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## **Radical Islam and the Nation: The Relationship between Religion and Nationalism in the Political Thought of Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb**

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines the respective conceptions of nationalism in the political thought of Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb, two of the most important Arab theorists of what is often referred to as “Islamism” or “radical political Islam.” While al-Banna was the chief theoretician of the Muslim Brotherhood, a mainstream, and today relatively peaceful, Islamist organization, Qutb’s writings have been most closely embraced by the movement’s radical and violent offshoots. By undertaking a close textual analysis of their writings, the paper attempts to examine the differences between the two theorists’ ideas concerning the proper relationship between religion and nationalism in the construction of identity and to place these in a wider cultural and intellectual context. The paper also attempts to account for some of the differences in the two theorists’ views concerning nationalism by looking at the respective social, political, and intellectual context in which each thinker operated. Finally, the paper offers a discussion of the possibility that the pan-Islamic ideology of thinkers like Qutb and al-Banna can itself be seen as a form of nationalism.

This paper will compare the conceptions of “nation,” “nationality,” and “nationalism,” put forward by Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb, two of the most influential political theorists of radical political Islam in the Arab world. The ideas of both men have had a profound impact on Egyptian, Arab, and Islamic politics, and continue to impact both Egypt and the entire Muslim world into the present day. The lives of al-Banna and Qutb, as well as their respective views concerning Islam, nationalism, and the relationship between the two, suggest fascinating similarities and asymmetries. In the first place, both thinkers were men of the same generation, in fact born in the same year, 1906. Both came from rural backgrounds, received a secular post-secondary education, and chose careers as schoolteachers. Both met their end at the hands of the Egyptian government: al-Banna was assassinated in 1949 and Qutb was executed in 1966. Finally, today both are seen as the two pre-eminent thinkers and activists of the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>1</sup>

As the oldest and largest Islamist organization in the Arab world, the Muslim Brotherhood is of interest to anyone trying to understand contemporary Islamic politics and the

resurgence of Islamism in the Arab world.<sup>2</sup> The organization had rather humble beginnings — it was founded at Hassan al-Banna's house, with six of his friends as the first members, in 1928. Within a period of twenty years, under al-Banna's direct leadership, the Brotherhood became an international mass movement. In 1948, the Brothers had over two million members in Egypt, at a time when the country's population was only nineteen million.<sup>3</sup> Institutionally independent organizations bearing the same name, and inspired by the Egyptian model, were started in other Arab states, most notably in Syria and Jordan.<sup>4</sup> In a less direct way, the Brotherhood provided a model for many other Islamist organizations in the Arab and Muslim worlds.

The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's fortunes were partly reflected, and in turn shaped by, the lives and works of Sayyid Qutb and Hassan al-Banna. In the 1940s, under al-Banna's leadership, the Brotherhood formed a powerful mass movement calling for the introduction of an "Islamic Order" in the country. It was able to form its own militia, and it engaged in violent anti-government actions. However, following the Free Officers' 1952 coup d'état, the Brotherhood's fortunes waned. Jamal 'Abd al-Nasser, who came to power as the result of the coup, was a secular Pan-Arabist nationalist. He had no desire to introduce an "Islamic Order" in Egypt; nor was he willing to tolerate vocal opposition to his increasingly authoritarian rule. In 1954, the Brotherhood was brutally suppressed by the government and many of its activists imprisoned or murdered. During this period of repression, while imprisoned in a Nasserist jail, Sayyid Qutb wrote his most influential and most radical works.

Since the 1970s, however, Egypt, along the rest of the Arab world, has experienced a revival of Islamist sentiment. At the same time, since the presidency of Anwar al-Sadat, the Brothers have been allowed to operate more openly in Egyptian society. Today, while its political activities are tightly circumscribed, the Brotherhood has been able to influence the government's agenda in the cultural and social arena.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the Brotherhood's call for the introduction of an "Islamic order" is shared by large numbers of Egyptians and other Arabs today,<sup>6</sup> while the Brotherhood itself remains the largest Islamist organization in the Arab world.

The Muslim Brotherhood's fortunes are to some degree reflected in the lives of Sayyid Qutb and Hassan al-Banna. Despite the parallels in their life stories, the two men never met and their most important works were written at different times and in vastly different political and historical circumstances. Hassan al-Banna was a political man, the creator and General Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood. He wielded considerable political influence in Egypt, and was actively involved in pushing the Brotherhood's political and social agenda both through peaceful and violent means.<sup>7</sup> However, al-Banna was also a political theorist. According to Israel Gershoni, "it was al-Banna who gathered together the various ideas and motifs which had been scattered over the writings of the various Pan-Islamic-oriented associations, currents, and individual intellectuals, wove them into a single ideological system, and formed them into well defined doctrinal and operative patterns."<sup>8</sup> Al-Banna's work continues to have relevance today, and not only for the Muslim Brotherhood. Even the pro-government orthodox religious scholars (*ulema*), represented by Egypt's Islamic al-Azhar University, came to accept al-Banna, albeit only after his death, as a member of the *ulema* and a scholar of Islam.<sup>9</sup>

Sayyid Qutb's life evolved quite differently, and his political thought bears witness to this fact. For the vast majority of the time when al-Banna was running the Muslim Brotherhood, Qutb was a quiet member of the nationalist Egyptian Wafd party. Although he became

disillusioned with the party leadership, he continued to be interested in party politics until 1945. His real passion for most of his life, however, was for literature and writing – he was engaged in journalism and literary criticism. He also published three novels and a volume of poetry. In fact, Qutb came to think about Islam in political terms only in his 40s, and joined the Muslim Brotherhood in 1951, two years after al-Banna was assassinated by government agents. When the Brotherhood was brutally crushed by Nasser in 1954, Qutb was sentenced to twenty-five years of hard labour. While serving in jail, he wrote all of his Islamic political writings.

Qutb's incarceration seems to have left an imprint on his political thought, which has achieved notoriety for its rejection of all secular political authority. While al-Banna wrote during a chaotic but relatively free period in Egyptian history, at a time when the meaning of the Egyptian "nation" was vigorously and openly debated, Qutb's thought emerged at a time when Islamic conceptions of political life were being actively combated and their proponents ruthlessly persecuted. Qutb's *Milestones*, which ultimately became a manifesto for even the most extreme Islamist groups, represents a much more radical conception of Islamic politics than does anything in al-Banna's work.<sup>10</sup> While Qutb's teaching had a tremendous impact on the Islamic fundamentalist movement as a whole, many of his most radical ideas were repudiated by moderates among the Muslim Brethren. For example, in 1982, Talmasani, the General Guide of the Brotherhood, wrote that "Sayyid Qutb represented himself alone and not the Muslim Brethren."<sup>11</sup> Qutb's work represents one of the most coherent, and certainly the most influential, articulations of the most radical conceptions of the Islamicist movement.<sup>12</sup>

In this respect, the works of Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb can be seen as the highest intellectual achievements of two separate and distinct periods in the development of Islamist political thought. At the same time, al-Banna's and Qutb's theories also present two alternative approaches to the problem of reconciling national and Islamic identity. Both these approaches are current throughout the Muslim world today. Examination of the two thinkers' respective ideas concerning the proper relationship between nationality and Islam in the shaping of identity will prove instructive for two separate reasons: First, it will allow the trajectory to be traced of the development of Islamist political thought in Egypt, and to draw a possible correlation between the development of religio-political thought and other political and historical developments. Secondly, on a more theoretical level, it will shed light on the possible ways in which religion and nationalism can interact in the "imagining" of identity. It should be immediately added, however, that identity is never static; nor can it be "invented" out of the blue. Both Hassan al-Banna's and Sayyid Qutb's visions of identity were inspired by the normative teaching of Islam (as each thinker understood it), on the one hand, and by the traditions of Egypt, the Arab people, and the Muslim world, on the other.

### **The Challenge of Engaging Islamist Thought**

As I will argue, Islamist political thought can be seen as a part of a larger intellectual response on the part of Muslim thinkers of "the realization of general societal decay as well as the perceived. . . experience of oppression by Western powers" which afflicted the Muslim world for the last two hundred years or so.<sup>13</sup> This intellectual reaction took multiple forms, ranging from the wholesale acceptance to the total rejection of modernity and the West. These will be

discussed later. However, the very notion of Islamist political thought as a reaction against Western thought (and Western political practice) poses unique challenges for Western scholars studying the works of Islamist thinkers and ideologues. Some of these must be addressed before proceeding.<sup>14</sup>

In particular, the notion of Islamist thought as a *reaction* feeds the distinction made by many Western social scientists between rational, modern, Western thought and irrational, tradition-bound, Islamist ideology.<sup>15</sup> It is therefore quite easy for us to dismiss Islamist thinkers as reactionary ideologues, who turn their backs on reason and modernity and, in the words of Bernard Lewis, attribute “all evil to the abandonment of the divine heritage of Islam [and advocate] a return to a real or imagined past.”<sup>16</sup> Many scholars, however, also disagree with Lewis’ view.<sup>17</sup>

The important point for this study is not the extent to which Lewis’ observation is accurate or inaccurate. Rather, the main problem raised by the West’s dismissal of Islamist thought as “irrational” is that it leads Western thinkers to the conviction of some “rational explanation” for the appeal of Islamism.<sup>18</sup> According to Roxanne L. Euben, this rationalist bias in turn leads Western scholars of Islamism to the *a priori* conclusion that its success “is explicable as a mechanical response to structural pressures,” such as the economic, social, and political problems faced by Middle Eastern societies. Therefore, Euben continues, the strength of Islamism in the contemporary Middle East is seen as owing “little to its inherent power as an ethico-political vision of the modern world.” Yet, if our understanding is to transcend the limits set out by our own rationalist paradigm, Islamist thought must be engaged on its own terms or, in other words, as it is understood by the Islamists themselves. Otherwise, we run the risk that the critical lens we use to examine the phenomenon of Islamism will show us little more than a reflection of our own preconceptions.<sup>19</sup>

Within the limited subject matter of this study, I have attempted to render a reading of Qutb and al-Banna’s political thought on the subject of nationalism, which would be in keeping with their own self-understanding. Without neglecting the context in which they were written and from which they emerged, I have attempted to let their respective texts speak for themselves rather than trying to force them into a preconceived theoretical framework. The question of whether Qutb and al-Banna are backward-looking reactionaries hearkening back to a pre-modern golden age, as Lewis suggests, or the purveyors of a “post-modern critique of modernity,”<sup>20</sup> as Euben would have it, can only be answered if their views have been given an impartial hearing. The primary goal of this article is to provide such a hearing for Qutb and al-Banna’s teachings on the subject of nationalism. It is up to the reader to judge whether this goal was achieved.

### **Islam and “The Nation” in Egyptian Political Thought Before the Muslim Brotherhood**

An instructive place to begin this inquiry is with a brief examination of the intellectual and historical background from which Qutb and al-Banna emerged, and which they challenged. One point of agreement among various scholars of nationalism is that as an ideology and a movement, nationalism is a distinctly modern phenomenon.<sup>21</sup> Pre-modern societies “imagined” the question of identity in diverse ways. In the Muslim Middle East, the primary, though

certainly not the only, source of politically salient identity was religious in content. According to Charles Wendell who undertook a detailed analysis of the Qur'anic usage of the Arabic word *umma*, which can be translated as "nation," the term was applied in the Qu'ran primarily to religious communities. Wendell writes: "The final stage of the semantic evolution [of the word *umma* in the Qu'ran] is reached when all human societies. . . are regarded solely in their aspect of communities united in religious belief and practice, this being now the basic cement, the *sine qua non* of corporate social existence."<sup>22</sup> In the works of medieval philosophers like Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Khaldun, the expansive conception of the righteous Islamic *umma* is often contrasted with more narrow communities of sentiment. The latter are described as being based on "mere" ties of blood or language, and are designated with the term *'asabiyya*.<sup>23</sup>

This vision of the *umma* persisted in much of Muslim and Arab thought well into the eighteenth century when it was challenged by "modern" ideologies, among them the conceptions of nationality and nationalism. These ideas, emanating from Europe, were painfully brought into the sphere of Muslim interest as a result of an ever-more apparent political and military weakness of the Islamic world *vis-à-vis* the new, dynamic, European nation-states. It may be an exaggeration to say that most of the Muslim world's political theory in the following years was simply a response to European "modernity." Moreover, many scholars warn against taking concepts such as "tradition" and "modernity" at face value or as "rigid and mutually exclusive categories of thought."<sup>24</sup> While this paper cannot hope to evaluate the theoretical merits of these conceptual categories, clearly the vast majority of nineteenth and twentieth centuries' Muslim and Islamist thinkers *themselves* perceived the West, and its novel form of social organization, as a "political, religious, and intellectual problematic and threat."<sup>25</sup> Whatever the ultimate judgement on the validity of conceptual categories such as "modernity" or "Europe," and of the historiographic traditions associated with them, consideration of much of Muslim political thought over the past two hundred years must acknowledge the challenge that European ideologies based on class and nation presented to traditional Muslim conceptions of the *umma*.

The re-envisioning of community and identity that took place in the Middle East in the last two hundred years comprises a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, a full account of which is beyond the purview of this study. However, a number of key intellectual developments can be identified that were of crucial importance for the subsequent thought of both al-Banna and Qutb. The first serious and comprehensive response to European conceptions of nationalism from an Islamic perspective was propounded by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani. The challenge before al-Afghani, as he understood it, was to incorporate the politically and socially useful aspects of European civilisation into the Islamic *umma* without sacrificing the essential religious, moral, and cultural identity of the latter. Despite the fact that al-Afghani was a devout Muslim, however, his project involved a certain redefinition of the traditional Islamic identity. Thus, for al-Afghani, "the centre of attention is no longer Islam as a religion, it is rather Islam as a civilization. The norm of human action is no longer the service of God; it is the creation of a human civilization flourishing in all its parts."<sup>26</sup>

By this subtle shift of emphasis, al-Afghani's thought opened a new debate in the Muslim world. Once the focus was shifted from the spiritual aspects of the Islamic community to its political and cultural success in comparison with other "civilizations," the doors became

open to a wholly secular interpretation of the history of the Islamic world and of its constituent parts. This process became even more pronounced after the abolishment of the Caliphate, in 1924, by Kemal Ataturk. In their capacity as Caliphs, the Ottoman Sultans acted (at least in theory) as the spiritual sovereigns over the entire Sunni Muslim *umma*. Whatever the institution's shortcomings under the Ottoman dynasty, the existence of the Caliphate provided many Muslims with a sense of identity. Its destruction, according to Anthony Black, forced many former "Ottomans," and particularly the Arabs, to re-envision their identities and conceptions of political community.<sup>27</sup>

This re-envisioning, which began even before the fall of the Caliphate, took many forms. While thinkers such as Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida followed in the footsteps of al-Afghani's "Islamic reformism,"<sup>28</sup> others came to imagine the respective communities in which they lived along alternate, novel, lines. Making this situation particularly complex was that most Middle Eastern societies presented numerous "building-blocks" – Islamic culture and religion, Arab culture and language, local (i.e. Egyptian, Syrian, etc.) cultures and traditions – that could all be utilized for the purposes of creating new identities. Thus, the 1920s and 1930s experienced a lively intellectual debate concerning the nature and identity of the Egyptian polity. Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski identify four major intellectual trends which competed for the loyalties of the Egyptian people in the 1930s. First, territorial nationalism sought to build a new community on the basis of civic notions of nationhood. Second, integral nationalism espoused ethnic criteria of "nationality" and the creation of a "Greater Egypt." Third, Arab nationalism stressed the Egyptians' identities as Arabs. Finally, Islamic nationalism sought to reconcile Egyptian identity with the cosmopolitan Islamic teachings on the nature of the trans-national Muslim *umma*.<sup>29</sup>

Al-Banna was a proponent of the last option and, at least to some extent, a follower of the line set out by al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Rashid Rida.<sup>30</sup> His writings, however, were only one alternative in an ongoing debate in which the meaning of the Egyptian polity was actively questioned and negotiated in a relatively open manner. Al-Banna's teaching constitutes, at least to a certain degree, not only an answer to the alternative visions of the political community held out by his opponents but also an invitation for young Egyptians, who may have come from other "nationalist" camps, to explore the Islamic alternative to ethnic or civic conceptions of nationalism.

### **Nationalism in the Thought of Hassan al-Banna**

Hassan al-Banna never wrote a comprehensive theoretical treatise which would explain his views in a logical and coherent matter. We are forced to reconstruct his vision from letters, and most importantly, from programmatic pamphlets, in which he expounds his mission of the Muslim brotherhood. This study will analyse three sources: two pamphlets published in *Jaridat al-Ikhrwan al-Muslimin*, the Muslim Brotherhood's official organ, in the 1930s, which are of particular significance for understanding al-Banna's views on nationalism; and a letter written in 1948 to King Faruq, which touches on the same subject from a slightly different perspective.<sup>31</sup> When reading al-Banna, one must consider that his works served not only as theoretical expositions of his views, but also as political manifestos intended for his followers and also for

potential followers and political allies, and even censors. The contradictions which abound in al-Banna's work are not necessarily the result of his carelessness or incompetence – often they result from his shrewd strategy to deliver a different message to different audiences. Nevertheless, deciphering al-Banna's actual views from amid the contradictions is not always an easy task.

Perhaps the best place to begin an exposition of al-Banna's views is with his analysis of the history of the Arabs, Muslims, and Egyptians, presented in "Between Yesterday and Today." Al-Banna's history ignores the pre-Islamic Arab and Egyptian past altogether, and begins with a glorious description of the first Islamic Caliphate – described in a manner reminiscent of so many secular nationalist mythologies, which inevitably hearken back to some bygone "golden age." This golden age, however, is not Arab but Muslim – al-Banna always speaks of the "Islamic state" and the "Islamic *umma*."<sup>32</sup>

Even more important for understanding the categories in which al-Banna thinks about identity is his analysis of European history. Until the Reformation, Europe is understood as one *umma*, acting with a single will, parallel to her Islamic enemy: "But Europe which had come into contact with the superior culture of Islam in the West through Spain, and the east through the Crusades, lost no opportunity and did not fail to profit by these lessons. She began to unite under the banner of the Franks in the land of Gaul. . ." While al-Banna acknowledges that ethnic divisions were significant for understanding the political actions of "Europe," he does not, in contrast to nationalist historians, see European history in national terms; it is only the Reformation which results in the "creation of a number of nationalities" in Europe.<sup>33</sup>

The question of nationality and nationalism raises its head in the Islamic *umma* only as a result of European involvement and, specifically, as a reaction to European colonialism. However, the national awakening of the Islamic nations constitutes merely a transitory period in al-Banna's teleological view of history. This awakening of nationalism among the Muslim peoples is the result of the destruction of the Islamic *umma* by the Europeans. However, national sentiments among Muslims will eventually subside when the Islamic Caliphate is re-established:

Although [European colonisation of the Muslim world] led to the development of local nationalism, with each nation demanding its right to freedom as an independent entity, and while many of those who worked for this revival purposely ignored the idea of unity, nevertheless the outcome of these steps will be, without a doubt, consolidation and resurrection of the Islamic empire as a unified state embracing the scattered peoples of the Islamic world and bearing its message. There is no nation in the world held together by same kind of linguistic unity, joint participation in material and spiritual interests, and similarity of suffering and hope that hold the Muslims together.<sup>34</sup>

Nationalism plays a secondary role in al-Banna's view of history. In Europe, nationalism resulted from the processes of secularization that were unleashed by the Reformation, and which ultimately destroyed the Christian *umma*. European nationalism is depicted as a pernicious phenomenon, and the "national selfishness" it caused parallels the "individual

selfishness," which according to al-Banna permeates Western culture.<sup>35</sup> However, al-Banna takes a milder view of national sentiments among Muslims. Nationalism seems to be an understandable response to Western oppression of Muslims and, more importantly, in the grand scheme of history it appears to play a positive role – it constitutes a stepping stone to the political unification of all Muslim lands.

The narrative of Arab peoples receives a privileged position within al-Banna's presentation of the history of Islam. For example, one of the causes al-Banna provides for the slow degeneration of the original Caliphate is the "transfer of political authority to non-Arabs – i.e., Persians at one time, Daylamites at another, Mamluks, Turks, and others – who had never absorbed genuine Islam." Furthermore, he takes pains to point out that the Islamic conquest was synonymous with the conquest of Arab culture. In his narrative, Egypt also receives a place of special importance among the medieval Muslim states as the saviour of Islam from the Crusaders and the Mongols.<sup>36</sup>

This special position accorded to the Arabs, who appear as more pious than the Turks, Persians, or Mamluks, may seem incongruous with al-Banna's longing for the unity of all Muslims. Some sense can be made of this, however, in two separate ways. In the first place, it can be argued that the Arabs were superior to the other nations merely because their faith was purer. Thus, the elevated status of the Arabs in the Islamic *umma* has little to do with natural superiority but is merely the result of their superior devotion to Islam.

Another possibility for al-Banna's decision to privilege the Arabs in his narrative is uncovered in an analysis of al-Banna's more systematic exposition of nationalism, which he presents in *Our Mission*. Of note, however, is that *Our Mission* is not simply a work of theory, but is also a political document. Aside from preaching to his Brothers, al-Banna also attempts to dispel the "mistaken notion," held by many Egyptian politicians, that the Brotherhood's vision of political Islam "splits the unity of the nation and weakens the solidarity of [its] youth." To this end, he points out that the Brotherhood shares the nationalists' goals of liberating "the land" from European colonisation, and of "reinforcing the bonds which unite the individuals within a given country." He argues that "the love of [one's land] and attachment to it is something anchored in the very nature of the soul, for one thing; and for another, it is prescribed by Islam."<sup>37</sup> Indeed, at certain points in his writing, al-Banna could easily be mistaken for a pan-Arab nationalist:

We are not denying that the various nations have their own distinct qualities and particular moral characters, for we know that every people has its own share of excellence and moral fibre, and we know too that in this respect the various peoples differ from one another and vie with one another in excellence. We believe that in these respects the Arabs possess the fullest and most abundant share. . .<sup>38</sup>

This passage, however, seems to directly contradict al-Banna's earlier quotation of a *hadith* of the prophet Muhammad: "God has removed from you the arrogance of paganism and the vaunting of your ancestry. The Arab has no superiority over the non-Arab except by the virtue of his piety."<sup>39</sup> How are we to account for this apparent contradiction? Again, two

answers are possible. First, al-Banna may very well believe that a certain pride in Arab culture and history, especially given the close historical connection between Arab culture and Islam, can be tolerated, but *only as long as* it does not endanger a Muslim's loyalty to the Islamic *umma*. More importantly, however, it appears that al-Banna is writing for two diverse audiences at the same time. On the one hand, he seeks to impart a message that, for a Muslim, the most important source of identity should be religion, and the most important source of pride should be piety. On the other hand, he is attempting to make his teaching as accessible as possible to potential nationalist converts and political allies, with whom the Brothers share a common agenda: liberating the Muslim world from European domination.

Al-Banna's political thought on the subject of nationalism is characterized by a great degree of tactical flexibility. In his open letter to King Faruq and to other Muslim leaders, written in 1948, he is willing to make the argument that "Islam is guaranteed to supply the renescent nation with its needs."<sup>40</sup> Hence, al-Banna appears to be endorsing Islam on the grounds that it will make the nation stronger. In reality, however, his political vision reverses this relationship. National liberation is only a tactical goal, a stepping stone in the journey towards the creation of a universal Islamic state:

[National liberation] would represent to the Muslim Brotherhood merely a part of the way, or simply a single stage of it. For after that, it still remains for them to strive to raise the standard of the Islamic Fatherland on high over all the regions of the earth, and to unfurl the banner of the Quran everywhere.<sup>41</sup>

While any nationalism that posits that the national community as a *goal in itself* is a European import, contrary to the teachings of Islam and destructive of the Islamic *umma*,<sup>42</sup> al-Banna is willing to tone down this rhetoric when speaking to particular audiences. Al-Banna's willingness to countenance some nationalist arguments is a tribute to his political realism. His ultimate goal – the establishment of a universal Islamic state – remains in the far-off future.

Al-Banna seems to be of the opinion that the Islamic state will come into being piecemeal. In all likelihood, its foundations will be laid by the Muslim Brothers in the "Nile valley." It will gradually spread to "the Arab domain," and only in the end will it come to pass "in every land which God has made fortunate through the Islamic creed."<sup>43</sup> At least for the moment, al-Banna apparently accepts the fact that many Muslim Brothers will share their allegiance to Islam with both an Egyptian and an Arab identity. The relationship between these identities, however, should be anything but symmetrical, as al-Banna explained at the 1938 Congress of the Muslim Brotherhood: "The Muslim Brothers honour their particular nationalism, considering it as their prime basis for the desired revival. . . Furthermore, they uphold Arab unity, considering it the second circle of revival. Then they work for Islamic unity, viewing it as the complete extent of the Islamic homeland."<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, almost the same argument was made about a quarter century later by Nasser. However, for Nasser, the importance of al-Banna's concentric circles of identity was reversed:

In *The Philosophy of Revolution*, Nasser invited the reader to look closely at the map of the world and consider the three spheres of Egyptian destiny. These

spheres which he circled he identified as follows: first and foremost was the “Arab circle,” the life of history of whose peoples are “intermingled with ours”; second was the “circle of the continent of Africa,” [ . . . ]; and third, the “Islamic circle,” a monotheistic religion, a civilization, and a heritage which bind Egyptian Muslims to all the Muslims of the world.<sup>45</sup>

For all the disagreements between al-Banna and secular nationalists, they at least operated within the same conceptual framework and acknowledged the divided and malleable nature of most Egyptians’ identities.

In summary, undoubtedly for al-Banna, the primary political allegiance of a good Muslim should be to Islam, rather than to any tribal, ethnic, or civic notions of “nationality.” The existence of non-Islamic forms of identity among Muslims is accepted, but al-Banna treats these identities tactically and instrumentally. By helping to raise the self-awareness of the Muslim peoples, they will act as steppingstones to the ultimate goal of an Islamic state. They must never, however, be allowed to become ends in themselves. Given the political and state-forming character of al-Banna’s vision of Islam, can we agree with Gershoni that al-Banna is a Muslim or pan-Islamic *nationalist*? The question is important, in that it raises the problem of defining nationalism and points towards a certain Eurocentric bias implicit in most definitions. We will return to this question, after the relation between nationalism and Islam in Sayyid Qutb’s work is examined.

### Nationalism in Sayyid Qutb’s Milestones

Sayyid Qutb’s work is of a very different character than al-Banna’s, as indeed is the political and historical context in which it was written. In the dying years of King Faruq’s regime, after al-Banna’s assassination in 1949, two forces seemed poised to seize control of Egypt: a clandestine group of secular nationalist army officers known as the Free Officers, who eventually toppled the dying regime, and the Muslim Brotherhood. Despite some initial co-operation, the ideological differences between the two parties proved too great. While the Free Officers were willing to use Islamic rhetoric when it suited their needs, they had little appetite for introducing *shari’ah* law or an “Islamic order.”

The Brotherhood’s vision of the Egyptian polity was incompatible with the Nasserists, and not surprisingly, after some complicated political manoeuvring and a failed attempt on Nasser’s life carried out by a Muslim Brother, the Brotherhood was violently suppressed.<sup>46</sup> Its leaders were jailed, often under extremely harsh conditions. Thus, the last years of Qutb’s life, from 1954 to 1964 were spent in Nasserist jails and concentration camps. He was briefly released in 1964, only to be re-arrested and executed in 1966. During his years in prison, he was “atrociously tortured,” and as a result of his illness, which allowed him to serve his time in the prison infirmary, he was able to write at all.<sup>47</sup> Under these conditions, he wrote the *Milestones*, his last, most radical, and probably most influential work.<sup>48</sup> This fact at least partially explains the extraordinary transition, from the mild poet and novelist to the fiery radical preacher, which Qutb underwent in the last years of his life.

Unlike al-Banna's writings, the *Milestones* is written with an almost relentless clarity, which constitutes part of the book's appeal and, even in the English translation, gives it an almost prophetic air. Unlike al-Banna, Qutb had no doubts about his intended audience; in his opinion, Nasser's persecution of the Brothers created a clear and unbridgeable divide between nationalists and "real" Muslims. Furthermore, he was unequivocal as to the role Islam should play in human political and social life:

Islam cannot fulfill its role except by taking a concrete form in a society, or more precisely, in a nation. . . From this point of view we can say that the Muslim community [*umma*] has been extinct for a few centuries, for this Muslim community does not denote the name of a land in which Islam resides, nor is it a people whose fathers lived under an Islamic system at some earlier time. [The Muslim *umma*] is the name of a group of people whose manners, ideas and concepts, rules and regulations, values and criteria, are all derived from the Islamic source. . . <sup>49</sup>

Qutb contrasts the Muslim *umma*, understood not simply as a spiritual community but as a "nation" or political community aspiring for its own state, with the non-Muslim world of *jahiliyya*. This term, literally translated as ignorance, is used by most Muslims "to designate the pre-Islamic society of the Arabian peninsula." *Jahiliyya* was often used in Muslim historiography to describe non-Muslim societies, much in the same way in which "barbarism" was used in the Western tradition to describe non-Western peoples.<sup>50</sup> Qutb, however, defines *jahiliyya* in contemporary and highly political terms:

If we look at the sources and foundation of the modern modes of living, it becomes clear that the whole world is steeped in *jahiliyya*. . . This *jahiliyya* is based on rebellion against the sovereignty of [God] on earth. It attempts to transfer to man one of the greatest attributes of [God], namely sovereignty, by making some men lord over others.<sup>51</sup>

This formulation is truly radical and unprecedented in that it places all regimes that are not governed directly by what "God has prescribed" in the realm of the *jahiliyya*, and thus beyond the pale of Islam.<sup>52</sup> Considering Qutb's definition of the true Muslim *umma*, this includes virtually all the regimes of the Muslim world. Qutb's definition places any state that claims to draw its legitimacy from representing the interests of the *nation* constituting it, firmly in the camp of the un-Islamic forces of *jahiliyya*. Where al-Banna at least to some extent privileges the story of the Arabs within his overall narrative of Islamic history, Qutb goes out of his way to emphasize the universal and non-Arab qualities of early Islamic civilization. "The marvelous [Islamic] civilization was not an Arabic civilization," he writes, "not even for a single day; it was never a nationality but always a community of belief."<sup>53</sup> The question of nationality was not only immaterial to the Islamic conquest, it was in fact antithetical to it: "[T]he purpose [the Islamic conquest] was not to free the earth from Roman and Persian tyranny in order to replace it with Arab tyranny."<sup>54</sup>

In Qutb's vision of the world, and not only of the Muslim world, the question of nationality plays a relatively minor role. The primary political division among human beings is between the Islamic *umma* and the world of anti-Islamic *jahiliyya* or, in terms Qutb borrows from the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence, between the domain of Islam (*Dar al-Islam*) and the domain of war (*Dar al-Harb*).<sup>55</sup> From Qutb's perspective, these divisions constitute the only legitimate political distinctions that the Muslims can draw: "a Muslim has no nationality except his belief, which makes him a member of the Muslim community in *dar-al-Islam*."<sup>56</sup> Clearly, Qutb's thought has no place for the "concentric circles" of identity which both al-Banna and Nasser refer to in their respective discussions of nationality. For Qutb, a "firmly established" Muslim identity will necessarily cause the "disappearance" of all other forms of social identification.<sup>57</sup> For a true Muslim, the issue of "national" identity will simply cease to exist. Qutb does not appear to see this process as a struggle, but merely as a natural development along the path of faith. Qutb's vision of the Islamic *umma* allows for no shades of grey and not even the faintest local attachments which could get in the way of a Muslim's Islamic identity:

A Muslim's fatherland is where the Islamic faith, the Islamic way of life, and the *Shari'ah* of [God] are dominant. Only this meaning of the "fatherland" is worthy of human beings. Similarly, "nationality" [*umma*] means belief and a way of life, and only this concept is worthy of man's dignity. Groupings according to family and tribe and nation, or race and color and country, [belong to the *jahiliyya*].<sup>58</sup>

Finally, Qutb rejects even instrumental or tactical acceptance of nationalism which accounts to at least some extent for al-Banna's occasional indulgence in nationalist rhetoric. Qutb finds such tactics unacceptable. Islamic ends call for Islamic means — using *jahili* methods to secure an Islamic end will inevitably corrupt that end.<sup>59</sup> Since nationalism is the creation of *jahiliyya*, it cannot be used in the cause of the Islamic *umma*. Indeed, Qutb theorizes that the Prophet Muhammad himself could have mobilized the tribes of Arabia by "kindling among his compatriots the fire of Arab nationalism," and then using his authority to impose upon them belief in Islam. This path, according to Qutb, could have sped up the spread of Islam and been very effective in overcoming the opposition of the political leaders of Mecca to the new religion. According to Qutb, however, the "all-knowing and all-wise Allah did not lead his prophet. . . on this course" because, once unleashed, the sovereignty of the nation would have been a challenge to the sovereignty of God.<sup>60</sup>

In the end, Qutb's opposition to nationalism, in any shape or form, is implacable. All forms of identity not rooted directly in Islam belong to *jahiliyya* and the world of war, as do all forms of political authority that do not emanate directly from God. Since "Islam has both the obligation and the right to release mankind from servitude to human beings so that they may serve [God] alone," nationalism, as an ideology which gives political legitimacy to the "nation," emerges as an irreconcilable enemy of every Muslim, both conceptually and in practice.<sup>61</sup>

### Al-Banna and Qutb: Similarities and Contrasts

Al-Banna's and Qutb's views on nationalism converge on one crucial point. Both thinkers ultimately reject both Arabism and territorial Egyptian nationalism in the name of a greater pan-Islamic political community or *umma*. This similarity, however, can easily cloud the differences between their respective approaches to nationalism which, while they may be of secondary importance from a theoretical point of view, are of tremendous practical significance. Al-Banna's teaching evinces a great amount of political pragmatism and flexibility. While al-Banna ultimately stresses the Islamic component of a Muslim's identity, he appears to be going out of his way to accommodate Muslims who may hold national sentiments, and to reach out to potential fence-sitters. Moreover, like Nasser, he at least acknowledges that the question of identity in Egypt is a complex and multifaceted one. On the other hand, Qutb appears to be going out of his way to burn any possible bridges that may exist between "real" Muslims and secular nationalists. In direct contrast with al-Banna, Qutb explicitly rejects nationalism even as a tool that could be used instrumentally in the Brotherhood's quest for the establishment of an Islamic state.

The thought of either thinker cannot be explained solely in terms of its political context, but examining how the two may have been influenced by their respective conditions is instructive. Al-Banna's openness to co-operating with nationalism and with nationalists seems to reflect, at least in part, the fact that as leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, he was able to make his voice heard in the marketplace of ideas, and to exercise both direct and indirect influence on particular policies of the Egyptian government.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, al-Banna could see himself as sharing, at least in the short term, many of the nationalists' goals, such as ridding Egypt of foreign influence or improving the economic and social situation of the Egyptian people.

Qutb's experience with nationalism could not have been more different. His experience with Nasser's secularist-nationalist regime was limited largely to visiting its prisons and concentration camps.<sup>63</sup> Thus, in the eyes of Qutb, as well as many other Muslim Brethren, nationalism became a truly implacable enemy of Islam. It put an end to the Brotherhood's preaching, and indeed its very existence, and provoked the jailing or executing of most of its leadership. Al-Banna simply never experienced this reality of nationalist policies. Whereas al-Banna was able to accommodate many nationalist sentiments in his teachings, Qutb *de facto* declared war on nationalism, both as an ideology and as it was embodied by the Egyptian government of his day.

Thus, while the primary difference between Qutb and al-Banna concerns not so much the ends as the means, the importance of this difference cannot be overemphasised. Whereas al-Banna is universally recognised as an Islamic scholar both by the Brotherhood and by the official religious establishment, Qutb's ideas are viewed with a mixture of admiration and revulsion by many Muslim Brethren, and denigrated as Kharijism by the al-Azhar *ulema*.<sup>64</sup> Perhaps even more important, however, is the impact of their respective ideologies on their followers. Al-Banna's views have helped in keeping the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood on a relatively peaceful course. Conversely, Qutb's uncompromising de-legitimation of all "man made" political communities, prompted in part by the state's violent attack on the Brotherhood and its teachings, has led many radical Muslim fundamentalists to embrace violent struggle

against the Egyptian polity. Al-Banna and Qutb both agreed that the fundamental goal of “true” Islam is the establishment of a universal Islamic state. However, al-Banna was willing to cooperate with nationalists to achieve this goal, and to allow Muslims to nurture a certain limited attachment to their local and Arab roots. Conversely, Qutb rejected both nationalist sentiment as such, and tactical co-operation with the nationalists, as being subversive of the Muslim *umma*.

### **Conclusion: “The Nation,” Islam, and Identity in the Arab Middle East**

When comparing the political thought of al-Banna and Qutb, the question is raised of whether their pan-Islamic ideologies can themselves be classified as a form of nationalism. No universal agreement exists among scholars on this subject; new theories and broad definitions of nationalism proliferate, some of which differentiate between numerous variations and ideological subtypes. For our purposes, nationalism at its core is a form of shared identity, intersubjectively perceived by the members of a particular human community. What distinguishes “national” identity, however, from other politically salient communal identities? Human communities vary from one another in religion, ethnicity, culture, and language, but these differences do not always, or even usually, result in the development of what can be called nations. National identity cannot be simply reduced to any one of these factors or some specific combination of them. Perhaps Max Weber’s classic definition is most useful here. “A nation,” Weber writes, “is a community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own; hence a nation is a community which normally tends to produce a state of its own.”<sup>65</sup> According to Weber’s definition, we can call any human community a nation if the demand for statehood becomes a feature of its communal identity — demand rather than “objective” factors such as language and ethnicity lies at the core of nationalism.

Many theorists of nationalism conditioned by the European or Western experience, however, may argue that the only kind of community that will “tend to produce a state of its own” is a community based on “ethnic” criteria, such as shared language, “race,” or myths about common ancestry. European history provides very few examples of state-seeking communities defining themselves along lines different from what can be broadly described as “the ethnic.” As a result, many scholars neglect the possibility of a nationalism based on non-ethnic criteria altogether. For example, Elie Kedourie, a historian of nationalism in the Middle East, accepts Weber’s definition, but concludes that nationalism serves to fill a human need for belonging to a “stable community,” which is “normally [in other words, in pre-modern or pre-nationalist conditions] satisfied by the family, the neighbourhood, [or] the religious community.”<sup>66</sup> Similarly, Benedict Anderson, perhaps the most widely cited contemporary theorist of nationalism, identifies the “decline of older forms of broader community,” such as “universal religion,” as one of the most important factors behind the rise of nationalism.<sup>67</sup> Both thinkers assume that the nation, understood in terms of ethnicity, will necessarily supplant any “pre-nationalist” forms of identity, such as those based on religion.

Yet, the Islamic *umma*, as imagined by Qutb, al-Banna, and their followers, illustrates the point that religion, just like ethnicity, can motivate a political community to strive towards a state of its own. If Weber’s definition is followed, both Qutb’s and al-Banna’s visions of the

Islamic community clearly constitute a form of nationalism. Both thinkers believe that, ultimately, history will witness the rebirth of a universal Islamic state and a supra-ethnic Muslim nation. Ethnicity, therefore, is not the only building block which can be used in the construction of a “national community.”

Is this oversimplifying the matter, however? One other potentially significant difference exists between nationalism as understood in the ethnic sense and the conception of the Islamic *umma* as articulated by al-Banna and Qutb. An integral part of our understanding of nationalism, which Weber’s definition does not address, is the fact that nationalism tends to see the freedom and greatness of the national community as a goal in itself. At least theoretically, this is not the case with the Islamic *umma*, which explicitly points beyond itself, and sees itself merely as a vehicle for facilitating man’s relationship with God. Yet, as Albert Hourani conclusively demonstrated in the case of al-Afghani’s political thought, a subtle tendency in the thought of many modernist Islamic thinkers is to view Islam as a “civilization” and not merely as the worship of God.<sup>68</sup> This view of Islam is certainly evident in the writings of both al-Banna and Qutb, but evaluating precisely to what extent their focus on the political aspects of the Islamic *umma* undermines its spiritual character, which presumably characterized the “pre-modern” understanding of Islam, is difficult. A detailed comparison of Qutb and al-Banna thought with exponents of “pre-modern” Islamic political philosophy is clearly in order.

The thought of Qutb and al-Banna is not *simply* the projection of nationalist sentiments from the secular nation onto the spiritual community. A clear difference can be seen between the “secular religion” of nationalism, which points to nothing beyond itself, and radical political Islam which, despite its political demands, offers a teaching that is fundamentally trans-political. Al-Banna’s and Qutb’s conception of the Islamic *umma*, however, also unquestionably shares similarities with many nationalists’ visions of the nation. Both nationalism and political Islam, as articulated by Qutb and al-Banna, point towards a teleological view of history, with a privileged political community firmly placed at the centre of the world’s historical stage.

Whatever its theoretical or theological justification for the Muslim fundamentalist, the *de facto* manifestation of radical political Islam in world politics is very similar to that of nationalism. For this reason, the question of whether Qutb’s and al-Banna’s ideas can be said to constitute an “Islamic nationalism” is largely semantic. Similar to self-declared nationalists from Mazzini to Nasser, Qutb and al-Banna were actively engaged in the process of “imagining” a community which, whatever its other characteristics, had a crucial political dimension. They were trying to imbue their followers with a new sense of politically salient collective identity. A careful analysis of Qutb’s and al-Banna’s respective works begs for a re-examination of the assumptions, rooted in the specific historical experience of nineteenth-century Europe, which underpin particular understandings of nationalism and national identities. Qutb’s and al-Banna’s teachings constitute a direct challenge to ethnic and territorial conceptions of nationalism in Egypt, and in the Arab and the Islamic worlds.

## Notes

1. Of note, however, is that many moderate Muslim Brothers have made an active attempt to distance themselves from some aspects of Qutb’s work.

2. An Islamist movement can be defined as one which posits Islam as “a total way of life and [wishes] to organize the whole of society by the Islamic Shari’ah [Law].” William E. Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1996), xii.
3. Christina Phelps Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt: The Role of the Muslim Brotherhood* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1964), 159. This paper cannot hope to provide a comprehensive history of the Muslim Brotherhood. For an in-depth historical study, see Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of Muslim Brothers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). See also Lia Brynjar, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement, 1928-1942* (Reading, England: Ithaca Press, 1998).
4. In Jordan, the Muslim Brothers contest elections and form an important part of the country’s pseudo-democratic political landscape. In Syria, the movement mounted an unsuccessful armed bid for power in the 1980s. The government was able to suppress the uprising at a terrible cost: in the infamous 1982 massacre of Hama, the Syrian army put down the Islamist rebellion by killing as many as 30,000 Muslim Brothers, sympathizers, and bystanders. Today, the Muslim Brotherhood is illegal in Syria, but it is widely believed to enjoy widespread popular support. The Palestinian terrorist organization Hamas also began its life as an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood.
5. Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, xii.
6. According to a poll conducted by the Cairo daily *Al-Ahram* in Egypt and other Arab states, 52.3% of respondents favored the application of an unreformed *shari’a* law, a *condition sine qua non* of the Muslim Brotherhood’s “Islamic Order,” in their respective countries. Elie Kedourie, *Democracy and Arab Political Culture*. (Washington: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1992), 1.
7. Phelps Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt*, 182.
8. Israel Gershoni, “The Emergence of Pan-Arab Nationalism in Egypt: Pan-Islamism and Pan-Arabism in the 1930s,” *Asian and African Studies*, 16 (1982): 59-94.
9. Gilles Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh: Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, (Norfolk: Thetford Press Ltd., 1985), 58.
10. Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, 37.
11. Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, 63.
12. Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, 36.
13. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John Esposito, *The Contemporary Islamic Revival: A Critical Survey and Bibliography* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 3-4.
14. The best known criticism of the whole discipline of Middle Eastern Studies, or at least of the way it has been traditionally practiced, is made by the late Edward Said. Said essentially accused Western scholars of the Middle East of hiding their notions of Western superiority, and even specific imperialist political agendas, under the guise of academic objectivity. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 333. What I am referring to in this case, however, is a more subtle challenge facing contemporary scholars of the Middle East.
15. Roxanne L. Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism: A Work of Comparative Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 154. Furthermore, this kind of stance is characteristic of the manner in which *all* religious thought, not only Islamism, is perceived by Western social science. Robert Wuthnow, “Understanding Religion and Politics,” *Daedalus* 120, 3 (1991): 1-18.
16. Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press), 159.
17. For example, John Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 54. See also, Euben, *Enemy in The Mirror*, 155.
18. Ahmad S. Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Ideological and Political Discourse of Sayyid Qutb* (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1977), 11.
19. Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror*, 154-155.

20. Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror*, 163.
21. Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (London: Routledge, 1998), 96.
22. Charles Wendell, *The Evolution of the Egyptian National Image: From Its Origins to Ahmad Lufti al-Sayyid* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 27.
23. Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 20-25.
24. Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi', *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 4.
25. Abu-Rabi', *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World*, 37.
26. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 114.
27. Anthony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), 311.
28. John Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, 61.
29. Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, "Print Culture, Social Change, and the Process of Redefining Imagined Communities in Egypt," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 31, 1 (1999): 81-93.
30. Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, 131.
31. Hassan Al-Banna, "Between Yesterday and Today" in *The Five Tracts of Hassan al-Banna*, ed. Charles Wendell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 13-39. See also in *The Five Tracts*, "Our Mission," 40-68, and "Toward the Light," 103-132.
32. Al-Banna, "Between Yesterday and Today," 20.
33. Al-Banna, "Between Yesterday and Today," 21.
34. Al-Banna, "Between Yesterday and Today," 24.
35. Al-Banna, "Between Yesterday and Today," 26.
36. Al-Banna, "Between Yesterday and Today," 18-21.
37. Al-Banna, "Our Mission," 48.
38. Al-Banna, "Our Mission," 55.
39. Al-Banna, "Our Mission," 54.
40. Al-Banna, "Toward the Light," 107.
41. Al-Banna, "Our Mission," 52.
42. Al-Banna, "Our Mission," 52-54.
43. Al-Banna, "Between Yesterday and Today," 36.
44. Gershoni, "The Emergence of Pan-Arab Nationalism in Egypt," 95.
45. Phelps Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt*, 12.
46. Gabriel R. Warburg, "Islam and Politics in Egypt: 1952-1980," *Middle Eastern Studies* 18, 2 (1982): 131-157.
47. Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, 38-43.
48. Sheperd, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*, i.
49. Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publication, 1990), 6.
50. Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, 44.
51. Qutb, *Milestones*, 8.
52. Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, 51.
53. Qutb, *Milestones*, 41.
54. Qutb, *Milestones*, 22.
55. Majid Khadduri, *The Islamic Conception of Justice* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984), 161-173.
56. Qutb, *Milestones*, 103.
57. Qutb, *Milestones*, 101.
58. Qutb, *Milestones*, 109.
59. Qutb, *Milestones*, 34.

60. Qutb, *Milestones*, 21-22.
61. Qutb, *Milestones*, 61.
62. Phelps Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt*, 182.
63. Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, 54.
64. Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, 59-67.
65. As quoted in Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, 14.
66. Elie Kedourie, "Nationalism and Self-Determination" in John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith, eds., *Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 55.
67. James Jankowski and Gershoni, Israel, eds., *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), xi.
68. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 114.

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37. P. Brykczynski, 'Radical Islam and the Nation: The Relationship Between Religion and Nationalism in the Political Thought of Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb', *History of Intellectual Culture*, 2005, 5, 1, 1-19. 38. Z. Munson, 'Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood', *The Sociological Quarterly*, 2001, 42, 4, 487-510. 40. D. Philpott, 'The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations', *World Politics*, 2000, 52, 206-45. 41. D. Philpott, 'The Challenge of September 11 to Secularism in International Relations', *World Politics*, 2002, 55, 66-95. 42. E. S. Hurd, 'The Political Authority of Secularism in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2004, 10, 2, 235-62. Contemporary political Islam needs to be understood as a product of the encounter between the West and Muslim-majority societies. Aslan weaves a magnificent tapestry of major thinkers in the history of Islamist thought, including Hasan al-Banna, a Sufi who turned away from nationalism, which he saw as the principal cause of World War I, and established the Muslim Brothers "not as a political party but as the world's first Islamic social movement calling for a just and egalitarian society.