

## **ISLAMISM: THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ITS POLITICS AND RELIGION**

**Politics, Theology and Religion in Jihadist Violence: Jonathan Cole, *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2019** — The global proliferation of jihadist violence over the past decades notwithstanding, many educated Westerners still view this phenomenon as a corollary of an extremist misinterpretation of jihad that has nothing to do with the concept's purported real meaning (i.e., an inner spiritual battle), or indeed with the actual spirit and teachings of Islam.

**The Muslim Brotherhood's Global Threat: Hillel Fradkin, *Hudson Institute*, July 12, 2018** — On July 11, Hillel Fradkin testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Following is the full text of his testimony:

**Debating Michael Walzer's 'Islamism and the Left': Michael Walzer, *Fathom Journal*, Summer, 2015** — Michael Walzer is professor emeritus at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, and one of the democratic left's foremost political philosophers.

**Supposedly "Deradicalized," They're Sending Money to ISIS Smugglers: Abigail R. Esman, *IPT News*, Apr. 9, 2019** — He was a leader of one of Europe's largest and most dangerous homegrown Islamist terror groups, responsible for the 2004 slaughter of writer and filmmaker Theo van Gogh in Amsterdam.

### ***On Topic Links***

**[Debunking Qanta Ahmed's Corrosive Claim, 'Antisemitism Is Profoundly Against Islam'](#): Andrew G. Boston, *PJ Media*, Feb. 18, 2019** — Qanta Ahmed is a secular Pakistani Muslim physician, and occasional talking head, who fancies herself "a Muslim expert in Islamism."

**[Islamists Infiltrate the US Political System](#): Oren Litwin: *Middle East Forum*, Mar. 18, 2019** — Islamists have been attempting for years to gain influence within the US political system. They align themselves with the left wing of the Democratic Party not because they support LGBT rights or abortion, but to gain power through the progressive agenda of intersectionality and multiculturalism.

**[How and Why Hamas Founded CAIR](#): *Mosaic*, Apr. 15, 2019** — Controversy broke out last week concerning remarks Congresswoman Ilhan Omar made at a gathering

of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). Last week also marked the fifth anniversary since CAIR—widely regarded by American journalists and politicians as a legitimate representative of U.S. Muslims—successfully pressured Brandeis University into canceling its plans to grant an honorary degree to the apostate Muslim and women’s-rights activist Ayaan Hirsi Ali.

[Shocking Video: Rampant Antisemitism in US Mosques: Clarion Project, Mar. 11, 2019](#) - Watch the rampant antisemitism in US mosques as documented by this undercover reporter

## **POLITICS, THEOLOGY AND RELIGION**

### **IN JIHADIST VIOLENCE**

*Jonathan Cole*

*Middle East Quarterly, Winter 2019*

The global proliferation of jihadist violence over the past decades notwithstanding, many educated Westerners still view this phenomenon as a corollary of an extremist misinterpretation of jihad that has nothing to do with the concept’s purported real meaning (i.e., an inner spiritual battle), or indeed with the actual spirit and teachings of Islam. Yet while the overwhelming majority of the world’s Muslims do not actively support the global jihadist movement, this does not make it a hijacker or distorter of Islam. Rather, both the movement’s pronounced goals and modus operandi arise from or reflect Islam’s authoritative texts, traditions, and history. But understanding this requires greater conceptual clarity about the interrelationship among the three Western categories at the heart of controversy: politics, theology, and religion.

### **Politics**

The global jihadist movement is political in two significant and uncontroversial respects. For one thing, it aspires to direct and administer states as ISIS managed to do in parts of Syria and Iraq, albeit briefly. Indeed, jihadists possess what they regard as a unique and efficacious Islamic art of directing and administering states. For another thing, jihadists seek to acquire political power via violent revolutionary means, primarily insurgency, but supported by terrorism and other tactics.

**Jihadist violence, whether directed at Muslim regimes or Western governments and populaces, is therefore political as it seeks to bring Islam to power in territorial states and thus implement its political agenda. Jihadists ultimately aim to redraw or remove boundaries between these states currently sovereign under international law and establish a global caliphate.**

**The founder of the Islamist group Hizb at-Tahrir has declared that Islam “is a complete and comprehensive regime for the totality of human life, which Muslims are obligated to implement and execute completely.”**

**In line with Islam’s fundamental outlook, jihadists categorically reject a functional separation between the private-spiritual and public-political spheres of both individual and communal life because of their understanding of two fundamental characteristics of Islam: Islam is both “complete” (kamil), which is to say perfect and sufficient, and “comprehensive” (shamil), encompassing all aspects of human life. As the founder of the Islamist group Hizb at-Tahrir, Taqi ad-Din an-Nabhani, put it, Islam “is a complete and comprehensive regime for the totality of human life, which Muslims are obligated to implement and execute completely.”[1]**

**So where does this complete and comprehensive conception of Islam, which recognizes no distinction or separation between politics and religion—between the secular and the sacred—leave the category of “politics” in jihadist thought? The Arabic language does have a word for “politics”—siyasa—that corresponds to the Western category. But siyasa is not a Qur’anic concept, which might explain why it is not a central concept in jihadist literature. There are, on the other hand, several important Qur’anic concepts that feature prominently in jihadist thought that could be described as political in Western terms. These include khalifa (caliph), Shari’a, and the lesser-known term hukm, which means “judgment” or “rule.” Qur’anic passages involving one or more of these concepts appear often in jihadist writing and together form the theological bedrock of jihadist political theory.**

**Hukm, from the verb hakama (to judge) has the sense of meaning rule in all its political dimensions. The verb hakama, for example, occurs in three closely related Qur’anic passages in the fifth sura (al-Ma’ida, The Table), which are often cited in jihadist literature, particularly in arguments seeking to substantiate the infidel status of governments in today’s Muslim-majority states... [To read the full article, click the following [LINK](#) - Ed.]**

**THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD’S GLOBAL THREAT**

**Hillel Fradkin**

**Hudson Institute, July 12, 2018**

**On July 11, Hillel Fradkin testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Following is the full text of his testimony:**

**... This subject entails 3 general questions:**

**First: Is the Muslim Brotherhood a global threat?**

**Second: If it is a global threat, how successful has it been or might be?**

**Third: What can be done to address this threat?**

**In these remarks I will principally address the first two questions. I expect we will address the third in the discussion.**

**Let me begin with the first and primary question: Is the Muslim Brotherhood a global threat?**

**Part of the answer is clear: The Brotherhood certainly means to be global and it means to be a threat. More specifically the Muslim Brotherhood is devoted to a political and religious project that in principle, in its essential character and goals, is hostile to other forms of politics, including our own. And it means for this project to be global in extent.**

**The global intent has been true of the Brotherhood from the time of its founding some 90 years ago by a school teacher named Hassan al Banna. Although an Egyptian, Banna looked to transcend his Egyptian base and establish his organization elsewhere in the world. This was not simple personal ambition. It followed from the character of the project.**

**What was that project? In response to this question, Banna offered a simple five-fold formulation that has remained the motto of the Brotherhood:**

**“Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our leader. The Qur’an is our constitution. Jihad is our way. Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope.”**

Implicitly this rejected the contemporary political arrangements of his native Egypt that was in the process of becoming a modern nation state. But he also understood his project to apply to all Muslims and the forms of governance under which they lived. That is he rejected as such the nation state as a legitimate form of Muslim governance; he rejected it as a form of governance of alien origin and at variance with the traditional forms and ideals of Muslim governance that were imperial and ultimately global in character. But he also rejected the nation state because it was intimately connected with new modern ways of life that violated a proper Muslim way of life, a way of life, as he put it, constituted by the Qur'an.

Banna's ultimate goal was a new Muslim state that would embrace all Muslims and would restore the authentic Muslim way of life as well as restore Muslim political power, military power, and Muslim prestige. To use a term that has recently become familiar it was to be an Islamic and not a national state, or rather The Islamic State.

In accord with this, Banna sought to establish branches of the Brotherhood in other countries and over time partially succeeded. Since Banna's Brotherhood was based in an Arab country he had to expect some limits to its expansion to other non-Arab Muslims. But he found de facto partners in the form of analogous movements elsewhere - initially in South Asia; subsequently in Turkey.

... [To read the full article, click the following [LINK](#) - Ed.]

#### **DEBATING MICHAEL WALZER'S 'ISLAMISM AND THE LEFT'**

*Michael Walzer*

*Fathom Journal, Summer, 2015*

**Michael Walzer:** Thank you to Fathom for organising this discussion about my essay 'Islamism and the Left' which appeared in Dissent earlier in 2015. I know you have all read it, so I am looking forward to hearing your critical responses.

**Robert Fine (Emeritus Professor of Sociology, Warwick University):** Thanks for your article. The primary explanation that you are using for the Left's condoning of Islamism is its fear of encouraging Islamophobia. But why should there be such a fear? Firstly, the Left is not afraid in the same way of encouraging anti-Semitism. Secondly, as you showed very well in the article, there is no opposition between

being sensitive to Islamophobia and being highly critical of Islamism. So, while I thought your description of the phenomenon was very good, I wasn't immediately convinced by your explanation that the fear of encouraging Islamophobia is the driving force behind left apologetics for Islamic fundamentalism.

**Michael Walzer:** You could probably say that the fear of Islamophobia is related to the hostility to Israel. There is this eagerness - I've heard this often in the States, I don't know if it happens here - to describe the Islamic minority in the US, or in Europe, as the 'new Jews'. Somehow, that gives you license to ignore the 'old Jews', and to focus on these 'new Jews', and to claim that we must not repeat with them what we did to the 'old Jews'. But that can lead to any criticism being interpreted as hostility to this minority and a way of targeting this minority. The argument becomes 'if you are critical of Islam, you are joining hands with the new xenophobes of the West.'

**Dave Rich (Deputy Director of Communications, The Community Security Trust):** I was also struck that this fear of Islamophobia was the central argument. In our experience this reluctance to tackle Islamist extremism for fear of being seen as targeting Muslims and Islam generally is now quite a mainstream fear. In a funny way, it reflects certain Islamophobic ways of thinking amongst the people who are scared of being accused of Islamophobia. It reflects a lack of knowledge and familiarity with Muslims, and a failure to understand the breadth and depth and diversity of Muslim life.

**Michael Walzer:** That sounds right to me. The fear of Islamophobia is also present among liberal centrists in the US, not just on the Left.

**Eve Garrard (Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Manchester):** Thank you Michael. If I've understood you rightly, you're suggesting that some of today's hostility to Israel and the Jews is driven by 'anti-imperialism'. What I'm interested in is the asymmetries in the argument. Though I'm sure anti-imperialism is playing some role, if we identify anti-imperialism as the source of the hostility towards Israel, then we have a problem: why is the anti-imperialism so selective? That is, why is it the West's anti-imperialism that generates so much hostility, and not, say, Russia's imperialism, and so on? It's that asymmetry that we need to investigate. Do you have a view about that?

**Michael Walzer:** The asymmetry you talk about is very clear. For me, the clearest

example has been friends of mine on the American left who announced that they won't visit Israel because of the occupation, but are eagerly soliciting invitations to China, despite what is going on in Tibet. They don't see any problem with that.

James Bloodworth (Editor, Left Foot Forward): I think we face a 'racism of low expectations' on parts of the British left. So-called 'community leaders' are held up by the Left, but they are often very conservative, elderly, male figures, with a host of reactionary views on things like women's rights and homosexuality. There are such low expectations on the Left - as if a Muslim person is 'supposed' to uphold these very illiberal views.

I also think that there is an unwillingness on the Left to agree with the establishment in any way. So, if you define yourself in opposition to the establishment, then when David Cameron stands up and starts talking about Islamism, there's an unwillingness to admit that he may be right, albeit for the wrong reasons. I think if you define yourself in opposition to the so-called establishment, it becomes a posture rather than a well thought through critique. You end up in a mess, simply defining yourself negatively, as in opposition to Israel, the US, David Cameron, whatever... [To read the full article, click the following [LINK](#) - Ed.]

## **SUPPOSEDLY "DERADICALIZED," THEY'RE SENDING MONEY TO ISIS SMUGGLERS**

Abigail R. Esman

*IPT News*, Apr. 9, 2019

He was a leader of one of Europe's largest and most dangerous homegrown Islamist terror groups, responsible for the 2004 slaughter of writer and filmmaker Theo van Gogh in Amsterdam. At the time of his 2006 arrest, Dutch authorities had evidence he was planning attacks on the Dutch secret service and intelligence agency, AIVD.

Seven years into his 13-year sentence, Samir Azzouz was released from prison, despite warnings from prosecutors that the former Hofstadgroep leader remained a danger. Though an ankle monitor and economic sanctions limited any potential efforts at violence, officials also set up a "deradicalization" program for him in the

hope it would help him to move beyond his terrorism past. It didn't.

According to an in-depth investigation by Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*, Azzouz, along with fellow Hofstadgroep member Bilal Lamrani, has not only continued to encourage radicals since his release, but has been raising funds for the children and wives of ISIS fighters still living in the former Islamic State. "If you know that children are dying from hunger, you help them," Azzouz defended himself to the *NRC* in an interview. "People who don't help, they're the ones who should be prosecuted."

It is true that ISIS children now being held in Syrian and Kurdish prisons are suffering. An investigation by *Der Spiegel* found hundreds of children desperately in need of medical attention, often malnourished, some suffering from injuries and diseases that range from scabies and pneumonia to tuberculosis. "The children bear obvious traces of neglect," reports *Der Spiegel*. "Their heads are shorn, their scalps covered in scabs. Their limbs are scrawny and when they talk, what comes out is seldom more than a faint squeak ... Some children lie so still in their beds that you have to look closely to notice the slight rise and fall of their chests confirming that they are still alive."

But the Hofstadgroep funds are not going through official channels to the hospital at the Al Hawl Kurdish refugee camp that cares for them, nor to the Kurdish Red Crescent, the International Rescue Committee, or other agencies that are helping to save these children. They are going to the families - including, for instance, the widow and children of Dutch terrorist Jermaine Walters, another Hofstadgroep member who was killed fighting for the Islamic State in 2015 - and to smugglers who promise to help women escape the Kurdish camps. According to Lamrani, donations to the fund, channeled through underground networks, have helped bring these women and families to Idlib, an area now in the hands of Hay'et Tahrir al Sham (HTS), a Syrian jihadist rebel group and former al-Qaida affiliate. Some are expected to remain there; others, Lamrani told Dutch daily the *Volkskrant* in a follow-up report, will continue working with smugglers in hopes of getting home to the Netherlands.

The fundraising doesn't just take place on the street. An app group called "Support Baghouz" is largely led by someone other members call "Bilal" and who happens to have the same phone number as Bilal Lamrani, the *Volkskrant* reports. Screenshots of conversations show one member asking, "What is Baghouz?", to which another replies, "It's a village in Syria where the kuffar [infidels] are killing



**our innocent Muslim brothers and sisters.”... [To read the full article, click the following [LINK](#) - Ed.]**