

**THE POLITICS OF ISLAM(ISM)  
DECOLONISING THE  
POSTCOLONIAL**

10–11 NOVEMBER 2007

**CONFERENCE PROGRAMME**

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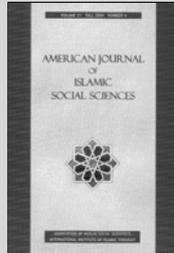
*organised by*

The Association of Muslim Social Scientists  
(AMSS UK)

Centre for the Study of Democracy  
(CSD) Westminster University

*Venue*

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER, LONDON



*AJISS 1984-2007  
Subscriptions  
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## POLITICS OF ISLAM(ISM)

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While the Muslim ‘Awakening’ is now clearly established as a global phenomenon, the exact nature and duration of the Awakening remains mired in controversy and opacity. Its analyses, already haunted by under-conceptualized terms such as ‘extremism’, ‘fundamentalism’, and ‘Islamofascism’ have become increasingly difficult to disentangle from the webs of complicity of the ‘War on Terror’ and the religious violence industry. Contemporary Muslim politics too, for its part, is increasingly marked by a ‘war of interpretations’ in which contending visions of Islam are used to legitimize or de-legitimize Islamism. Rather than affording insights into the current crises, traditional theologically-based Islamic scholarship becomes conscripted into the struggles surrounding the phenomenon. Analyses and representations of Muslims and Islam, both outside and within Muslim communities, continue to be dominated by variants of Orientalism, and beholden to Eurocentric paradigms that claim supremacy in the guise of universalism. The cumulative effects of all of this is to maintain Islam and Muslims within a colonial framework from which it is impossible to generate enduring solutions to the many problems and difficulties that confront the Muslim Ummah. Ways forward require decolonization in terms not only of cultural, economic and political subordination but also of the states of knowledge that enable such subordination. This in turn demands the forging of alternative conceptual frameworks and analytical tools, and the evolution of new discursive approaches going well beyond the rejection of Eurocentric paradigms. Simultaneously, the new approaches must not limit themselves to traditional Islamic conceptual frameworks. In short, what is needed, is an approach to Muslim politics with all its complexities and diversities as a field of contestation between those who interpret Islam and Islamicate history as necessitating the institution of a political and social order and those that reject such an interpretation. The purpose of this conference is to contribute towards the development of such alternative approaches to the understanding of the Muslim ‘Awakening’.

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## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

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DAY I • SATURDAY 10TH NOVEMBER 2007

- 09:30–10:00 REGISTRATION & REFRESHMENTS
- 10:00–10:30 OPENING SESSION
- *Recitation of the Qur'an*
  - **Opening Remarks**  
**Representative of CSD**  
Westminster University  
**Dr. Anas S. al Shaikh-Ali**  
Chair, AMSS (UK)
  - **Presentation of AMSS (UK) 2006 Lifetime Achievement Award to Professor M. Abdel Haleem**  
Professor of Islamic Studies, SOAS, London University
- 10:30–12:00 SESSION I: ISLAM AND THE POLITICAL
- CHAIR  
**Professor James Piscatori**
- SPEAKERS  
**Dr. S. Sayyid (UK)**  
Islamism and Decolonizing the Political  
**Dr. Amr G.E. Sabet (Canada)**  
Islamic Politics or Politics of Islam  
**Dr. Kamal El-Helbawi (UK)**  
Politics of Islamism in the 21st Century: The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt as an Example

12:00-13:00	<i>Lunch Break &amp; Prayer</i>
13:00-14:30	<p><b>SESSION II: BEYOND THE TRIBAL MIND</b></p> <p>CHAIR  <b>Dr. Fauzia Ahmad</b></p> <p>SPEAKERS  <b>Dr. Abdelwahab El-Affendi (UK)</b>  The Nonsense of the Nonsense: The Islamic Reformation and other Superstitions  <b>Dr. Jeremy Henzell-Thomas (UK/France)</b>  Tribalism and the Colonization of Core Values: Reclaiming Shared Universals  <b>Dr. Robert D. Crane (USA)</b>  Religious Demonization: The Role of Academics in Confronting the Totalitarian Mind</p>
14:30-14:50	<i>Tea Break &amp; Prayer</i>
14:50-16:20	<p><b>SESSION III: POLITICAL IDENTITY &amp; CULTURE</b></p> <p>CHAIR  <b>Dr. Wanda Krause</b></p> <p>SPEAKERS  <b>Dr. Saeed A. Khan (USA)</b>  <i>Hijab</i> Awakenings: Muslim Women and their Attempt to Define their Identity and Create Space in the Public Sphere  <b>Shamim Mia (UK)</b>  Music as Resistance: The Role of Muslim Hip Hop  <b>Itrath Syed (Canada)</b>  Towards an Autonomous Muslim Feminist Praxis</p>
16:20-16:50	<i>Tea Break &amp; Prayer</i>

16:50-17:50

**SESSION IV: POSTCOLONIALITY AND MUSLIM  
POLITICS**

CHAIR

**Dr. S. Sayyid**

SPEAKERS

**Dr. Mohammed Seddique Seddon (UK)**

Beyond Postcoloniality and Ummatic Universalism:  
Western Muslims and Minority Islam

**Dr. Abdoolkarim Vakil (UK)**

Paki Bastards, Book Burners and Reluctant  
Fundamentalists: Representation, Subjectivation, and  
the Politics of Doing Muslim Voices

**Dr. Tasmia Mesbahuddin (UK)**

Polarisation of a Civil Society Space between Secularists  
and Islamists by Design: The Case of Bangladesh



DAY 2 • SUNDAY 11TH NOVEMBER 2007

09:30-10:00 REFRESHMENTS

10:00-11:30 SESSION V: NATION AND DIFFERENCE

CHAIR

**Dr. Anas S. al Shaikh-Ali**

SPEAKERS

**Yahya Birt (UK)**

Islamophobia, Nationalism and Liberalism:  
Some Preliminary Thoughts

**Dr. Elmira S. Muratova (Ukraine)**

Islamic “Awakening” in the Post-Soviet Space: Threat  
to Stability?

**Dr. Bican Sahin/Dr. Bilal Sambur (Turkey)**

An Inquiry on the Various Methods of Treating Ethnic  
and Religious Difference in the Islamic World

11:30-13:00 SESSION VI: ISLAM AND GOVERNANCE

CHAIR

**Dr. Dibyesch Anan**

SPEAKERS

**Khalif Muammar A. Harris (Malaysia)**

Constitutional Government in Islam

**Dr. Mustafa Ozel (Turkey)**

The Future of Turkism and ‘Light Islamism’ in Turkey

**Alejandro J. Beutel (USA)**

Sunni Structural Puritanism

13:00-14:00 *Lunch Break & Prayer*

14:00-15:30

**SESSION VII: IN SEARCH OF LIBERATION**

CHAIR

**Dr. Mohammed Seddique Seddon**

SPEAKERS

**Dr. Mohammed Mestiri (France)**

Decolonizing the Muslim Mind: Toward a Philosophy of Will Liberation

**Dr. Wanda Krause (UK/Canada)**

Women's Empowerment Through the Islamist Discursive Tradition?

**Melissa L. Finn (Canada)**

Acts to Habitus: The Banalization of Sacrifice

15:30-15:50

*Tea Break & Prayer*

15:50-17:20

**SESSION VIII: ISLAM & POLITICAL THOUGHT**

CHAIR

**Abdul-Rehman Malik**

SPEAKERS

**Omar Ali Grant (UK)**

Muslim Political Thought between Modern Liberalism and Traditional Islam

**Dr. Jasser Auda (UK/Canada)**

New Ijtihad and Islamist Politics

**Dr. Said Shehata (UK)**

Muslim Brotherhood and Democracy in Egypt

17:20-18:00

**SESSION IX: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS**

CHAIR

**Dr. Abdelwahab El-Affendi**

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## SPEAKERS

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(in alphabetical order)

**Abdelwahab El-Affendi** is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminster and Co-ordinator of the Centre's Democracy and Islam Programme. Educated at the Universities of Khartoum, Wales, and Reading, he is author of *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan* (1991), *Who Needs an Islamic State?* (1991), *Revolution and Political Reform in Sudan* (1995), *Rethinking Islam and Modernity* (2001), *For a State of Peace: Conflict and the Future of Democracy in Sudan* (2002) and *The Conquest of Muslim Hearts and Minds: Perspectives on U.S. Reform and Public Diplomacy Strategies* (2005). He has also contributed to many leading journals, and is contributor or co-author of works including: *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1998), *Social Science and Conflict Analysis* (1993), *Islam and Justice* (1997), *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East* (2000), *Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century* (2003), *Understanding Democratic Politics* (2003), *American Power in the 21st Century* (2004), *The Arab Human Development Report* (2004), and *The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought* (2006). Dr. El-Affendi was a member of the core team of authors of *The Arab Human Development Report* (2004) and is a member of the Advisory Board and a contributor to the forthcoming report. He is also a member of the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, member of the Board of Directors of Inter-Africa Group, a trustee of the International Forum for Islamic Dialogue, and a member of the AMSS UK Advisory Board. He is the 2006 winner of the Muslim News Allama Iqbal Award for Creativity in Islamic Thought.

**Jasser Auda** is the Founding Director of Al-Maqasid Research Centre in the Philosophy of Islamic Law, a project of Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, London, U.K., since 2005. He is a fellow of the International Institute of Advanced Systems Research (IIAS) in Canada, a member of Executive Board of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS UK), a member of the Academic Council of the International Institute of

Islamic Thought (IIIT) in the UK, a founding member of the International Union for Muslim Scholars (IUMS), based in Dublin, a consultant for islamonline.net, and a visiting Lecturer to the Islamic Institute of Toronto in Canada, Faculty of law in Alexandria University in Egypt, and the Islamic Fiqh Academy of India. Dr. Auda has a multi-disciplinary academic background. He wrote two PhD theses on Islamic Philosophy of Law and Systems Analysis and Design, in the University of Wales, UK, and the University of Waterloo, Canada, respectively. His latest book shows his multi-disciplinary approach to research in Islamic Studies. It is titled: *Maqasid al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*, published by the IIIT in the UK in 2007.

**Alejandro J. Beutel** is a Program Assistant at the Minaret of Freedom Institute, a Muslim think tank which seeks to educate Muslims on the importance of liberty and free markets to a good society, while also educating non-Muslims in the West about the beliefs and contributions of Islam. Alejandro recently finished his Bachelors of Science in International Relations and Diplomacy from Seton Hall University. His research interests include international religious freedom, democratization, and security studies.

**Yahya Birt** is currently the Director of the City Circle, a London-based network for Muslim professionals, that runs cultural, educational and welfare projects, is a part-time Research Fellow at the Islam in Europe Unit at the Islamic Foundation, Markfield, Leicestershire, UK and a member of *Islamica Magazine's* Editorial Board. He completed an M.Phil in Social Anthropology from the University of Oxford. He has written for *The Sunday Times*, *Prospect magazine*, *The New Statesman*, *The Spectator*, *Open Democracy*, *Q-News*, *Muslim News*, and *alt.muslim*. He has written articles in several academic collections and journals, as well as book reviews, on various aspects of British Islam. He is currently undertaking a project on the “beliefs, narratives and ideologies of violent radicalisation” in the UK as part of a four-country study for the European Union. He maintains a blog, *Musings on the Britannic Crescent*, and an archive of his writings at [www.yahyabirt.com](http://www.yahyabirt.com).

**Robert D. Crane** holds the position as Scholar in Residence at the International Institute of Islamic Thought. He earned a doctorate (J.D.) at

Harvard Law School (1959) in International Investment and Comparative Legal Systems. Crane is the former adviser to the late President of the United States, Richard Nixon; former Deputy Director (for Planning) of the National Security Council (1969); Principal Economic and Budget Adviser to the Finance Minister in Bahrain (1977–78); and former U.S. Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates (1981). Crane was the principal *da'ii* (religious instructor) at the Islamic Center, Massachusetts Avenue, Washington, D.C. (1983–86); Director of Publications, International Institute of Islamic Thought (1986–88); founding member of The American Muslim Council and Director of its Legal Division (1992–1994); and President of research centers: The Center for Policy Research and The Islamic Institute for Strategic Studies (1994–2001) and Founding Chairman of The Center for Understanding Islam (2001–2006). He has authored or co-authored a dozen books and hundreds of professional articles on comparative legal systems, global strategy, and information management. Languages include English, German, Russian, Spanish, French and Arabic.

**Melissa L. Finn** is a Ph.D Candidate in the Department of Political Science at York University in Toronto, Canada. Her research interests include political philosophy, phenomenology, literary theory, and sufism. Melissa Finn's dissertation research examines the many facets of the banalization of sacrifice.

**Omar Ali Grant** was born in the city of Cordoba, Argentina, in 1979, of a Scottish father and Argentine mother, converted to Islam in 1996, and spent two years studying Sociology in Scotland before travelling to study traditional Islamic sciences in several countries like Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Jordan and finally Iraq, where he studied in the renowned seminary of the Holy City of Najaf. As well as his traditional "Ijazas" or certifications from scholars in several religious disciplines, he studied for a BA in Islamic Studies and Arabic from Middlesex University at the Islamic College for Advanced Studies in London. Since joining Al-Khoei Foundation, he has been active in several interfaith activities throughout the country and has worked as an advisor on Muslim and social cohesion affairs for the government; participated in several TV and radio discussions; and has given interviews for several newspapers and magazines, including the likes of the *Jerusalem Report*, amongst others.

He has also participated in several consultations at St George's House, of which he is an associate, and Wilton Park. Furthermore, he is a founding member of the expanding group Open Discussions ([www.open-discussions.com](http://www.open-discussions.com)), a network of young Muslim activists who organise monthly events with distinguished speakers on a variety of topics to foment debate and participation in current affairs. He has lectured on Islamic related topics at conferences in Sweden, Germany, Trinidad and Tobago, Kuwait and Jordan. He is also the author of several published papers and articles in prominent political, philosophical and religious journals.

**Khalif Muammar A. Harris** is a Ph.D. candidate at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia, and a research fellow at the Academy for Civilizational Studies, Malaysia.

**Kamal El-Helbawy**, originally from Egypt, is a prominent scholar and consultant on Muslim affairs. His many writings include the status of Muslims in non-Muslim societies. He has held several academic positions, including the Editor-in-Chief for the Centre for International Policy Studies in London; Advisor at the Institute of Policy Studies in Islamabad, and Editor and Founding Member of the Arabic weekly, *Qadaya Dawliyya* (International Affairs). Until 1997, he served as the Official Spokesperson for the Muslim Brotherhood in the West. Dr El-Helbawy is the former Chairman and Founding Member of the Muslim Association of Britain; a Founding Member of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), Former Trustee of the Islamic Foundation (Leicester) and currently Chairman of the Global Civilisations Study Centre (GCSC) and the Centre for the Study of Terrorism, respectively.

**Jeremy Henzell-Thomas** is Executive Director of the Book Foundation, a registered UK charity with worldwide objectives working with partner institutions in the UK and the USA to improve understanding of Islam in the West. He was the first Chair of FAIR UK (Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism) and has served as a member of the Executive Committee and the Advisory Board of the AMSS (UK). He holds degrees in English and Linguistics from London and Edinburgh universities, and a Ph.D. in the Psychology of Learning from the University of Lancaster. He has worked at many levels in education both in the UK and overseas, as a teacher,

academic director, curriculum development specialist, schools inspector, university Lecturer, doctoral research supervisor and educational consultant. He speaks widely on the themes of education, society and spirituality, and writes regular columns for *Islamica* and *emel* magazines. He is a member of the Advisory Board of *Islamica* and a contributing editor of *The American Muslim*. His recent international conference papers, including plenary addresses, have been delivered at the Gustav-Stresemann Institut, Bonn (2002), University of Surrey, Roehampton (2003), University of Indiana, Bloomington (2003), University of Edinburgh (2004), Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations, Aga Khan University, London (2005), and the University of Durham (2005). His most recent keynote address, “Beyond the Tower of Babel: A Linguistic Approach to Clarifying Key Concepts in Islamic Pluralism” was delivered at the AMSS conference on Citizenship, Security and Democracy in Istanbul last year (2006).

**Saeed A. Khan** is currently Lecturer in the Department of History and Lecturer in the Department of Near East & Asian Studies at Wayne State University- Detroit, Michigan, where he teaches Islamic and Middle East and History and is completing his PhD on Muslim identity in America. He is also teaches Islamic Studies at the University of Detroit-Mercy, and has taught Modern Middle Eastern and World History at Henry Ford College and Eastern Michigan University. In addition, he is the Founder and a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Social Policy & Understanding, a Michigan-based Think Tank promoting the study and analysis of US social and domestic policy. His publications include, “Orientalism and Western Concepts of Race and Difference in Science,” in Nature Publishing Group’s *Encyclopedia of the Human Genome*, four entries in the *Encyclopedia of Islam in America* by Harvard University Press and an entry on Muslim Women in Multimedia Roles in North America in Brill’s *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Culture*. His research on Muslim women and the headscarf will be published as a chapter, “Creating New Gender Identity and Space in the Public Sphere,” in the upcoming *Negotiating Boundaries? Identities, Sexualities, Diversities*, published by Cambridge Scholars Press.

**Wanda Krause** is Research Fellow with the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR) and the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), UK. She holds a PhD from the University of Exeter on Middle

East Politics. Her interests include civil society development, Islamist politics and networks, gender politics, modes of governance and state-society relations. She has several refereed articles on politics in the Middle East and other developing countries and article entries in encyclopaedias. Examples include “Political Islam in the Middle East – Doing the State’s Work: Women and the Parallel Sector in the Arab World,” in Thomas Bateman and Roger Epp, *Braving the New World: Readings in Contemporary Politics*, 3rd edition. Nelson, 2004; “Civil Society in the Democratization Process: A Case Study on Cairo Islamic Women’s and Secular Feminist Organizations,” *Global Development Studies*, (winter/spring) 2004: 221–50; and “The Role and Example of Chilean and Argentinean Mothers in Democratisation,” *Development in Practice*, Vol. 14(3), April 2004.

**Tasmia Mesbahuddin** has a PhD from the University of Bath, Department of Economics and International Development. She is currently an ESRC Post-doctoral Fellow on the Non-Governmental Public Action Programme (NGPA), and has recently joined the Centre for the Study of Democracy at Westminster University. Her interests include the political and theoretical aspects of civil society in non-Western contexts, particularly from a development perspective. Her doctoral thesis focused on the state of civil society in Bangladesh from an Islamic perspective, attempting to prove the western bias that remains within the international development policy framework and how this impinges on alternative methods to development in countries that are less secularised in their everyday practice. She has also consulted extensively with the UK Department for International Development (DfID) in Bangladesh and has worked within the non-governmental community both in the UK and Bangladesh.

**Mohamed Mestiri** holds a PhD in Philosophy from Sorbonne University, Paris, 1994. He has a Bachelors in Islamic Theology and Philosophy, Zeitouna University, Tunis, 1989. He is a Professor and responsible for training at the High Institute of Journalism, France; Visiting Professor in Islam in Western Societies at the Institut Polytechnique Saint Louis – Cergy; Scientific Director for Religious Sciences: Islam, at the University UCL, Belgium where he is also Professor of Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Epistemology; member of the research group, “Peace and War in Coran”, EHESS (School of High Studies in Social Sciences), Paris; affiliated

member of the Unesco Chair of Intercultural Studies; member of international interfaith and intercultural organisations, such as WCRP, “Abraham Brotherhood;” Academic Advisor in the International Institute of Islamic Thought, and Coordinator of AMSS, France. Since 1999, he is Editor of “Roua” revue and Director of the Centre of Studies on Civilizations, Paris. His publications include different articles in contemporary islamic thought (french, arabic and english), and a number of books including *Traité des fondements de la religion*, *Penser la modernité et l’islam: regards croisés*, and *L’identitaire et l’universel dans l’islam contemporain*.

**Shamim Miah** teaches Sociology at Huddersfield University. He has a background in policy work within the public sector. He is a frequent contributor for *Q News* and other Muslim publications. Shamim lives in Oldham where he has been involved in youth and community work for over 10 years.

**Elmira S. Muratova** is a Docent (Associate Professor) in the Department of Political Science at Tavrida National Vernadsky University (Simferopol, Ukraine) where she teaches on the Islamic World, Modern Politics and Political Islam in the Post-Soviet Space. Muratova is also Director of the Crimean Institute for Peace, which deals with inter-ethnic and interfaith relations in Crimea (Ukraine). She holds a PhD in Political Science, thesis titled, “Political Analysis of Islam’s Revival in Crimea” (2004). Her research areas include political Islam, ethnic and religious clashes, and Islam’s revival in the post-Soviet space.

**Mustafa Ozel**, born in 1956 in Agri, Turkey, graduated from Bogazici University of Istanbul (Economics, 1980). With one foot in academia, he worked for banks and commercial and industrial companies as an economic researcher. After completing his PhD in Economic History at Marmara University, Istanbul, he joined Beykent University and taught International Economics, History of Trade, and Management Thought. He is currently teaching at Fatih University, acting as a management consultant for several companies, and leading two influential NGOs focused on higher education. His major studies include: *The End of the American Century* (1993); *The Individual, the Bourgeois, and the Muslim Richman* (1994); *Geopolitics and Geoculture* (Translated from Immanuel Wallerstein); *Capitalism and Civilization* (Parts of Braudel’s work); *A Guide for*

*the Perplexed* (From E. F. Schumacher); *Civilization and Modernity* (1998); and *Japanese Capitalism and Economic Thought* (Ph D Thesis, 1999).

**Amr G. E. Sabet** is a Political Scientist from Canada. He is a Docent in the Department of Political Science, University of Helsinki, Finland, and a visiting scholar in the Department of Public Management at Vaasa University, Finland.

**Bican Sahin** is an Assistant Professor of Political Science in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at Hacettepe University. Dr. Sahin received his Ph.D. at the University of Maryland, College Park in 2003. His dissertation title is “An Investigation of the Contributions of Plato and Aristotle to the Development of the Concept of Toleration.” Among his research topics are ancient and modern political thought, classical liberal and libertarian philosophy, the relation between liberal democracy and Islam, and the relationships between state and civil society in Turkey. He is currently conducting his post-doctoral research at the University of Maryland, College Park through an Earhart Foundation fellowship. The title of his post-doctoral project is “An Expansive Theory of Liberal Tolerance: The Historical Case of Pierre Bayle”. Some of his most recent publications are “Toleration, Political Liberalism, and Peaceful Coexistence in the Muslim World,” *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, vol. 24, no.1, Winter 2007, pp-1-24; “Is Islam an Obstacle to Democratization in the Muslim World? The Debate of the Compatibility of Islam and Democracy Revisited”, *Bilig*, Spring 2006, 37: 189-204; and “The Principle of Self-Interest Properly Understood in Virtuous Polity,” *Bogaziçi Journal: Review of Social, Economic and Administrative Studies*, Vol. 20, Number 1-2 (2006).

**Bilal Sambur** is an Assistant Professor in the Psychology of Religion at The Department of Religious and Philosophical Sciences at the University of Suleyman Demirel, Isparta, Turkey since 2003. He received his Ph.D. at the University of Birmingham, Department of Theology, Birmingham, UK in 2000. His dissertation is titled “Prayer in the Psychology of Religion with Special Reference to al-Ghazali, Ata Allah al-Iskandari, and Muhammad Iqbal.” Prior to his appointment at the University of Suleyman Demirel, he worked as Lecturer in Islamic Studies at various universities and colleges such as Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, UK (2000–2001), the University

of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK (1999–2000), and Woodbrook College, Birmingham, UK (1999–2000). In summer 2007, he has been a visiting fellow at Acton Institute, Grand Rapids, MI, USA. Some of his recent publications include “Islam as the Paradigm for Global Responsibility,” *Hamdard Islamicus*, no. 3, vol. XXV, 2002, pp. 25-30; “Jesus through Muslim Eyes,” *Beyond Boundaries*, (In press); “Tillich’s Approach to Secular Culture,” *Islamiyat*, vol. II, no. 19, 2001, pp. 15-32.; and ‘From the Fear of the Civilizational Clash to the Hope of the Civilizational Dialogue,’ *Islam and the Modern Age*, vol. XXXIII, no. 1, 2002, pp. 47-57.

**S. Sayyid** is a political theorist and the author of *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*. He is currently Director of Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies, University of Leeds, UK and a member of the AMSS UK Executive Committee.

**Mohammad Siddique Seddon** obtained his PhD in Religious Studies at the University of Lancaster and is currently Lecturer in Islamic Studies at the Theological and Religious Studies Department, Chester University. He has previously worked as Development Officer at the Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK, Cardiff University. He is a former Research Fellow at the Islamic Foundation and is an Executive Member of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (UK). His research interests are historical and contemporary issues relating to Islam in Britain and British Muslim communities. He has published a number of related works and books including, *British Muslims: Loyalty and Belonging*, (2003) and, *British Muslims between Assimilation and Segregation: Historical, Legal & Social Realities*, (2004).

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## ABSTRACTS

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### **The Nonsense of the Nonsense: The Islamic Reformation and Other Superstitions**

DR. ABDELWAHAB EL-AFFENDI

In recent years, predictions about an impending “Islamic Reformation”, and claims of engineering one, have reached a feverish pitch reminiscent of Mahdist claims during Muslim crises of times past. Unlike its Christian namesake, however, this Islamic Reformation is not supposed to be driven through by fanatical priests upset at the drift of the religious hierarchy away from the “true teachings” of religion, but by assorted mavericks who are farthest removed from the centre of religious authority, including some self-confessed heretics and renegades. Not only that, but there is a stampede by Western intelligence agencies to hasten such a “Reformation” through all sorts of machinations, including funding of putative religious bodies and “reform movements”, in an exercise reminiscent of the fictional con-trick ascribed to British intelligence in the novel *The Mahdi*, where a secret agent assumes such a messianic role aided by specially engineered special effects. There is something fundamentally wrong with this discourse on Reformation, which seems to rest on a gross misconception about the nature and dynamics of religious authority as such, and not only in Islam. In this paper, we trace this century-old debate, and the way it interacted with traditional and modernizing calls for reform and renewal (*Islah* and *Tajdid*). Offering an analysis of the arguments for and contra this messianically awaited Reformation, we conclude that the discourse is riddled with so many contradictions as to merit the accusation of “incoherence” leveled by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali against the philosophers of his time. (And that is why I borrow for my paper Ibn Rushd’s title in his rebuttal of al-Ghazali, only in what I believe a more accurate translation). Both the rationale for this desirable Reformation (that it could help “tame” anti-Western Islamic “extremism”) and the mechanisms employed to achieve it, are extremely problematic, to put it mildly. While Islam indeed stands in need of an urgent spiritual and cultural regeneration, this task

can only be undertaken by spiritually competent and intellectually sound reformers. It certainly is not a task for CIA-funded think tanks or self-confessed heretics.

### **New Ijtihad and Islamist Politics**

DR. JASSER AUDA

This paper attempts to analyse the lack of ijihad (re-interpretation of the Islamic law) in Islamist circles. The general picture is that of rejection and denouncement of new opinions proposed by scholars of the Islamic law outside the specific circle of each group. However, the Muslim Brotherhood group announces their readiness to change their policies and stands on issues based on new ijihad, and thus, are taken as a case study. This article argues that unless real progress is made in the following three areas, the group will continue to fail to present a real progressive and widely public direction. These areas are: (a) women's rights, (b) governing democratic principles, and (c) the relationship between Muslims and 'the West.' It is true that the Muslim Brotherhood movement did attain, despite much controversy in its circles, incremental progress in this regard. Specifically, the group now generally allowed women to vote and be elected, announced its acceptance of the principle of the exchange of power through multi-party elections, and announced its support of the integration ('nationalisation') movement in western societies. However, the overall stands of the group, as expressed through occasional statements made by its leaders, and especially on the three crucial areas mentioned above, remain largely inclined towards extreme or outdated opinions. The reasons behind this include the influence of the salafi movements on the group's masses, the group's reactionary attitude towards 'secular' ideologies, the exclusively-traditional learning of the group's *fiqhi* minds, the science- and engineering-education of most leaders, and the official persecution of its 'progressive' strategists.

### **Sunni Structural Puritanism**

ALEJANDRO BEUTEL

It is undeniably painful to admit that many religiously justified terrorist acts have recently been committed in the name of Islam. These barbaric acts have been perpetrated by Puritans who represent a significant departure from the rich moral and intellectual traditions of Islam. I argue that much of this intellectual and moral departure is caused by Sunni

Structural Puritanism (SSP). SSP argues that one of the major causes of Puritanism is a lack of strong religious institutions which sustain an ideologically moderate orthodoxy. As a result, a theological and political authority vacuum emerges which Puritanical individuals and organizations fill in. This vacuum is dual natured: it is the result of a loss of the scholars' political autonomy within the nation-state and its loss of popular legitimacy among Muslim laity. I begin my paper by putting SSP into contemporary and historical political contexts and argue why this phenomenon is an important religious freedom and long-term strategic security issue for Western nations like the United States. I then draw on several examples from different Muslim-majority countries to elaborate on the effects of SSP and go more in depth in three specific case studies: Al-Azhar of Egypt, Pakistan and Central Asia. The paper ends by providing successful models for reversing SSP and policy recommendations for the United States.

### **Islamophobia, Nationalism and Liberalism: Some Preliminary Thoughts**

YAHYA BIRT

This paper will attempt to explore tentatively the notion that current expressions of Islamophobia in Britain and Europe are primarily the outcome of the reassertion of liberal nationalism in which liberal values and national identity are redefined in relation to Muslims as illiberal strangers.

### **Religious Demonization: The Role of Academics in Confronting the Totalitarian Mind**

DR. ROBERT D. CRANE

The primary motivating cause of militant extremism is not the simple drive for power, but rather its opposite in the form of compulsive fear. Fear leads to the totalitarian mind, and this leads to terrorism. This is true for both terrorism and terroristic counter-terrorism. The defense mechanism is first to demonize what one fears and then to destroy it. Tyrants have always been and always will be, but they do not present an existential threat, because they seek only their own power at home and therefore can be co-opted to serve someone else's agenda. Such tyranny is different from totalitarianism, which by definition seeks total control of the human mind not only as a means to consolidate its own power but primarily as the

ultimate end of its own destiny. The threat to the world was not Saddam Hussein and it was not American politicians. It was a half-century old intellectual movement, known eventually as Neo-Conservatism, which was based on compulsive fear of imminent global chaos. The fear goes beyond material greed. It was and is existential. In 1957, the proto NeoCon, Robert Strausz Hupe, forecast that within two or three decades Communism would implode. Instead of the “end of history,” he forecast that the result would be a much greater threat of global chaos caused by population explosion of peoples who did not share American values and would eventually gain access to nuclear weapons. This new dynamic of human affairs gave birth to a new dominant paradigm on September 11, 2001. The cause of the impending chaos was immediately identified as Islam. Professional Islam bashers had been preparing the way for more than a decade, but they finally got a hearing as allies of the NeoCons who needed their scholarly expertise. The new academic field of Islam bashing has burgeoned over the past six years into a distinct discipline. The principal leaders are not the populist evangelists and not the NeoCons who support them. The principal leader is Robert Spencer, who has been honing his trade for twenty years. His magnum opus is his latest book, *The Truth About Muhammad: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion*. In a world of Satans and Counter-Satans, the role of academics should be to expose the generic threat of religious demonization and to forge a common front of Christians, Muslims, and Jews against this source of global chaos. They can do this by showing that people like Spencer can be more effective if they join Muslims who are trying to oppose the totalitarian Muslims in their midst by bringing out the classical understanding of the Qur'an and the real truth about Muhammad.

### **Acts to Habitus: The Banalization of Sacrifice**

MELISSA L. FINN

Most of the current literature on martyrdom operations unquestionably refers to them as ‘suicide bombings’. The actors and supporters of these operations, however, do not see the acts as suicide; they regard them unquestionably as martyring the actor. I argue in this paper that the operations are neither totally suicide nor totally martyrdom/sacrifice. They are something more than simply escape/evasion, or the selfless giving of one’s life. The critical hinge-point that entangles both concepts conceptually/linguistically/culturally together is the Other towards whom

the act is planned, directed, and executed. Political self-immolation/martyrdom operations “suicide” the actor (kill the actor and human targets) and “martyr” the actor (in his/her bearing witness through sacrifice of self). Since so-called martyrdom operations cannot evade their roots in suicide or murder, I prefer to call them acts of sacrificial violence. Few would deny that such acts are at once an intense and ultimately selfless giving of life; they are a response to a witnessing (of oppression) that seeks to witness God, and yet, in its modern-day form, sacrificial violence is resolutely directed towards and desires to kill an Other. When it involves non-combatants it is a most selfish, and senseless taking of life. While remaining sensitive to the grounds that make acts of sacrificial violence possible, this paper explores how the once radical act of authenticity and originality has been reduced to an act of predictable imitation, and in turn, how the act itself has been transformed into a routinized, ritualized, and glorified practice turned habitus. The act is no longer a rupture with the given, a governing and beginning, as the ancient Greeks conceived the act; it is rather an everyday practice which produces habitus (the disposition which guarantees the ‘correctness’ of such practices) rising from an anxious social body. The act is exiled from its original purposes; it repeatedly produces carnage of an excess that will never deliver freedom nor legitimately found a democracy or theocracy. The banalization of sacrifice therefore can be seen not only in the transformation of the means of the act into ends, or in the everydayness of the act, but also in the dynamic of repetitive acts rendering strategized sacrifice an unimaginative and rationalized performance in the theatre of the absurd. We are currently witnessing the banalization of sacrifice in the strings of attacks targeting civilians in Iraq and Palestine. It is my hope that this paper will spark debate and reflection among Muslim social scientists about the meaning of sacrifice in an act complicated by copy-cat vigilanteism and the unlawful murder of innocents.

### **Muslim Political Thought, between Modern Liberalism and Traditional Islam**

OMAR ALI GRANT

This paper is a comparative study related to political thought in modern liberalism and traditional Islam. The concepts of “modernity” and “traditionalism” are often presented as antithetic theories in academic circles since the former aims to reform or modify – and in some cases to

reject – the latter. However – as this paper tries to demonstrate – this is not always true. The political debates present in many ancient political schools of thought around the world – especially in the Islamic world – are evidence of the fact that millenary and traditional doctrines can still nowadays be considered as “modern”. Such phenomena can be called “modern traditionalism”. The title “Muslim Political Thought, between Modern Liberalism and Traditional Islam” has been chosen not to emphasize the conflictual nature of the two concepts, especially when they are ascribed to two of the main ideologies labelled by many scholars as expressions of modernity – i.e. liberalism – and traditionalism as expressed in most of the current Islamic thought, but to express the current dichotomy which does not necessarily represent a correct expression of reality and the current intellectualism of Islamic Thought. The reason that led to the expression “traditional Islam” is the way that its ideology is presented in this essay by the traditional Islamic sources: the Qur’an and the Sunnah or life conduct of the Prophet of Islam. While the theory of liberalism is a very recent phenomenon produced by recent scholars, an Islamic ideology cannot overlook the “holy texts” that the religion of Islam should necessary rely on to be consistent and true to its own parameters. In spite of the fact that such perspective can be considered as obsolete, the “modern traditionalism” found in the Islamic political thought still aims to challenge the liberal theory. In this paper we will look critically at the principles of liberalism, then, after a glance at the political system described in normative Sunni Islam, we will deal with the concept of “*wilayah*” in Shi’ite Islam and the political thought stemmed from it by referring to its traditional evidences and the conflict between maximalists and minimalists. Then, after having analyzed democracy from an Islamic perspective, our conclusion will consider both the Islamic and the liberal systems trying to prove the necessity of the former over the latter in order to ensure a coherent syncretism of spiritual and temporal values, basing our arguments on the concept of freedom as understood in the religious-spiritual framework of Islam and shared by most divinely inspired systems.

### **The Notion of Constitutional Government in Islam**

KHALIF MUAMMAR A. HARRIS

This study argues against Western political theorists’ contention that the notion of constitutional government was introduced by Western thinkers in the Enlightenment era. I contend that the Charter of Madinah which is

dated back to 622 A.H, along with several other features of constitutional government, is a seamless proof that the notion of constitutional government is originated and initiated by Muslims. The fact is that the Charter was formed about 600 years before Magna Carta was signed by King John in 1215 C.E. which is considered in Western writings as the first of such attempt in the world. Nevertheless, this study is an attempt to prove that the view of the majority of Orientalists, along with liberal Muslims, such as 'Ashmawi, al-Na'im and many others, who contend that Islam does not provide constitutional theory, is erroneous. An in-depth study of the principles of representative government, *shura*, justice, equality, liberty, and accountability demonstrates that these principles, which are the political implications of supremacy of the *Shari'ah*, are the key features of constitutional government in Islam. Moreover, some of the above principles, i.e., *shura*, freedom of expression and accountability, are also considered as mechanisms which function as a bulwark against political absolutism and arbitrary rule.

### **Politics of Islamism in the 21st Century: The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt as an Example**

DR. KAMAL EL-HELBAWY

Many Islamic Movements will not be happy with the term: Islamism; it is a Western production and its connotation may not describe the meaning of Islamists and/or Islamism very well. This paper concentrates on the following themes and questions: (1) the nature and case of MB *Dawah*; (2) the politics of the MB in Egypt in the 21st century and current change; (3) the difference between the MB strategies and politics. Is the MB strategy a part of politics or is politics a part of the strategy? As such, the problem of the political party within the MB strategy will be discussed. (4) How does the MB envision a reform project in Egypt and how can it be achieved? (5) Are political developments in the MB anti-Western in nature? (6) What impact does the MB have on political values and behaviour in Egypt and abroad? (7) Finally, what are the chances for an alliance between the MB, as a religious *Dawah* Political Islamic Movement, and the Ruling Authority (Power)?

## **Tribalism and the Colonization of Core Values: Reclaiming Shared Universals**

DR. JEREMY HENZELL-THOMAS

As a reaction to perceived threats to national identity and social cohesion arising from migration, multiculturalism and, above all, the resurgent Muslim presence in its midst, a vocal political and cultural tendency has emerged in the West to claim national ownership of a set of core values which purport to distinguish modern, progressive Western civilization and its way of life from alien and hostile influences which are held to be incompatible with it. This paper will offer a critique of this process of colonization with reference to the supposedly “core British value” of “responsibility for others”. It will be argued that instead of appropriating and even misappropriating values for the purpose of asserting tribal superiority, we should all, no matter what our affiliation, be working together to reclaim those core human values which transcend national, cultural and religious divides. The challenge for Muslims in Britain today is to embody the altruistic love of humanity which is the core of all authentic religion. It is to come of age, to assume the mantle of a truly creative minority which can inspire social renewal and help the nation as a whole to lift its ambition, rediscover its moral compass and heal its social maladies. This is a task which cannot be accomplished by any group acting in the interests of narrow identity politics, tribal partisanship or triumphalism, but only by all people of goodwill embracing shared universal human values and acting together for the common good.

## ***Hijab* Awakenings: Muslim Women and their Attempt to Define and Create Space in the Public Sphere**

DR. SAEED A. KHAN

The recent emergence of popularity of the *hijab* among British Muslim women is a phenomenon that cannot be adequately attributed to an aggregate rise in religious awareness. The rhetoric of contemporary *hijab* discourse implies that several socio-cultural and political currents have contributed to the “rediscovery” of the scarf. Over the past two decades, there appears to be a resurgence of interest in the veil, by non-Muslims and Muslims alike. For non-Muslims, the *hijab* often implies oppression, coercion and an unwillingness to integrate. For Muslim women, the *hijab* represents commitment to their religion, liberation from social pressures, empowerment to dictate and define their own identity and an ability to

establish their presence in the public sphere. *Hijab* discourse varies, sometimes dramatically, depending on temporal and spatial considerations. The rationale for the *hijab* may differ in one part of the Islamic world as opposed to a different region or a different period of a community's development. Despite unique and specific circumstances affecting the direction of *hijab* discourse in a particular place, there are some factors that appear common to all aspects of the Muslim community worldwide: a desire by Muslim women to define their own identity and create space for themselves in the public arena. This paper shall analyze the non-theological variables that affect the decision to wear the *hijab*. Attention shall be paid to *hijab* discourse in different regions of the Islamic world, examining the variations from one area to the other. In addition, attention shall be paid to how discourse on gender has been influenced by socio-economic forces, class structure and political necessities, such as colonial and post-colonial modalities. Finally, this paper shall investigate how the various *hijab* narratives have coalesced in Great Britain over the past two decades to form a unique, diversified and indigenous *hijab* discourse.

### **Women's Empowerment Through the Islamist Discursive Tradition?**

DR. WANDA KRAUSE

This paper is an attempt to contribute to a questioning of the knowledge developed on Islamist politics in terms of women's empowerment as much as it is an endeavour to question the 'truths' within Islamist discourses on the matter. Women, especially from non-western regions, have increasingly voiced contention about feminist readings of women's oppressions around the globe that fail to capture many women's sources of oppression and especially the meanings 'other' women attach to freedoms, dignity, happiness, and well-being. The subject experiences and understands life within a discursive and material context. Recognizing women's modes of action as being within a discursive tradition helps us capture the relevant meanings and significance of these actions to the fostering of alternative visions of empowerment. Analysing specifically the Islamist discursive tradition, to which Muslim women in different localities subscribe, the paper attempts to expose a self that interprets reality different to the reality a western paradigm assumes should exist for all women. The paper asks if women can offer an alternative vision to empowerment through an Islamist discursive tradition in which greater 'equality', 'freedoms', dignity, happiness, and general well-being can be achieved. While affirming its

possibility, the paper looks at the politics of Islamism in the development of this discourse and the power relations among actors of this discursive tradition. In so doing, the paper seeks to understand how the Islamist discursive tradition may also fashion a subjectivity that contributes to processes that are not conducive to a wider empowerment. Just as a western developed discourse has been subject to the specificities of power as it relates to the shaping of truth and knowledge, so is the Islamist discourse. Such an endeavour allows one to see outside the western paradigm; yet it exposes some of the barriers within the Islamist discursive tradition to the actualization of women's empowerment.

### **Polarisation of a Civil Society Space between Secularists and Islamists by Design: The Case of Bangladesh**

DR. TASMIA MESBAHUDDIN

Bangladesh has been rich in civil society activity since its very birth but the term civil society became a mantra from the 90s onwards when donors within the international development policy framework saw in it a potential for instilling democratic processes in otherwise volatile political structures. However, the term that has taken root in the country has been derived from a western neo-liberal frame of understanding, which has led donors to favour certain civil society actors at the expense of others, particularly those that are perceived as being 'anti-fundamentalist'. These civil society actors have largely been translated as non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The paper broadly points out the subtle ways a civil society space in Bangladesh has been crowded out through the dominance of 'big' NGOs since the country's independence. Backed by heavy donor support and a local base of secular-oriented power elite, these NGOs have become a pivotal voice for society at large and have managed to falsely construct an opposition between so-called secularists and Islamists, hence, reducing the prospects of a plural civil society.

### **Decolonizing the Muslim Mind: Toward a Philosophy of Will Liberation**

DR. MOHAMMED MESTIRI

This paper will try to redefine a fundamental condition for decolonizing the Muslim mind which is liberty. The impact of modern colonization is more than a territorial occupation, or an economical and political dependence. The colonization has acted on the self-confidence of the

whole Ummah, and the capacity of its elite to renew the leadership responsibility on the basis of creativity and freedom. The self-censorship within the Muslim scholars, reduces the possibilities of renewal. Thus, the fear from challenges of western reality and from the heavy Muslim heritage imposes permanent internal spirit colonization. The self-change will seem to be sacrificed in order to face the external strategic challenges. From the beginning of Islamic thought history, the issues of status of man's vicegerency has been founded on the relationship between liberty and will. And during the whole civilization history, especially the modern one, this issue has represented a centre of reflection and evolution. This paper proposes a new perspective to decolonize the Muslim mind and will from its fear pathology, in order to rethink new conditions of thought liberty.

### **Music as Resistance: The Role of Muslim Hip Hop**

SHAMIM MIAH

The dominance of Muslim Hip Hop (MHH) in the West demonstrates that 'Islam' and 'hip hop' are not bipolar opposites, but rather have a long tradition of rappers drawing on reciprocal relationships between Islam and hip hop. In fact, the birth of hip hop in the States was influenced by Islamicate theologies and activism. More recently, well-known hip hop artists have either converted to Sunni Islam, such as Moss Def. Everlast (Cypris Hill), Ali Shaheed Muhammad (A Tribe Called Quest) and Napoleon, or have rediscovered Islam, such as Outlandish and AMMAN. This paper will argue that the MHH genre is a powerful tool used by second-generation Muslim youths as a symbolic expressive form of 'Kool Islam', a powerful, creative, hybrid voice in addressing and responding to the key political issues of the day. Despite ongoing demonisation of Islam in the media, Kool Islam seems to be on the rise. This paper focuses on the role of MHH in defining Muslim youth culture in the UK; this will allow us to understand, firstly, the diverse cultural aspects of the Muslim youth. Secondly, it will allow us to evaluate distinctive patterns of behaviour or expressive forms to identify with young people's social, political, religious and material life experiences. Finally, it will permit us to explore the ways in which young people use music to signify their political, social or religious expressions. Drawing upon existing interviews of artists, analysis of lyrical contents of the key albums together with interviews with young people, this paper highlights how various forms of MHH is enabling the Muslim youth to develop distinctive and authentic forms of youth culture,

which allows them to signify specific and multiple identities in local contexts. Furthermore, the paper assesses ‘transglobal hip hop ummah’ by focusing on the role of place and space in the articulation and consumption of MHH. Hip hop traditionally has been associated with the idea of the ‘hood’, whilst Muslim hip hop seems to transcend the notions of place and space and focus on the experiences of the global ummah. Finally, the paper contextualizes MHH in the socio-political context of the Muslims in the West and explores the extent to which MHH is grounded in the social political struggle by exploring the phenomena as microphone-G-Had.

### **Islamic “Awakening” in the Post-Soviet Space: Threat to Stability?**

DR. ELMIRA S. MURATOVA

There were more than 54 million Muslims in the former Soviet Union that constituted about 20 percent of the whole population of the country. However, at the same time there was an extreme lack of information about them around the world. They were known as “forgotten Muslims”. The collapse of the USSR changed the situation radically. Former Soviet Muslims started the process of Islam’s revival that took irreversible forms. While this process was gaining strength, the public opinion in the Commonwealth Independent States has been changed from positive to negative. Basically it happened because of the ethnic conflicts and national movements each of which had its own “Islamic factor”. Most dramatically, people’s attitude toward an Islamic “awakening” has changed after the first Russian-Chechen War (1994–96). From the middle of the 1990s, Islam and all Islamic movements in the post-Soviet countries have been basically considered as a threat to stable and safe development. This statement can be proved from the case-study of Islam’s revival in Crimea, where Muslims have returned to their homeland after fifty years of deportation and whose presence in the peninsula is considered by authorities and other ethnic groups as a threat to the Crimean peace.

### **The Future of Turkism and ‘Light Islamism’ in Turkey**

DR. MUSTAFA OZEL

Islamism, Ottomanism, Turkism, and Westernism were rival empire-saving ideologies one hundred years ago. The first two receded in face of a merger between the latter ones. Although Turkey could not be colonized like much of the rest of the Islamic world, a nation-state as a form of

political governance took over the minds (and hearts) of the new ruling elites. But Islam as a worldview and as a way of life kept alive for the majority. The more Turkey became democratic, the more Islamic ideas and norms were asserted by the masses. Light Islam (under the rubric of 'conservative democracy') seems to be a reconciliation of once radical Muslims with the radical secularists, both Turkist and Westernist. However, the post 9/11 world system has forced Turkey-like regional powers with historical and geographical depth to assume greater responsibilities in their parts of the world. Such roles cannot be effectively played with light or shattered social identities. New, more inclusive socio-political ideologies have to replace Western-inspired, narrow, nationalist ones.

### **Islamic Politics or Politics of Islam**

DR. AMR G. E. SABET

Subtle differences between terms such as Islamic politics and politics of Islam frequently lead to conceptual confusion. Clarifying differences between both is not simply a matter of definitions or of posing comparative distinctions, but involves also a process of conceptual construction. Conceptual interactions which reflect the principled foundations they emanate from lend legitimacy to claims of affiliation and commitment. An Islamic conceptual edifice which reflects such a condition in both theory and praxis and is therefore self-referential may allow for claims of Islamic politics. Self-referentiality signifies cases in which epistemology (politics) continuously falls back on its ontology (Islam), or a dialectical relationship between both. Politics of Islam is an integral component of this relationship. A breakdown in this correlation or a reversal in the ontology-epistemology dynamic may lead to politics of Islam. In this case, the latter may reflect a form of ideology, or to any political situation, dealing with Islam or is about Islam, whether pursued by Muslims or even non-Muslims. In addition to this conceptual aspect the paper attempts to propose and justify some concepts, such as the Khaldunian *assabiyya*, and theoretical frameworks, such as the Islamic theory and law of nations, as components of Islamic politics.

## **An Inquiry on the Various Methods of Treating Ethnic and Religious Difference in the Islamic World**

DR. BICAN SAHIN AND DR. BILAL SAMBUR

If there is a most pressing issue in contemporary political theory, it is the issue of coping with the conflict that emerges from differences in society (Kukathas 2005; Kymlicka 1995, 2002). The societies in which we live are becoming more and more diverse in terms of religious, ethnic, linguistic, and moral affiliations. We live in culturally and morally plural societies. When someone or some groups, who do not like the ways of others, attempt to eradicate those differences, we end up having conflict in the midst of our societies. The societies of the Muslim world are no different in this respect. They are also marked by diversity and the associated conflict. Thus, the future democracies in the Muslim world will have to tackle this issue before securing peace and stability. Focusing on Islamic societies, this paper will explore two different traditions: Islam and liberalism. This paper will limit itself to religious and ethnic differences. In this direction, first, we will present the Islamic practice of *dhimma* according to which non-Muslims could enjoy freedom of religion and conscience and a certain level of autonomy in their civil and criminal legal affairs. Second, we will turn to the liberal tradition. The contemporary discussion on the liberal tradition is marked by a twofold distinction. On the one hand, we find the approach of multiculturalism promoted by Will Kymlicka (1995), and on the other, we have Chandran Kukathas' (2003) model of 'benign neglect'. These two approaches will be presented in a comparative manner. After the presentation of both the Islamic and liberal traditions' approaches towards ethnic and religious differences, a critical assessment of them will follow.

## **Islamism and Decolonizing the Political**

DR. S. SAYYID

One of the ways in which much of the current unrest in Muslim communities can be seen as an attempt –in very general terms – is to recover from the effects of Western colonization. The Muslim recovery or "Awakening" takes the form of a re-politicisation of Islam. This project of re-politicisation (Islamism) takes place in the context of a world marked by the logic of postcoloniality in which the cultural underpinnings of Western dominance find it difficult to translate Western economic and political power into global hegemony. There is a series of overlapping interventions, which take

as their departure point the “de-centring of the West” (Young, 1996; Sayyid, 1997) and its relationship to the Muslim Awakening (Asad, 2000). One way of describing this terrain is to call it postcolonial. The postcolonial is in this sense not a descriptive term but primarily a conceptual category, referring not to the end of Western colonial empires but erosion of coloniality (Quinjajo, Mingolo), that is, the framing of the world along a fundamental hierarchy between West and non-West. This presentation will sketch out some of the implications of emergence of mobilizations in the name of Islam and the relationship to the prevailing order.

### **Beyond Postcoloniality and Ummatic Universalism: Western Muslims and Minority Islam**

DR. MOHAMMAD SIDDIQUE SEDDON

The phenomena of western colonialism and globalisation have both fissured and synergised Muslim identities through imposed political nation-state nationalisms and ‘virtual’ ideas of universal brotherhood. The combined effects appear to have facilitated a distinct postcolonial and anti-western sense of ‘Muslimness’ that is deemed a considerable potential threat to modern western hegemony. But what of Muslims living as minorities in the West? How do they attenuate ideas concerning their ‘belongingness’ and issues relating to the marginality of their faith? This paper examines the paradigms of ‘minority Islam’ from the Prophetic era and considers how contemporary western Muslims might resolve their marginal predicament.

### **Muslim Brotherhood and Democracy in Egypt**

DR. SAID SHEHATA

There are concerns inside Egypt and abroad with regard to the involvement of the Muslim Brotherhood in politics. The fears come from three main actors within the Egyptian context. First is the Egyptian regime where power is most important for the ruling elite. The regime dislikes competition from oppositional actors, especially the Muslim Brotherhood. Second is the Coptic community because the situation of non-Muslims in the discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood is vague and ambiguous. Third are the secular forces, especially the leftists and liberals, who link between religious movements and authoritarian attitudes. To understand the stand of the Muslim Brotherhood on the issue of democracy, one must examine the discourse and practices of the Muslim Brotherhood in student unions,

professional syndicates and parliament. The main issues that should be analysed are the position of women, the position of non-Muslims under an Islamic state, the meaning of the Shariah law, the decision making process inside the structure of the Muslim Brotherhood, the notion of an Islamic *Khilafa* and the authority of the supreme guide and the Guidance Bureau.

### **Towards an Autonomous Muslim Feminist Praxis**

ITRATH SYED

The idea of being at once Muslim and feminist continues to be constructed as an ontological impossibility by all sides. The combination of a hegemonic discourse that racializes Muslims as the irredeemable civilizational other, on the one hand, and the dominant patriarchal readings of Islam within Muslim discourses, on the other, threaten to render obsolete the resistant voices of Muslim women. Added to this mix is a western feminist tradition that has often objectified Muslim women as passive, infantilized and in need of being saved. And yet, Muslim women's feminisms and our activism for social change continue to thrive despite this most inhospitable context. The voices and political envisioning of contemporary Muslim feminists are also at risk of being co-opted into the larger neo-liberal project to remake Muslim societies in the image of the "West" and in ways that are most palatable to the interests of global capital. From Cheryl Bernard's Rand Report to the travelling interventions of Karen Hughes, Muslim women's rights and increased access to the political process have been repeatedly identified as both an objective and a vehicle for the social transformation of Muslim societies. How can Muslim feminists create a distinct and autonomous third space within which to make effective social change towards greater equality and democratic power, and yet not be anchored to the discourses of empire building? This paper will examine these issues and explore the possibilities of negotiating this terrain.

### **Paki Bastards, Book Burners and Reluctant Fundamentalists: Representation, Subjectivation, and the Politics of Doing Muslim Voices**

DR. ABDOOLKARIM VAKIL

During the Grunwick strike of June 1977, police beat up a member of the strike committee while calling him a Paki bastard. A month later, Rasheed Araeen used the term of abuse as the title for a performance piece which

explored the relations between individual, artistic and collective identity in the context of racism, third worldism, and the struggle for Black and Asian visibility and recognition in '70s Britain. In the immediate aftermath of 1989, as he cited, prison warders reportedly read passages of *The Satanic Verses* to a Muslim prisoner, and 'Rushdie' had become a racial taunt in Britain. Tariq Modood explored the formation of 'British Asian Muslim' anger in a series of engaged interventions in the social sciences and policy spheres which both charted and contributed to fashioning a distinct political identity out of Blackness. This year, Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* has emerged on the Man Booker prize shortlist. In the fractured polemics over blasphemy, art and the sacred, which traverse the debates on radicalisation, the death of multiculturalism and the disciplining of moderate Muslims, the fictional hero's monologue of coming of age and consciousness under the impact of 9/11 vies with a number of literary and non-literary auto-biographical, semi-biographical and fictionalised voices and narratives of penitent Islamists, jihadists, moderate Muslims, Muslims and ex-Muslims for public recognition. What articulations can be drawn between these three moments and their contexts? What are their proper contexts? How can or should we be woven into usable (Muslim) pasts and towards what futures? How are the politics of representation and claims to representability traversed by the aesthetic, the representational and representations of the political? By addressing these questions through these and other examples this paper seeks to contribute towards a critical discussion of Muslim subjectivation.