Manfred Halpern

The Politics of Social Change in the Middle East and North Africa

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AND NORTH AFRICA

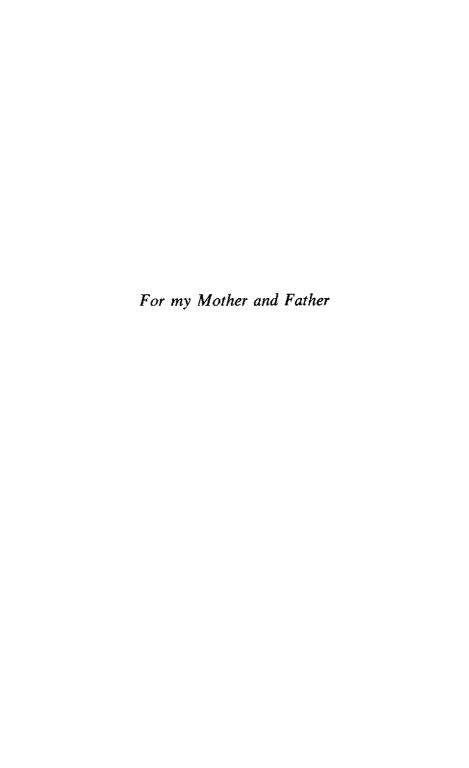# The Politics of

Social Change in the

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By Manfred Halpern

Consultant to The RAND Corporation

For my Mother and Father

FOREWORD

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The Substance of This Book

THE AREA from Morocco to Pakistan is in the midst of a profound revolution. This book attempts to analyze the causes and character of that revolution; examine the forces, groups, ideas, and institutions now in motion; and estimate the direction which politics may take in the future in the Middle East and North Africa.

I have not been content, therefore, merely to summarize recent insights into the nationalist revolution now in progress in this area, or into the ensuing "revolution of rising expectations." These two revolutions have been particularly dramatic in the Middle East and North Africa. The number of newly independent nations has almost tripled in this region during the past twenty years. The revolution of rising expectations is being accelerated by the pressure of a population that has tripled since the turn of the century but still cultivates only four percent of the region's total land area.

The revolution being examined here is broader and runs deeper than nationalism and its discontents. The five parts into which this book is divided define the scope of the Middle Eastern and North African transformation. First, a way of life that endured nearly 1300 years is being destroyed by challenges for for which, as a system of faith and action, it was almost entirely unprepared. Second, a new social system with new social values is taking the place of the traditional society. Third, a new range

of ideological choices has opened up for a new kind of elite. Fourth, new political instruments are at the elite's disposal. Finally, the fact that new men are using new means to attain new ends in their attempts to deal with the politics of social change entails revolutionary consequences at home and abroad. Only by understanding the totality of this revolution will we be able to see why the cost of change, or of avoiding change, runs so high in the Middle East and North Africa.

By concentrating on the comparative analysis of changing internal politics, this study is also intended to contribute to the understanding of international relations. In order to appreciate the opportunities, driving forces, and limitations of the international system, it is not enough to attend to those dramatic moments when the interests of one nation clash with the interests of another or to appreciate the changing structure of the international system. The world is steadily and rightly concerned with the difficult and still tenuous efforts of the great powers to make large-scale war too costly. But because a truce between the great powers persists, international relations are today being profoundly transformed mainly through *internal* politics. The balance of power, and the orientation, health and stability of the international system, are vitally affected by the success or failure of local elites in dealing with the social, political, economic, intellectual, and psychological modernization of their countries. At the same time, no rulers can pursue these tasks in sovereign isolation. Increasingly, the choice which all of them face is whether to achieve such complex and difficult domestic goals through free international collaboration, or whether to suffer such social change to be directed through the subversive intervention of the stronger nations in the unstable and violent internal politics of the unsuccessful. In the latter case, domestic failure thus also helps to enlarge the areas of hostile confrontation among the great powers.

Such an emphasis on the domestic forces that mold the attitudes and interests of nations is perhaps especially required in approaching an area of the world where people often remain obsessed by the memories of particularly unhappy conflicts with outside powers and with each other; an area where the West has

been late and often unskillful in adjusting itself to the changing pattern of international relationships; an area where both Middle Easterners and Westerners have barely begun to deal with the political problems of social change.

The Need for Policy-oriented Research
Based on Inadequate Data

It must be admitted at the outset, however, that anyone who presumes to analyze the changing forces at work in the Middle East and North Africa treads on uncommonly precarious ground. The systematic study of comparative politics and the art of estimating future trends are themselves quite new.[1] Analyses that focus on the changing present in the Middle East and North Africa for the sake of estimating future forces and trends are also hampered by our lack of knowledge about this area's past. Although the traditions of medievalism in Islam have been yielding to the modern age only during the past century and their long shadows still affect the vision of today's Moslems, it remains difficult to assess that legacy in terms of its contemporary meaning. We know much more about the Islamic community's inherited theology than about the actuality of its past beliefs; much more about its inherited political utopias than its past political practices. "We do not know the social history of Islam," writes the French historian Braudel, and he adds in despair, "Shall we ever know it?"[2]

We are scarcely better informed about the present. As H. A. R. Gibb has written: "The historian of the Arab world in the twentieth century . . . has at his disposal few—and in all cases incomplete—materials of a genuinely historical nature upon which

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[1] On the present state of comparative politics, see Harry Eckstein and David Apter, *Comparative Politics: A Reader,* New York, 1963. None of the most active and organized practitioners of the art of estimating, namely those in the American government, has yet published his reminiscences.

[2] *La méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'epoque de Philippe II,* Paris, 1949, p. 637, cited by Robert Brunschvig, in "Perspectives," *Studia Islamica,* 1953, p. 5. For a detailed inventory of our ignorance concerning the Ottoman Empire even during the last 200 years of its existence, see H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West,* Volume 1, Part I, London, 1950, pp. 1-18, *passim.*

to base his study of twentieth century trends. His facts hang in mid-air. But in all truth the situation is worse still. Even in relation to the twentieth century, political and diplomatic history has all but monopolized the interest of students or observers of the Middle East, to the exclusion of fact-finding studies on the actual phenomena and mechanisms of human life. . . . There is not one [volume] which traces the internal social and economic institutions [of Egypt] on the basis of the available documents. . . . The full and true history of the British Occupation has still to be written. . . . There is surprisingly little on the development of the [Arab] cities and their populations, and nothing at all on the evolution of the modern professional classes: doctors, lawyers, journalists, school teachers, industrialists, and civil servants. . . . Too often, also, the studies made by Arab writers other than novelists of the economic, educational, religious, and other institutions are tracts, more or less purposefully and skillfully designed to support a policy or a point of view."[3]

Except that it takes too generous a view of political and diplomatic studies, this is a just complaint. There is scarcely a handful of books in any language that analyze the relationship between social, economic, and intellectual forces and contemporary political trends in the countries of the Arab world—east or west of the Suez Canal—or among the Turks, Iranians, Afghans, and Pakistanis along the northern tier.[4]

Even without these materials to draw on, an essay such as the present one must be attempted. The policy-maker and the concerned public need an analytical foundation for judgment before all the returns are in. If one waits until all is known and the die cast, knowledge may do no more than let the dead bury the dead.

[3] H. A. R. Gibb, "Problems of Modern Middle Eastern History," in *Report on Current Research, Spring 1956: Survey of Current Research on the Middle East*, edited by Anne W. Noyes, The Middle East Institute, Washington, D.C., 1956.

[4] Twenty years ago, no one had ever written a book on American policy in the Middle East and North Africa, nor could any American be found teaching the contemporary politics, economics, or sociology of that region of the world. From its belated beginnings, the political exploration of the Middle East and North Africa has not progressed as quickly or systematically as that of Eastern Europe or the Far East. For a further examination of this backwardness, see Manfred Halpern, "Middle Eastern Studies: A Review of the State of the Field with a Few Examples," *World Politics*, October 1962, pp. 108-122.

To this extent, therefore, the study is policy-oriented. From incomplete knowledge of present forces and trends, it projects probable estimates of the future, since no policy-maker in the West or in the Middle East can escape making commitments upon this precarious ground.

The book, however, is addressed equally to those whose main concern is the increase of knowledge. There may be considerable advantage in giving priority to the construction of a broad outline map that will give us an overview of major Middle Eastern patterns and dynamics. It will teach us where to find the gaps in our knowledge, what questions we need to ask first, and which detailed studies are likely to prove to be the most crucial. A map, however imperfect, forces us to make explicit and to expose to criticism our basic assumptions about the lay of the land, its resources, and the direction of its traffic.

The Question of Method

This study rarely pauses to make explicit the methodological framework of its analysis, or the concepts and hypotheses that underlie its conclusion. To show how political, social, economic, and intellectual systems may be linked with one another, and how change is related to stability is a task demanding separate treatment and a language of its own. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that this study is not based merely on existing facts. It does not say simply, for example, that the Middle East has few political parties, that there is some talk, though less effort, to form a few more, and that it would therefore be premature to estimate just what political parties might be able to accomplish. The book goes further and asks what role parties must play if they are to be effective in creating a new political culture in the midst of rapid social transformation. What kind of structure must they build? What kind of functions must they be able to perform? What kind of problems are they likely to face? And then—returning to the existing political parties—how successful are particular countries likely to be in achieving political stability and modernization given the help (or lack of help) of an effective popular movement? The advantage of this type of

analysis—exploring the structural and functional requirements no less than the actualities of a situation—is that it allows a more systematic treatment of the potentials of the situation, while it makes explicit the criteria of judgment involved.

This study also relies upon a second and related method for drawing broad generalizations from incomplete data. It proceeds on the assumption that institutions, groups, behavior, or ideas performing functionally equivalent roles in a similar context are comparable. Since an army in the Middle East, for example, acts like a political party, much that we have learned about parties can be used to illuminate the role of an army under such conditions. More generally, we are here exploring some sixteen countries that have experienced similar problems in passing from an Islamic past into the modern age. In other respects, systematic contrasts can usefully be drawn between one and another of these countries.

The concern for comparable roles and functions under similar conditions of social change forces us to reject the stereotyped meaning of such familiar labels as "moderate," "extremist," "leftist," or "rightist," drawn from the history of a different culture, and to ask anew what the major historical issues are about which a Middle Easterner may be a moderate or extremist. It may be idle, for example, to call "conservative" a Middle Eastern regime that does not encourage innovation and, hence rendered powerless to deal with a rapidly changing society, fails to conserve anything. In this part of the world, the meaning not only of "socialism" but of "society" is changing, while "political parties," "armies," and "parliaments" play unexpected roles. Even locally bred ideas and institutions no longer mean what they have always meant. Wherever Islam asserts itself as an active political force today, it is not in the form of a traditional religion but as a modern political ideology. The impact of Islam is therefore quite different from what it used to be.

The two methods of analysis on which this book chiefly relies can help us to enhance the range, accuracy, and relevancy of interpretation. They cannot fully compensate for our ignorance of facts, and much of what is said here still rests on selected examples rather than full and complete evidence. Such ex-

amples, nonetheless, are intended in every case to be a convincing illustration that data in support of a particular hypothesis do exist. They are offered on the assumption that further research would reveal corroborative evidence in other parts of the region. Every hypothesis, however, remains a hypothesis without sufficient proof, so that others may find it possible either to alter or to disprove what has been offered here as further evidence comes to light.

Subjects Omitted

A number of topics vital to any thorough study of the politics of social change in the Middle East and North Africa has been omitted. I do not separately examine each Middle Eastern and North African country in detail to account for political developments within it, or to spell out all the variations between one and another. Many additional years' work by many hands would be required to assemble the necessary materials for the first time, and many times the space occupied here would be needed to examine even the most significant issues and events.

I have also had to overlook a number of area-wide phenomena that help to mold the process of social change. The growing liberation of women—psychologically, intellectually, socially, economically, and legally—is bound to alter the whole style and substance of Middle Eastern relationships. The energy of other important segments of society remains circumscribed. The independently creative or critical intellectual as yet still rarely raises his head. The university is in most countries still hobbled by state control, overwhelmingly large classes, and extremely small salaries. The primary and secondary schools remain greatly inadequate in number and quality. The press, with honorable exceptions, is frustrated by censorship or corrupted by venality and sensationalism. The judiciary is increasingly free to deal rationally and fairly with criminal and civil cases, but usually powerless to enter with the same spirit into cases dealing with political liberty and social values. The great ease of communication within and beyond the region through books, radio, and rapid transportation is creating a new psychic mobility and re-

latedness. These factors already deeply affect the changing political culture of the Middle East and also the chances for the development of a stable plurality of autonomous centers of power. But none of them could be taken up here.

To analyze the intellectual, moral, and psychological climate of the Middle East, as it affects the relationship between leaders and followers, and between freedom and authority, is a task which, however useful to the present inquiry, demands a major investigation of its own. Such a study would also give more explicit and systematic treatment than this one to the cultural diversities within the Middle East and North Africa. The Saudi Arabian, whose heritage is the proud, parochial freedom of the desert, obviously has a different cast of mind from the Egyptian, who has for so long been dependent on the tyranically corrupt rulers of a generous Nile; the trading Lebanese have different values from the mountaineers of land-locked Afghanistan. Such distinctions have already been assimilated within the range of problems and alternative courses examined under the topic of political modernization—the chief concern of the present book— but so far as these differences also affect styles and preferences of action, they must be given more attention at another oppor- tunity.

The Place of Israel

Israel is not one of the states considered in this volume. At first, its exclusion seemed logical. This is not intended to be a textbook covering each country of this region, but a comparative study of the political modernization of a certain, interrelated por- tion of the Islamic community. Even the Arab-Israeli conflict is given only enough space to explain how it exacerbates or helps to distort the politics of social change in the area. Since nearly 95 percent of the population in the region from Morocco to Pakistan is Moslem in its religion and way of life,[5] it seemed unfruitful constantly to interrupt the flow of thought about the

[5] The principal religious minorities among the 230,000,000 people who live in this region are: 10,000,000 Hindus, 7,000,000 Christians and 2,500,000 Jews. However, about 30,000,000 Moslems belong to various heretical sects, while in Iran the heretical Shia form of Islam is the state religion.

consequences of social change in Islamic society with the phrase "except in Israel."

Yet as the book progressed, it became apparent that Islam shared many problems with Israel. Like Islam, Israel presents a society whose modern, Westernized elite will have to learn how to assimilate an oriental majority. Both are intent upon creating secular states despite the presence of important religious political parties. One society faces the problem of converting Zionism, as the other must transform anti-colonialism, into a nationalism appropriate to a generation that has known neither exile nor foreign rule. Israel is challenged by the task of making Judaism relevant to a modern environment quite different from the one that has nourished it, either in Europe or in oriental countries, for the past two thousand years, and thus finding new sources for moral judgment. Moslems face the same challenge in Islam. Israel must renovate Hebrew, as other countries must Arabic, so that it can deal clearly with modern science, politics, and philosophy. Israel has the special opportunity of demonstrating whether large infusions of capital into an underdeveloped economy can succeed in raising both the political and economic standard of living. Its experiments with trade unions, cooperatives, and collectives are immediately relevant to the general social and economic problems of the area. Both Israel and the Arab countries, having declared their commitment to the ideas of the secular nation-state, will fall far short of that promise unless they come to treat the ethnic and religious minorities inside the state as equals.

No book has yet been written on Israeli politics in a perspective akin to that of the present work. When that too-long-delayed task has been accomplished, it would be most rewarding to develop comparisons and contrasts between the transformation of Israel and that of its neighbors.

Middle Eastern Geography: A Matter of Convenient Definition

This study draws material primarily from the following countries: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Jordan,

Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. I have ignored the sheikhdoms and principalities of the Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf since most of these small tribal societies have not yet experienced the problems or developed the institutions that lie at the center of my analysis. The oil-producing states of Kuwait, Bahrein, and Qatar are rapidly entering the modern age, but so little pertinent material concerning them was available that I had to exclude them from consideration.

Throughout, I have used the term "Middle East" to refer to the entire area from Morocco to Pakistan. I do not mean to cause old "Near Eastern" or new "West Asian" hands any more dismay than necessary. This usage is merely a matter of present convenience. Although I have sometimes reminded the reader of the area covered by referring to the "Middle East and North Africa," I have used the less cumbersome term "Middle East" consistently to indicate the whole region under discussion. The phrase "Arab world" refers here to the area from Morocco to the Sudan and thence to Iraq. The "Arab East" is separated at the Egyptian-Libyan frontier from the "Arab West," or the Maghrib of North Africa, which sometimes also receives separate mention.[6]

[6] Every book dealing with the Middle East must face the fact that the sound of Middle Eastern languages cannot readily be transliterated into the Roman alphabet. There is an excellent and accurate system of transliteration adopted by the Library of Congress, involving dots below letters, dashes above letters, and two kinds of apostrophes. This is a necessary device for assuring communication among scholars. But one has to know Arabic to recognize Koran in Qur'ān and Saladin in Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. I have elected to use a simplified form of the Library of Congress system and to give the common spellings of well-known names for the sake of the general reader.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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NOTHING in this book can be blamed on a lack of opportunities. After ten years in the Department of State, I had wished for a chance at last to describe in a single work the most significant forces and relationships of Middle Eastern and North African politics. I had hoped for a few years of comparative freedom from other work to re-examine the problems and my ideas about them, and also to test these views during a fourteen months' visit to two-thirds of the countries in this area. This book is the realization of hopes that once seemed almost extravagant.

The generosity of two institutions has made this volume possible: The RAND Corporation and Princeton University. Apart from my field trip, the preparatory work for the book has been supported by Air Force Project RAND, a continuing program of research conducted by The RAND Corporation. The costs of book production, however, have been assumed by The RAND Corporation, out of its own funds.

As a Consultant to The RAND Corporation, I have benefited from the assistance and criticism of several RAND staff members. Jeffrey C. Kitchen encouraged, and with Victor Hunt and Hans Speier helped to crystallize this project from the very beginning; Alexander L. George greatly facilitated its completion. These four, together with Bernard Brodie, Herbert Goldhamer, Paul Langer, and Herman B. Fredman, helped to sharpen the analysis by their criticism of an earlier draft. Paul Kecskemeti and Victor Hunt commented extensively on two successive drafts. If this book possesses any merits, it is to a considerable degree because I tried

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PART I

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST AND THE
CLAIMS OF THE PRESENT

COUNTRIES AND POPULATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Population density above 40 people
per sq/km is shown in color

CHAPTER 1

THE INHERITANCE OF THE ISLAMIC
COMMUNITY

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The Present Setting: From Revolution to Revolution

WITHIN the region from Morocco to Pakistan—the span of this study—there were only seven independent nations twenty years ago and the world was scarcely interested in them. The United States had diplomatic representatives in only five of the seven countries, the U.S.S.R. in only two. By 1963, eighteen countries in this region, with a total population of about 230,000,000, had become fully sovereign. Their problems filled front pages around the globe.

This nationalist revolution, dramatic and pervasive as it is, is only the political symptom of a more profound and yet unfinished social transformation of Asian and African society. This larger transformation involves not merely a change in rulers but a change in what men believe, how men act, and how men relate to each other.

To gain the political freedom to run one's own society is no mean achievement. Men who have lost their traditional faith and social structure have little chance of recovering or refashioning themselves or their society as long as foreigners control local political, economic, and intellectual institutions for alien ends. That is one powerful reason why the battle for national independence was everywhere given priority in Asia and Africa, even where the elimination of poverty or ignorance or exploitation was no less obvious a target.

The nationalist revolution has put Africans and Asians themselves in charge of the fire that is now melting and transmuting

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the form and substance of their faith and society. Can they put the resulting fragments together in a new form suitable to the modern world and the new expectations of the people? Asians and Africans are entering the modern age centuries later than the West, and hence are vulnerable to the superior power of others. These new nations are intent upon rapidly overcoming their poverty and powerlessness, yet most of them possess fewer resources and skills than those who took the road to modernization before them. More invidious frustrations and more intense conflicts than marked the modernization of the West are therefore likely to dramatize African and Asian politics as this majority of the world at last joins in making the transformation of man's existence a universal quest. It is in the context of this transformation that we explore the political tasks and choices facing the Islamic countries of the Middle East and North Africa.

Any study of transformation must begin at the beginning of change. In the case of Islam, there is a special profit to be gained from contrasting the Islamic past and present. Traditional Islam, like modern Islam, was a society almost continually beset by rivalries, assassinations, rebellions, and wars. Yet it survived over large areas as a single political system and always as an interrelated pattern of faith and action for nearly 1300 years. What was the secret of its extraordinary endurance amid almost constant instability? Why is a system that has proved itself so resilient in the past faced by revolution today?

An attempt to answer these questions in the first part of this inquiry may help to define with greater precision the character and scope of the forces of change which challenge the Moslems of the Middle East, and so clarify the range of policies that may therefore be relevant. Only by understanding the past will we see why the cost of change (or of avoiding change) runs so high in the Middle East.

It is appropriate to begin with the birth of Islam, for its official calendar starts not with the birth of its Prophet Mohammed but with Islam's first political act—the founding of the Community of Believers in A.D. 622.

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The Political Community as a Religious Vision

Divine and therefore perfect, perfect and therefore complete, complete and therefore final, final and therefore unalterable— such was the constitution the Prophet Mohammed received for the Moslem community from God in the middle of the seventh century of our era. It was a constitution that did not separate the realm of God from that of Caesar, or the realm of ethics from the realm of law. As detailed in the Koran and the *Shari'a*—the corpus of Islamic jurisprudence—God's realm was not circumscribed. His word covered with equal authority matters of worship, ritual, politics, economics, and personal relations. By conducting himself in conformity with this established pattern of righteousness, the Moslem could hope to establish a perfect society on earth.

The term Islam designates, therefore, not only a religion but also a community and a way of life. For the first time in Arab history, this community transcended the tribe, for it is composed of all who are ready to surrender themselves to the same God.[1] Its ruler's supreme purpose is to execute God's revealed law, being himself subject to it. Its learned men exert themselves to understand the law, and advise both ruler and ruled in its meaning.

Such is the vision of Islam held by the "ulema"—literally, the "knowers," the scholar-legists of the Islamic code of conduct. Until the nineteenth century, all their books and teachings were based on this view. In the twentieth century, Moslems who think and write nostalgically about the past recall that world. In fact, it never existed.

The Political Community as a Historical Reality

The conduct of righteous politics proved to be no easier for Moslems than for other peoples. The Islamic attempt began as an inspired response to great needs. Arabia in the seventh century heard prophets mourning the multiplicity and corruptions of

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[1] "Moslems" are those who have surrendered themselves to God, "Islam" their state of surrender.

faiths while men tired of the constant warring among tribes in the absence of a clearly transcendent authority. But the Prophet Mohammed alone was inspired to establish a Community of Believers that would permanently overcome moral and political instability in a society organized to serve God. He succeeded in laying the emotional, intellectual, and political foundations for a new social system that was to endure for over a millennium. But it was not quite the community he had in mind.

The new community was born in compromise. Mohammed, who had been forced to leave his Meccan tribe in order to find honor as a prophet elsewhere, had initially organized his followers in a brotherhood divorced from all regional and tribal allegiances. The great majority who became Moslems in Mohammed's lifetime and thereafter, however, were not individual converts but families and tribes who made the decision to join the larger community of Islam on the basis of their own customary solidarity. Alongside the demand for the unity of all Believers, there were thus, from the first, these other organized and competing claims for loyalty.

The new community of Islam never acquired institutions that could permanently resolve such conflicts of loyalty and the constant battle for power which this multiplicity of allegiances entailed. Of the four caliphs who succeeded Mohammed, only the first died a natural death. In retrospect, orthodox Moslems remember them as the four pious caliphs. For they were succeeded by the Umayyad branch of the Prophet's family, which reasserted its ancient political pre-eminence in Mecca to become the first dynasty in Islam. Within a hundred years after the Prophet's death, the Umayyad dynasty expanded Islam into an area reaching from France to India—larger than the Roman Empire at its zenith—but at the cost of turning the new Community of Believers into an Arab Empire. "For many centuries after the Muslim conquest, the vast majority of the Caliph's subjects were not Sunni [Islamic orthodox], and hated Sunnism as the emblem of an oppressive regime and of a foreign privileged ruling class of Arabs."[2]

[2] Bernard Lewis, "The Islamic Guilds," *Economic Review*, November 1937, p. 22.

The Umayyad dynasty was overthrown toward the beginning of the second Islamic century by the Abbasids, another branch of the Prophet's family, who led a movement to refashion the Arab Empire into a Moslem Empire. The dream of a Community of Believers united to carry out God's laws never ceased to inspire Moslems and to stimulate action to turn this vision into a reality. But all such efforts, including that of the Abbasids, produced new rivalries and discontents, splintering Islam in the very task of creating unity. Perhaps only a community that experienced so much disunity and lawlessness would hold on so dearly for so long to the ideal of a Community of Believers joined under divine law.

Certainly the environment of the Middle East and North Africa itself was inhospitable to movements for unity. This region of the world has never resembled the neat cluster of well-articulated colored blocks that map makers draw. Most of the population lives in a scattering of large and small oases, far separated from each other by high, rugged mountains and broad deserts. However absolute was the Caliph in Baghdad or Constantinople, his powers of supervision and execution diminished almost geometrically with the distance from the capital. The thin coastal oasis of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia was in its entire Islamic history of 1250 years united with the Arab Empire to the east for only about 100 years; only twice, for about 120 years altogether, was it united within a single North African empire. Egypt, mostly desert but containing one of the most reliable sources of water, was usually strong enough to assert its autonomous political existence within any Islamic Empire.

Segmented geographical isolation and sharp competition for scarce resources helped to perpetuate that spirit of separatism and rivalry which, in most conflicts, elevated the kinship of common blood above the kinship of common faith. Traditional Islam did not succeed in developing sufficient spiritual and material resources to alter this environment. It could not establish institutions above the kinship group that could assure the continuance of any particular state, provide for the equal application of authority in all its parts, or ease the peaceful transfer of power.

Traditional Islam gave an appearance of continuity and stabil-

ity that was deceiving. For 600 years, it is true, a single family supplied all the Sultans for the Ottoman Empire, the largest and most enduring Islamic state. In fact, however, power in the Ottoman Empire was usually shared among various autonomous groups and rulers. Between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, for example, one finds Egypt pursuing its customary independent course, and Iraq supporting its own Mamluk dynasty (from 1749 to 1831). Moreover, Mamluk rule did not extend to Mosul, which was governed separately for over a century by the Jalili family. Meanwhile, the Azm family ruled in Damascus; other families held Jerusalem; and the Aleppo region was so torn with strife, civil wars, and depredations that between 1765 and 1785 hundreds of villages disappeared. It would be "monotonous and repetitious," writes one historian, "to describe each one of these petty lords ruling autonomously within the Ottoman Empire and to relate the incidents of his rise to power and his local tyrannies."[3]

Islam's Supreme Political Achievement

Islam could scarcely have survived for so long as a political system and as a contributing civilization, however, if its longevity had depended only on the uncertainties of petty tyranny. Its survival is all the more remarkable in view of the many threats from outside.

Over three hundred years ago, the Islamic world was already almost encircled by the superior strength and enterprise of Western sailors and soldiers and Russian Cossacks. "The noose was round the victim's neck," writes Arnold Toynbee, "and, what was more, he had by then already been foiled in divers attempts to break out of the toils. This failure was a signal one in view of his possession of the interior lines . . . and he was now inexorably condemned to die by strangulation whenever an alien executioner might choose to draw the fatal bow-string tight. . . .

[3] Sydney N. Fisher, *The Middle East, A History,* New York, 1959, p. 254. This particular period of regional dissidence in the Ottoman Empire differs from other such periods only in the inability of the Sultans to oust the disloyal. Even in earlier days, the defeat of rebellious local leaders merely produced temporary acquiescence.

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"Why had both the West and Russia been so slow in taking the offensive against an hereditary enemy at their gates? And why, after they had at last tasted blood, had they not managed to devour more than the extremities of this Tityos' carcase? In a list of reasons for the Islamic World's rather surprising reprieve we may include the initial self-confidence with which the Muslims had been inspired by the memory of extraordinary previous achievements; the subsequent tactical victories that masked their strategical defeat in their attempts to break out of the toils of Western and Russian encirclement; the long-lasting effect of these impressive Muslim successes in inducing Westerners to take the Muslims at their own valuation; the leading Modern Western peoples' loss of interest in the Mediterranean for some three hundred years after their conquest of the ocean towards the close of the fifteenth century; and the mutual frustration of the rival competitors for the spoils of the Islamic World after the Western Powers and Russia had at last become aware that the once formidable titan now lay at their mercy."[4]

These are valid points, but it would be misleading to write an exposition of Islamic society merely as the tale of divorce between vision and power, and to accredit its long endurance to an accident of good fortune. This is not the whole truth any more than is the argument that Islam was one perfect moment in history foiled, according to one's lights, by secular lusts of the later Umayyad or Abbasid dynasties, the destruction wreaked by invading Turkic and Mongol tribes, the weakness and errors of later Ottomans, or the encroachments of the imperialist West. To understand the traditional Islamic system, we must see it in its entirety, not merely as a turbulent sequence of events or as a compendium of its most glorious or desperate moments.

Each of the main participants in the Islamic system—sultan, scholar-legist, saint, soldier, tribesman, villager, intellectual, and devotee of religious brotherhoods—called himself "Moslem." In one sense, this was a valid identification. Each lived under conditions created by the presence of the others; all roles were entwined in a single pattern of action. Yet, in another sense, this

[4] Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History,* London, 1954, Vol. VIII, pp. 219-222.

identification was misleading. Far more than the medieval European or the traditional Japanese, every Moslem also retained his spiritual, political, and social autonomy. Despite its original ideal, Islam had many faces, for what was demanded of each Moslem in practice was not theological or political conformity. The decisive criterion of membership in the Community was acquiescence in the largely unwritten code which defined the rules of social collaboration and conflict.[5] The Moslem Community hoped for, but rarely ever insisted on, other proofs that an individual was a Believer.

Traditional Islam survived for more than a millennium in a harsh and uncertain environment because it was capable of converting constant tension and conflict into a force for constant political renewal and social survival. This extraordinary political and social system of action—mobile in all its parts yet static as a whole—is rare in human annals for its endurance. This resilient system has been one of traditional Islam's greatest, yet least appreciated, achievements. The Islamic system's ability to convert tensions into balances deserves closer examination, both for the sake of developing a political theory that reflects the actual practice of the traditional Islamic system and for the sake of understanding why such a system could not continue to function in the modern age.[6]

[5] "There would seem to be no word in Arabic, or indeed in any Islamic language, meaning 'orthodox,'" writes Wilfred Cantwell Smith in *Islam in Modern History*, Princeton, 1957, p. 20. "The word usually translated 'orthodox,' *sunni*, actually means rather 'orthoprax,' if we may use the term. A good Muslim is not one whose belief conforms to a given pattern, whose commitment may be expressed in intellectual terms that are congruent with an accepted statement (as in the case generally of Protestant Christianity), but one whose commitment may be expressed in practical terms that conform to an accepted code." This statement aptly defines the "good Moslem." We have somewhat expanded this formulation to make room for all Moslems within the pale, whether good or bad. Heretic Moslems are those who fashioned a similar but separate system of action.

[6] Chapter 2 explores the reasons for the disintegration of this traditional system. For a discussion of traditional Islamic political theory based on ideal Moslem prescription, see Erwin I. J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam*, Cambridge, 1958.

The Polarities of Folk Islam: Isolation and Conquest,
Acquiescence and Rebellion

Most Moslems have lived and died in the small, closed kinship group of the family and tribe. Whatever the original motive for conversion to Islam—whether piety, fear, profit, or politics—the folk community[7] could find in the Islamic way of life a broader, more profound understanding of ultimate and secular imperatives, and a larger scope for political and social mobility than it had usually possessed before.

Still, its relationship to the Islam of the caliphs or scholar-legists remained uneasy. Folk Islam could appreciate caliphs as enforcers of the larger code of revelation and conduct, and of peace among settled and nomadic tribes. There were advantages in the rule of a sacred stranger who could bring peace and justice, but a stranger by his very existence did not fit into the consensus of kin, and therefore was bound to inspire fear and suspicion no less than awe and respect. Even the kinship group's own leaders could not command or legislate in defiance of the existing tribal consensus.[8] A secular-minded sultan who ruled by exploiting rivalries and represented neither kin nor the larger code was an obvious menace. The early splintering of the new Community of Believers renewed the threat of unprincipled external authority to the integrity of the kinship group. As a result, a considerable number of families, villages, and tribes sought parochial isolation in mountain strongholds or desert vastness. For most, however, there was little security. The very existence of a multitude of closed kinship groups in an environment of great scarcity, of unstable centralized power, and the absence of any intervening, stable, powerful property-owning class were permanent incitements to tribal imperialism. Islam provided a new cause or rationalization for conquest. The splintering of Islam allowed all manner of men to assert the resuscitation of Islam as their justifi-

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[7] "Folk" Islam in this book refers to the traditional way of life and the beliefs of the common people, regardless of whether they lived in city, village, or desert.

[8] Emile Tyan, *Institutions du Droit Public Musulman*, Vol. I, *Le Califat*, Paris, 1954, p. 87.

cation for building their own empires, without in fact heeding their moral ties with all Believers.

One of the greatest Arab sociologists and historians, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), has analyzed the doom of continuous rise and decline of all such caliphates, sultanates, and kingships in a fashion applicable to the entire period of traditional Islam, including its last remnants in contemporary Saudi Arabia and Yemen.[9] When a tribe found itself blessed with more *asabiyah* (loyalty, courage, and will based on strong group solidarity) than any neighboring tribe, it would move out to conquer. Conquest by force or the threat of force was the only way in which a state could be formed. A tribe was organized by lines and obligations of blood. In its patriarchal egalitarianism, it required no institutions of state. A state involved control over men with whom one had no automatic ties of kinship. Hence to form a state meant to form an empire, and thus create a new and uncertain pattern of dominance and submission. Each conquered tribe sought to the utmost to protect its integrity for the sake of survival and for future struggles for predominance.

The conqueror himself, according to Ibn Khaldun, was secure in his rule because he had defeated others and had enlarged the respect of his tribe by virtue of his victory and the distribution of booty. The son who succeeded him could not claim the respect due to a victor; he usually demonstrated his prowess by building monuments and encouraging luxury, and secured his power by finding allies in many parts of his empire. Since his own tribe was no longer fit for war, yet being closest to him was most prone to produce rivals, the king began to rely increasingly on mercenaries. As a result, the *asabiyah* that united him with his tribe weakened. The grandson, having to his credit neither conquest nor construction, became the tool of the mercenary army, the only local group with force at its command, or else fell prey to conquest by a tribe with a stronger *asabiyah*.

Whether in three generations, a dozen generations, or a single

[9] Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah, An Introduction to History,* New York, 1958, translated from the Arabic by Franz Rosenthal, esp. Vol. I, pp. 252-286, 305-307, 311-447; Vol. II, pp. 103-155. (Vol. I, pp. 353-355, summarizes his thesis.)

one, this schema covers the history of all parts of the Islamic world. Wisdom, energy, imagination, and shrewdness have sometimes allowed a particular leader to delay the doom spelled out by Ibn Khaldun. There were clear-cut limits, however. The sources of wealth—including booty, tribute, taxes, trade, and harvests—were circumscribed and uncertain, and the ruler sought to marshal them for the uses of his dynasty. In the most illustrious phases of Islamic history, schools, hospitals, mosques, as well as writing and art, experienced the ruler's patronage, as did, in the darkest periods, the military commander, the torturer, and the executioner. Solicitude for the material welfare of his subjects as a whole, however, was required neither by the *Shari'a* nor by sultanic tradition. Defense against the political power of unbelievers, the administration of the Islamic code of justice, and enforcement of public morality were the only duties prescribed for the ruler by the *Shari'a* and even the fulfillment of these obligations often suffered due to weakness, intra-Moslem rivalries, and expediency. The bureaucracy was appointed to function only as an extension of the sultan's person. The soldiery were, while he remained strong enough to control them, the sultan's personal property or personal henchmen, without permanent links to state or society.

For most of his subjects, the sultan's power was thus absolute but almost irrelevant. The caliph Ma'mun (813-833), though himself one of the most liberal and philosophical of rulers, is quoted as saying: "The best life has he who has an ample house, a beautiful wife, and sufficient means, who does not know us and whom we do not know."[10]

Yet this is not the full story of rise, conflict, decay, and renewal in Islam. Seldom was the struggle between kinship group and supra-tribal authority merely political. Even in its political disunity, Islam remained a transcending bond among kinship groups—though not in the way that had originally been intended

[10] Cited by G. E. von Grunebaum, *Islam, Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition,* The American Anthropological Association, Vol. 57, No. 2, Part 2, Memoir No. 81, April 1955, p. 26. "It should perhaps be noted," Grunebaum adds (p. 136), "that despite theoretical differences and actual hostilities between Sunnite and Shi'ite governments, their administrative practices would seem to have been more or less the same."

—by fostering an undivided political loyalty to Mohammed's caliphs. Instead, by placing all loyalties and relationships under the authority of one God, Islam reinforced a more ancient test of political legitimacy—the ruler's ability to protect the moral and physical integrity of the Middle East's most immediate and enduring community, the kinship group.

Even before the coming of Islam, the kinship groups of the Middle East had long acted on the implicit assumption that faith and community constituted a single web. This web was composed exclusively of personal relationships—whether to neighbor, nature, or spirits. Any ruler, whether imposed lord or the kinship's own victorious chieftain, could justify his status only by his success in his personal relationships, whether with his own group or with ultimate powers, including God. He might be blamed for the drought no less than the taxes.

After the coming of Islam, kinship groups continued to grant their full loyalty only in personal relationships, now reinforced by God's final standard for judging such relationships. More than ever before rebellion seemed to be a duty whenever the ruler, by either impiety or injustice, morally isolated himself from the community.

In seeking to set the world in tune again with the moral laws of the universe, the kinship groups often linked themselves with a movement equally devoted to personal relationships—the religious brotherhoods. While many scholar-legists, as guardians and interpreters of orthodox Islam, became defenders of caliphal and sultanic authority, large numbers of Moslems bound themselves to each other in brotherhoods dedicated to personal unity with God and with ritual brothers. These brotherhoods took various forms.[11] Some were craft and trade guilds dedicated to the autonomous regulation of the spiritual, economic, and, whenever possible, political welfare of their members. Some fraternal organizations, by their devotion to contemplation,

[11] Bernard Lewis, "The Islamic Guilds," *The Economic Review*, November 1937, pp. 23-37; also Hans Joachim Kissling, "The Sociological and Educational Role of the Dervish Orders in the Ottoman Empire," in G. E. von Grunebaum, editor, *Studies in Islamic Cultural History, The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 56, No. 2, Part 2, April 1954, pp. 23-35; Franz Taeschner, "Futuwwa, eine gemeinschaftsbildende Idee im mittelalterlichen Orient und ihre verschiedenen Erscheinungsformen," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde*, Vol. 52, 1956, pp. 122-158.

ecstatic exercises, or mutual assistance, helped to make acquiescence to superior power bearable. Others were openly or covertly organized as fighters for "virtue." Between the ninth and the twelfth century, several brotherhoods took the form of Isma'ili heresies which by their religio-political rebellions kept the Islamic realm in constant turmoil, and succeeded in establishing several major rival centers of power. The largest and most enduring of them, the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt (971 to 1173), was at least the equal in power and prosperity of the orthodox caliphate of Baghdad.[12]

Like conquests inspired by tribal *asabiyah*, rebellions inspired by religio-political mysticism served not only to destroy existing authority in Islam, but also continually to renovate it. All successful rebellions produced states. All states, in turn, inspired new rebellions. The rebellious and state-forming activities of the religious brotherhoods continued to the nineteenth century, when the Mahdi Mohammed Ahmad created a state in the Sudan and the Sanusi a state in Cyrenaica.

Ulema and Sultans: Antagonistic Collaboration between Vision and Power

In the first two centuries of Islam, the ulema had been courageous and creative in trying to avoid a divorce between law, morality, and politics by expanding and revising the unalterable constitution God had revealed to the community.[13] An empire needed governing, and on this subject the Koran was silent, inadequate, or too restrictive in many fields. By relying as guides first on the sayings and actions of the Prophet, then of his Companions, and finally on the invention of such sayings and actions[14] and on the actual customary law of the conquered areas, the ulema greatly expanded the available corpus of law. So

[12] Bernard Lewis, *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, Cambridge, 1940; also his article, "Some Observations on the Significance of Heresy in the History of Islam," *Studia Islamica*, Vol. I, pp. 43-63.

[13] See Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, Oxford, 1950. For this and the later period, see also Majid Khadduri and Herbert J. Liebesny, editors, *Law in the Middle East, Vol. 1: Origins and Development of Islamic Law*, Washington, Middle East Institute, 1955.

[14] Including the invented saying of Mohammed, "Whatever is good, I said it," and his invented reassurance that "My community will not agree on error."

powerful had been the impact of the original revelation, however, that the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence which emerged during the first 200 years differed relatively little in spirit or detail.

Yet this pious creativity and invention became dangerous as the Islamic Empire splintered and the caliph became the captive of his mercenary troops. To the secular interests of rival sultans and armies, the ulema coud not counterpose the institutional power of any priestly hierarchy or established church. To save the spirit of the law, the ulema safeguarded its letter. By the tenth century, the ulema closed the "gate to individual interpretation" of the *Shari'a*.

A living community, however, could scarcely abide by such a decision. The rulers continued, as they had almost from the first, to develop administrative law (encompassing the entire realm of politics and government) as well as criminal, civil, and commercial law apart from *Shari'a* law. The people, in turn, frequently sought to avoid the law courts of sultans and ulema by resorting to private vengeance or the arbitration of tribal chiefs and saintly men. If nothing else would help, they attempted to secure justice through nepotism, bribery, personal influence, and casuistry, or to restore it through rebellion.

In such a sundering of the values and activities of the various components of Islamic society lay the seeds of destruction. We have already explored the creative defenses of folk Islam against such moral and political division. In their search for certainty in this highly uncertain environment, sultans and ulema discovered that, however much at odds their final aims, they also needed each other.

The sultans recognized that the rule of naked force is the least secure of all authority. They required an ideological justification for their power consonant with the pre-Islamic and Islamic folk insistence upon the unity of politics and religion, even though they refused to accept the sharing of sovereignty implicit in this folk tradition. The ulema also could not countenance the unorthodox religio-political concepts championed by folk Islam. The ulema became the ideologists of the state, for they could not deny legitimacy to the actualities of Islamic history lest they imply that the Community of Believers had fallen away from the sacred law,

and hence that the Community's judicial and religious activities were void.[15] "The concessions made by us are not spontaneous," said Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali, the greatest of medieval Moslem theologians, "but necessity makes lawful what is forbidden. . . . We should like to ask: which is to be preferred, anarchy and the stoppage of social life for lack of a properly constituted authority, or acknowledgment of the existing power, whatever it be? Of these two alternatives the jurist cannot but choose the latter."[16] In this way, the doctrine of the necessary unity of faith and politics, which justified rebellion to folk Islam, also became the justification employed by the ulema for demanding obedience to kings.

Though it would appear an unrewarding division of labor for the ulema to uphold one kind of norm while the powerful conformed to a different kind of practice, the role of the ulema was by no means without profit to the latter. For the role and doctrines of the ulema reflected and served well certain fundamental social interests. The minority of ulema who counted politically— the muftis appointed by the sultan to issue formal interpretations of the *Shari'a*, the kadis who not only pronounced legal judgment but usually also supervised urban or provincial administration, and the ulema who acted as advisers to the sultans—almost invariably came from the most prominent families of the town or empire.[17] Almost all education was in their hands; almost all officials were educated by them. In the Ottoman Empire, their occupations became increasingly, though not exclusively, hereditary, like most other crafts. They also became tax-exempt. Thus "we can picture the bureaucrat" in the Middle East, no less than in

[15] H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 26. Part I and II, London, 1950 and 1955, have provided indispensable materials for the present analysis.

[16] *In Iqtisad Fi al-I'tiqad*, cited by I. Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, Vol. II, Heidelberg, 1929, p. 93.

[17] See Claude Cahen, "Zur Geschichte der städtischen Gesellschaft im islamischen Orient des Mittelalters," *Saeculum*, Vol. 9, 1958, No. 1, p. 67. An audit of "Listes chronologiques des grands cadis de l'Egypte sous les Mamlouks, établies, annotées et documentées," by Kamal S. Salibi in *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, Vol. 25, 1957, shows that a majority (or 76) of the cadis between 1267 and 1517 were related to each other or to officials of similar rank in other important towns. Since power created wealth in traditional Islamic society more often than wealth created power—and since power was unstable—this relationship between ulema and prominent families does not imply that the same families remained dominant. Rather, this type of relationship predominated even though the fortunes of specific families waned.

China, "as a scholar-gentleman, with his roots in society, sensitive to the varied complexities of individual social and family situations, and adapting the law and his own behavior to fit them, accommodating himself to state power, . . . but checking it simply by being what he was."[18]

The ulema's role in the service of the sultan was not without benefit to the rest of the community, for their ideology had a double-edged character. By supporting all existing authority—that of the successful usurper no less than the dynastic heir—the ulema were able to safeguard not only their own position, but also prevent both ruler and community from quite forgetting the ideal code of conduct. By constantly reiterating that code, they maintained an implicit criticism of actual authority. By occupying many of the subsidiary positions of power, these ulema were able to modify the exercise of sultanic authority. They could filter or entangle royal commands through a web entwining the social, economic, and legal interests represented or mediated by the ulema.[19]

Unity through Factionalism

Another autonomous set of tensions and balances existed in Islam to bind the entire society through conflict no less than through collaboration. Although kinship was Islam's most solid and enduring tie, relatives and kindred families and tribes often fought each other until menaced by a common enemy.[20] Almost all villages, tribes, and families in the Middle East were, and often still are, divided into rival factions. These factions, cutting across class and status lines, acted as rival networks for marshal-

[18] *Confucianism in Action*, edited by David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright, Stanford, 1959, p. 17. The introduction and essays in this book, first called to my attention by Professor Paul M. A. Linebarger, and Max Gluckman's *Custom and Conflict in Africa*, Oxford, 1955, suggested rewarding perspectives for this analysis of Islamic society.

[19] A number of the more pious ulema refused to serve the government in any capacity. Their role in the Islamic system is discussed in a later section of this same chapter.

[20] Tribal blood ties were not immutable. Defeated, decimated, or dependent tribes were sometimes given the option of becoming clients of other tribes, and ultimately merging with them. Individuals were sometimes also given this privilege.

ling influence and protection, and for undermining the influence of others. They were, in a sense, the secular equivalent of the religious brotherhoods, providing for collaboration among individuals unrelated by blood. The resulting alliances were often fickle and hence there was much political instability, but the very system that produced conflict also produced means for new collaborative combinations. Even when tribes were pacified or their chiefs granted bribes, individuals readily continued to conspire for power. In a society divided by lines of blood, factionalism provided an important solvent, freeing men for collaboration regardless of kinship ties.

Saints, Intellectuals, and Soldiers Testing the Limits of the Islamic System

There were three groups whose members were by their very nature not firmly tied to the network of balanced tensions that in actuality constituted Islam. Since it assumed that God's final truth had been fully revealed, the Islamic community found it difficult to make room for intellectuals bent on a search for truth. The recruitment of standing mercenary or slave armies to protect sultans against their Islamic rivals or Islamic subjects created elements of preponderant force difficult to match elsewhere in Islamic society. (Originally, the entire Islamic community had been expected to supply armed men for wars that were holy because they were exclusively directed against non-Moslems.) Although the continual generation of saintly men must surely have been desired by the prophet of Islam's original vision, his successors often found saints difficult to bear.

By their less fettered existence all three—intellectuals, saints, and soldiers—often clearly revealed and challenged the limits of the Islamic system. During most of Islam's history, the saints and soldiers who raised Islam's spirit and power seemed also to be the principal threats to the survival of the system. The saints, by their extreme, sometimes even heretical piety, endangered the system of balanced tensions that in fact held the Moslem community together; the soldiers threatened it by their exceedingly secular and unilateral concern for power. The pious and the men of

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arms helped, as we shall see, to bring about the decay of the tra-
ditional Islamic system. It was the intellectuals, however, who
ultimately succeeded in destroying it.

Throughout Islamic history, some of the most pious Moslems
refused to accept public office. They did not see how justice could
triumph when those who knew the *Shari'a* attempted to reconcile
it with their loyalty to sultan, family, and faction. Sometimes such
saintly ulema or mystics were imprisoned or killed for their con-
scientious objection. When they publicly asserted the supremacy
of absolute truth or the absolute good, they threatened the com-
promise by which the Islamic community lived.

The military found it easier than any other group in Islam
to make its views prevail. It often had the strength to master its
master; it made and unmade sultans. Because the army was
usually recruited among slaves or mercenaries, and hence alien
to the population among whom it was stationed, the soldiery com-
monly did not hesitate to extort a high price for its presence. It
ravaged and wasted the community's resources in almost peren-
nial warfare among Islamic military commanders. By possessing
a preponderant power that could only imperfectly and infre-
quently be checked by other elements of the Islamic system, the
military made it more difficult for the balanced tensions of Islam
to remain in creative and renovating motion. By its overbearing
weight, the army gradually made the Islamic system more static.
In this way, and by its pre-emptive sapping of the region's ma-
terial resources, it helped to bring about the decay of Islam.

That decay was slowed, however, by the fact that even this
most powerful and detached force was vulnerable to the opera-
tions of the Islamic pattern of action. The army might have as-
sured its supremacy had it been able to convert itself into a stable,
exclusive military caste. But it could not muster the strength,
either through brute force or institutional transformation, en-
tirely to put an end to social and political mobility in Islam. The
army's own ranks frequently splintered, reflecting personal, fac-
tional, tribal, and regional conflicts.[21] Army regimes at times
succumbed to the attacks of rival armies organized by other au-

[21] In Algiers, between 1671 and 1818, for example, 14 of the 30 rulers rose
to power as a result of a military mutiny and the assassination of their