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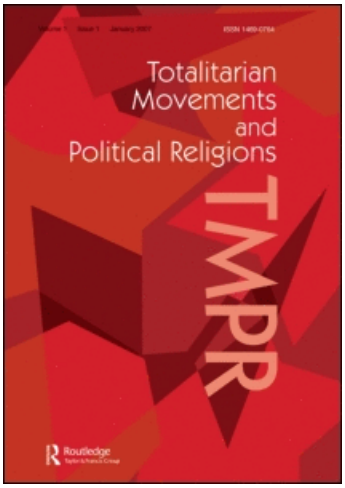

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Islamism and Totalitarianism

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ABSTRACT *Ever since the 1979 Iranian Revolution, and even more so since the spectacular attacks by Qa'idat al-Jihad against the U.S. on 9/11, there has been an ever-growing flood of academic and journalistic publications devoted to radical Islam. Unfortunately, much of that literature has embodied problematic conceptual perspectives that can best be characterized as 'Islam bashing', 'Islam apologism', or – worst of all – 'Islamist apologism'. The purpose of this article is to identify the key problems with all of those perspectives, and especially to challenge the widespread view that Islamism can assume genuinely 'moderate', 'democratic', or 'liberationist' forms. On the contrary, the argument herein is that Islamism is an intrinsically radical and anti-democratic extreme right-wing political ideology, one that is not only based upon an unusually strict, puritanical interpretation of central tenets of the Islamic faith but is totalitarian in its very essence. Hence Islamist movements should not be seen as being comparable to Western movements like Christian Democracy, but rather as being similar in certain respects to Western totalitarian movements like Marxism-Leninism and fascism.*

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> A state of [the Islamist] sort cannot evidently restrict the scope of its activities. Its approach is universal and all-embracing. Its sphere of activity is coextensive with the whole of human life. It seeks to mould every aspect of life and activity in consonance with its moral norm and programmes of social reform. In such a state, no one can regard any field of his affairs as personal and private. Considered from this perspective the Islamic state [i.e., the Islamist state] bears a kind of resemblance to the fascist or communist states."
>
> Sayyid Abu al-A'la Mawdudi[1]

Ever since the 1979 Iranian Revolution, and even more so since the spectacular terrorist attacks by Qa'idat al-Jihad (The Base or Foundation of the Jihad) against the United States on 11 September 2001, there has been an ever-growing flood of academic and journalistic publications focused on radical currents of Islam. Although such a focus is clearly warranted given the asymmetric threat that global jihadist groups continue to present to the United States, European countries and

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other nations that are crucial pillars of the current international political order (such as Russia, India and China) – and that locally oriented jihadist groups still pose to incumbent regimes in the Muslim world – much of that literature is arguably problematic if not seriously flawed, sometimes from a basic factual standpoint but even more commonly from a conceptual point of view. Indeed, one might say that anyone endeavouring to learn more about radical Islam will soon find themselves caught between the Scylla of 'Islam bashing' and the Charybdis of 'Islamist apologism', two conceptual 'monsters' that have only served to obscure the real nature of Islamism and jihadism. In between, but much closer to the latter interpretive pole, lies the problem of 'Islam apologism'.[2] It is the purpose of this article to highlight these complex issues and, above all, to help clarify the nature of Islamism itself.

'Islam bashing' nowadays normally takes the form of conflating Islam, one of the world's most historically important and influential religions, with Islamism, an intrinsically radical modern Islamic political ideology whose distinguishing characteristics will be clarified further below.[3] Or, to be more precise, 'Islam bashers' tend to attribute all of the regressive, bellicose and other undeniably negative characteristics associated with Islamism and its jihadist components to Islam in general.[4] The allegation is, explicitly or implicitly, that such characteristics are intrinsic to Islam itself, and therefore that Islamism and jihadism are simply logical extensions – or simple applications in practice – of the authentic tenets and core values of Islam.[5] Although it is certainly true that Islamism and its jihadist variants do indeed derive from specific interpretations of Islam, some of which are quite orthodox and hence arguably legitimate whereas others are instead highly idiosyncratic, what the 'Islam bashers' fail to acknowledge is that these particular interpretations are by no means the only possible interpretations of core Islamic doctrines, traditions and values, much less the most authentic, valid or widely shared interpretations.[6] Indeed, whether the interpretations of various Islamist and jihadist ideologues are legitimate is currently the subject of highly charged and often polemical debates amongst recognised scholars of Islamic doctrine and law (the *shari'a*). Hence the 'Islam bashers' adopt a grossly oversimplified and indeed distorted position concerning Islam that would be akin to viewing the political ideology of Christian Reconstructionism, which is based upon a radical, intolerant, puritanical and theocratic interpretation of Christian scriptures, as identical to Christianity in general.[7]

In part as a reaction against this 'Islam bashing' tendency, which has oft been driven by prejudicial conservative or right-wing Christian religious dogmas and has unfortunately become more pronounced in the wake of 9/11, and in part due to the hegemony of certain corrosive fads characteristic of the academic study of the Middle East, there has been a widespread tendency amongst academicians in the West not only to whitewash Islam in general, but also – something which is far worse – to apologise for Islamism itself.[8] One illustration of the former is the frequent assertion that Islam is a 'religion of peace', when in reality Islam has always embodied and espoused a complex combination of both tolerant, humanitarian sentiments and intolerant, bellicose attitudes, one of which often predominated depending upon the specific historical context. In this respect Islam has been no different than Judaism or Christianity, two other monotheistic religions that emerged from the same ancient Near Eastern religious tradition. One must therefore ask a hard question: on the basis of what possible criteria can one make the argument that Islam is intrinsically or exclusively a religion of peace (or, for

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that matter, that it is intrinsically or exclusively a war-like religion, as the 'Islam bashers' have generally argued)? Sadly, most of the pundits who peddle this comforting mantra about Islam being a peaceful religion, the implication of which is that radical currents of Islam are totally unorthodox if not heretical, provide little or no evidence to support their extraordinarily one-sided claims, which are regularly being refuted by the actual course of events in the present era.[9]

A second variety of 'Islam apologism' is the view that all religions are equally prone to produce extremists, a notion that is clearly not supported by the historical record.[10] Although virtually all religions are theoretically capable of producing extremists, and most have done so at some point in the distant or recent past, some religions seem to be far more prone to do so than others. No knowledgeable person would argue, for example, that Jainism or Taoism is as likely to produce violent extremists as members of numerous other religions. Indeed, the adherents of pantheistic and polytheistic religions are frequently better able to co-exist with the followers of other religions because, being generally less doctrinaire and sectarian than monotheists, they are more capable of syncretistic borrowing. Thus the ancient Greeks and Romans, who embraced polytheistic religions consisting of a large pantheon of gods with anthropomorphic characteristics, were often willing and able to incorporate the deities of other peoples they encountered into their own pantheons, thereby avoiding the unnecessary generation of religion-based hostility and conflict. In marked contrast, the three Near Eastern monotheistic religions are almost bound to engender animosity or conflict, since their followers generally believe that only their God is the true god, that all other gods are false gods, and that anyone who does not convert to their religion or accept their God is consigned to Hellfire for eternity. Such an attitude is scarcely conducive to the establishment of peaceful, harmonious relations with the followers of other religions.[11]

Nor is this the end of the matter. One must also make a distinction between *missionary* monotheistic religions like Christianity and Islam and *non-missionary* monotheistic religions like Judaism. Missionary monotheistic religions insist that it is the duty of their followers to spread their faith throughout the world, whether by means of proselytising and/or by having recourse to the sword, since they believe that it is meant for all of mankind rather than only a select ethno-cultural community. This attitude is almost guaranteed to generate friction or bring them into outright conflict with the adherents of other religions. In contrast, non-missionary religions, monotheistic or otherwise, believe that their small community has been specifically chosen by God for some important role, and thus not only do not generally try to convert others to their religion but typically even go out of their way to make it difficult for non-believers to convert. Such an attitude creates a host of other intractable social, political and cultural problems, including excessive insularity and cliquishness, but it is less likely to produce open conflict through the insistence that others adopt the faith whether or not they wish to.

Moreover, one final factor distinguishes Islam from Christianity that has arguably caused it to adopt a rather more bellicose attitude towards non-believers – the astonishing initial political and military successes of the early Islamic community and the fact that Muhammad, who as the 'seal of the Prophets' and the leader of that community, quickly became a venerated exemplar for other Muslims. It should not be forgotten that Muhammad personally participated in over 20 military campaigns, both against the leading families in Mecca and other caravan towns and against recalcitrant Bedouin nomadic tribes from the interior

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desert regions of the Arabian Peninsula. Hence unlike Jesus and the early Christian communities, which were persecuted for centuries and thus were arguably compelled to adopt a tolerant, pacifistic, non-threatening veneer and to 'render [temporal authority] unto Caesar' in order to survive, the early Islamic *umma* only remained a small, vulnerable group subject to persecution by the Meccan authorities for a period of 10 or so years, prior to the flight of Muhammad and his *muhajirun* companions to Medina. From that point on, he and the growing Muslim community and their Medinan allies were able first to check and then defeat their Quraysh rivals from Mecca whilst rapidly expanding their control over other regions of the peninsula. Such a rapid and spectacular trajectory of success, made possible by a series of victorious military campaigns, resulted in a significant shift in the nature of the Qur'anic revelations inasmuch as the tone of the Medinan *sura*s became far more intolerant and bellicose vis-à-vis unbelievers, including other so-called 'people of the book' (*ahl al-kitab*), than that of the earlier Meccan *sura*s. Since an influential interpretation of Islamic theology holds that whenever and wherever they conflict, the later Medinan *sura*s take precedence over those earlier Meccan *sura*s, which is known as the doctrine of 'abrogation' (*naskh*), the jihadists embrace the idea that the early tolerant and peaceful revelations dating from the Meccan period have been abrogated by certain intolerant and warlike passages dating from the Medinan period – especially the so-called 'sword verse' (9 : 5) – which obviously serve to justify their ongoing prosecution of armed struggle against unbelievers (*jihad bi al-sayf*).[12]

Such belligerent attitudes were further hardened as the pace of Muslim military conquests continued, leading to the destruction of the Sasanid Persian empire, the retreat of the Byzantine empire to the Anatolian heartland, and the rapid subjugation of vast amounts of territory, ranging from southern Spain to most of North Africa, from the Iranian plateau to broad swaths of the steppes of Central Asia, from northern India to the littoral areas of eastern Africa, followed by the conversion of millions to Islam and the establishment of a great civilisation under the late Umayyad and 'Abbasid dynasties. This not surprisingly led to the codification, in the late eighth and ninth centuries, of the classical Muslim conception of international relations whereby the world was sharply divided between the 'realm of Islam' (*dar al-islam*), those territories governed by the *shari'a*, and the 'realm of war' (*dar al-harb*), those territories not governed by Islamic law. According to this notion, it was the duty of Muslims to expand the 'realm of Islam' at the expense of the 'realm of war' until the entire world was brought under the aegis of the *shari'a*, a notion that officially amounted to a doctrine of perpetual war against 'infidels', who were to be given the stark options of converting to Islam or fighting (or, in the case of the 'people of the book', of converting to Islam, retaining their religion in exchange for the paying of a poll tax [*jizya*] signifying their subordinate status as 'protected ones' [*dhimmi*], or fighting).[13] Although in practice Muslims were soon forced to adapt and adjust to reality by developing other, less provocative notions due to shifting and disadvantageous correlations of military power, such as that of the 'realm of truce' (*dar al-sulh*), these latter notions were regarded as purely temporary ceasefires or cessations of combat that would eventually be rescinded when the triumphant march of Islam resumed.[14] Although most Muslims nowadays recognise that such a Manichean division of the world is both inappropriate and unrealistic, it is this very same dualistic and belligerent doctrine that has been enthusiastically embraced by contemporary jihadists, who argue that more

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moderate interpretations of Islam, perhaps above all by promoting tolerant and peaceful relations between believers and non-believers, violate classical Islamic doctrines that authorise and indeed mandate the prosecution of armed struggle against infidels until such time as Islam achieves dominance over the entire world.[15]

In short, one could certainly make a strong case that Islam, due to its peculiar and in many respects extraordinary pattern of historical growth, has often been more prone to adopt a hostile and belligerent attitude towards non-believers even than other missionary monotheistic religions, and much more so than the majority of pantheistic and polytheistic religions. For this very reason, it is likewise arguably more prone to produce violent extremists, as is painfully obvious in the present era. That does not mean, of course, that other religions do not also assume violent forms or that these intolerant and bellicose interpretations of Islamic doctrine cannot be effectively challenged and successfully countered by much more tolerant and peaceful interpretations, which also find powerful scriptural support in the Qur'an.

A third form of 'Islam apologism' is the argument that Islamism has nothing whatsoever to do with Islam. Marc Sageman, for example, has asserted that 'global Islamist terrorism [is] utterly distinct from Islam'.[16] Although Sageman has made some useful contributions to understanding jihadism, this particular argument is completely absurd inasmuch as Islamism is a radical political ideology that is explicitly based upon an unusually strict, puritanical interpretation of Islamic doctrine. Hence Islamism, including jihadism, is inconceivable without reference to Islam, just as Christian Reconstructionism is inconceivable without reference to Christianity.

If 'Islam bashing' and 'Islam apologism' are both unwarranted and problematic, even less justifiable are the inexplicable and often tortuous attempts by both Westerners and Muslims to whitewash and apologise for Islamism, a tendency that is all too common amongst academic specialists on the Middle East. The most common form of 'Islamist apologism' is the insistence that there are 'moderate' forms of Islamism as well as radical forms.[17] Here one must ask two more hard questions: in what way is Islamism truly moderate, and in what possible way can it become so? Can Islamism really be said to be 'moderate', attitudinally or behaviourally, in relation to, say, the Copts in Egypt, the Christians in Nigeria, the Bahá'í in Iran, atheists, homosexuals, or Westernised women in Muslim countries? There are of course innumerable variants of Islamism, just as there are innumerable variants of communism and fascism, but as will be clarified below, all of those variants share certain fundamental views that are intrinsically radical and therefore, by definition, cannot be justly characterised as moderate. Even so, one can and indeed should draw a legitimate distinction between two different types of moderation: *moderation with respect to goals* and *moderation with respect to means*, and in this sense one can argue that Islamist movements that reject violent means are more 'moderate', relatively speaking, than those that do not, i.e. the jihadists. However, even those Islamists who eschew or reject violence as their preferred tactic cannot be said to espouse truly moderate goals, and in that sense one cannot accurately speak of 'moderate' forms of Islamism with respect to their ultimate aims.

A second form of 'Islamist apologism' promotes the idea that Islamism is essentially a new type of 'democratic movement from below', a kind of justifiable reaction against the corrupt, authoritarian regimes that unfortunately hold sway

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throughout most of the Muslim world.[18] This raises yet another hard question: how is it that an intrinsically anti-democratic and thoroughly regressive anti-modernist ideology like Islamism can be construed as having inspired a 'democratic' popular movement simply because it has harshly criticised and bitterly opposed various types of undemocratic incumbent regimes? That would be equivalent to arguing that Marxism–Leninism and fascism, two other intrinsically anti-democratic and totalitarian ideologies, somehow managed to inspire the formation of genuine 'democratic movements from below' simply because they levelled serious critiques of and arose in opposition to authoritarian and/or corrupt regimes in their respective countries. The sad truth is that Islamist opposition to the authoritarian regimes in places like Egypt and Algeria, whether violent or non-violent, has never arisen primarily because the Islamists are troubled morally or philosophically by the fact that those regimes are 'authoritarian' and 'undemocratic' – so too are the Islamists, even the allegedly 'moderate' ones – but rather because they consider those states to be 'apostate' or 'un-Islamic', as well as because the very same regimes have not hesitated to carry out harsh repressive measures against Islamist groups.[19]

Nevertheless, all too many of today's supposedly learned commentators have inexplicably sought to miraculously transform indisputably anti-democratic ideologies and the movements they have inspired into ostensibly 'democratic movements from below', just as medieval alchemists once foolishly sought to transform base materials into precious metals of great value. In both cases, such efforts are in the long run doomed to failure, as is the pursuit of national or international security policies based on making alliances with purportedly 'democratic' Islamists.[20] The grim truth is that various Western powers have been forging covert geopolitical alliances with Islamists and even jihadists for decades, starting in the 1950s when efforts were first made to collaborate secretly with elements of the Muslim Brotherhood to weaken the secularised and allegedly 'pro-Soviet' Arab nationalist regimes of Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir in Egypt and, later, the Ba'thist regime in Syria. Nor were such covert alliances made only with 'moderate' non-violent Islamists, as was demonstrated by the large-scale US military support provided to the Afghan *mujahidin* (who, absurdly, were reportedly characterised by the Reagan Administration – along with factions of the Nicaraguan *contra*s led by former security personnel from the recently overthrown Somoza dictatorship – as the 'moral equivalents of the American founding fathers').[21] Every single one of these cases, even those regarded as 'successful' like the Afghan *jihad*, generated very significant negative 'blowback' for the United States and its Western allies, just as earlier covert postwar alliances with intrinsically anti-democratic groups such as former fascists usually did.[22] Yet these instructive precedents have generally been ignored, and therefore have not prevented either naive Western academicians or 'realist' former intelligence officers from promoting future alliances with allegedly 'moderate' or 'democratic' Islamist movements.[23]

A third and related form of 'Islamist apologism' is that Islamism, having embodied or at least exhibited supposedly 'democratic' and 'moderate' forms, can even be seen as an Islamic form of 'liberation theology'.[24] So it is that an utterly reactionary movement that has sought to suppress personal and collective freedom everywhere that it has assumed any degree of power or control, often violently, has once again been transmogrified by some observers – in a truly Orwellian manner – into a movement of genuine liberation. If the historical record is indicative, no Islamist movement has ever 'liberated' anyone other than

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like-minded religious fanatics – unless one equates 'liberation' with the suppression of religious diversity, moral 'deviance' and political dissent, the restriction of minority and women's rights, the *de jure* or *de facto* repudiation of genuine democratic values, and the more or less systematic attempt to control both the external behaviour and the very consciousness of believers – and no Islamist regime is ever likely to, either, at least not without jettisoning its core Islamist doctrines.[25] To claim that such movements are 'progressive' in any way, simply because they oppose Western hegemony, defies all logic. After all, the Italian Fascists and Nazis were also bitterly opposed to Anglo-American, French and Soviet 'imperialism', yet no well-informed academician would ever claim that they were a force for 'liberation'. Yet that is how some are nowadays portraying the Islamists.[26]

A fourth form of 'Islamist apologism' is the bizarre claim that the 'Islamic threat', terrorist or otherwise, does not really exist or that, at the very least, it has been greatly exaggerated.[27] Here it should be noted that during the 1990s, at the very moment in which jihadist terrorism was assuming increasingly dangerous forms, both with respect to its operational capabilities and its geographical extension, high-profile academic figures such as John Esposito and Bruce B. Lawrence were producing books arguing that attempts to associate Islamists with violence were unfair and that the terrorist threat from this quarter was being unjustifiably hyped by Western commentators.[28] Similar arguments about the supposedly non-existent 'Islamic danger', whether from Muslims in general or Islamists, were likewise made by many other commentators, including several in Europe.[29] One might have thought that the ongoing escalation of global jihadist terrorist attacks, which culminated in the devastating assaults on 9/11 but have since afflicted many other countries, would have caused many of these 'nay-sayers' to rethink their positions and offer public mea culpas, but the ever-increasing ferocity and scope of jihadist terrorism has instead only resulted in the appearance of still more books seeking to minimise the terrorist threat from this quarter and/or insisting that this 'construct' has been developed primarily to provide a pretext to justify 'imperialist' aggression.[30]

Having identified the chief interpretive minefields that currently beset the study of radical Islam, whether these embody attitudes that are unduly hostile or inordinately sympathetic to Islam, it is now time to clarify what Islamism actually is. To boil it down to the absolute basics, Islamism can be defined as a radically anti-secular and anti-'infidel' Islamic political ideology, based upon an exceptionally intolerant and puritanical interpretation of Islamic scriptures and Islamic law, which has both revolutionary and revivalist features. It can be described as revolutionary because, in order for the Islamists to achieve their stated objectives, the existing international world order would have to be fundamentally transformed if not overturned, either wholly or in part.[31] It can be characterised as revivalist because the Islamist goal is to restore the pure, pristine Islamic community that supposedly existed at the time of Muhammad and his companions (*sahaba*), as well as the first two generations of their successors, the so-called 'virtuous forefathers' (*al-salaf al-salih*) of the faith, set the Islamic *umma* back on the 'straight path' (*al-sirat al-mustaqim*) from which it has allegedly deviated, transform the 'barbarous' (*jahili*) contemporary world that is now governed by 'satanic' man-made laws and institutions (including democracy), and ultimately extend Allah's sovereignty (*hakimiyyat Allah*) over the entire planet by conducting missionary activity (*da'wa*) and/or waging armed struggle (*jihad*) against 'hypocrites', 'apostates', 'tyrants', 'polytheists' and 'unbelievers'.[32] Although Islamism is a very diverse and often sectarian ideological milieu, one can

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nonetheless identify four essential beliefs that are characteristic of all Islamist ideological currents and movements, both Sunni and Shi'i: an outright rejection of Western secular values, an intransigent resistance to any and all forms of 'infidel' political, economic, social and cultural influence over the Muslim world, a pronounced hostility towards less committed and militant Muslims (who at worst are denounced as 'apostates' or even 'unbelievers' [the process of *takfir*], making them potential targets of violence), and an insistence on the establishment of an Islamic order (*al-nizam al-islami*) or Islamic state (*al-dawla al-islamiyya*) governed by a rigid, puritanical application of the *shari'a*. Since these particular ideas are inherently radical, one cannot legitimately draw a meaningful distinction between 'moderate' and 'radical' Islamists, at least not in terms of the Islamists' ultimate objectives.[33]

Of course, important distinctions do have to be drawn between Islamists based on the aforementioned *means* or *methods* that they choose to pursue in order to come to power and promote their agendas. Some employ what can be referred to as the 'gradual Islamization from below' strategy, which involves slowly colonising and Islamising civil society by establishing a host of interventionist front groups, as well as 'making a long march through the institutions' by infiltrating the state apparatus, a strategy that the Muslim Brotherhood refined and primarily resorted to throughout most of its history. Others instead rely on what can best be characterised as the 'violent Islamization from above' strategy, which involves seizing state power via an armed putsch and thence forcibly establishing a totalitarian, theocratic Islamic state (which is favoured, almost by definition, by jihadist groups). Still others alternate between both strategies (e.g. certain Islamist groups with distinct 'political' and 'military' wings, like HAMAS and Hizballah [The Party of God]), which are therefore not mutually exclusive. In all cases, however, the Islamist objective is to establish an Islamic state or an Islamic order governed in accordance with a strict, puritanical interpretation of the *shari'a*, a goal that is certainly not 'moderate' regardless of the means employed to achieve it. Finally, one must distinguish between jihadist groups with a local or national focus, i.e. those that are fighting the so-called 'near enemy' (*al-'adu al-qarib*), whether they be 'infidels' ruling Muslim-majority territories or 'apostate' Muslim regimes in their own countries, and those with a global agenda that are determined to attack the 'far enemy' (*al-'adu al-ba'id*), above all the West, such as Qa'idat al-Jihad and its affiliates.[34]

It follows from this that Islamists – as defined above – cannot be genuinely democratic in terms of their underlying values, first because they view democracy as a 'satanic' political system devised by Western 'unbelievers' that substitutes the sovereignty of man in place of that of Allah and hence is not in accordance with what they regard as authentic Islamic theological and legal precepts, –or, at best, as a simple administrative mechanism that is compatible with the 'Islamic' institution of *shura* (consultation) as long as it is restricted in its scope and subordinated fully to the tenets of the *shari'a* (which they interpret strictly) – and second because they are monists rather than pluralists inasmuch as they believe that there is only one, proper, divinely inspired and divinely sanctioned way of organising human relations.[35] Since 'truth' and 'falsehood' cannot be allowed to co-exist on this earth (as Sayyid Qutub and other Islamist ideologues have often emphasised), and all Muslims are responsible for 'enjoining the good and forbidding evil', individuals must not be granted too much personal freedom lest they be tempted to 'abuse' that freedom by consciously choosing not to conform to

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Allah's will. This intrinsic theological and philosophical opposition to democracy does not mean, of course, that various Islamist groups have not disingenuously proclaimed their acceptance of democratic rules and cynically exploited democratic processes and procedures, such as participating in elections and forming temporary coalitions with other parties, simply in order to facilitate their accession to power, just as other monists and totalitarians like the communists and fascists had periodically done in past eras. However, it would be a terrible mistake to confuse the Islamist manipulation and exploitation of democratic procedures and institutions with an authentic Islamist commitment to democratic values, as many observers in the West have inexplicably done.[36]

As other observers have rightly noted, Islamism (provided that is not defined imprecisely or overly broadly) can in fact be described as a totalitarian ideology, and Islamist movements inspired by those ideologies can likewise be characterised as totalitarian.[37] Some will no doubt object that since the term 'totalitarianism' was first developed in post-Enlightenment and indeed post-industrial Europe to describe new types of secular revolutionary ideologies with utopian, world transformative agendas, it cannot be legitimately applied to an Islamic religio-political context where the secularisation processes associated with the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment did not occur, at least not until the West began encroaching militarily, politically, economically and above all culturally upon the Muslim world.[38] However, like similar arguments that the term 'fundamentalism' is not applicable elsewhere simply because it was first used to describe a Protestant Christian movement that was institutionalised in the United States during the early twentieth century, such an argument is problematic if not spurious. After all, if one were to follow that type of restrictive terminological logic to its ultimate conclusions, no term that was specifically developed to refer to or describe a phenomenon occurring in one society (or perhaps in one larger cultural region) could ever legitimately be extended to apply to similar phenomena in other societies, in which case the term 'democracy' would have to be restricted to the partial but direct form of democracy in ancient Greece instead of being applied to modern Western representative democracy. Likewise, the term 'fascism' would have to be restricted solely to the movement and regime in Benito Mussolini's Italy instead of being applied to similar movements or regimes in other European and non-European nations.[39] Moreover, the essence of totalitarianism does not lie in the specific form taken by the Bolshevik or Nazi states, but rather in the obsessive desire of political extremists of whatever type to exert extraordinary levels of control over both the outward behaviour and the inner thoughts of those they claim to represent or someday hope to rule over. On that basis alone, Islamism can be characterised as totalitarian.

However, that is not all. In contradistinction to pre-modern Islamic revivalist movements and perhaps also to some Islamic fundamentalist movements – if any of the latter can be said to pre-date modernity, which is the subject of controversy and considerable debate – Islamism is itself a product of modernity.[40] For one thing, Islamist movements not only arose in the Muslim world after the political and intellectual impact of the West had been clearly felt, but also after major structural processes were underway that significantly transformed traditional societies in the region, such as industrialisation, urbanisation and the development of 'mass society'.[41] A strong case can be made that Islamism, including its ability to mobilise a mass base of support, would have been inconceivable in the absence of those major social and economic changes. Moreover, Islamism arose

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specifically in opposition to the multidimensional influence exerted by the West on the Islamic world, including the occupation of Muslim territory by colonial powers and the resulting rule by those powers' actual or alleged local 'agents', as well as – like earlier Islamic revivalist movements – in opposition to what its ideologues regarded as 'corruptions' of or 'deviations' from pure Islam. Hence Islamism is indisputably a post-Enlightenment anti-modernist movement.[42]

For another, despite their seemingly absolute rejection of Western values and their claims to be purely Islamic in inspiration, several Islamist leaders and thinkers were strongly influenced by and indeed borrowed considerably from modern Western political ideologies and movements such as nationalism, communism and fascism, in particular their techniques of organisation (the establishment of front groups and parallel hierarchies), propaganda, ideological indoctrination and mass mobilisation. Sayyid Abu al-A'la Mawdudi went so far as to openly claim that Islam – read Islamism – was a 'revolutionary party' comparable to communism and fascism, Hasan al-Banna was clearly influenced by fascist ideas and organisational techniques, and even the ostensible anti-Western puritan Sayyid Qutub devoted considerable space to emphasising the vitally important role of the Islamist 'vanguard' (*tali'a*) in organising, mobilising and properly 'educating' Muslims.[43] Although the term *tali'a* does appear in authentic Islamic religious sources, it is hard to ignore the similarities between Qutub's application of the term and Vladimir Lenin's elitist concept of the revolutionary 'vanguard party', which was also borrowed enthusiastically by the fascists. In other words, it was not only the so-called 'Westernisers' in the Middle East, such as the Ba'thists, who borrowed Western ideas and techniques, but also many anti-Western 'rejectionists'.

Indeed, far from signifying that Islamism was not totalitarian in its orientation, the fact that the Muslim world did not experience a true internal religious Reformation, much less an intellectual Enlightenment or indigenous process of secularisation, may indicate that Islamism could become even more threatening to the West in various respects than the West's own secular forms of totalitarianism ever were. The reason is simple: rather than carrying the secularisation process forward even further, as both the communists and fascists in most respects did or would have done, Islamists both vociferously oppose and *tangibly aim to reverse* that very secularisation process (as do certain extremist Protestant and Catholic movements associated with the Christian right) in the process of restoring a religio-centric Islamic world order. If the Islamists were ever to succeed, which is fortunately very unlikely, they would make sustained efforts to drag the Western world backwards into their own thoroughly regressive and reactionary pre-Enlightenment mental universe, and would therefore be driven – like their modernist or quasi-modernist counterparts such as Marxism–Leninism, Stalinism, fascism and Nazism, however 'reactionary' or 'anti-modernist' they may have been ideologically – to exert extraordinary degrees of control over the actions and thoughts of others.[44]

In any event, the term 'totalitarian' was originally applied by critical observers to the Bolshevik and Italian Fascist regimes, and was thereafter extended to the Nazi regime and other communist regimes. From the very outset, the term signified that the rulers of these regimes aimed not merely to control the external behaviour of the people they ruled, like traditional tyrants, autocrats and authoritarians, but also to get 'inside their heads' and transform their internal consciousness and values by means of incessantly promoting an all-encompassing utopian ideology and enmeshing them within a host of party-controlled front organisations. In other

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words, these new types of totalitarian regimes were infused with ideological fanaticism, driven to thoroughly and violently transform their own nations and ultimately – in most cases – the entire world, and therefore aspired to exert *total control* over their societies, obliterate the distinction between the public and private spheres, destroy the plethora of voluntary associations that constituted civil society, and thereby bring each and every individual under the direct control of the state and its vast array of institutions.[45] To accomplish these totalistic goals, such regimes adopted certain autocratic institutional structures, mechanisms and techniques that were consciously designed to facilitate these desired all-encompassing processes of transformation, including the establishment of single party-run states, the attempted centralisation of control over the flow of all information and the systematic application of state terrorism. Although the notion of totalitarianism was later subjected to criticisms of various types, both scholarly and political, the concept arguably still retains a good deal of validity.[46] Even though total control can never actually be achieved over a particular society and all of its members, the mark of totalitarian regimes is their aspiration and effort to exert such a complete level of control, not whether they succeed fully.

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However, what is of concern here is not so much *totalitarian regimes*, since Islamist movements have only managed to come to power in a handful of countries (Iran, the Sudan, Afghanistan under the Taliban), everywhere with tragic results, but rather the *totalitarian ideologies* that animate them and the *totalitarian movements* that their founders organised prior to the establishment of those regimes.[47] In short, totalitarian ideologies are the first things to be formulated, and only infrequently become the regnant ideologies of states, and totalitarian movements inspired by those ideologies then periodically emerge, most of which fail to succeed in overthrowing existing regimes and actually seizing power. Needless to say, Bolshevism, Fascism, Nazism and Islamism all existed as totalitarian ideologies and totalitarian socio-political movements long before they managed to become, in certain instances, the official doctrines of totalitarian or quasi-totalitarian states.[48]

The ideology of Islamism was first formulated during the second decade of the twentieth century, and the first organised Islamist movements were likewise formed in the 1920s by al-Banna in Egypt and Mawdudi in South Asia. Islamist ideology, as articulated by al-Banna, Mawdudi, Muhammad Rashid Rida, Sayyid Qutub, Muhammad Qutub, Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Faraj, 'Abdallah al-'Azzam, Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, Abu Qatada, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, various Shi'i religious authorities or 'sources of emulation', and numerous others, clearly exhibits totalitarian pretensions inasmuch as it not only aims to transform the outward behaviour and ritual practices of Muslims, but also their inner beliefs and core values so as to forcibly bring them into conformity with the Islamists' own peculiarly strict, puritanical interpretations of Islamic scriptures and Islamic law. Despite the occasional efforts of non-violent Islamists to pay lip service to pluralism and democratic processes, almost always for purely tactical reasons, the substance of Islamist doctrines is intrinsically anti-pluralist and anti-democratic.[49] Indeed, Islamist doctrines, despite their variability, exhibit all of the characteristics of extremist ideologies in general and totalitarian ideologies in particular: Manicheanism (a sharp division of the world between the forces of 'righteousness' and the forces of 'evil', devoid of any shades of grey), monism, hyper-moralistic puritanism, utopianism, collectivism, extraordinary levels of intolerance, high degrees of authoritarianism, paranoia (of the non-clinical type),

conspiracy mongering and a penchant for dehumanising and indeed demonising designated enemies.[50]

Time and space permitting, it would be easy to present innumerable citations from Islamist texts, including those produced by so-called Islamist 'moderates' (for example, by spokesmen for the new generation of supposedly 'democratic' Muslim Brothers), that exemplify Islamist intolerance and fanaticism and thus serve to display, explicitly or implicitly, its intrinsically totalitarian features. Herein, alas, it will have to suffice to refer the reader to various works, in Western language translations for greater accessibility, which catalogue or summarise the writings of leading Islamist ideologues.[51] Those who have previously studied the history of political theory (especially the works of Plato and 'totalitarian democrat' Jean-Jacques Rousseau), comparative revolutionary ideologies and movements, extremism in general, or totalitarianism in particular – which some Middle East specialists have apparently never done – should have no trouble at all recognising the totalitarian thrust of Islamist doctrines. Nor should anyone be reassured by the views of sophisticated Islamist spokesmen like Hasan al-Turabi, Rashid al-Ghannushi, Tariq Ramadhan, or the other 'democratic' reformists within Islamist organisations like the Muslim Brotherhood, since to the extent that they proclaim their support for democratic processes and procedures, it soon becomes apparent that they regard democracy, hedonistic libertinism, vociferous individualism and freedom of speech to be anathema, above all if the latter manifests itself in the open criticism or ridiculing of Islam.[52] For example, none of these individuals appear to have publicly defended the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*'s undeniable moral right, in a truly free society, to publish cartoons satirising Muhammad, much less the right of Geert Wilders to release his short film critical of Islam.[53] Nevertheless, these particular individuals are relative pragmatists compared with the more ideologically uncompromising and fanatical Islamists.

Furthermore, in consonance with their stated doctrinal tenets, Islamist movements typically begin making efforts to exert total ideological and behavioural control over their own members and followers from the very moment they are established, i.e. long before they obtain enough of a following to challenge or threaten existing Muslim or non-Muslim regimes.[54] For this and other reasons, one need not wait until they actually come to power and establish autocratic states to characterise them as totalitarian in their basic orientation. After all, if someone is endeavouring to understand the real nature of particular political or religious movements, it is better to examine their actual behaviour very closely, both towards their own members and towards others, than to give undue credence to their sometimes sophisticated propaganda efforts, which may be specifically designed to conceal their actual aims by falsely reassuring outsiders that their intentions are peaceful and that they represent no threat to anyone else. By this measure, Islamist movements can scarcely be said to behave democratically, even internally, since they tend to exercise rigid control over their own cadres and rank-and-file members. Since this *de facto* behaviour is observable almost everywhere, there is little reason to suppose that Islamist leaders would treat outsiders any differently, much less tolerate the presence of serious opponents or troublesome dissidents, should they manage to attain political power, whether through democratic means or otherwise.

In short, after taking into account the aforementioned caveats, Islamism can be justly described as the third major totalitarian ideological movement to arise in the course of the immensely destructive twentieth century, along with the

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Marxist–Leninist form of communism and fascism.[55] In the case of Islamism, of course, one is confronted with a *theocratic form of totalitarianism* rather than with secular forms of totalitarianism (albeit ones with quasi-religious features), as well as with the attempt to politicise a genuine religion *and* to religionise politics, not merely the latter. Cheryl Benard accurately describes the situation when she points out that the Islamists

> have as their goal an ascetic, highly regimented, hierarchical society in which all members follow the requirements of Islamic ritual strictly, in which immorality is prevented by separating the sexes, which in turn is achieved by banishing women from the public domain, and in which life is visibly and constantly infused by religion. It is totalitarian in its negation of a private sphere, instead believing that it is the task of state authorities to compel the individual to adhere to proper Islamic behavior anywhere and everywhere. And ideally, it wants this system – which it believes to be the only rightful one – to expand until it controls the entire world and everyone is a Muslim.[56]

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Therefore, there is no justification whatsoever for whitewashing, romanticising or apologising for Islamism, just as there were never good reasons to whitewash, romanticise or apologise for communist and fascist totalitarianism.

Nevertheless, although Islamism itself can never become truly democratic, that does not rule out the possibility that individual Islamists may at some point change their fundamental worldviews and thence genuinely embrace democratic and pluralist values.[57] Indeed, in response to new life experiences, personal crises, evolving historical contexts or the learning of painful lessons, some of them surely will as time passes. If they do, however, they will have effectively abandoned or repudiated core tenets of Islamism and can therefore no longer be accurately described as Islamists. Similarly, former authoritarian communists and fascists who truly abandon their revolutionary, totalitarian pretensions and genuinely adopt democratic values, or at least honestly agree to accept pluralism and abide by democratic processes and procedures, are no longer really Marxist–Leninists or fascists. Rather, they have managed to transform themselves into 'social democrats', 'democratic socialists', 'Euro-communists', 'national populists' and the like, appellations which indicate that at some point they jettisoned their earlier utopian and totalistic agendas.

Likewise, in the unlikely event that entire Islamist movements or parties were to undergo a fundamental transformation to the point where they discarded many of their core beliefs, those entities could no longer be legitimately characterized as Islamist either, ideologically speaking. Although key leaders or factions of certain jihadist groups have publicly renounced their former reliance on violence and terrorism, including both al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Group) and the Tanzim al-Jihad al-Islami (Islamic Jihad Organization) in Egypt, so far there have been few if any examples of Islamist movements, parties, or regimes collectively undergoing such a substantive ideological reorientation that they have ended up enthusiastically embracing true pluralism and authentic democratic *values* (as opposed to reluctantly tolerating or cynically exploiting formal democratic *processes*), and there is little reason to suppose that this situation will change in the foreseeable future. Indeed, it will only be when various movements and regimes established by Islamists are marginalized or supplanted by genuinely moderate

Muslims or democratic secularists that true democracy and pluralism will have a chance to emerge in the Muslim world.

Notes

1. See Abul A'la Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution* (Delhi: Taj Company, 1986 [1960]), pp. 144–5. He then adds, unconvincingly, that "despite its all-inclusiveness, it is something vastly and basically different from the totalitarian and authoritarian states. Individual liberty is not suppressed under it nor is there any trace of dictatorship in it." One may well ask, however, how a state that intrudes itself into every aspect of life and that must "be run only by those who believe in the ideology on which it is based and in the Divine Law which it is assigned to administer" can avoid suppressing individual liberty. See *ibid*, pp. 146–7.
2. It must be said at the outset that simply raising these thorny matters is bound to generate controversy and perhaps even animosity within academic circles, yet such issues are too important not to be addressed in a forthright and honest manner, regardless of who may be offended. However, lest anyone falsely claim that I am exhibiting 'anti-Islamic' or 'Orientalist' biases simply because I have had the temerity to level criticisms herein against both Islam and Islamism, I feel obliged to note that I am no more critical of Islamism as a political ideology than I am of the regressive, intolerant, obscurantist and totalitarian political currents deriving from other religious traditions, including those associated with the Christian right in the United States. and Europe, Jewish fundamentalists in Israel, Hindu 'nationalists', etc.
3. I prefer to use the term 'Islam bashing' to describe this particular anti-Islamic phenomenon, primarily because the term 'Islamophobia' has nowadays become a loaded word, like 'Orientalism' or 'racism', which Islamists, other Muslim activists and dogmatic 'multiculturalists' regularly use as a virtual epithet to try and de-legitimise, if not slander, all those who criticise, no matter how justifiably, Islamism or aspects of Islam. Moreover, it is a misnomer insofar as it implies that significant numbers of Westerners are irrationally fearful of or hostile to Islam *as a religion*. Apart from a relatively small number of ultra-traditionalist Catholics, fundamentalist evangelical Protestants, dogmatic Eastern Orthodox Christians and extremist Orthodox Jews, few if any Westerners are hostile to Islam for narrowly theological or religious reasons. Of course, some Westerners still retain racist or xenophobic attitudes towards Arabs, Iranians, Turks and other non-white Muslims, just as they do towards non-whites who are not Muslim (though even the prevalence of this type of racism has often been exaggerated for political purposes). Nevertheless, most of the hostility in the West towards Muslims *as Muslims* stems from the perceived unwillingness of the latter to assimilate, the insistence of their self-styled spokesmen that Western host societies must adjust to Islam rather than vice versa, and the vastly disproportionate amount of terrorist violence that is nowadays committed by Islamists against both Muslims and non-Muslims. As Walter Laqueur has wryly observed, if Eskimos began committing similarly disproportionate amounts of terrorism, there would be an understandable increase in the amount of suspicion and hostility directed at Eskimos, which would then inevitably lead to bogus accusations of 'Eskimophobia'. See his review of Michael Gove's *Celsius 7/7* book in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 11 August 2006. In the face of continued Islamist agitation and jihadist terrorism, unfortunately, it is likely that both anti-Muslim racism and actual hostility towards Islam will increase in the West. However, two other equally problematic trends that will have a considerable bearing on the West's future relations with Muslims – widespread Muslim and especially Islamist hostility towards non-Muslims, and 'Islam apologism' if not 'Islamist apologism' amongst key segments of the Western intelligentsia – are rarely discussed at all. These latter phenomena will be discussed further below.
4. For examples of this 'Islam bashing' tendency, see Serge Trifkovic, *The Sword of the Prophet: Islam – History, Theology, and Impact on the World* (Boston, MA: Regina Orthodox Press, 2007); Gregory M. Davis, *Religion of Peace? Islam's War against the World* (Los Angeles, CA: World Ahead, 2006); several pamphlets by Bill Warner and his colleagues, including Center for the Study of Political Islam (CSPI), *The Political Traditions of Mohammed: The Hadith for the Unbelievers* (Nashville, TN: CSPI, 2006), and *Mohammed and the Unbelievers: A Political Life* (Nashville, TN: CSPI, 2006); a number of books by Mark A. Gabriel (a Muslim convert to Christianity), including *Culture Clash: Islam's War on the West* (Lake Mary, FL: FrontLine, 2007); and several works by Robert Spencer, including *Islam Unveiled: Disturbing Questions about the World's Fastest-Growing Religion* (New York: Encounter, 2003), and *The Truth about Muhammad: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant*

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Religion (Chicago, IL: Regnery, 2007). The thrust of these books, most of which were written by 'concerned' conservative Christians with a theological as well as a political axe to grind, is that Islam *per se* is the problem, not merely Islamism. To place these authors in the 'Islam bashing' category does not mean, of course, that all of their criticisms of Islam are unwarranted, merely that they are clearly not disinterested or neutral observers.

5. For good examples of the conflation of Islam in general with Islamism, see the article that appeared on the 'Stop Islamization of America' (SIOA) website (and was subsequently reprinted on Bill Warner's 'Political Islam' website), wherein D. L. Adams, in the course of describing a demonstration held in Copenhagen by a Danish sister organisation called Stop Islamisation of Denmark (SIAD), insisted that 'Islam is a political ideology', thereby collapsing the crucial distinction between Islam the religion and Islamism the modern political ideology; this article is available at http://sioanetwork.com/?p=101 . See also the film *Fitna*, which was produced at the behest of Geert Wilders, a right-wing Dutch politician who considers Muslim immigration to be a threat to Holland and other Western societies. In that film, various citations from the Qur'an and the *ahadith* (i.e. written collections of oral reports, canonical and otherwise, about what Muhammad allegedly said and did) are juxtaposed with statements by jihadist leaders and spokesmen, in order to suggest that the latter are not only following authentic Islamic injunctions but faithfully applying Islamic tenets by carrying out their violent actions. Ironically, although the jihadists themselves would make the very same claim in other contexts, they have bitterly attacked the film in their propaganda broadsides as an example of 'Islamophobia'. The film can be accessed at http://www.break.com/usercontent/2009/2/Fitna-Documentary-about-Islam-660675.html.
6. For example, there were not only tolerant interpretations of Islam that dated from the period of its emergence, but also some very important rationalist and philosophically oriented interpretations of the Islamic faith that arose during the medieval period, interpretations that were quite influential at certain historical junctures (such as that of the Mu'tazili school). There were also various mystical schools of interpretation, which were often viewed as problematic and 'deviant' by those with a more orthodox perspective. In the last two centuries, in response to Western influences, several other interpretations of Islam have been competing with traditionalism, puritanical revivalism, fundamentalism and Islamism, such as neo-rationalism or moderate reformism (sometimes referred to as Islamic 'modernism') and other more liberal, democratic, contextual or metaphorical interpretations of core religious and legal texts. See e.g. Farhad Daftary (ed.), *Intellectual Traditions in Islam* (New York: I. B. Taurus, 2001); Suha Taji-Farouki (ed.), *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Qur'an* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Mansoor Moaddel and Kamran Talatoff, (eds), *Modernist and Fundamentalist Debates in Islam: A Reader* (New York: Macmillan Palgrave, 2000), part 1; Charles Kurzman (ed.), *Modernist Islam, 1840–1940: A Sourcebook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); and idem (ed.), *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), although the editor inexplicably also includes selections from several Islamists who are certainly not 'liberal' except in the most relative sense of that term, such as Rashid al-Ghannushi, 'Ali Shari'ati, and Yusuf al-Qaradhawi.
7. In the American context, Christian Reconstructionism (which is also sometimes referred to as Dominion Theology or Theonomy) is the closest analogue, ideologically speaking, to Islamism. Indeed, in the mid-1980s the Reconstructionists and their Christian right allies formed an organisation called the Coalition on Revival (COR) that actually advocated employing the term 'Christianism' for their doctrines, which would of course be an exact terminological analogy of Islamism. See Michelle Goldberg, *Kingdom Coming: The Rise of Christian Nationalism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007), pp.39–40. For the views of the Reconstructionists, who consider unbelievers, '[secular] humanists', and Christians with more moderate interpretations to be the *de facto* enemies of God and who promote the creation of a totalitarian theocratic state governed by a rigid and puritanical application of ancient Biblical law, cf. Rousas John Rushdoony, *Christianity and the State* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House, 1986); idem, *God's Plan for Victory: The Meaning of Post-millenialism. A Chalcedon Study* (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, 1977); idem, *The Institutes of Biblical Law. A Chalcedon Study* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1977); and Gary North, *Christian Reconstruction: What It Is, What It Isn't* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1991).
8. For various debilitating interpretive trends and intellectual orthodoxies in the academic study of the Middle East, most of which are associated with the academic left, see Martin S. Kramer, *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001), a polemical but nonetheless insightful study. However, there are also lots of inaccurate ideas about Islam and Islamism being peddled outside the corridors of academe by people on the right, e.g. both by the aforementioned 'Islam bashers' and by neoconservatives and old Cold Warriors within policymaking bureaucracies and think tanks.

One such idea is that today's jihadist terrorism is primarily a product of state sponsorship by so-called 'rogue regimes' such as Syria, an exaggerated or distorted view that is also promoted by many Israeli hardliners. For a discussion of these conspiratorial notions, in contradistinction to the actual efforts by states to use terrorists as their proxies, see Jeffrey M. Bale, "Terrorists as State 'Surrogates' or 'Proxies': Separating Fact from Fiction," in Michael A. Innes (ed.), *Making Sense of Proxy Wars: The Politics of Armed Surrogacy* (Washington, DC: Potomac, 2009), forthcoming. Moreover, if truth be told, the primary facilitators of Sunni extremism and terrorism have been regimes allied with the United States, such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, not hostile 'enemy' regimes (except in the cases of certain Palestinian rejectionist groups, both secular and Islamist).

9. David Bukay has clearly revealed just how one-sided such claims are in *From Muhammad to Bin Laden: Religious and Ideological Sources of the Homicide Bombers Phenomenon* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008), esp. chapters 1-3, although he leans too far in the other direction and, in the end, wrongly indicts Islam rather than Islamism (*ibid*, p. 352).
10. Indeed, Mark Juergensmeyer made such a claim explicitly at a conference we both attended in 2008. This is a notion that he also suggested, at least implicitly, in *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), where chapters are devoted to extremists from diverse religious traditions, all of which are seemingly viewed as equally culpable. So too did journalist Christiane Amanpour in her three-part CNN television documentary entitled 'God's Warriors', which gave equal time to Jewish, Muslim and Christian fundamentalists.
11. For a recent book in a long line of studies that favourably contrast the relative tolerance of polytheistic religions with the built-in inflexibility of monotheistic religions, see Jonathan Kirsch, *God Against the Gods: The History of the War between Monotheism and Polytheism* (New York: Penguin, 2005).
12. For a good short introduction to the doctrine of abrogation, see David Bukay, "Peace or Jihad? Abrogation in Islam," *Middle East Quarterly* 14:4 (Fall 2007), pp.3–11. It is a matter of debate whether the concept of abrogation has or has not been the generally accepted interpretation. See e.g. Hamadi Redissi and Jan-Erik Lane, "Does Islam Provide a Theory of Violence?," in Amélie Blom, Laetitia Bucaille and Luis Martinez (eds), *The Enigma of Islamist Violence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p.30, who claim that classical exegesis canonised interpretations of Qur'an 9:5 in such a way that they superseded or repealed over one hundred more peaceful and tolerant Qur'anic verses.
13. For the classical Islamic doctrine of international relations, see Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1955), esp. chapters 3, 5, 6, and 8. For these basic concepts, see A[rmand] Abel, "Dar al-Islam," in Bernard Lewis et al., *Encyclopedia of Islam: New Edition* [hereafter *EI2*] (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983 [1965]), volume 2, p.127; and idem, "Dar al-Harb," *EI2*, volume 2, p.126. This bipartite division of the world seems to have first emerged during the 'Abbasid period, specifically in the later eighth century. See Roy Parviz Mottahedeh and Ridwan al-Sayyid, "The Idea of Jihad before the Crusades," in Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh (eds), *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001), p.28. For the significance of the *jizya* and the *dhimmi*, see C[laude] Cahen, "Dhimma," *EI2*, volume 2, pp.227–31; and idem, "Djizya," *EI2*, volume 2, pp.559–62.
14. For these modified concepts, cf. D. B. McDonald and A[rmand] Abel, "Dar al-Sulh," *EI2*, volume 2, p.131; Halil Inalcik, "Dar al-'Ahd," *EI2*, volume 2, p.116.
15. See e.g. the important text attributed to Usama b. Ladin, "Moderate Islam is a Prostration to the West," reprinted and translated in Raymond Ibrahim (ed.), *The Al Qaeda Reader* (New York: Broadway, 2007), pp.22–62.
16. See e.g. Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p.37. Cf. also Cenap Cakmak, "Islamic Ideology, Hegemony and Terrorism," paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Le Centre Sheraton Hotel, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 17 March 2004.
17. Such a simplistic division between 'radical' and supposedly 'moderate' Islamists has in fact become standard among academicians studying the Middle East. Some have even gone so far as to refer to the latter (i.e. to non-violent Islamists) as 'mainstream' Islamist movements and organisations, as if they were normal democratic political parties whose leaders and members were philosophically wedded to democracy. See e.g. Nathan Brown, Amr Hamzawy and Marina Ottaway, *Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process in the Arab World: Exploring Gray Zones* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), p.3.

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18. See e.g. Raymond William Baker, *Islam Without Fear: Egypt and the New Islamists* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), yet another Western academic apologia for the Jami'yyat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin (Society of the Muslim Brothers, better known as the Muslim Brotherhood) and its offshoots. See the harsh judgment of Kramer concerning this and other misrepresentations of Islam and Islamism in *Ivory Towers on Sand* (note 8), chapters 3–4, esp. pp.50–2 (on 'democratic' Islamism).
19. See further Walid Phares, *The War of Ideas: Jihadism against Democracy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp.188–91. The Islamists' professed but phony concerns about 'authoritarianism' are comparable to, say, the American radical right's hypocritical (but nonetheless justifiable) defence of 'free speech' whenever the government takes measures to suppress its speech, even though these same right-wingers would have no hesitation about restricting the free speech of others if they ever attained positions of power.
20. In theory, the idea of allying, whether openly or secretly, with non-violent Islamists from the Muslim Brotherhood against jihadist networks might appear to make superficial sense. After all, both Western governments and the Brotherhood are strongly opposed to 'jihadist Salafist' terrorism carried out against the 'far enemy'. However, the two protagonists are opposed to the jihadists for very different reasons. The Brotherhood is certainly not opposed to acts of jihadist terrorism for moral reasons (at least not if they are perceived to be acts of 'defensive' *jihad*) or because its cadre have any genuine sympathy for the West, but rather only because such attacks may end up targeting them or otherwise interfering with their ability to carry out their long-term plans to gradually and stealthily Islamise the territories they reside in, including Western countries. Every time the jihadists carry out an attack in the West, it serves to reawaken the populace to the dangers posed by Islamism, and thus brings the Brotherhood under closer scrutiny as well. In other words, in the wake of such traumatic incidents, both official and journalistic spotlights are, at least temporarily, focused on the activities of a multitude of Islamist groups, including the ostensibly non-violent ones, and this renewed attention often makes it more difficult for them to operate undisturbed and secretly pursue their agendas. Hence non-violent Islamists may at times be willing, for purely instrumental reasons, to work with the authorities in Western countries. Despite this, it can be argued that the gradualist but nonetheless corrosive cultural, social and political activities of the Brotherhood and the Mawdudists, and perhaps also those of the fundamentalist Tablighis (members of the Tablighi-i Jama'at [Association for the Propagation of the Faith], an international Islamic organisation originally founded in South Asia), represent a far greater danger to the West in the long run than the jihadists do (unless, say, the latter are able to acquire nuclear devices and detonate them in Western cities). For this reason, although Western government agencies will not be able to avoid interacting with non-violent Islamists, they should not collaborate, either overtly or covertly, with the latter Islamists except in the most unusual or dangerous circumstances, and they should never make the mistake of viewing such groups as their trusted allies or as genuine 'friends' of the West.
21. Similarly, in 1996 factions within British intelligence allegedly provided covert support to Libyan jihadists, including members of al-Qa'ida itself, in an effort to kill or oust Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, the Israelis supported the Harakat al-Muqawwama al-Islamiyya (HAMAS: Islamic Resistance Movement) early on in an attempt to weaken the rival Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyya (PLO: Palestine Liberation Organization), and according to both insiders and informed observers, components of the so-called 'deep state' (*derin devlet*) in Turkey – perhaps including the Jandarme İstihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele Merkezi (JİTEM: Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counterterrorism Center), the military's Özel Harp Dairesi (ÖHD: Special Warfare Department), and the underground paramilitary ultranationalist and pan-Turkist organization Ergenekon (named after a mythical site in the Altai mountains) – at first covertly aided and thence manipulated a fanatical Kurdish Sunni Islamist group known as Hizbullahî Kurdî (Kurdish Hizballah, which is more often referred to – misleadingly – as Turkish Hizballah) so as to divide Kurdish loyalties and weaken the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (PKK: Kurdistan Workers Party). See, respectively, Martin Bright, "MI6 hired Al Qaeda men to kill Gaddafi: ex-official," *Dawn* [Pakistan], 30 October 2002, available at http://web.archive.org/web/20021105130221/http://www.dawn.com/2002/10/30/int9.htm, and also "The Shaylergate Files," NLP Wessex website, available at http://www.nlpwessex.org/docs/shaylergatehtm.htm [Shayler is a former MI5 officer who later became a whistleblower and made specific claims about this matter]; Andrew Higgins, "How Israel Helped to Spawn Hamas," *Wall Street Journal*, 24 January 2009, available at http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123275572295011847.html, and "Les très secrètes 'relations' Israël-Hamas," *Le Canard Enchaîné*, 1 February 2006; and "What is Turkey's Hizbullah?: A Human Rights Watch Backgrounder," Human Rights Watch website, 16 February 2000, available at http://www.hrw.org/legacy/english/docs/2000/02/16/

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turkey3057.htm, as well as many Turkish-language sources, e.g., Faik Bulut and Mehmet Faraç, *Kod adı Hizbullah: Türkiye Hizbullahçılarının anatomisi* (Istanbul: Ozan, 1999). All of these secret operations either failed or had very negative consequences in the long term. Hence the expected short-term benefits of these "enemy of my enemy" alliances must always be weighed against the possible long-term ramifications and costs.

22. See e.g. Christopher Simpson, *Blowback: America's Recruitment of Nazis and its Effects on the Cold War* (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988). Similar covert efforts to recruit former fascists were likewise made by other former wartime allies, including both Western European countries and Soviet Bloc regimes.
23. See e.g. Graham E. Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). Others who have advocated such alliances in the interests of *Realpolitik* include another former CIA officer, Reuel Marc Gerecht. Antony T. Sullivan has gone much further by arguing that these supposedly 'moderate' Islamists are 'committed to democratic governance and share cultural concerns held by mainstream American conservatives'. See his paper entitled "Conservative Ecumenism: Politically Incorrect Meditations on Islam and the West," delivered at The Historical Society conference in Boothbay Harbor, Maine, on 4 June 2004, cited in J. Michael Waller, *Fighting the War of Ideas Like A Real War: Messages to Defeat the Terrorists* (Washington, DC: Institute for World Politics, 2007), p.116, note 133. (This is hardly a ringing endorsement, since even if the Islamists did actually share the concerns of socially and culturally conservative Americans – which is only partly true – that would still mean that they presented a threat to certain fundamental Western freedoms and Enlightenment values.)
24. See e.g. Ahmad S. Moussalli, *Moderate and Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Quest for Modernity, Legitimacy, and the Islamic State* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1999). Therein, according to the blurb of the publisher, Moussalli suggests that Sunni 'Islamic fundamentalism might prove to be a liberating theology for the modern Islamic world'. Since Moussalli is very knowledgeable and has produced several informative books, it is even more astonishing that he could make such an argument. For similar claims about Shi'i Islamism, cf. Hamid Dabashi, *Islamic Liberation Theology: Resisting the Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2008), and Michel Foucault, who originally portrayed the Islamic Revolution in Iran as a culturally 'authentic' liberation movement – right before the Ayatollahs began systematically exterminating their opponents, both real and imagined. See Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson (both critics from the left), *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), esp. pp.69–137 and, for translations of some of Foucault's key writings and statements on the Iranian Revolution, pp.179–277. To paraphrase H. L. Mencken, no one will apparently ever go broke betting on the astonishing myopia and naivety that will inevitably be displayed by certain circles of Western intellectuals, no matter how brilliant they may be. This is all the more true given the long and often sordid history of their prior apologetics for, and outright romanticisation of, both Bolshevism and fascism, two earlier totalitarian ideologies and movements. For these tragic and embarrassing long-standing tendencies, cf. Julien Benda, *The Treason of the Intellectuals* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969 [1928]); Jean-François Revel, *The Totalitarian Temptation* (New York: Penguin, 1978); Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Western Intellectuals in Search of the Good Society* (New Brunswick, NY: Transaction Publishers, 1998 [1981]); and John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *In Denial: Historians, Communism and Espionage* (San Francisco, CA: Encounter Books, 2003). Cf. also the New Left and 'post-communist' glorification of anti-democratic 'third worldist' ideologies and movements, which persists to the present day, a phenomenon which has been documented by Pascal Bruckner, *The Tears of the White Man: Compassion as Contempt* (New York: Free Press, 1986); Caroline Fourest (a self-described supporter of the 'anti-totalitarian left' who is opposed to the 'Third Worldist left'), *La tentation obscurantiste* (Paris: Grasset, 2005), pp.33–51; and Pierre-André Taguieff, *Prêcheurs de haine: Traversée de la judéophobie planétaire* (Paris: Fayard, 2004), who provides numerous examples of the harmful political and moral consequences of uncritically glorifying and supporting all anti-Western movements in the Third World, no matter how reactionary they may be (as the Islamists clearly are). In short, Islamism is the only the latest in a long line of anti-democratic and indeed totalitarian ideologies and movements that have been whitewashed if not championed outright by certain Western (and, for that matter, Muslim) intellectuals.
25. Some may object that the ostensibly moderate and now ruling Adalet va Kalkınma Partisi (AKP: Justice and Development Party) in Turkey, which was founded by certain relatively pragmatic 'reformists', is an example of an Islamist regime that has accepted pluralism and democracy. However, this is a contestable claim, one that has often been advanced by 'Islamist apologists' within and outside of academia. It should be emphasised that the 'moderation' of the AKP stems from two rather unique factors. First, several of its predecessors, the Milli Nizam Partisi (MNP:

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National Order Party), the Milli Selamat Partisi (MSP: National Salvation Party), the Refah Partisi (RP: Welfare Party) and the Fazilet Partisi (FP: Virtue Pary), were legally banned by secularist elements within the military for maintaining paramilitary wings, promoting the radical Islamisation of Turkish society and thereby threatening the Kemalist state and its secularised constitution. As long as the old guard within the military continues to exert high levels of influence and control over the political process, the AKP must pursue its Islamisation schemes very slowly and carefully. Note, however, that the Islamist movement associated with all of those parties – Milli Görüş (National Vision) – still remains quite radical. Second, the AKP government must also present a moderate, 'democratic', and 'pro-Western' face to the world in order to convince European nations that it is a suitable candidate for joining the European Union (EU), which it is interested in doing mainly for economic reasons. This too forces the party to advance its Islamist agenda with considerable caution and circumspection. Despite these major obstacles, however, the AKP has assiduously, albeit stealthily and subtly, pursued its Islamisation efforts – e.g. by subsidising the establishment of a vast network of religious schools, replacing secularists on high school and university faculties with Islamists and, most recently, trying to bring key elements of the military to trial for having carried out covert 'dirty wars' against the Kurds and other segments of Turkish society, including several Islamist groups. (Although exposing the anti-democratic activities of the security forces would normally be a laudable goal, in this case these efforts are unfortunately motivated by Islamist rancor rather than genuinely democratic sentiments.) In any event, should the AKP ultimately evolve into a party that fully embraces democratic values instead of one that participates actively in democratic processes and even governs but is still largely animated by anti-democratic sentiments, it will no longer be an Islamist party at all. For contrasting interpretations of the AKP, cf. M. Hakan Yavuz (ed.), *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti* (Provo, UT: University of Utah Press, 2006), wherein the AKP is presented as having evolved from an Islamist party into a conservative democratic party comparable to Christian Democratic parties in Europe [sic]; and Barry Rubin and Birol A. Yeşilada (eds), *Islamisation of Turkey under the AKP Rule* (New York: Routledge, 2010), which argues that the AKP, whilst presenting itself as a 'centre-right reform party', is in fact actively engaged in the Islamisation and de-secularisation of Turkey.

26. As disillusioned leftist Nick Cohen justly noted, for such people '[a] stance against "the West" or "the hegemonic" absolved all [Islamist] sins.' See *What's Left?: How the Left Lost Its Way* (London: Harper Collins UK, 2009), p. 377.
27. Here I am not suggesting that the Islamist terrorist threat, like earlier terrorist threats, has not been frequently hyped or exploited by those with vested interests, both inside and outside of governments, only that jihadist terrorism has constituted a very real and serious threat for some time. Hence efforts to downplay or minimise this threat, all the more so during an era in which jihadist groups have been regularly carrying out bloody attacks in regions throughout the world (mainly against other Muslims), are at best misguided and at worst thoroughly dishonest. For the exploitation of the terrorist threat, see, e.g. John Mueller, *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006); and Ian S. Lustick, *Trapped in the War on Terror* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), although the former author overstates his case by implying that the jihadist terrorist threat is not particularly serious, a claim that the ever-growing numbers of victims of the jihadists would surely find both astonishing and appalling.
28. John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (New York: Oxford University, 1999); Bruce B. Lawrence, *Shattering the Myth: Islam Beyond Violence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1998). In support of his claims, Esposito coined the misleading term 'secular fundamentalism' (*ibid*., pp. 259–62) to label those who were justifiably concerned about attempts by Islamists to infuse religion into public life, by force if necessary. Some Islamist spokesmen have since adopted that same handy phrase to try and delegitimize their critics.
29. Cf. Fariba Adelkhah and Alain Gresh (eds), *Un péril islamiste?* (Brussels: Complexe, 1994); W. A. R. Shadid and P. S. van Koningsveld, *De mythe van het islamitische gevaar: Hindernissen bij intergratie* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1992); and Jochen Hippler and Andrea Lueg (eds), *The Next Threat: Western Perceptions of Islam* (London: Pluto Press, 1995), esp. pp.1–6, 7–31, 116–53.
30. Indeed, a common argument was that Western political elites now allegedly felt compelled to 'construct' a new Muslim 'enemy' or 'Other' in order to justify their maintenance of inflated defense budgets and their attempts to project power abroad following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. Hence the new 'green' (Islamist) threat was simply being substituted, dishonestly and cynically, for the old 'red' (communist) threat. See e.g. Joseph M. Schwartz, "Misreading Islamism: The 'War Against Terrorism' and Just-War Theory," in Tom Rockmore, Joseph Margolis, and Armen T. Marsoobian (eds), *The Philosophical Challenge of*

September 11 (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pp.42–70, esp. the first two paragraphs. Emblematic of this blatantly partisan approach, whose constant refrain is that 'Islamophobic Westerners are unfairly demonizing the innocent Muslim Other', is the book edited by Emran Qureshi and Michael A. Sells, *The New Crusade: Constructing the Muslim Enemy* (New York: Columbia University, 2003). Not surprisingly, these very same themes are regularly emphasised in jihadist and Islamist propaganda. What such interpreters conveniently ignore is that there was a real communist threat during the Cold War (albeit one that was often exaggerated), just as there is now a real Islamist threat (albeit one that is also sometimes exaggerated).

31. See Jeffrey M. Bale, "Jihadist Ideology and Strategy and the Possible Use of WMD," in Gary Ackerman and Jeremy Tamsett (eds), *Jihadists and Weapons of Mass Destruction* (New York: CRC Press, 2009), pp.17–21, for a fuller discussion (albeit specifically in connection with the global jihadists).
32. For the notion of the *salaf al-salih*, see A[li] Merad, "Islah," *EI2*, volume 4, pp.148–50. The concept of *jahiliyya*, a term that originally referred to the 'barbarous' and 'ignorant' pagan pre-Islamic era in the Arabian Peninsula and beyond, was later applied by both Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutub to the contemporary world. See e.g. Sayed Khatab, *The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb: The Theory of Jahiliyya* (New York: Routledge, 2009). For the concept of *hakimiyya* and its relationship to *jahiliyya*, see idem, *The Power of Sovereignty: The Political and Ideological Philosophy of Sayyid Qutb* (New York: Routledge, 2006). Here it should be emphasised that I do not accept the common equation of the terms 'Islamism', 'political Islam', and 'Islamic fundamentalism'. In my view, these three terms are not in fact synonymous. First, I would argue that the term 'Islamism' should only be applied to the extreme right wing of the political Islam spectrum. Under the rubric of 'political Islam', I would include all of the ideologies and movements that *actively aim to politicise Islam or Islamise politics*, whatever form this may take, and in that sense one can describe the political Islam spectrum as a very broad umbrella that ranges – left to right – from 'Islamic socialism' (not to be confused with Western utopian or Marxian socialism, since it endeavours to reconcile Islam's traditional emphases on social justice and egalitarianism with modern socialism), to 'Islamic liberalism' (not to be confused with 'bourgeois' Western liberalism, since its proponents seek to reconcile Western notions of democracy with traditional Islamic – really pre-Islamic tribal – institutions [like the *majlis al-shura* or consultative council] and customs [such as *ijma'* or consensus]), to 'moderate Islamic reformism' (of the sort advocated by Muhammad 'Abduh, before the Salafiyya movement was transformed into a puritanical current of Islamism by Muhammad Rashid Rida), to the Islamic right. (If one wanted to create a Christian analogy, the 'political Christianity' spectrum would encompass 'liberation theology' on the left, liberal 'social gospel' activism, moderately conservative mainstream Christian groups that regularly engage in politics and the Christian right.) Second, one should make a distinction between Islamism and Islamic fundamentalism, since fundamentalists (i.e. those who aim to restore what they regard as the 'pure', 'uncorrupted' foundational elements of their religious tradition and to protect that 'authentic' tradition from internal 'deviations' and external threats) can respond in one of two main ways to the perceived external corruption, 'sinfulness' and 'evil', either as 'quietists' whose primary concern is to insulate themselves from the external society so that they can practice a 'purer' personal form of their faith, or as 'activists' who feel that it is their personal duty and obligation to transform that corrupt external world through various means, ranging from aggressive missionary work to the employment of violence. From this point of view, 'Islamism' can be viewed as a subset of 'activist Islamic fundamentalism' (which basically means that not all activist Islamic fundamentalists are Islamists, but that all Islamists are activist Islamic fundamentalists). A fuller exposition of this argument was originally going to be included as a separate chapter in this special issue of *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, but will instead appear in a future issue of this journal under the title "Islamic Fundamentalism, Political Islam, and Islamism: An Alternative Categorization Scheme."
33. See further Jeffrey M. Bale, "Islamism," in Richard F. Pilch and Raymond Zilinskas (eds), *Encyclopedia of Bioterrorism Defense* (New York: Wiley, 2005), pp.296–8; and idem, "Islamic Fundamentalism, Political Islam, and Islamism." For more on Islamist doctrine(s), compare Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1990); Abderrahim Lamchichi, *L'islamisme politique* (Paris: Harmattan, 2001); Johannes J. G. Jansen, *The Dual Nature of Islamic Fundamentalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1997); and Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi', *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* (Albany: SUNY, 1996). See also the contrasting interpretations found in Martin Kramer (ed.), *The Islamism Debate* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University/Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1997).
34. Cf. Fawaz Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), passim. This shift in targeting priorities from the 'near enemy' to the 'far enemy', of course, was the primary strategic innovation associated with Usama b. Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri.

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35. As Cohen has noted (*What's Left?*, pp. 268-9), like fascism and its "predecessors in the Counter-Enlightenment," Islamism is 'not a rational critique of this or that failure of a democratic government, but an assault on democracy and human rights as malign in themselves'. Or, as he put it elsewhere (*ibid*, pp. 261-2), '[i]t was the best of the West [that] Islamism was against not the worst, and its detestation of Enlightenment values was nothing new'. Cf. Mary Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), esp. chapters 4–5; and Farhad Khosrokhavar, *Inside Jihadism: Understanding Jihadi Movements Worldwide* (Kent, WA: Paradigm, 2009), esp. chapter 4. Both authors are focused on jihadism rather than Islamism in general, but apart from bitter disputes over tactics – and the obsessive jihadist emphasis on armed struggle – there is not as much difference between the two as many observers claim, especially as regards their ultimate long-term objectives and their designated enemies.
36. See also Bassam Tibi, "Islamism and Democracy: On the Compatibility of Institutional Islamism and the Political Culture of Democracy," in this same issue.
37. See e.g. idem, *Die neue Totalitarismus: "Heiliger Krieg" und westliche Sicherheit* (Darmstadt: Primus, 2004); Alexandre del Valle, *Le totalitarisme islamiste à l'assaut des démocraties* (Paris: Syrtes, 2002); and Amir Jahanchahi, *Vaincre le IIIe totalitarisme* (Paris: Ramsay, 2001).
38. The fact that absolutist interpretations of religion can in fact be interpreted as totalistic has been emphasised by Bruce B. Lawrence in his definition of fundamentalism in general: '*Fundamentalism* is the affirmation of religious authority as holistic and absolute, admitting of neither criticism nor reduction; it is expressed through the collective demand that specific creedal and ethical dictates derived from scripture be publicly recognized and legally enforced'. See *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt Against the Modern Age* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), p.27. (Sadly, Lawrence was wrong, even at that time, to claim [ibid.] that the term only applied to 'marginalized protest cadres' in the Muslim world.) If such totalistic qualities can be associated with fundamentalism in general, they are clearly applicable to the explicitly political ideology of Islamism, which demands the establishment of a strict Islamic order or state.
39. See further Jeffrey M. Bale, "(Still) More on Fascist and Neo-Fascist Ideology and 'Groupuscularity'," *Erwägen Wissen Ethik* 15/3 (October–November 2004), esp. pp.381–2 (as well as in Roger Griffin, Werner Loh and Andreas Umland (eds), *Fascism Past and Present, West and East* [Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2006], pp.291–3).
40. See e.g. Mehdi Mozaffari, "The Rise of Islamism in the Light of European Totalitarianism," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 10/1 (March 2009), as well as his interchange with Ana Soage, pp.1–18. Although both authors rightly emphasise that Islamism is related in various ways to the parallel rise of communism and fascism, Mozaffari's claim that the 'roots' of Islamism 'go back to the High Middle Ages' (ibid., p.12, note 2) is mistaken. Although many Islamists were influenced by certain ideas associated with the medieval Hanbali theologian Ibn Taymiyya and other pre-modern puritanical figures, including the eighteenth–nineteenth century Islamic revivalist Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, the ideology of Islamism was first developed in the second decade of the twentieth century. Whether fundamentalism is necessarily a post-Enlightenment phenomenon that can be sharply distinguished from earlier puritanical revivalist movements, and whether it must adopt an activist and aggressive posture towards outsiders, are complex matters that are addressed further in Bale, "Islamic Fundamentalism, Political Islam, and Islamism".
41. For the concept of 'mass society', see William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2008 [1959]).
42. Here one must distinguish between 'unmodern' and ideologically 'anti-modernist'. Neither the Islamists in general nor the jihadists among them are 'unmodern' in the sense that they are unwilling or unable to exploit modern Western technologies to further their regressive causes. On the other hand, they are opposed to virtually every idea and value associated with the European Enlightenment movement, and hence are by definition 'anti-modernist'. That is why the title of Michael J. Mazarr's otherwise interesting book, *Unmodern Men in the Modern World: Radical Islam, Terrorism, and the War on Modernity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), is rather misleading.
43. Cf. Syed Abul Al'a Maudoodi, *Jihad in Islam* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2001 [1939]), pp.8, 9, 19, 24; Ana Belén Soage, "Hasan al-Banna or the Politicisation of Islam," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9/1 (March 2008), pp.21–42; Ladan Boroumand and Roya Boroumond, "Terror, Islam, and Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 13:2 (April 2002), pp.7–9, who emphasise that both al-Banna and Qutub borrowed 'organizational and ideological tools … from European totalitarianism' (ibid., p.9), that Qutub 'called for a monolithic state ruled by a single party of Islamic rebirth' (ibid., p.8), and that the latter's ideas effectively amounted to 'Leninism in Islamic dress' (ibid.); and Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004), esp. pp.92–100. Qutub also referred to this Islamist vanguard as *al-safwa al-mukhtara* ('the chosen elite').

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44. For the Nazis' complex and schizophrenic attitude towards modernity (which was also true of Italian Fascism, especially given its Futurist component), see Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Some have gone even further and argued that Adolf Hitler in fact looked favourably upon several aspects of the French Revolution, which if true would make the Nazis rather more modernist in some respects than is often supposed. See e.g. Rainer Zitelmann, *Hitler: Selbstverständnis eines Revolutionärs* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990). Cf. also Michael Prinz and Rainer Zitelmann (eds), *Nationalsozialismus und Modernisierung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991).
45. For some standard works on totalitarianism and totalitarian regimes, see Franz Borkenau, *The Totalitarian Enemy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1940); Peter F. Drucker, *The End of Economic Man: The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1995 [1939]); Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Schocken, 2004 [1958]); Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965); and Jeanne Kirkpatrick, *Dictatorships and Double Standards: Rationalism and Reason in Politics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983), esp. pp.23–52, 96–138. (Ironically, Brzezinski and Kirkpatrick, two well-known analysts of totalitarianism, both advocated providing aid to the Afghan *mujahidin*, presumably because, although they understood clearly that the Soviet regime had once been totalitarian, they failed to recognise that Islamism likewise had intrinsically totalitarian tendencies.) For more recent scholarly analyses, cf. François Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), esp. chapter 6; Hans Meier (ed.), *Totalitarianism and Political Religions, Volume 1: Concepts for the Comparison of Dictatorships* (New York: Routledge, 2005); and A. James Gregor, *Marxism, Fascism, and Totalitarianism: Chapters in the Intellectual History of Radicalism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).
46. For representative works that include critiques of the totalitarianism concept, see Ernest A. Menze (ed.), *Totalitarianism Reconsidered* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1981); and Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
47. See Friedrich and Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, esp. chapter 7, on totalitarian ideologies (though one may quibble about certain of their supposedly defining characteristics).
48. Fortunately, Islamist movements with totalitarian agendas have so far mainly been able to seize control in less developed countries with dysfunctional governmental institutions and only rudimentary levels of infrastructure. Hence those movements have lacked the means to erect relatively efficient, well-organised totalitarian regimes comparable to those of, say, the Bolsheviks and Nazis. The main exception, of course, has been Iran. There, though inspired by Imam Ruhallah Khumayni's absolutist *vilayat-i faqih* (Custodianship of the Islamic Jurists) doctrine, whereby leading clerical figures were to lead a theocratic state, ostensibly as the regents of the Hidden Imam until his return, the Islamists were eventually forced to establish a hybrid regime with some totalitarian, some polycentric and even some quasi-democratic features in order to consolidate their power.
49. See e.g. the passages in al-Banna's and Mawdudi's writings devoted to democracy, where their occasional professed support for democracy turns out, upon further inspection, to be decidedly illiberal and indeed undemocratic. As Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr has pointed out, for Mawdudi the term 'democracy was merely an adjective used to define the otherwise indefinable virtues of the Islamic state'. See *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.86. Cf. also the useful discussion of Marion Boulby, *The Muslim Brotherhood and the Kings of Jordan, 1945-1993* (Atlanta, GA: Scholar's Press, 1999), pp. 129-35, which highlights the many contradictions between 'democratic' Islamist rhetoric and the substantive Islamist hostility to pluralism. Therein she cites one former Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood member, who rightly pointed out (*ibid*, p. 134) that 'when [the Islamists] talk about democracy they are talking about theo[cratic]-democracy', which is of course the antithesis of genuine democracy. Even Fawaz Gerges, who originally sought to downplay the threat of Islamist terrorism before facing reality and focusing on it, admitted that Islamists were their own worst enemies because they were 'equivocal about democratic norms, human rights, peaceful relations with the West, and the use of terror in the pursuit of domestic political goals'. See *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.241–2. The obvious reason for this ongoing equivocation is that the Islamists have never genuinely embraced the first three ideas, and that many have actively promoted the use of terrorism, at least in certain contexts. In short, Islamists generally mean very different things than most Westerners do when they use terms like 'democracy'. Here it should also be pointed out that it has long been common for the

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most anti-democratic, illiberal and totalitarian communist parties and regimes to call themselves democratic, as with the Democratic People's Republic of [North] Korea (DPRK), even though the term was devoid of actual substance or, at least, had a completely different meaning.

50. For the concept of extremism and its characteristics, see John George and Laird Wilcox, *American Extremists: Militias, Supremacists, Klansmen, Communists, and Others* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1996), pp.54–62; Gian Mario Bravo, *L'estremismo in Italia* (Rome: Riuniti, 1982), pp.7–18; Neil J. Smelser, *The Faces of Terrorism: Social and Psychological Dimensions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), esp. pp.58–80; and Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (New York: Perennial, 2002 [1951]), though 'true believers' are even more common within sectarian vanguard parties than the mass movements they aspire to lead. Cf. also Maxwell Taylor, *The Fanatics: A Behavioural Approach to Political Violence* (London and Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1991), esp. chapter 2, wherein 'ten features of fanaticism' are listed that are analogous to several of the characteristics others have associated with 'extremism'.
51. Cf., e.g. Hasan al-Banna, translated and annotated by Charles Wendell (ed.), *Five Tracts of Hasan al-Banna (1906–1949): A Selection from the* Majmu'at rasa'il al-Imam al-shahid Hasan al-Banna (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978); Olivier Carré and Michel Seurat (eds), *Les Frères musulmans, 1928–1982* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001); Sayyed Abul Mawdudi, *A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam* (Selangor, Malaysia; Islamic Book Trust, 2002 [1st edn, 1963]); Albert Bergesen (ed.), *The Sayyid Qutb Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Faraj, translated and analysed by Johannes J. G. Jansen, *The Neglected Duty: The Creed of Sadat's Assassins and Islamic Resurgence in the Middle East* (New York: Macmillan, 1986); Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, *Islamic Awakening between Rejection and Extremism* (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2007); and the Ayatallah Khumayni, translated by Hamid Algar (ed.), *Islam and Revolution 1: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini* (New York: Kegan Paul, 2002).
52. All of these individuals have been characterised by academicians as liberals, democrats or moderates. See e.g. Tim Niblock, "Foreward," in Mishal Fahm al-Sulami, *The West and Islam: Western Liberal Democracy versus the System of Shura* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p.vi, where he opines that 'the views expressed by al-Turabi are largely compatible with Western democracy' [sic]; Azzam S. Tamimi [himself an Islamist and leading member of a Muslim Brotherhood front group], *Rashid al-Ghannushi: A Democrat within Islamism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); and Ian Hamel, *La vérité sur Tariq Ramadan: Sa famille, ses réseaux, sa stratégie* (Paris: Favre, 2007). Alas, such characterisations could only be true relative to other Islamists who are even more extreme (or perhaps simply more honest), since all of the above figures have proven to be very adept at disguising their immoderate underlying agendas. For example, apart from being the 'spiritual advisor' of a brutal Sudanese Islamist regime until his own arrest and expulsion, the supposed 'liberal' al-Turabi reportedly endeavoured to forge a joint anti-Western alliance between violent Sunni and Shi'i Islamists in the mid-1990s, so much so that he allegedly brokered meetings between the leaders of al-Qa'ida, then ensconced in the Sudan, and other jihadist organisations, including Hizballah (not to mention Iranian intelligence operatives). See further Millard Burr and Robert O. Collins, *Revolutionary Sudan: Hasan al-Turabi and the Islamist State, 1989–2000* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003), esp. chapter 3. For Western academic attempts to portray al-Ghannushi as a 'democrat', efforts that the Tunisian himself undermined because of his rhetorical support for extremists and his conspiratorial anti-Semitic, anti-Masonic and anti-secular sentiments, see Kramer, *Ivory Towers on Sand* (note 8), p.53. As for Ramadhan, many people are familiar with his works that are designed for Western consumption, which are both fairly sophisticated and relatively moderate in their orientation. See e.g. Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (New York: Oxford University, 2004). Alas, far fewer Westerners have read his other works, which present significantly less moderate views, such as Tariq Ramadan, *La foi, la Voie et la résistance* (Lyon: Tawhid, 2002); idem, *Jihād, violence, guerre et paix en islam* (Lyon: Tawhid, 2002); and idem, *Dār ash-shahāda: L'Occident, espace du témoignage* (Lyon: Tawhid, 2002). Fewer still are aware that he employs a 'double discourse', one that is designed to appeal to and allay the concerns of well-meaning Western intellectuals, and another that is far more radical and designed to rally the support of Muslims living in the West. On this, see Caroline Fourest, *Frère Tariq: Discours, stratégie et méthode de Tariq Ramadan* (Paris: Grasset, 2004); Paul Landau, *Le sabre et le Coran: Tariq Ramadan et les Frères musulmans à la conquête de l'Europe* (Monaco: Rocher, 2005); and Ralph Ghadban, *Tariq Ramadan und die Islamisierung Europas* (Berlin: Hans Schiler, 2006). For analyses of the views of the 'new' Muslim Brotherhood reformists in Egypt, cf. Israel Elad-Altman, "Democracy, Elections and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood", in Hillel Fradkin, Husain Haqqani, and Eric Brown (eds), *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology, Volume 3* (Washington, DC:

Hudson Institute, 2006), pp.24–37; and Mohamed Fayez Farahat, "Liberalizing the Muslim Brotherhood: Can It Be Done?," *Arab Insight* 2/6 (Winter 2009), pp.11–23.

53. Of course, all too few governments, newspapers and intellectuals in the democratic West made serious efforts to express solidarity with, much less tangibly support, the free speech of their Danish colleagues either, one of the most stunning examples of Western pusillanimity in the long and sad recent history of Western attempts to appease, not only Muslims in general but also Islamist demagogues (who had cynically exploited and intentionally manufactured the 'cartoon crisis' in the first place). Cf. Ralf Dahrendorf, "Today's Counter-Enlightenment," Project Syndicate website, 2006, available at http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/dahrendorf55/English . For more on the Danish cartoon controversy, see Mohamed Sifaoui, *L'affaire des caricatures: Dessins et manipulations* ([Paris]: Privé, 2006), esp. chapters 4–5. The key figure in generating the worldwide Muslim hysteria about these cartoons was an Islamist cleric residing in Denmark named Ahmad Abu Laban, who even went so far as to sponsor the production of phony Muhammad cartoons in order to inflame Muslim passions.
54. See e.g. Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993 [1967]), esp. part 2 and pp.300–306, for the Brotherhood's organisational structure and its emphasis on obedience and internal discipline. Even believers in Muslim Brotherhood 'moderation' have been forced to admit, in response to hardliner victories in the 2008 'elections' for the organisation's *shura* in both Jordan and Egypt, that Islamism, like 'many religious and ideological movements', [is] 'structurally biased against the moderate and reform camps within them, which accounts for their marginalization and limited influence'. See Amr Hamzawy, "The Islamist Conundrum," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 17–23 July 2008.
55. This does not mean, as some polemicists and propagandists who have peddled the notion of 'Islamo-fascism' would have it, that Islamism is actually a form of fascism. Since fascism (as per Zeev Sternhell and others) is a secular revolutionary ideology combining radical nationalism and non-Marxist socialism (or, in the case of its most notorious but highly atypical Nazi variant, overlaying both nationalism and socialism with biological racism and eugenics), and Islamism's principal enemy is Western secularism, it is absurd on the face of it to characterise Islamism as a form of fascism. For the same reason, it is misleading to attempt to draw too close a comparison between communism and Islamism, as William Rosenau has sought to do in his otherwise excellent analysis, "Waging the War of Ideas," in David G. Kamien (ed.), *The McGraw–Hill Homeland Security Handbook* (New York: McGraw–Hill, 2005), pp.1135–6. Cf. also the idiosyncratic but often insightful interpretation of Laurent Murawiec, *The Mind of Jihad* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 2nd edn; and especially *Pandora's Boxes: The Mind of Jihad, Volume II* (New York: Hudson Institute, 2007), where the significance of the historical links between communism and Islamism has been greatly exaggerated. On the other hand, it is true that various components of the radical Western right and left view Islamism sympathetically because all of these ideologies share certain common enemies: Israel (if not Jews), American 'imperialism', democracy and capitalist 'globalization'. On this, see Jeffrey M. Bale (with Gary Ackerman), *Will the Extremes Touch? The Potential for Collaboration between Islamist Networks and Western Left- or Right-Wing Extremists*, monograph in preparation; Taguieff, *Prêcheurs de haine* (note 23); Nick Cohen, *What's Left?*, chapter 10; Bernard Henri-Lévy, *Left in Dark Times: A Stand Against the New Barbarism* (New York: Random House, 2009), esp. chapter 6; and George Michael, *The Enemy of My Enemy: The Alarming Convergence of Militant Islam and the Extreme Right* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2006).
56. See Cheryl Benard, *Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources, and Strategies* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003), p.7. Unfortunately, she refers not to Islamists in this passage but rather to Islamic 'fundamentalists', since she confusingly claims that the former term – see ibid., p.3, note 3 – is 'used by different authors to describe either the fundamentalists or the traditionalists'. Islamists are invariably Islamic fundamentalists, as noted above, but they are the rivals and indeed often the enemies of Islamic traditionalists (a term which implies that one accepts much of the vast corpus of Islamic jurisprudence as essentially authoritative rather than ignoring or rejecting it and instead relying – or at least claiming to rely – solely on the Qur'an and *ahadith* as sources of theology and law, as the Islamists do).
57. As e.g. Ed Hussain and a few other Islamist extremists have done. See his book *The Islamist: Why I Joined Radical Islam in Britain, What I Saw Inside and Why I Left* (London: Penguin, 2007). Hussain has since become an anti-Islamist activist.

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