raymond Ibrahim, "Osama bin Laden as Robin Hood?" *American Thinker,* September 11, 2008, at http://www.americanthinker.com/2008/09/osama_bin_laden_as_robin_hood.html.

[68] Al-Sūrī, *The Global Islamic Resistance Call,* Section (12) حكم السكن في ديار المشركين p.1160.

[69] Muslim historians record that a total of 600-700 Jews of the Banū Qurayza were ordered killed by the Prophet in the fifth year of the *hijra* after the tribe submitted to the judgment of the convert Sa'd bin Mu'adh, who "adjudged by the command of God" that all the able-bodied male persons belonging to the tribe should be executed.

> The struggle between Islam and the Jews is still in vigor and will continue so, since the Jews will not be contented with anything other than the destruction of this faith. Since the victory of Islam they have been fighting this faith with plots, infiltrations and the promotion of their agents in the shadows.[70]

Johannes von Leers[71], one of the most important ideologues of the Third Reich, registered his applause for what he considered to be the essential position of Islam thus:

> Mohammed's hostility to the Jews had one result: Oriental Jewry was completely paralyzed... As a religion, Islam indeed performed an eternal service to the world: it prevented the threatened conquest of Arabia by the Jews and vanquished the horrible teaching of Jehovah by a pure religion.[72]

A conspiracy requires the existence of a *constant enemy*. If for Nazi Germany the role was filled by the Jews, in the case of the Islamists it is actually more than merely the Jew, it is the *ewige Kāfir*, the eternal infidel. If the 'enemy' defines those with an unclear sense of their own identity in the modern multi-faith pluralist environment, Islamist ideologues make ample use of the device to force the message of an eternal plot of disbelief against Islam. Beyond Jews, Christians and imperialists luring Muslims away from the true faith, the roster of enemies expands to the more sinister, internal conspirators: these are the liberal Muslim thinkers and the secularists. The al-Qaeda affiliated *al-Neda* jihadi website provides us with the list and the commentary on elements that pull Muslims away from the true faith:[73]

The Threat to Islam from Muslims

"Sometimes a hundred times worse than the hatred of the enemies of the nation, the Jews and the Christians" emanating from the leaders of Islamic countries and the clerics who serve them.

The Secular Threat

"One of the greatest threats to the hegemony of Islam and the dominance of *Shari'a* is the American secularism that will be imposed forcefully on the region… The Islamic world will change from dictatorship to democracy, which means subhuman degradation in all walks of life."

The Threat of Those Who Abandoned the Islamic Tradition

Since secularism will be rejected by a large section of Muslims, the Zionist-Crusader coalition is encouraging major spiritual groups such as the Sufis, "who are mostly infidels" and believe in monism, pantheism, and re-incarnation and observe "conscience, inspiration, and other endless falsehoods." Orders such as the Sufis "oppose *Jihad* and do not oppose the infidels."

The Threat of the Rational School

A "deadly seedling that maintains that Islam is not opposed to atheism, and that Islam must get close to the infidel and coexist with him." A school of thought, planted by British imperialism and "established by Muhammad 'Abduh and which maintains that logic takes precedence over the text [of the *Qur'ān*]." This school "may become the first stepping stone to secularizing the region, because it is a mixture of secularism and Islam."

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[70] *Our Struggle with the Jews*, Dār al-Shurūq, 12th ed, p.36.

[71] His life has an interesting trajectory in terms of the relationship of faith with totalitarianism. Leers joined the Nazi Party in 1929, for whom he wrote the notorious anti-Semitic tract *Juden Sehen Dich An* ('Jews are Observing You'). He was one of the most important ideologues of the Third Reich and after 1945 continued to specialize in anti-Semitic propaganda. He became the political adviser to the Egyptian Information Department under Muhammad Naguib, and as head of the 'Anti-Zionist Propaganda Service,' directed among other things the radio broadcasts for the highly influential *Sawt al-'Arab* ('The Voice of the Arabs') which featured anti-Semitic themes, and he oversaw the Arabic translation of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. He converted to Islam in 1957 and changed his name to Omar Amin, in honour of the Caliph 'Umar and the Mufti of Jerusalem Hajj Amin el-Husseini. For a good summary of his life and work, see Antonio Rossiello, *Il professore Johann von Leers 'Omar Amin' ed il suo Gotteskampf*, http://forum.politicainrete.net/etnonazionalismo-voelkisch/18037-il-professore-johann-von-leers-omar-amin-ed-il-suo-gotteskampf.html.

[72] 'Judentum und Islam als Gegensaetze' ('Judaism and Islam as Opposites') in *Die Judenfrage*, Vol. 6, No. 24 (15 December 1942), p. 278. The citation is discussed in Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy,* Belknap, Harvard University Press 2006, p.181.

[73] See *MEMRI Special Report*: "Contemporary Islamist Ideology Authorizing Genocidal Murder", No. 25 January 27, 2004.

More intensive than Fascism, the plot in this case is nothing less than the machinations of Satan against the Truth, and his exploitation of the enemies of Islam *within* the Islamic world for this purpose.

The hero and the permanence of the struggle

The totalitarian programme is *par excellence* a call to action. There is a universal mission to enact against the unsleeping forces of the conspirator. But since the fight is part of a perennial struggle there is no end to it, and the fact of the struggle becomes embedded in the very purpose of living. There is no struggle for life, but rather life is lived for struggle. The primacy of action, for Georges Sorel, was "the only possible way for men to ascend to an ethical life filled by the character of the sublime and to achieve deliverance"[74] and therefore peace is nothing less than a betrayal of values. 'Fascism,' according to Mussolini, as regards the future and development of humanity,

> repudiates Pacifism, which is born of a renunciation of struggle and an act of cowardice in the face of sacrifice. War alone brings up to its highest tension all human energy and puts the stamp of nobility upon the people who have the courage to meet it. All other trials are substitutes, which never really put a man in front of himself in the alternative of life and death.[75]

Expansionist jihad is a collective religious duty. If this is not carried out, the whole Islamic *umma* is sinning. Reform, according to al-Zawahiri, "can only take place through Jihad." It could be argued that the doctrine of *fard 'ayn,* the 'individual duty' of the Muslim to wage jihad, implies that the life of the Muslim is conceived of as this permanent struggle. For Sayyid Qutb the struggle is certainly central to Islam:

> Jihad …is not something accidental to the particular period which witnessed the advent of Islam. It is a permanent need, inherent in the nature of the Islamic faith."[76]

Indeed, for Qutb the Qur'ān itself is not a 'holy book' like the Christian Bible, but rather a manual for action, approached "as a soldier on the battlefield reads 'Today's Bulletin'"[77]. Later, among the *mujāhidīn* fighting against the Soviets in Afghanistan, the 'life as a permanent struggle' theme came to be embodied in the words of Shaykh 'Abd Allāh 'Azzām, for whom

> history does not write its lines except with blood. Glory does not build its lofty edifice except with skulls. Honour and respect cannot be established except on a foundation of cripples and corpses.[78]

Eco noted that under the fascist scheme the permanence of the struggle conflicts with the equally fascist concept of an 'Armageddon complex', the final battle that ushers in the end of struggle in the final peace or Golden Age. He noted that "no fascist leader has ever succeeded in solving this predicament."[79] However, Islamist radicalism does resolve this contradiction, for the battle is indeed permanent, since it has existed since the beginning of time:

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[74] As an indication of the convergence of totalitarianisms, towards the end of his life George Sorel, who was attracted initially to Marxism, became an admirer of Mussolini. The appreciation was mutual, since Mussolini himself said: "I owe most to Georges Sorel. This master of syndicalism by his rough theories of revolutionary tactics has contributed most to form the discipline, energy and power of the fascist cohorts."

[75] Giovanni Gentile and Benito Mussolini, 'La dottrina del fascismo' in *Enciclopedia Italiana* (1932), Section 3 of *Dottrina Politica E Sociale*: "Respinge quindi il pacifismo che nasconde una rinuncia alla lotta e una viltà - di fronte al sacrificio. Solo la guerra porta al massimo di tensione tutte le energie umane e imprime un sigillo di nobiltà ai popoli che hanno la virtù di affrontarla. Tutte le altre prove sono dei sostituti, che non pongono mai l'uomo di fronte a se stesso, nell'alternativa della vita e della morte."

[76] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, vol.3, pg.281 (translated and edited by Adil Salahi & Ashur Shamis) United Kingdom: The Islamic Foundation, 2001.

[77] See Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, p.13, Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1990

[78] 'Abd Allāh 'Azzām: *Martyrs: The Building Blocks of Nations,* quoted by Myatt in *National-Socialism and Islam.*

[79] Umberto Eco, 'Ur-Fascism', in *New York Review of Books*, 22 June 1995.

since long before our attacks and in fact before Huntington and Fukuyama with their books on the Clash of Civilizations. This war has been going on ever since the existence of Faith and Disbelief.[80]

According to Sayyid Imam (Dr. Fadl) this struggle will continue on no less permanently, for

> [true] jihad is [a command that is] in force until Judgment Day, and jihad is not limited to any given organization ... It is a law that is in force until the end of time.[81]

It is life-long, and the final battle may be enacted in each *mujāhid's* self-sacrifice, to achieve his final peace in the only true world that exists, the world after death.

The struggle, then, is the very symbol of Islam, the badge of the hero. Muhammad Farag, author of *The Missing Obligation*[82], held that jihad was a salvific action of such central importance that Islam itself can be reduced to the question of whether or not Muslims fight. He saw jihad as a panacea for the Muslim world, and its abandonment as the principal reason for "the lowness, humiliation, division and fragmentation in which the Muslims live today." The action therefore becomes the purpose. Inflicting injury upon the enemy, al-Maqdisi asserts, 'is one of the purposes and goals of life for a Muslim'. The Prophet himself, he maintains, held that this was one of

> the great goals for which they were created, the greatest of which are: worshipping Allāh Alone, and granting victory to His religion by inflicting injury upon the enemy. *So for this reason the Muslim is alive.*[83]

......

Of all the above features of totalitarianism and their parallels with Islamism, perhaps the most telling are contained in these polarities of birth and death. The totalitarian spirit is expressed in the belief in the necessity for a purifying rebirth on a pristine re-invigorating model, in the fight for primordial Truth against the conspiracies of intellectual, moral and political contamination, in a struggle that stretches to the end of Time, and where death and self-sacrifice is the culmination of the warrior's *Heldenleben*. In these respects Islamism and totalitarian political ideologies follow trajectories similar enough to make the comparison both compelling and compromising. Muslim thinkers in the Middle East have certainly recognized the validity of the analogies on this level of *intellectual mechanisms*[84] and the parallelism has been enough to convince ex-Islamists that they were indeed being indoctrinated in a modern political ideology in an Islamic dressing.[85]

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[80] Abū Muhammad al-Maqdisī, القافلة تسير والكلاب تنبح (*'While the Dogs Are Barking, the Caravan Moves On'*) published in *Mu'askar al-Battar,* Issue 7, March 2004, pp.7-8.

[81] Interview with Muhammad Salāh for *al-Hayat* (London), December 10, 2007: والجهاد ماض إلى يوم القيامة، والجهاد ليس محصوراً في تنظيم معين كما. A typical commentary on a Salafist forum illustrates this permanence: "Jihad will continue until the end of time, whatever period of time a person is in, there will always be Jihad happening. There is actually hidden wisdom behind it, but it might not be apparent to you right now, but the more you learn about Allaah and His existence, the more you will understand why certain things have been prescribed." Posted on November 12th 2009 on the Islamic Awakening forum: http://forums.islamicawakening.com/f18/jihad-relevant-for-present-past-30191/ .

[82] Muhammad Farag, الفريضة الغائبة (the 'Missing Obligation', or 'Neglected Duty'), written in 1981. The work represents one stage on from Sayyid Qutb in the trajectory towards global jihad under *Al-Qa'ida* in that, doctrinally, he extends the source material for justification of violence beyond the Qur'ān to the Hadīth literature. He goes so far as to posit Jihad as the 'sixth pillar' of Islam, a *fard 'ayn* (compulsory religious duty) that must be satisfied directly and immediately.

[83] Abū لتحقيق المقاصد العظيمة والجليلة التي خلقوا من أجلها وأنّ من أجلها هذان المقصدان : عبادة الله وحده ونصرة دينه بالنكاية في أعدائه ، فمن أجل ذلك يحيى المسلم Muhammad al-Maqdisī, وقفات مع ثمرات الجهاد (*'Reflections on the Fruits of Jihad'*) Minbar al-Tawhīd wal-Jihād, May 2004, p.57.

[84] Examples are: Saudi columnist Muhammad bin 'Abd Al-Latīf Āl Al-Shaykh: *Al-Jazira* (Saudi Arabia), المقدسي وتبرئته ('Al-Maqdisī and his acquittal') July 10 and بل هم أسوأ من النازيين وأضل سبيلا! ('But they are actually worse than the Nazis and more misguided!') July 24, 2005, where the columnist proposed that jihadism be classified as Europeans classified fascism, a movement "whose thought, propaganda and propagation is destructive to international security and peace ... The two groups drink from the same source ... if the denomination differs, the results are still the same." See also 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Rāshid: بالتأكيد هم فاشيون ('But they surely are Fascists') *al-Sharq al-Awsat,* August 13, 2006.

[85] This, for instance is the view of prominent ex-Islamists such as Ed Hussein (author of *The Islamist*) Maajid Nawaz and Shiraz Maher, both ex-members of the Hizb al-Tahrir.

Implications of comparative totalitarianism and fundamentalism for counter-ideology

As the above hopes to demonstrate, the approach of comparative totalitarianism and comparative fundamentalism is one of the most powerful tools to fight Islamist radicalism. This approach resolves the problem of non-Muslim reticence to address the civilizational underpinning to Islamism and Jihadism founded on the spurious argument that it is not their business to engage in this 'internal' discussion. On the contrary, western and non-Muslim contribution to the debate is legitimate since it focuses on what these last are eminently qualified for: the discussion on the nature of western totalitarian systems of thought and their own historical experience.

It also challenges in a unique way the Islamists' claim over other Muslims to authenticity and exclusive authority, and the case which they make that there is no debate to be held. If it can be conclusively proved that the ideology of the Islamists demonstrates identical patterns of thought to man-made, infidel political ideologies of the 20th century, then the claim that their endeavors are 'in God's path' is severely, if not terminally, compromised. Even if Islamists resort to the argument that the Muslim does not engage in discussions on Islam with the infidel, the discussion may just as well begin unilaterally – since a lack of response to the presentation of strong similarities compromises their position.

Comparative fundamentalism is the one method which forces Islamist radicals onto a neutral ground of discussion (since this is in the nature of a comparative exercise). Debating in this neutral arena requires the Islamists to set to one side their customary tool of textualism – of Qur'ānic *āya* and Prophetic Hadīth – and this leaves them at a disadvantage. It will require them to acquaint themselves in depth with studies on totalitarian thought and examine mindsets and motivations, instead of taking refuge in moral abdication to the letter of the scriptural Text.

Whether in terms of secular, but sacralized, political systems and their intermeshing with totalitarianisms, or in terms of comparative religious fundamentalism, the particular value of the comparative approach lies in the penetrating challenge it represents to a movement that *strenuously defines itself as authentic, uniquely Islamic and divinely sanctioned.* The comparison demolishes these pretensions by demonstrating that most of the core features of Islamism and militant Jihadism are manifestations of *a commonly found deviation*. This commonality deprives the exponents of their authority, their justification and their cause.
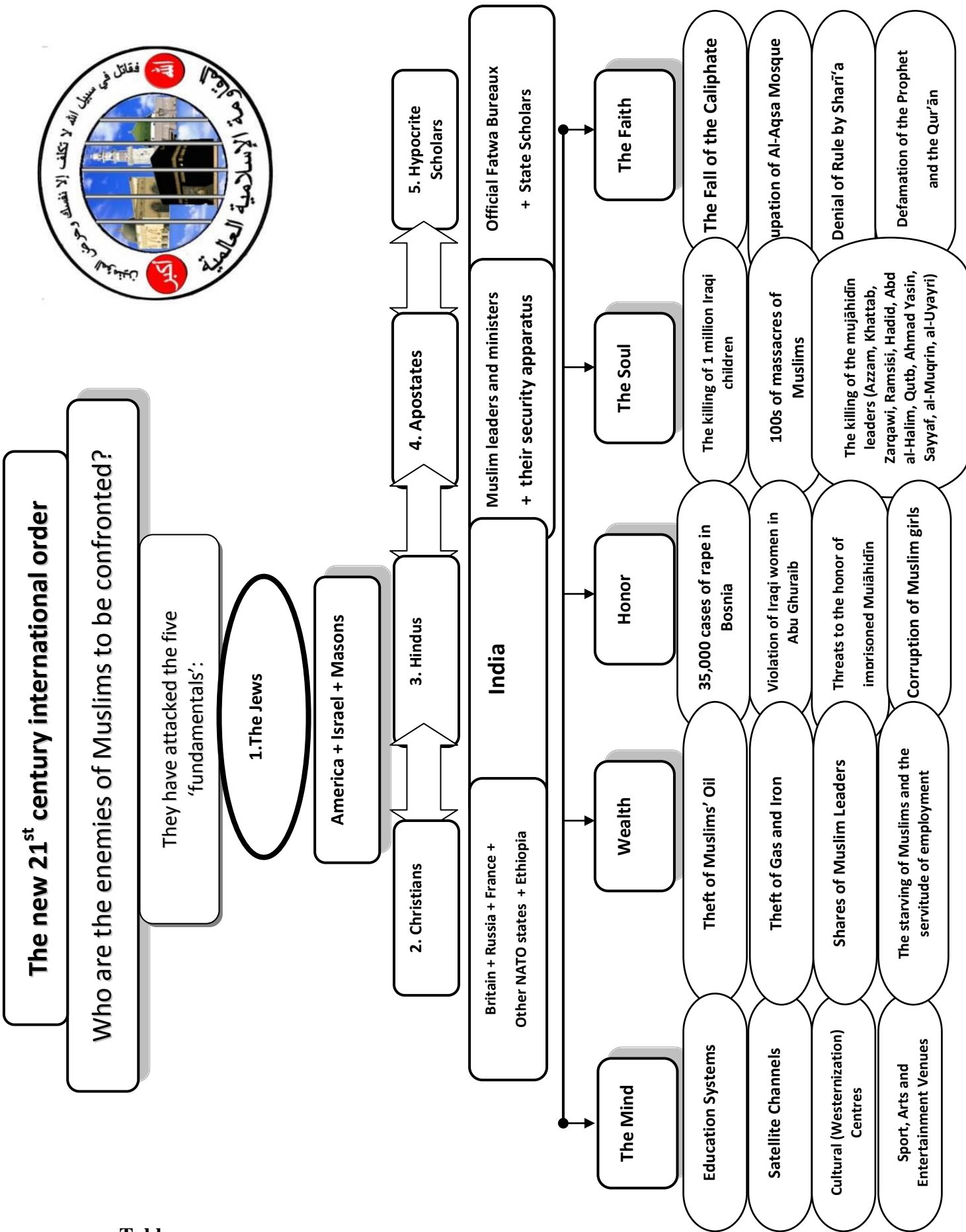
The new 21st century international order

Who are the enemies of Muslims to be confronted?

They have attacked the five 'fundamentals':

1. The Jews

America + Israel + Masons

2. Christians

Britain + Russia + France + Other NATO states + Ethiopia

3. Hindus

India

4. Apostates

Muslim leaders and ministers + their security apparatus

5. Hypocrite Scholars

Official Fatwa Bureaux + State Scholars

The Mind

- Education Systems
- Satellite Channels
- Cultural (Westernization) Centres
- Sport, Arts and Entertainment Venues

Wealth

- Theft of Muslims' Oil
- Theft of Gas and Iron
- Shares of Muslim Leaders
- The starving of Muslims and the servitude of employment

Honor

- 35,000 cases of rape in Bosnia
- Violation of Iraqi women in Abu Ghuraib
- Threats to the honor of imprisoned Mujāhidīn
- Corruption of Muslim girls

The Soul

- The killing of 1 million Iraqi children
- 100s of massacres of Muslims
- The killing of the mujāhidīn leaders (Azzam, Khattab, Zarqawi, Ramsisi, Hadid, Abd al-Halim, Qutb, Ahmad Yasin, Sayyaf, al-Muqrin, al-Uyayri)

The Faith

- The Fall of the Caliphate
- Occupation of Al-Aqsa Mosque
- Denial of Rule by Sharī'a
- Defamation of the Prophet and the Qur'ān

Table

The Enemies of the Muslims
according to
The Global Islamic Resistance