Dædalus

Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

Summer 2003

comment	Robert Post	Congress & the Court 5
on secularism & religion	James Carroll	Why religion still matters 9
	Nikki R. Keddie	Secularism & its discontents 14
	Henry Munson	'Fundamentalism' ancient & modern 31
	Martin E. Marty	Our religio-secular world 42
	Thomas Jefferson	Religious freedom 49
	Azzam S. Tamimi	The renaissance of Islam 51
	M. Hakan Yavuz	The case of Turkey 59
	T. N. Madan	The case of India 62
	Vali Nasr	Lessons from the Muslim world 67
	William Galston	Jews, Muslims & the prospects for pluralism 73
	Jean Bethke Elshtain	Against liberal monism 78
	Daniel C. Tosteson	Religion & the plague of war 80
	Christopher Hitchens	The future of an illusion 83
	Akeel Bilgrami	The clash within civilizations 88
poetry	Lucie Brock-Broido	The One Thousand Days 95
fiction	Lee K. Abbott	Men of rough persuasion 97
dialogue	Kwame Anthony Appiah & Robert S. Boynton	on philosophy, race, sex &c. 104
notes	Nathan Glazer	on the American indifference to inequality 111
	Michael Traynor	on environmental law 116

McDona
Restaura
CARS
TRUCKS
JESUS: THE GIVER OF HOPE A
Pizza
Hut

Inside front cover: Jesus and junk food, billboard and signs, the sacred and the profane: strip advertising on a state highway in Alabama. The United States, like other societies around the world, is "neither exclusively secular nor exclusively religious, but rather a complex combination of both." See Martin E. Marty on *Our religio-secular world,* pages 42 – 48. Photograph © 2003 by Abbas/Magnum Photos.

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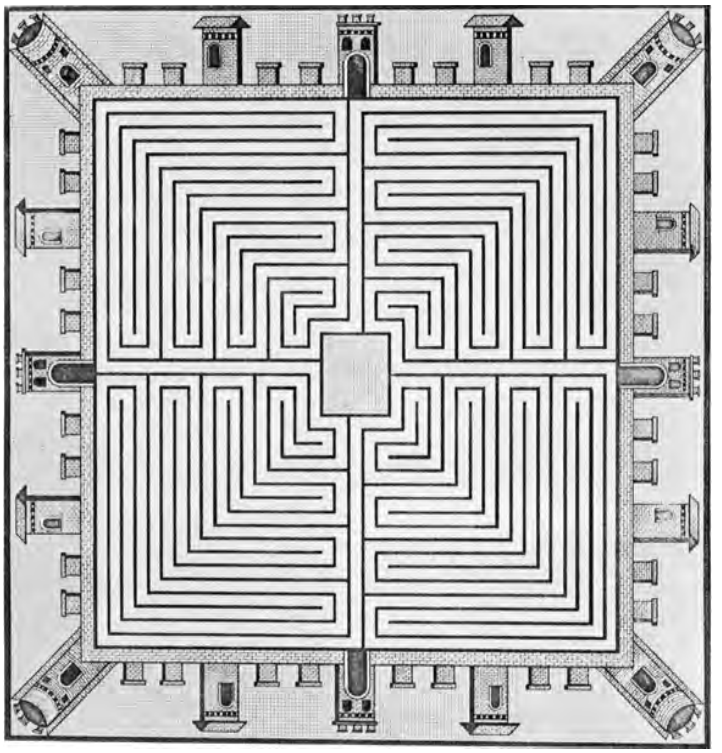

Nineteenth-century depiction of a Roman mosaic labyrinth, now lost, found in Villa di Diomede, Pompeii

Dædalus was founded in 1955 and established as a quarterly in 1958. The journal's namesake was renowned in ancient Greece as an inventor, scientist, and unriddler of riddles. Its emblem, a maze seen from above, symbolizes the aspiration of its founders to "lift each of us above his cell in the labyrinth of learning in order that he may see the entire structure as if from above, where each separate part loses its comfortable separateness."

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Comment by Robert Post

Congress & the Court

The United States in recent years has been drifting toward an important confrontation over constitutional limits on the power of the federal government. Three years ago, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia took the extraordinary step of publicly accusing Congress of "increasingly abdicating its independent responsibility to be sure that it is being faithful to the Constitution."[1] More recently, New York Senator Hillary Clinton has sharply warned against "the imperial tendencies of the current Court."[2] Amid the charges and countercharges, one thing is clear: In a series of landmark decisions over the past decade, the Rehnquist Court has overturned understandings of constitutional structure that have been in place since the New Deal.[3]

The looming crisis is formidable, even by the standards of a relationship that is historically fraught with controversy. The framers of the U.S. Constitution, fearful that the "encroaching nature" of political power would overwhelm merely "parchment barriers," deliberately separated the new federal government into three distinct branches, "so contriving the interior structure of the government as that its several constituent parts may, by their mutual relations, be the means of keeping each other in their proper places." With exquisite practicality, the framers sought to make "ambition . . . counteract ambition," thereby "supplying, by opposite and rival interests, the defect of better motives."[4] Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court were thus designed to face each other at arm's length, with the abiding suspicion that the opposite branch might potentially overreach its rightful bounds.

This tension has waxed and waned, but the controversy now building be-

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1 Justice Antonin Scalia, quoted in the editorial "A Shot from Justice Scalia," *The Washington Post*, 2 May 2000, A22. Scalia added, "My court is fond of saying that acts of Congress come to the court with the presumption of constitutionality. But if Congress is going to take the attitude that it will do anything it can get away with and let the Supreme Court worry about the Constitution . . . then perhaps that presumption is unwarranted." See also Robert Stacy McCain, "Scalia Disses Congress," *The Washington Times*, 19 April 2000, A6; and Tony Mauro, "Court Declares Constitutional War on Congress," *The Legal Intelligencer*, 22 May 2000, 5.

2 Hillary Rodham Clinton and Goodwin Liu, "Separation Anxiety: Congress, the Courts, and the Constitution," *Georgetown Law Review* 91 (2003): 439, 449.

3 See John T. Noonan, Jr., *Narrowing the Nation's Power: The Supreme Court Sides with the States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

4 The Federalist Papers, Nos. 48 and 51.

tween Congress and the Court threatens to reach historic proportions. Until the 1930s, the premise of American civics was that the federal government in Washington, D.C., was to have only limited powers; it was confined to the specific forms of authority granted it in the Constitution. State governments, by contrast, were considered plenary; they had all powers except those that had been taken away by the Constitution. How to ascertain the proper balance of power between the federal government and the states was understood to constitute "the cardinal question of our constitutional system."[5] The U.S. Supreme Court would from time to time seek to answer that question by articulating the constitutional limits of congressional power. For example, in 1918 it decided that the Congress had exceeded the bounds of proper national authority when it sought to regulate child labor within the states.[6]

The Great Depression destroyed this vision of constitutional structure. In the crucible of that crisis the Court and the country reinterpreted the Constitution to authorize the national government to legislate as necessary to meet national needs. The Court accordingly redefined its function: Instead of policing the limits of federal authority, it would seek to ensure that the exercise of national power did not violate individual constitutional rights. Congress consequently emerged from the Great Depression and from World War II essentially unbound by the old constraints of federalism. Generations of Americans have since grown up assuming that national power is effectively plenary. For many years, the students to whom I taught constitutional law regarded as merely quaint absurdities earlier Supreme Court decisions that had applied principles of federalism to limit national authority.

All this changed dramatically in 1995 when five justices appointed by Republican presidents elected on platforms dedicated to resurrecting the values of federalism joined together to decide what for the previous fifty years had been almost inconceivable – that a congressional statute was invalid because it exceeded the limits of national authority transferred to Congress by the Constitution.[7] These same five justices have now coalesced into a solid voting bloc that has embarked upon the remarkable task of circumscribing federal power in the name of federalism.[8] The result has been fairly characterized as a constitutional revolution.

It is of course serious business to hold that our national legislature cannot enact such legislation as is deemed necessary to meet national needs. The Court's

5 Woodrow Wilson, *Constitutional Government in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1908; reprint, 1921), 173.

6 *Hammer v. Dagenhart*, 247 US 251 (1918).

7 *United States v. Lopez*, 514 US 549 (1995) (striking down the Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990). The Court had not struck down a congressional statute on this ground since *Carter v. Carter Coal Co.*, 298 US 238 (1936). The five Justices were Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, Sandra Day O'Connor, Antonin Scalia, Anthony M. Kennedy, and Clarence Thomas.

8 For the Court's decisions limiting congressional power under the Commerce Clause, see *United States v. Lopez*, 514 US 549 (1995); *United States v. Morrison*, 529 US 598 (2000); cf. *Jones v. United States*, 529 US 848 (2000); *Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County v. United States Army Corps of Engineers*, 531 US 159 (2001). For the Court's decisions limiting congressional power under Section 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment, see *City of Boerne v. Flores*, 521 US 507 (1997); *Florida Prepaid Postsecondary Education Expense Board v. College Savings Bank*, 527 US 627 (1999); *Kimel v. Florida Board of Regents*, 528 US 62 (2000); *United States v. Morrison*, 529 US 598 (2000); *Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama v. Garrett*, 531 US 356 (2001).

new decisions may not be dismissed simply as conservative disapproval of past liberal legislation, for the Court has struck down many statutes, like the Religious Freedom Restoration Act[9] and the Patent and Plant Variety Protection Remedy Clarification Act,[10] that were enacted with virtually unanimous support. What is most fundamentally at issue in the Court's recent opinions is the structure of the constitutional relationship that will obtain between the Court and Congress.

These opinions have created real confusion about exactly what the Court wishes Congress to do in order to validate the constitutionality of federal statues. Some language in the Court's opinions seems to point to the need for more detailed congressional fact-finding; other language seems to point toward a categorical and judicially enforced "distinction between what is truly national and what is truly local."[11] It is not clear what leeway the Court will grant Congress to interpret and enforce constitutional rights.[12]

In the complex structure of checks and balances created by the framers, judicial review is an important means by which the Court can limit an overreaching Congress. But the force of judicial review is countered by the constitutional mechanisms given to Congress to restrain judicial excess. There are numerous such mechanisms, which range from determining the scope and nature of judicial jurisdiction to the setting of judicial salaries. By far the most important avenue of congressional influence is the confirmation process. Because the Senate must approve the appointment of all Article III federal judges, it can ultimately control the complexion of the federal judiciary.

Confirmation hearings for Supreme Court Justices have always carried the potential to turn highly contentious. But political discord has sharply accelerated in the years since the Senate's rejection of President Reagan's nomination of Robert Bork in 1987. Each nomination to the Supreme Court is now an impending bomb waiting to explode in the Senate Chamber. Senators are divided about the nature of the confirmation process. There is profound disagreement about the questions that can appropriately be posed to a nominee and about the criteria of judgment that ought to be applied in deciding whether or not to confirm a candidate. These sharp divisions are now affecting the confirmation hearings of lower federal judges, most especially of nominees to the U.S. Courts of Appeals. This is an entirely new historical phenomenon.

Although there are means by which the Court can check Congress and means by which Congress can check the Court, in most circumstances the federal government works best when Congress and the Court pull together, cooperating in the smooth and efficient articulation and enforcement of federal law. The idea is that Congress enacts legislation, which is then seamlessly interpreted and

9 See *City of Boerne v. Flores*, 521 US 507 (1997).

10 See *Florida Prepaid Postsecondary Education Expense Board v. College Savings Bank*, 527 US 627 (1999). The Court has also struck down Title I of the nearly unanimous Americans with Disabilities Act as beyond the power of Congress under Section 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment, which in effect means that Congress cannot authorize its enforcement by private damage actions against the states. See *Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama v. Garrett*, 531 US 356 (2001).

11 *United States v. Morrison*, 529 US 598, 617 – 618 (2000).

12 Robert C. Post and Reva Siegel, "Equal Protection by Law: Federal Antidiscrimination Legislation After *Morrison* and *Kimel*," *Yale Law Journal* 110 (3) (2000): 441.

applied by the judiciary. The orderly operation of the federal government depends upon this continuous and quotidian cooperation.

Even here, however, the relationship between Congress and the Court is in disarray. Vigorous disputes have arisen among the justices about how exactly they should go about the process of construing and applying federal legislation. Some justices contend that courts ought never to review legislative history when seeking to interpret statutes, whereas others deliberately look to all available forms of information that might help a court understand the meaning of legislation.[13] It has become unclear, therefore, what, in addition to the actual text of a statute, will count as authoritative indicia of legislative intent and meaning. The smooth cooperation of Court and Congress is correspondingly undermined.

These are unsettling developments to anyone who cares about the effective operation of the federal government. As a nonpartisan witness of recent developments, with a strong independent interest in promoting principles of good governance, the American Academy is using its good offices to facilitate a constructive dialogue to reach across the chasm now separating Congress from the federal courts. It has launched a project to identify and study the current tensions between the Court and Congress, with an eye to ameliorating whatever tensions disinterested scholarship might properly address. The steering committee of the project consists of Jesse Choper, Linda Greenhouse, Abner Mikva, Nelson W. Polsby, and Robert Post, together with Leslie Berlowitz and Alexandra Oleson. There is in addition an advisory committee that consists of members of the Court and Congress.

The project is currently pursuing two initiatives. The first is to host a series of private, off-the-record conversations between members of the federal judiciary and members of Congress. These meetings promote mutual understanding and permit a broad range of issues involving the ongoing relationship between Congress and the federal courts to be ventilated and examined. Constructive solutions to particular problems can be proposed and vetted; cooperation can be encouraged. The second initiative involves bringing the disinterested expertise of the American Academy to bear on issues that currently divide Congress and the federal judiciary. To the extent that these issues might be clarified by the exercise of such expertise, the American Academy can assemble an interdisciplinary team of scholars whose work would be valuable to both sides.

One area of investigation has already been identified. The American Academy is working to assemble a group of scholars to investigate the subject of statutory interpretation. The study will select a sample of judicial decisions that involve controversial questions of statutory interpretation and will compare how the relevant legislation was actually enacted, on the one hand, with how it was interpreted by the courts, on the other. By closely examining these cases, the study will assess the empirical plausibility of the premises of the various theories of statutory interpretation now in play. The study will also examine how the procedures of Congress, and the working processes of the federal courts, have changed in the past decades in ways that might affect the task of statutory interpretation.

13 For a survey of the field, see Philip P. Frickey, "Revisiting the Revival of Theory in Statutory Interpretation: A Lecture in Honor of Irving Younger," *Minnesota Law Review* 84 (1) (1999): 199.

James Carroll

Why religion still matters

The question put to religion by the secular Enlightenment in its Freudian and Marxist manifestations is asked in a different way in the age of terrorism. The old question was, *How can otherwise sensible people, in affirming God as a source of meaning, manifest such infantilism?* Now the question has become, *How can people committed to the democratic ideal embrace a belief system that underwrites intolerance and even violence?*

To be religious, in the view of many who are not, involves a form of psychological immaturity. But more troubling is the suspicion that religion itself is a fundamental source of radical discord – a suspicion that has its origin in the European wars of religion between Catholics and Protestants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but which has been broadly renewed since the 9-11 savageries were enacted in the name of Allah.

The problem is exacerbated by the fact that the suicide-murderers of Al Qaeda (and of Hezbollah, for that matter) are not the only ones to justify violent absolutism by appeals to the divine. America's War on Terrorism is itself defined by a fervent Manichaeanism that divides the world between good and evil. "God bless America," a formerly innocuous patriotic piety, has taken on the character of a truth-claim, an open assertion of the long-dormant exceptionalism that assumes a national anointing – a sacred destiny that elevates America above other nations. A religious self-understanding informs our nation's new imperial impulse, explicitly articulated in the Bush administration's 2002 "National Security Strategy."

The result is a drastic reordering of American relations not only with an Islamic adversary that is perceived univocally (Iraq is 'evil,' and so is Iraq's mortal enemy Iran), but also with an openly skeptical Europe, and an increasingly alienated Asia.

Meanwhile, Hindus and Muslims in India and Pakistan find religious justifications in their otherwise dissimilar traditions for apocalyptic brinkmanship – as if deities could will Armageddon after all. Many Muslim preachers, and not only in the Arab world, have resuscitated the ancient slanders of anti-Semitism – and even its modern corollary, which is the murder of Jews for being Jews. A similarly anti-Jewish structure of mind

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(old versus new; law versus grace; form versus substance) is rooted in supercessionist Christian theology – and while its effects have been widely repudiated by the churches, that theology itself remains more or less intact. At the same time, self-consciously religious, ultranationalist Jews, invoking God's will as revealed in sacred texts, have staked claims to disputed land on the West Bank and in Gaza – land which is now valued above human life. A form of expansive Jewish sectarianism denigrates the lives not only of Palestinians, but of the broader population of Israel, whose entire project of democratic hope has been put at risk by the exclusionist theology of a restored biblical kingdom.

Equally troubling is the North Korean regime that, having been labeled 'evil' by President Bush, pushes back with a cosmic dualism of its own. Officially atheist, Pyongyang preserves the political amber in which a communist 'historical materialism' itself supplies a transcendental justification for nuclear recklessness – even if the transcendent end is purported to be purely secular. (North Korea reminds us that – after Marx – regimes animated by religious faith have no monopoly on the making of absolute claims to authority.)

In the context of the way such world developments call into question the character of religion as such, the simultaneous meltdown of authority in the Roman Catholic Church takes on special significance. At first glance, it seems the main tragedy of the priestly sex abuse scandal, apart from the personal devastation of its victims (and, of course, there is no 'apart' from that), lies in the discrediting of Catholic moral authority. But in fact the scandal has put on display, even for the most conservative-minded Catholics, the way in which an absolute exercise of expressly religious power, even from within a profoundly unfundamentalist tradition like Catholicism, can breed what also must be reckoned as fanatical violence, even if it is more psychological than physical, and even if it occurs on an intimate scale, in an apolitical context. Indeed, from the point of view of its underage and profoundly vulnerable victims, the pathology of priestly sexual abuse and the related cover-up by bishops are exactly that – fanatical violence.

While there is no moral equivalence between the suicide-murders of Muslim fascists, the exclusionary sacralizing of disputed land by religiously nationalist Jews in Israel, the apocalyptic transcendentalism of nuclear brinkmanship (be it Washington's or Pyongyang's), and the Catholic preference of clerical power even over the safety of children – all of these urgent problems from different orders are manifestations of something wrong in the heart of religion.

For detached spectators, the old question has become one question: *Would the world be better off without religion?*

But to ask such a question from *within* a religious tradition is like asking, *Would the world be better off without desire?* (Not quite an unthinkable prospect, since certain Buddhists aim to extirpate desire.)

An emphasis on the negative consequences of faith can blur the powerful consolations and challenges that religion sponsors. Indeed the impulse to honor transcendent being, and even to recognize it as personal, can serve as much as a check on hubris as a source of it. Yes, there have been Yahweh-sponsored slaughters of Canaanites, the holy wars of Crusaders, and the jihads ancient and recent. But where Pope Urban II declared "God wills it!" at Clermont in 1095, Pope Paul VI, before the UN General Assembly in 1965, cried "*Jamais plus la guerre!*"

The great religions, by inviting human beings constantly to surpass themselves,

are part of what makes the human project possible. Whatever else these phenomena foster, the three Abrahamic traditions, together with Hinduism, Buddhism, and other established world religions, are organized around compassionate love for the neighbor as the motivating ideal. The great world religions, that is, having been engines of humanistic social change, remain reservoirs of humane moral sensibility. To take an example from my own tradition: the modern Catholic Church's declared prejudice against violence (*Pacem in Terris*) could slow the world's current rush to war, while the Church's skepticism toward free market capitalism (*Progressio Populorum*) could mitigate the widening chasm between rich and poor.

Some religions give primacy of value to mystical union, some to works of charity, some to justice, and some to ritual observance. But all of the great religions have tracked the movement from God as unknown, to God as fearsome, to God as love itself. Here is how the great Roman Catholic theologian of the mid-twentieth century Karl Rahner articulated that broadly religious intuition: "God does not merely create something other than himself – he also gives himself to this other. The world receives God, the infinite and the ineffable mystery, to such an extent that he himself becomes its innermost life." Religious human beings are the creatures who instinctively respond to that innermost life. "This mystery," Rahner writes,

> is the inexplicit and unexpressed horizon which always encircles and upholds the small area of our everyday experience .... We call this God .... However hard and unsatisfactory it may be to interpret the deepest and most fundamental experience at the very bottom of our being, man does experience in his innermost history that this silent, infinitely distant holy mystery, which continually recalls him to the limits of his finitude and lays bare his guilt yet *bids him approach*; the mystery enfolds him in an ultimate and radical love which commends itself to him as salvation and as the real meaning of his existence.

Rahner is speaking from within Christianity, but his broad theological generalization applies with comparable force to each tradition, no matter what else separates them – or so it appears to this Christian.

Positing an encompassing horizon that is ever beyond reach yet exerting an irresistible pull – and daring to name it God – the religions both accommodate and explain the human interest in what lies beyond, even within. Mystery, far from alien or threatening, is thus accounted for as essential to life on earth. Religion helps humans not to flee mystery, but to plumb it.

But such is the human condition that in every way that religion can be sacred, it can be trivial; in every way consoling, threatening. A ready source of humility, religion embodies an impulse to triumphalism, too. And the political events referred to above define what is at stake in each religion's struggle with itself.

This complexity moves the question away from *Why religion?* to *What kind? What in each tradition promotes peace instead of war? Tolerance instead of contempt? Self-criticism instead of smug superiority?*

And these questions, far from abstract, are in fact being forced on religions by world conditions. Indeed, it is the shift in world politics – in demographics, in patterns of ethnic dispersal, in the explosion of information technology – that has transformed the situation of religion, especially of the formerly dominant religions of European imperialism.

"The West is no longer shut up in itself," Rahner wrote:

> it can no longer regard itself simply as the center of culture, with a religion which ...

> could appear as the obvious and indeed sole way of honoring God . . . . Today everybody is the next-door neighbor and spiritual neighbor of everyone else in the world . . . which puts the absolute claim of our own Christian faith into question.

Absolute claims are the issue. The challenge for religions of all kinds, but perhaps especially for religions based on narratives of divine revelation, is to make positive assertions of faith that do not simultaneously denigrate the different tenets of faith held by others. Religious denigration is a source of violence. "There will be no peace among the nations," the Swiss Catholic theologian Hans Küng has written, "without peace among the religions. There will be no peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions. There will be no dialogue between the religions without the investigation of the foundations of the religions."

The new condition of world politics that has brought so much trouble with it is also the source of hope, because formerly triumphalist traditions now have no choice – precisely because of religious elbow-rubbing – but to encounter the truth claims of others. That means that the foundational assumptions of every religion must now be the subject of reexamination.

Just such a thing is going on inside Roman Catholicism. And if it can happen there, it can happen anywhere.

Since the Holocaust, fundamental tenets of Catholic belief have been called into question – especially aspects of the faith that have spawned the Christian anti-Judaism, which was so powerfully laid bare by its mutation into Nazi anti-Semitism. The important point is that the questioning is being done by Catholics *themselves* – a project that began on the margins of the Church with once suspect figures like Rahner and Küng, then moved into the center of ecclesiastical identity with the Second Vatican Council, and has been continued in fits and starts ever since. The apology in 2000 by Pope John Paul II for various sins of Catholic triumphalism, especially Catholic contempt for Jews and Jewish religion, is an emblem of this process, and one that marks its beginning, not its end.

Now the Catholic Church, in response to the crisis tied to priestly child abuse and the bishops' cover-up, is openly grappling with such basic questions as its attitude toward sexuality, its clerical caste system, the place of the laity, the need for democracy – and, especially, the rights of women. Questions like these push to the heart of Catholic theology, which in fact had already been penetrated by the challenges tied to the Church's relationship to the Jewish people, to those of other faiths, and to those of no faith. Adjustments must follow in claims made for Jesus, in notions of who God is, in the way sacred texts are understood and taught, in the very structure of thought about what it means to be a Catholic. Even in the throes of crisis, the Church is invigorated by a fierce debate – and it is a debate with itself.

It is for adherents of each faith to define, but some version of this grappling with fundamental belief can be seen to be occurring in other religions – certainly in Judaism, where the question of what it is to be a Jew is being asked with new power. The political crisis of Israel, an entity regarded as originating as a sign of God's covenant, brings with it basic religious questions.

And so with Islam. The post-September 11 situation of Muslims seems marked by an urgent new introspection in response to the questions of reform, text, attitudes toward the other, and the tradition's relationship to violence that

have been forced by an expressly Islamic outbreak of terror. It is up to adherents of Islam to refute the broad Western suspicion that Islamic devotion may be incompatible with democratic liberalism. But in this task, Muslim reformers have a great resource in the Islamic tradition of *convivencia*, which, even for the West, was the very incubator of tolerance – political as well as religious.

All of this defines the new shape of religious commitment, and it suggests the kind of 'investigation' leading to reform that only the religiously committed can undertake. Each religion must seek ways of tapping into its reservoir of neighborliness, its foundational assumptions about the goodness of creation, its attitude toward God as the world's innermost source of love.

Criticism of religion is necessary and, these days, inevitable. But what really counts now is religious *self*-criticism. Detached observers among those who are not religious make a mistake to regard this project cynically, because broad religious reform is essential now to the rescue of the world itself.

Democratic values, ideological openness, freedom of conscience, positive regard for those who are different (also known as pluralism), as well as the capacity to tolerate even those who remain intolerant: these pillars of the post-Enlightenment social order will not stand unless exactly equivalent pillars are erected to reform – and thus secure – the institutions of traditional religion.

In short, I believe that religion and the social order are inseparable – which will come as no surprise to anyone who shares my faith that God is inseparable from God's creation.

Nikki R. Keddie

Secularism & its discontents

In the quarter century since the Iranian Revolution took much of the world by surprise – not least in the way its religious leadership mobilized a genuinely popular uprising – many commentators in the West have been inclined to see the Middle East and South Asia as cultural backwaters, where religion-based politics are overcoming the secular forms of political organization appropriate to modern industrial societies.

But this understanding of recent events is misleading. A comparative historical survey of the rise and fall of successive waves of secularism in the modern era reveals a more complicated and paradoxical picture of trends in Western countries and of the impact of these trends on societies struggling to emulate the economic success of the modern West.

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In the survey that follows, I will focus on the conflict between secularist and antisecularist trends in a variety of different states, starting with the rise of secularism in the West. Before I begin, it will be useful to examine more closely the history of some key terms.

Over the centuries, 'secular' has conveyed a far wider variety of meanings than current usage may suggest. A term derived in Middle English from the Old French word *seculer* (itself from the Latin *saecularis),* the word originally referred to clergy who were not bound by the religious rules of a monastic order. In Middle English, it could also refer to the realm of the 'this-worldly' as opposed to the divine – the sacred and 'other-worldly' realms historically monopolized in Western Europe by the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, the evolving use of words based on 'secular' reflects, among other things, a long and contentious history; 'secularism' and its militant Latin sibling 'laicism' emerged in Western European countries that were once, if not still, dominated by Roman Catholicism.

It was only in the nineteenth century that the word 'secular' came to be associated with 'secularists' who espoused a doctrine of 'secularism' – that is, the belief that religious institutions and values

should play no role in the temporal affairs of the nation-state. These terms were coined in England in 1851 by a radical atheist, George Holyoake, who was looking for respectable euphemisms to replace 'atheist,' 'infidel,' 'freethinker,' 'unbeliever,' etc.[1] Holyoake and his successor Charles Bradlaugh led a national network of secular societies that some have seen as an alternative church – certainly these societies served social and political as well as ideological functions.

Appealing largely to skilled laborers from the upper working classes, the secular societies advocated an end of privileges for the Anglican Church, and the extension of equal rights and freedoms to all religious and antireligious persons and institutions. They convinced Parliament to abolish disabilities for nonbelieving witnesses, helped discredit (though they did not succeed in abolishing) blasphemy laws, and, after Bradlaugh was elected to Parliament and refused to take the religious oath, made it possible for an avowed nonbeliever to hold office.[2] Apart from Bradlaugh, the organization's most effective speaker and writer was the young Annie Besant, best known for her later association with the theosophy movement, with its Hindu and Buddhist overtones.[3]

By the end of the nineteenth century, the political aims of secular societies had been largely achieved, in part because they were in tune with other social and cultural trends. After the death of Bradlaugh and the defection of Besant, the movement, never large, faded away. By then, Darwinism and socialism had replaced secularism as fighting creeds, and Thomas Huxley's late-nineteenth-century coinage, 'agnostic,' had largely replaced 'secularist' as a term for religious skeptics.

The older noun 'secularization' underwent a somewhat analogous evolution. For centuries, the term in Latin and French referred only to a change in clerical status – for example, when a monk became a secular priest. A broader meaning was documented only after the Thirty Years' War and the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, when the term was used to describe the process whereby Brandenburg was granted church land within its borders. In the decades that followed, 'secularization' was often used to describe the confiscation or conversion of ecclesiastical religious institutions or property for civil possession and use.[4]

By the end of the nineteenth century, 'secularization' was being widely used in conjunction with the terms 'secularists' and 'secularism' to refer to various state measures that weakened the Church and religion, including the disestablishment of dominant churches, the protection of religious and atheist minorities, and increased lay control of formerly religious spheres.[5] By extension, 'secularization' was used as well to describe a generalized process of replacing religious with

1 Edward Royle gives the origin and early development of the secularist movement in *Victorian Infidels: The Origins of the British Secularist Movement 1791 – 1866* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974).

2 Franklin L. Baumer, *Religion and the Rise of Scepticism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1960), 135.

3 Edward Royle, *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans: Popular Freethought in Britain, 1866 – 1915* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980); Peter van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), chap. 3, "The Spirits of the Age: Spiritualism and Political Radicalism."

4 Karel Dobbelaere, "Secularization: A Multi-Dimensional Concept," *Current Sociology* 29 (2) (Summer 1981): 3 – 213.

5 Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

lay values in the character and direction of morality, education, and culture. For many, 'secular' and 'secularist' (and French variants on 'laic') remain associated with unbelief.

Enter the social scientists: only in the early twentieth century did 'secularization' become a scholarly category, usually traced to the sociologists Weber, Tonnies, and Troeltsch, although similar concepts can be found in earlier thinkers.[6] In common usage today, 'secularization' refers to:

- an increase in the number of people with secular beliefs and practices;
- a lessening of religious control or influence over major spheres of life; and
- a growth in state separation from religion and in secular regulation of formerly religious institutions and customs.

These phenomena are to a degree logically independent, and also often independent in practice. Trying to measure the extent of secular beliefs and practices through church membership may not yield accurate results; in Europe today figures for religious belief as measured by opinion polls are considerably higher than those for church attendance and membership. Nor does the extent of belief or unbelief necessarily correlate positively with the extent of state separation from, or control over, religion.[7]

In addition, all of these phenomena vary widely in scope and intensity, and all of them can be paradoxical in their implications. Instead of a separation of church and state, secularism has sometimes been used to justify and enforce aggressive political control over religion and its institutions. This has been true in modern Turkey, Pahlavi Iran, Bourguiba's Tunisia, and the Soviet Union and communist Eastern Europe, whose governments have mostly seen such control as a necessity for their states' rapid social and economic modernization.

For much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, most scholars and writers, Western and Eastern alike, saw the growth of secularism as a one-way street toward modernization – a wholly positive process according to Comte and many subsequent theorists, or a dialectical process synthesizing positive and negative moments, as hypothesized by Hegel and Marx. In the social science literature, the growth of secularism is often interpreted as a natural concomitant of the spread of science, education, and technology – all of which seem to undermine the need for religious explanations of the world and, ultimately, for powerful organized religions in modern society. Theorists with a progressive view, whether straight-line or dialectical, have also tended to imagine that people will enjoy ever greater levels of material well-being, thus diminishing the collective need for religious consolation. (It is worth bearing in mind, however, a certain imbalance in scholarly accounts: most scholars who write about secularization consider it a rational, even natural, point of view, while most scholars who write about fundamentalism are

6 Dobbelaere, "Secularization," 9.

7 For discussions of problems regarding secularization see Steve Bruce, ed., *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). In that volume, Hugh McLeod, "Secular Cities: Berlin, London, and New York in the Later Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," 58–89, notes the ambiguity of the word 'secularization' and shows that in this period Berlin was by far the most secular of the three cities in terms of religious belief, but the least secular by the criterion of church-state relations.

skeptical about the value of religious politics.[8]) Most of the evidence from the West has tended to bolster this view of progressive secularization, and, despite the West's crisis of confidence in progress, most modern governments have continued to exercise ever greater levels of control over formerly religious spheres.

At the same time, it has become increasingly clear in country after country that the political struggles between religious and secular forces are far from over – whether in Iran, India, or even the United States. Even though worldwide a great many people think religion should not affect legislation and policy-making, those who disagree are a growing force.

In the survey that follows, I shall focus on parts of the world where institutions of major world religions held power that created significant obstacles to secularization. I will therefore concentrate on areas that had either monotheistic scriptural religions with exclusive claims – namely Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; or a number of conflicting religions with strong incompatible claims, as in South Asia. These are the areas where important struggles over secularization have occurred. They are also, not coincidentally, the areas that have seen the recent rise in 'fundamentalist' movements, which I have termed 'The New Religious Politics.'[9]

Before the sixteenth century, religion was a major organizing principle of civilization in most of the world – and certainly in Western Europe. There the authority of the Roman Catholic Church was unrivaled: it may well have been the most powerful religious institution the world has ever seen. From the late eleventh century until about 1300, canon law had priority over secular law, and kings had to perform significant penance if they violated Church edicts.[10] Furthermore, the Church played a leading role in organizing Crusades not only in the Holy Land, but also against heretics and non-Catholics in Europe. Later it also played a leading role in dividing the New World into Spanish and Portuguese domains.

The rise of Protestantism initially increased religiosity in Western Europe by provoking intense personal concern about religious doctrines and loyalties, among both Protestants and the reformed and aroused Catholics of the Counter Reformation. Ultimately, however, the proliferation of sects and the exhaustion of the combatants in long, bloody, and inconclusive religious wars led to increasing religious toleration. Governments gradually granted equal civil status to those holding a variety of religious and irreligious beliefs – a key condition for creating secular states. But rulers in Western Europe now had to contend with a great variety of religions.

The political implications of these changes evolved over several centuries, in a series of sometimes violent struggles that pitted rulers against established religious groups. In England, Henry VIII (r. 1509 – 1547) broke with Rome, confiscated church lands, and closed monasteries. In Italy three centuries later, the nationalists under King Victor Emman-

8 For further discussion of these and other points on secularism see Nikki R. Keddie, "Secularism and the State: Toward Clarity and Global Comparison," *New Left Review* 226 (November/December 1997): 21 – 40.

9 See Nikki R. Keddie, "The New Religious Politics: Where, When and Why do 'Fundamentalisms' Appear?" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (October 1998).

10 Thomas Renna, *Church and State in Medieval Europe 1050 – 1314* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1974).

uel II (r. 1861 – 1878) stripped the Church of its control over the papal states and Rome, resulting in a break in relations between the Vatican and the Italian government that lasted into the twentieth century. In France, the struggle between the government and the Church, begun in 1789 during the French Revolution, culminated between 1901 and 1905 in the confiscation of religious property and in a strict separation of church and state. In Spain, Portugal, and many nations in Latin America, analogous struggles followed a broadly similar course.[11]

Regarding these trends, Western thinkers drew a variety of conclusions. Some thinkers, such as John Locke and John Stuart Mill, advocated religious tolerance, while others, particularly in France during the Enlightenment, harshly criticized organized religion. But even some of the harshest critics (Voltaire, for one) believed that religion might be good for the lower classes, keeping them honest, diligent, and peaceful – a proposition that came to seem especially credible after the anticlerical violence unleashed during the French Revolution.[12]

The French Revolution also made it clear that nationalism – a growing sentiment of shared moral, political, and social attachments expressed through the institutions of the nation-state – might well rival, or even replace, religiosity in the minds of newly self-conscious citizens. Traditional religious loyalties potentially conflicted with the priorities of emergent nation-states; even before the rise of modern nationalism, European regimes tried to weaken religious institutions that interfered with their secular power.

Nationalism created an ideological basis for nonreligious loyalties and also made it easier to extend equal rights to citizens professing different religious beliefs, and possible to encourage national networks of production and consumption.[13] Although in some modern European countries – for example, Poland and Ireland – nationalism has utilized religious sentiments, in most it has been a force for secularization, putting national loyalty above religion and rendering the nation-state stronger than any church, even in the presence of state religions, as in England.

The period from 1860 to 1914 was probably the heyday in Europe of expansive secularization, just as it was the heyday of optimistic theories of evolutionary human progress, from Karl Marx to Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer. As Eric Hobsbawm describes the period:

> Traditional religion was receding with unprecedented rapidity, both as an intellectual force and among the masses. This was to some extent an almost automatic consequence of urbanization . . . . In the Roman Catholic countries, which comprised 45 percent of the European population, faith retreated particularly fast . . . before the joint offensive of . . . middle-class rationalism and the socialism of

11 Four Catholic national groups scarcely touched on in this essay – Poland, Brazil, Spain, and the United States – are discussed in José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1994). On France and Italy, see Maurice Larkin, *Church and State after the Dreyfus Affair: The Separation Issue in France* (London: Macmillan, 1974).

12 See, e.g., Chadwick, *The Secularization*, 104 – 105.

13 For recent interpretations of nationalism, its causes and meanings, see Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Ernest Gellner, *Encounters with Nationalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994); E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

> school teachers, but especially of the combination of emancipatory ideals and political calculation which made the fight against the Church the key issue in politics.[14]

These changes were accompanied by a surge in secular control over education and a rise in Marxist socialism, especially among workers. "In many ways Marxism [in Karl Kautsky's version] . . . was the last triumph of nineteenth-century positivist scientific confidence. It was materialist, determinist, inevitabilist, evolutionist, and firmly identified the 'laws of history' with the 'laws of science.'"[15]

In Eastern European countries, where orthodox Christianity prevailed, secularism was also a rising trend between the seventeenth and early twentieth century. Peter the Great (r. 1682 – 1725) abolished the Russian patriarchate, created church government by synod, and installed a government representative as chief procurator of the synod. Catherine the Great (r. 1762 – 1796) confiscated much church land, and a succession of nineteenth-century tsars took further measures to control the Orthodox Church.[16] In these years, secularization was primarily a top-down affair carried out for reasons of state. While democratic and socialist secularists spoke for parts of the urban intelligentsia, the rural majority of Russia's people remained devoutly Christian.

After the October 1917 revolution, the Bolsheviks – committed to Marx's atheist worldview – disestablished the Orthodox Church and expropriated its assets. Violent nationwide campaigns against the Church, religious belief, and the clergy ensued. These policies changed during World War II, and in 1943 the regime accepted an accommodation with the Church that restored the patriarchate. The end of communism in the Soviet Union enabled the Church to recover considerable property and influence, but levels of religious belief and church attendance remained low,[17] indicating that even top-down secularization can succeed in undermining religious belief in some circumstances. (Similarly low levels of church and mosque attendance have been reported in post-Communist orthodox Bulgaria and Serbia, as well as in many other areas of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.)

European Jewry was also affected by a broad secular trend, especially in Western Europe. In countries like Germany and France, middle-class Jews welcomed the separation of church and state and the spread of civil equality. Theodor Herzl and most of the other late-nineteenth-century founders of political Zionism were secularists – but many of their followers in Eastern Europe were not. Among European Jews, secularism and nationalism were not entirely congruent forces: many Zionists, especially on the popular level, were not secularists, and many secularists were not Zionists.

14 E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire 1875 – 1914* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 265 – 266.

15 Ibid., 267.

16 See Gregory L. Freeze, "Eastern Orthodoxy," *Encyclopedia of European Social History,* vol. 5 (New York: Scribner, 2001), 313 – 326; Robert L. Nichols, "The Church in Imperial Russia," *The Donald W. Treadgold Papers In Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies*, 102 (Seattle: The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington, 1995); Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire 1552 – 1917* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

17 Freeze, "Eastern Orthodoxy."

Meanwhile, in the United States throughout the nineteenth century, though secular principles organized political life, a variety of religions flourished, partly because the equal treatment of different Christian churches in America left people free to join or found a religion of their choice. But when religiously minded intellectuals in America moved toward more rationalist and socially reformist interpretations of religion in the latter part of the nineteenth century, it provoked a backlash from literalist Protestant conservatives, who fought the gradual secularization of behavior, belief, and public schooling.

Even in European countries at the zenith of expansive secularization, religious groups did not accept the situation without a struggle. In Germany, divided between Protestants and Catholics, a Catholic party formed and gained considerable strength. And in the past half century, a number of Western nations have experienced a renewal of political claims on behalf of religious values and institutions.

Doubts about the wisdom of unmitigated secularism have been provoked by a variety of developments. One was the devastation caused by the two world wars and subsequent regional bloodbaths. The civilized peoples' capacity to commit acts of mass destruction, far worse than anything experienced in the nineteenth century, bred pessimism about progress. Another factor was the mixed performance of economic systems, whether capitalist or socialist, that were supposed to ensure the wealth of nations. Although most people living in the West enjoyed a steady rise in their standard of living, the new economic order created new uncertainties: cycles of boom and bust, increasing income gaps, high levels of unemployment. Recent rapid globalization of the world economy has exacerbated many of these problems and tensions and has lowered living standards for many. Working-class solidarity, trade unionism, and indeed the industrial working class itself have all proved weaker than socialists expected.

The new secular social systems have also had mixed success, ameliorating some major problems but often creating new ones. The decline in racial barriers worldwide was a major advance, but was nowhere accompanied by adequate educational, health, and other measures to provide equality of opportunity among racial groups. Ethnic tensions have sometimes worsened. Many parts of Europe have seen growing hostility to immigrants, especially to Muslims. Women have won greater equality, but very few countries have adequate child care and other services for working mothers. Some women, given current difficulties, long for a return to the days of the idealized two-parent, male-breadwinner family, often associated with religious morality.

In short, secularism is nowhere in the West a simple *fait accompli*. The spread of secular beliefs and practices in Europe and the United States has involved slow change and continuing, sometimes sharp, debate. As a result, it would be foolish to expect that secularist reforms would somehow be accomplished more easily in the Middle East and South Asia. I would argue that the slow ripening of secular tendencies is more important than doctrinal differences in explaining the current strength of secularism in the West. As even a short survey indicates, the West was at first no more open to secularization than are parts of the Middle East and South Asia today. As I have argued elsewhere, the common idea that religion and politics have always been more inextricably intertwined in Islam

than in Christianity is untrue. Typically, governments in the Muslim world followed Islamic rules only to the extent they thought it was in their interest to do so.

Secularism as an animating set of political beliefs came late to the Muslim world, as a by-product of the growing influence of Western political ideas. While Christian Europe underwent its epochal series of struggles between church and state, most Muslim countries remained moderately religious in orientation. Throughout the early modern period, the majority of Middle Eastern rulers adhered to Islam, and Muslim religious leaders continue to play an active role in civil society, though without making claims to temporal authority of the sort advanced by the Roman Catholic Church before the Reformation.

Because secularization has progressed unevenly around the world, secularists in the Middle East now face some of the difficulties previously encountered in Western Europe. For example, just last century, secularists in France and Italy were hesitant to grant women suffrage, for fear that the majority of them would vote with the Catholic Church; some secularists in Arab countries today fear the majority of a free electorate will elect religious parties. Similarly, in 1902 the leaders of the French Radical Party issued an election program that proposed that "By suppressing religious orders, by secularizing ecclesiastical property in mortmain, and by abolishing payment of public money to the clergy, we mean to put into practice this decisive liberal formula – free churches in a free and sovereign state";[18] a few decades later, a somewhat similar policy was pursued in Atatürk's Turkey, in part because Turkish secularists had reasons to fear the socioeconomic, political, and cultural power of their own religious elite.

Western European regimes were inconsistent in their application of secularizing principles – especially in their colonies. While the French and some other colonial powers were suppressing religious schooling at home, they encouraged it in their colonies as part of a wider cultural project. The French colonies, where conservative diplomats and military officers dominated, were exempted from anticlerical laws, as the Catholic orders continued to receive French government subsidies and support for colonial educational institutions by arguing that local nationalists would otherwise take over.[19] Colonial policy sometimes favored certain religious groups, thus increasing sectarian strife – but it also introduced some leaders in colonized areas to Western thinking about secularization and modernization. After studying at Western-model schools or returning to the Middle East and South Asia from schools in the West, several of them opted for secular nationalism, which after World War II became a dominant mode of decolonization not only in India, Turkey, and Tunisia, but also in Egypt, Syria, Iran, and Iraq.

While some have compared the politico-religious ferment in the Muslim world today with the rise of Protestantism, a closer, though still inexact, parallel is the history of religious-secular struggles in Catholic countries. In both possible parallels, religion claimed power in politics, law, personal behavior, and the regulation of gender and family

18 Émile Faguet, *Le Libéralisme* (Paris: Société Française d'Imprimerie, 1903), 121.

19 See Elizabeth Thompson, "Neither Conspiracy nor Hypocrisy: The Jesuits and the French Mandate in Syria and Lebanon," <http://www.columbia.edu/sec/dle/ciao/conf/mei01/the01.html>.

roles. But whereas some version of secularism has emerged victorious in almost every Catholic country, the past few decades have seen a dramatic growth in the influence of so-called Islamists – Muslims who want to consolidate religion and politics in novel combinations that they present as traditional.[20]

Contrary to Christian practice, in Islam there has never been a central body to decide religious dogma; even the central institution of Islamic law has never been universally applied. Here my discussion will center on the Middle East and Pakistan, which include the strictest regions of Islam; and it should be noted that in Southeast Asia and in Africa south of the Sahara, where Islam spread late and peacefully, Islamic law and practice has usually been less strict.

Terms like 'secular' were never widely used in Muslim countries until the twentieth century. Then, until roughly 1967, secularists, nationalists, and socialists played a growing political role in the Muslim world, coming to power in several countries and carrying out secularizing programs as a concomitant to modernization.

The Ottoman Empire and Turkey, its most central successor state, played a pioneering role in this regard. Under the Ottoman Empire, the state exercised an unusual amount of control over its religious institutions. For example, Muslim scholars, or *ulama*, were hierarchically organized and sanctioned by the state, and Ottoman sultans often issued decrees with the force of law. The powers of the central government grew after 1826, enabling it to initiate a number of secularizing measures in the nineteenth century, often under Western pressure. These measures included significant government control over *vakf* (mortmain) property and the declaration of equal rights for Muslims and non-Muslims. Meanwhile, nationalism grew in the army and among the educated middle classes.

The biggest impetus to secular nationalism came after World War I, with the accession to power of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. A war hero, he had led the Turkish troops that repelled the European invaders, forcing the Allied powers to recognize Turkish control of enough territory to constitute a viable nation-state. Since the sultan-caliph had acquiesced in the possibility of an Allied dismemberment of Turkey, there was little internal resistance to Atatürk's abolition of the sultanate and then of the caliphate, though the abolition of the latter aroused resistance in other parts of the Muslim world.

The need for strong government action to establish a secular state was due both to the residual strength of existing Islamic institutions and the felt need to catch up with a West that had a long head start in centralization and modernization. Atatürk's secularizing measures included the romanization of the script and outlawing the use of Arabic – and the abolition of religious education and of Shariah. Modeling Turkish law on the Swiss Civil Code, Atatürk granted women almost equal rights and discouraged veiling. His were the strongest measures against religious institutions any-

20 These problems were early suggested by Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, trans. Carol Volk (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), and are stressed in Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002). The trend to moderation of Iran's policies since the 1978 – 1979 revolution and the early loss of Muslim faith in Iran as a model for revolution elsewhere are relevant, and are discussed in Nikki R. Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003).

where outside the Communist world, as he and many Turkish nationalists adopted the French model of militant laicism.

It is not surprising that after World War II there was a backlash against some of Atatürk's most aggressively secularizing measures. Even secular politicians wanting better relations with the oil-rich Arab world made gestures toward Islam. A dramatic sign of antisecularist reaction was Turkey's giving an electoral plurality to an Islamist party and the appointment of a prime minister from that party in 1996.[21] This in turn produced a secularist reaction, especially within the military, and the Islamist prime minister resigned in the summer of 1997. Mainly because of a deep economic crisis, a new Islamist-based but more moderate and formally secular AK Party won a plurality in the November 2002 elections and has since led the government. Periodic struggles continue over issues like the prohibition of Islamic head covering for women in state localities such as Parliament and universities. This prohibition may eventually be rescinded, but the basic secular nature of Turkey's government is unlikely to change. This is partly because Turkey has hopes of joining the European community, and partly because the active majority of Turks are still secular, though often willing to allow freedom of dress, and the ruling party is not threatening basic secularism.

As in Russia, much of the population was successfully secularized by governmental fiat and policies. There is not as much religious backlash in Turkey today as in several Arab countries in the Middle East, and Turkey is unique in its renunciation of Islamic justifications for laws and institutions. (Laws on women's status have been similarly reformed in Tunisia, but there the reform was carried out under Islamic justification.)

In Iran, the ulama had far more independent power than anywhere else in the Muslim world, due to developments in Iranian Shiism after it became the state religion in 1501. Only in the late nineteenth century did nationalism begin to grow in the country: in dramatic contrast to Muslim leaders, early Iranian nationalists blamed the country's decline on the seventh-century Arab Islamic conquest, and vaunted its ancient 'Aryan' (linguistically Indo-European) heritage. Disgruntled ulama allied with merchants and nationalist reformers in a partially successful antigovernmental revolt in 1890 – 1891. Beginning in late 1905, a revolution produced a constitutional parliamentary regime that continued in power until Russia and Britain intervened in 1911.[22]

Reza Shah, who governed Iran from 1921 until 1941, imitated Atatürk, though in his less modern nation he could not go as far. He centralized his country – chiefly by forcibly settling nomads, improving education, transport, and com-

21 On Turkey see Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964); Binaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981); David Kushner, "Turkish Secularists and Islam," *The Jerusalem Quarterly* 38 (1986): 89 – 106; Roy Mottahedeh, "The Islamic Movement: The Case for Democratic Inclusion," *Contention* 4 (3) (Spring 1995): 107 – 127.

22 In the extensive literature on this, see especially Nikki R. Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Iranian Tobacco Protest of 1891 – 1892* (London: Frank Cass, 1966); Janet Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906 – 1911: Grassroots Democracy, Social Democracy, and the Origins of Feminism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Mangol Bayat, *Iran's First Revolution: Shiism and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905 – 1909* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Vanessa Martin, *Islam and Modernism: The Iranian Revolution of 1906* (London: Tauris, 1989); and several articles by Ann K. S. Lambton.

munications, and promoting the secular nationalist view of Iran hitherto favored by intellectuals. Simultaneously, he forced his citizens to adopt Western dress, promoted a secular public school system, and so forth. Modernizing secularization continued under his son, Muhammad Reza Shah (r. 1941 – 1979), and was widely associated with subservience to the United States and its interests, especially after American leadership and British involvement in the 1953 coup that overthrew the popular (and secular) Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq. Modernization, which took place there almost entirely between 1925 and 1975, was much more sudden in Iran than it had been in Turkey. Meanwhile, the suppression of secular opposition opened the way for the rapid rise and 1979 victory of a multifaceted revolutionary movement led by a religious opposition that appealed to widespread anti-Western and anti-tyrannical feelings.[23]

Other Muslim countries had only partly similar trajectories, which I will describe in brief. By a historical contingency, in the Middle East only Arab countries experienced Western colonial rule. Almost all of them outside the Arabian Peninsula were for a time either colonies, protectorates, or mandates of Britain or France. Western control of Palestine in the crucial years after 1918 culminated in the creation of Israel, which greatly strengthened anti-Western currents in the Arab Middle East. In Palestine and Algeria, the only Muslim countries occupied by foreign settlers, there was a strong counter-assertion of national and religious identities, prompted in large part by efforts to assert local, non-Western cultural values in regions ruled by the West.

Secular nationalists generally led the anticolonial liberation movements after World War II. In Egypt, Gamal Abdul Nasser participated in a 1952 revolution and survived an assassination attempt by the Muslim Brotherhood in 1954, which he used to legitimate a crackdown on religious institutions; two years later, Nasser declared Egypt a socialist state. Popular support for his brand of secularism began to fade with the defeat of Egypt by Israel in the Six-Day War in 1967, and his successors, as autocratic as he, provoked even deeper distrust by instituting 'free market' policies that, critics charged, primarily served Western interests. Current Egyptian Prime Minister Hosni Mubarak has not limited his crackdown to militant Islamists; he has arrested and brought to trial a number of dissidents, including civil rights leaders like Saad Eddin Ibrahim.

In Tunisia after its 1956 independence, Habib Bourguiba instated strongly secular measures that reinterpreted Islam, weakened religious institutions, and introduced virtually equal rights for women. His successor, Ben Ali, however, has autocratically suppressed both Islamists of all varieties and civil rights lawyers and advocates.

In Algeria, governmental suppression of the 1992 elections that Islamists were poised to win led to a bloody civil war, but also to a significant decline in militant Islamism.[24] Jordan and Morocco's recent histories are more moderate; Saudi Arabia is ruled under a strict Islamic

23 Among the many works on Iran, see Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982); H. E. Chehabi, *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990); Nikki R. Keddie, *Iran and the Muslim World: Resistance and Revolution* (London: Macmillan, 1995); Sami Zubaida, *Islam, The People and the State* (London: Routledge, 1989).

24 See *Islamism and Secularism in North Africa*, ed. John Ruedy (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

creed that dates back to the eighteenth century; Syria and pre-war Iraq have simultaneously suppressed Islamic and non-Islamic opposition. Militant Islam is still a strong force in much of the Muslim world, but I would agree with those who point to its weakening in recent years in key centers including Iran, Egypt, and Algeria. Despite the bin Laden phenomenon, it seems unlikely that militant Islamists will take over more Arab governments in the near future.[25] On the other hand, recent U.S. policies toward the Arab-Israeli dispute, Pakistan, and most recently, Iraq, have led to a growth in both Islamist and non-Islamist hostility to the U.S. government in the Arab world, Turkey, Pakistan, and Southeast Asia that could be expressed in further violence against American and Western targets.

The fatal association of secularism with autocratic rule and Western influence helps account for the general trend against secularism in the Muslim world;[26] when people want to be free of Western control, they don't generally envision the path to their salvation in the secularist ideas sovereign in the West. The creation in recent decades of modernized and highly political versions of Islam encourages mobilization of the still-religious masses and provides the elements of an ideology that seems familiar, powerful – and untainted by Western influence.

In recent years, Islamist Muslims have introduced antisecular elements rare in past Islamic history, like the total intertwining of religion and politics and the political primacy of clerical and lay Muslim leaders. The idea and practice of codifying Islamic law and making it the law of the state is also distinctly modern. Still, most people attracted to Islamist ideologies do not envision a violent overthrow of their governments; they rather wish to establish political parties and participate in free elections. Several Islamists today champion values long associated with secularism in the West, including democracy and respect for modern science, technology, and education. Anti-Western terrorism, while of natural international concern, involves a very small minority of Muslims, and has thus far spread far less than many feared after 2001.

Paradoxically enough, the Islamic country where forms of secularism are most popular today is probably Iran. Reformists have won repeated electoral victories in the country since 1997, demonstrations against the hard-liners who control the government are increasingly frequent, and there is a healthy ferment in the arts. Just as the Iranian revolution was briefly seen as a model in much of the Muslim world, so Iranian reformism and activist opposition to clerical autocracy are now models for many outside Iran.[27] Furthermore, in Iran as elsewhere, a number of writers, mostly women, have undertaken the difficult issue of interpreting early Islamic traditions as implying equality for women, and there have been a few legal and many social changes in the direction of greater gender equality, though laws are far more unequal than they were under

25 Kepel, *Jihad*; Olivier Roy is also writing a book on these questions.

26 These points are emphasized in several chapters of *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East*, ed. Azzam Tamimi and John L. Esposito (London: Hurst and Co., 2000).

27 See Asef Bayat and Bahman Baktiari, "Revolutionary Iran and Egypt: Exporting Inspirations and Anxieties," in *Iran and the Surrounding World*, ed. Nikki R. Keddie and Rudi Matthee (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002).

the Shah.[28] Women now comprise 63 percent of university entrants, as health, education, and family programs have brought birthrates down from seven per woman to two.

Some intellectuals in Iran and elsewhere in the Muslim world think that advances associated with secularism in the West can be achieved via reinterpretations of Islam without renouncing the ties between state and religion. The economic failures and cultural repression experienced under Islamic rule have disillusioned most Iranians, whose anticlericalism is exemplified by the pervasive refusal of the country's taxi drivers to pick up clerics. Many Iranians are speaking not only against clerical rule, but also explicitly in favor of the separation of religion and the state. The failures of the Islamic Republic have also dampened enthusiasm for Islamic revolution and rule elsewhere.

The dynamics of secularization in South Asia and Israel, where religion and nationalism have been closely intertwined for decades, have been somewhat different from those in the West and the Middle East. In Pakistan and Israel, religious identity spurred movements to create a nation, movements chiefly based on religious nationalism. And in both countries religion-based parties have grown since the states' formation, and constitute a significant element in political life.

The early leaders of Israel's Zionist movement were, however, secularists, as were a number of Pakistan's founders, including Muhammad Ali Jinnah.[29] And secularist intellectuals continue to be stronger in these countries than in much of the Islamic Middle East. As a result, there is no consensus that being a Jewish or Muslim state requires any further strengthening of religious laws.

Pakistan differs greatly from Israel, however; it trails Israel in modernization and education programs, and must also contend with widespread poverty and persistent tribal and regional power centers. Having enacted, under General Zia ul-Haq in the 1970s, 'Islamic' laws that discriminate against women and religious minorities, it is also substantially different from Israel on the social front. Current Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has secular aims, but by his acts he has alienated many Islamists and democratic secularists alike, and he is having trouble in his efforts to introduce secular education into the far-flung *madrasas*. Ultimately, Israel's government and society, despite all the privileges granted to Jews and the religious parties, are more secular than Pakistan's.

The case of India, where Hinduism is practiced among several other major religions, is more complex. Hinduism, it has been argued, did not originate as a single religion, but rather was 'reformed' into a unity of doctrine and practice after the coming of the British and the development of clearer Christian and Muslim identities within the country.[30] Reform movements that incorporated Western influences first emerged in India during the early nineteenth century and developed earliest among Hindus, who occupied more middle-class positions than Muslims.

28 See Nikki R. Keddie, "Women in Iran since 1979," *Social Research* 67 (2) (Summer 2000): 405 – 438, and the sources it cites.

29 See Stanley A. Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

30 See chapters by David Shulman, Heinrich von Stietencron, and Robert E. Frykenberg in Gunther D. Sontheimer and Hermann Kulke, eds., *Hinduism Reconsidered* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1989).

Founded in 1885, the Indian National Congress was predominantly liberal-secular, and officially neutral regarding religion. Such religious neutrality seemed necessary if the party was to enlist both Muslims and Hindus in the struggle for national independence. On the other hand, some leaders' emphasis on Hindu issues (for example, the movement against cow slaughter) as advocated in the early twentieth century by B. G. Tilak attracted mostly Hindu support and alienated some non-Hindus.

In the first years of the twentieth century, divisive communal issues came to the fore with the abortive partition of Bengal, favored by Muslims but broadly opposed by Hindus. The dispute over Bengal led to the formation of the Muslim League and to the granting of separate electorates, at first for local bodies, based on religion. Congress and the Muslim League cooperated in the Khilafat movement of support for the Ottoman caliphate during and after World War I, but this became a nonissue with Atatürk's abolition of the caliphate, and the cooperation broke down.

The Congress Party attracted a number of Muslim politicians, most prominently A. K. Azad, at a time when the Muslim League was far from securing the majority of Muslim voters. Congress secularism had unacknowledged contradictions, however, and the successes of the party's outstanding leader Mohandas Gandhi were partly due to the mass appeal of his spiritual themes such as nonviolence and asceticism, which were closer to certain Hindu and Jain traditions than to Islam. On the other hand, the religious Gandhi and his agnostic fellow Congress leader Jawaharlal Nehru were in agreement that the national movement and ultimate national government of a united India should be secular in its policies and treat all religions equally.

In elections for provincial legislatures in 1937, the Muslim League did not get the majority of Muslim votes, but subsequently many Muslims found the performance of the Congress-dominated legislatures pro-Hindu and discriminatory. In the 1940s, after the Muslim League's determination to make Pakistan a Muslim state further aroused communal-religious feelings, most Muslims actively supported the creation of a separate Muslim state. While partition might have been avoided – especially if Nehru had accepted proposals for substantial autonomy for Muslim regions – it instead took effect with brutal suddenness after the hasty departure of the British in 1947. Large-scale massacres occurred on both sides.[31] And in the decades that followed the partition, three major Indian leaders were assassinated for religio-political reasons: Mahatma Gandhi in 1948 by a Hindu nationalist; Nehru's daughter, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in 1984 by a Sikh militant; and her son, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, in 1991 by a Hindu adherent of the Tamil Tigers.

In India after the partition, maintaining state secularism and religious neutrality proved difficult, and the Indian constitution did not establish a uniform civil code. In 1985, a crisis ensued when a branch of the Indian supreme court ruled that an elderly Muslim woman, Shah Bano, was entitled to maintenance by her ex-husband under a section of the Indian Criminal Code, and went beyond this in advocating a uniform civil code. This led to significant Hindu-Muslim conflict, though some Muslim women and liberals agreed with the judgment. Rajiv Gandhi's Congress (I) government backtracked, however, successfully

31 See Gyanenda Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

pushing a 1986 law exempting Muslim women from the law of maintenance. A Hindu nationalist backlash was a factor in the ultimately successful campaign to demolish the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya.[32] Other governmental acts that encouraged communal reactions included affirmative action policies for Muslims and for disfavored castes and tribes at a time when educated Hindus were experiencing high unemployment.

In recent years, Hindu nationalism has grown in power; its party, the BJP, currently leads the government. A number of intellectuals, including Ashis Nandy, T. N. Madan, and Partha Chatterjee, have questioned either secularism itself or the particular secularist policies of past governments. Some Indian intellectuals defend secularism, but criticize its application, arguing, for example, that Nehru and his followers adopted a top-down policy, doing little to negotiate with religious people before handling problems with insensitivity. Others criticize the government's conformity to public opinion. As a result of these ongoing controversies, contemporary India has produced perhaps the world's largest contemporary body of publications debating the merits of secularism.[33]

The conflict between secularism and religious nationalism has been a recurrent theme of recent South Asian history not only in India but also in Sri Lanka. In reaction to Hindu and Muslim versions of religious nationalism, Sikh and Buddhist nationalist movements have emerged in South Asia. In India, Sikhs and Muslims have clashed with Hindus; in Sri Lanka, Buddhists are battling Hindus. All of these religious nationalist movements have contributed to a weakening of secularism in the region.[34]

The Indian situation differs from that of the Muslim world in that it involves reactions against a longstanding secular government with democratic elections. At the same time, Western political hegemony is less of an issue in India. India and the Muslim world are similar in that secularism developed there much more rapidly than in the West – imposed top-down on populations that have not yet embraced a secular outlook.

Another area where secularism has been on the defensive, and religio-politics on the rise, is a very different country, neither third world nor newly established: the United States.

The United States has little in common with the countries surveyed so far, and very possibly most of the reasons for the attacks on secularism in the United States are different from those elsewhere, even though its antisecular forces became strong almost simultaneously. There do, however, seem to be some similarities.

32 See especially the chapters on South Asia in *Fundamentalism and Gender*, ed. John Stratton Hawley and Wade Proudfoot (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

33 A good sampling of published work on the question is *Secularism and its Critics*, ed. Rajeev Bhargava (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), with an outstanding chapter by Akeel Bilgrami. The issue is intelligently covered in T. N. Madan, *Modern Myths, Locked Minds: Secularism and Fundamentalism in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997).

34 On religious nationalisms in India see Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and the relevant chapters by Daniel Gold, Robert Eric Frykenberg, Harjat Oberoi, Ainslee T. Embree, and Peter van der Veer in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms Observed, Fundamentalisms and the State,* and *Accounting for Fundamentalisms* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1991 – 1994).

Notably, the rise of the New Religious Politics since 1970 is in part a reaction to strong and sometimes resented secular measures, accompanied by a rise in government centralization and increasing encroachment in many spheres of life. In the United States there have been a number of secularizing governmental measures, but antisecular opposition has focused in particular on two Supreme Court decisions: the outlawing of school prayer in 1962 and the legalization of abortion in 1973. The fundamentalists' earlier focus on creationism versus evolution, a matter for local governments and school boards, has expanded to encompass opposition to schools' teaching about homosexuality – and, indeed, about sex at all.[35]

Throughout the world, the strengthening of antisecular political parties and movements has been accompanied by some weakening of secular parties and movements, a weakening due not only to political failures but also to popular disillusionment with the old secular ideologies and panaceas. The end of Communism unleashed in some populations a renewal of religious traditions not wholly lost in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Among worldwide behavioral trends are the rise of freer sexual habits, resulting in more babies born out of wedlock and a rise in sexually transmitted diseases and crime rates, and a felt decline in community action and spirit, partly due to atomizing forces like television. Some people find in revived religious ties and morality a partial or complete solution for such problems.

In the past, when religion and government were usually intertwined, it was easy for dissidents to see the weakening of religious powers and the creation of secular states as major steps to solving social problems. Similarly, today, when secularism and government are usually intertwined, it is easy for dissidents to react against secular states and call for an obvious alternative – renewed political power for religion. The same 'enemy of my enemy is my friend' logic applies to ideology. In the past, when secular ideologies like nationalism, socialism, and free market capitalism had not been widely tried, they could more easily be presented as keys to creating a better world. In recent decades this situation has been reversed, and religious groups no longer tied to government have been able to advance religious solutions to intractable secular problems.

A related dynamic is at work in some intellectual circles, in which disillusion with various older secular ideals has opened the door for some to reinstate religion or create new religious ideologies. This goes along with the upswing in identity politics in recent decades, where religion, along with ethnicity, gender, and sexual preference, has become a basis of political solidarity, in part replacing older identities based on class or patriotism, or on universalist worldviews like socialism and liberalism.

In some ways, however, the rise in religiosity and decline in secularism are perhaps less pervasive than they seem. For one thing, all sorts of traditions eschewed by the Westernized educated classes have come to be seen, often erroneously, as belonging to religious tradi-

35 Different approaches to religion and politics in contemporary America are found in Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1995); Garry Wills, *Under God: Religion and American Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990); Ralph Reed, *Active Faith: How Christians are Changing the Soul of American Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1996). A thorough survey is Barry A. Kosmin and Seymour P. Lachman, *One Nation Under God: Religion in Contemporary American Society* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1993).

tion. In the Islamic world as in the United States, the religious Right has embraced a romantic view of traditional social relations, projecting a picture of harmony that never, or rarely, existed.[36] At the same time, when religious parties have come to power, as in Iran, they have tended to retain, or eventually to reinstate, important components of modern secularism. Not only, for example, did Iran's Islamic Republic adopt a largely secular constitution using Western models, but its economy, foreign policy, and educational system are also run on mainly secular lines, despite a religious overlay that, as with the U.S. religious Right, concerns mainly questions of gender and sexuality.

The backlash to secularism is likely to produce its own backlash, which is happening already in Iran, particularly among young people and women, who have been able to force some changes in policy. In the United States too, for all the superior grassroots political organization of the religious Right, fundamentalism has so far been unable to win majority support, either in elections or in polling on major moral and social issues, even though it has importantly influenced Republican policies.

Taking the world as a whole, we see that secularism today is not in overwhelming retreat, although antisecular ideologies now have more strength than they did some decades ago. Still, the struggle between secular and religious worldviews is far from over.

In conclusion, I think it is worth stressing two major points that emerge from this brief comparative historical survey of secularism around the world:

First, secularization around the world has been a far longer, more difficult, and more partial process than is usually assumed. It requires a profound change in human outlook: in both the West and the East, the difficulties of establishing stable secular regimes have often been underestimated.

Second, the Western path to secularism, and indeed the Western definitions of secularism, may not be fully applicable in all parts of the world, because of religious differences and the complex impact of Western colonialism. It is therefore predictable that non-Western states that try to establish secularism quickly by government fiat, without marshaling popular support, will experience serious difficulties – and run the risk of provoking a religious backlash. Modern religious rule has not, however, solved the problems that brought it to power. It has increased inequalities between genders and among religious communities and has brought about its own backlash and countermobilizations.

36 See Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

Henry Munson

'Fundamentalism' ancient & modern

During the reign of the Seleucid King Antiochus Epiphanes (r. 175 – 164 B.C.E.), lawless men arose in Israel and urged their fellow Jews to follow Greek customs in defiance of the laws of God. The king commanded the Jews to sacrifice pigs in the temple and leave their sons uncircumcised. Seleucid soldiers were to kill all those who disobeyed. Yet some Jews continued to obey the laws of God over those of the king. Among them was the priest Mattathias, who fled the desecration of Jerusalem to seek refuge in the nearby town of Modi'in.

The king's men came to Modi'in and ordered Mattathias to sacrifice in the Greek manner. He refused. Then a Jew came forward to sacrifice as the king commanded. When Mattathias saw this, he was full of righteous rage and killed both the Jew and a Seleucid officer trying to enforce the king's laws. Mattathias then cried out, "Let every one who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me" (1 Macc. 2:27, RSV). Mattathias and his sons and others seeking justice and righteousness fled to the hills of Judea. Joined by a band of "pious ones," they struck down the sinners and the lawless men. They tore down the unholy altars of the Hellenists. They forcibly circumcised the uncircumcised boys within the boundaries of Israel. "They rescued the law out of the hands of the Gentiles" (1 Macc. 2:48). When Mattathias died, his son Judah the Maccabee – or Judah 'the Hammer' (*Yehuda ha-Maccabi*) – succeeded him as leader of the rebellion against Hellenism and the Seleucid dynasty. At first, Judah and his men lived in mountain caves like wild animals (2 Macc. 10:6), but he was eventually able to gather an army of pious Jews to attack and burn towns and villages at night. Like a lion, he "pursued the lawless" and "destroyed the ungodly," and "terror fell upon the Gentiles round about them" (1 Macc. 3:3 – 5, 8, 25). Judah eventually gained control of the temple in Jerusalem and purified it of all traces of the Hellenistic abominations. Jews celebrate this deliverance from oppression every year at Hanukkah.

The first and second books of the Maccabees emphasize the Maccabean insistence on strict conformity to the Torah and the punishment of Hellenistic Jews who renounced God's laws. At the same time, there clearly was a nationalistic and anti-imperialist dimension to the

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Maccabean revolt. Judah "gladly fought for Israel" and "extended the glory of his people" (1 Macc. 3:2-3). He called upon the Lord to look upon His "oppressed people" as well as His desecrated temple (2 Macc. 8:2). Exhorting his men to prepare for battle, Judah declared, "It is better for us to die in battle than to see the misfortunes of our nation and of the sanctuary" (1 Macc. 3:59).

The Maccabean revolt illustrates several important features of the modern movements commonly called fundamentalist. These movements demand strict conformity to sacred scriptures and to a moral code ostensibly based on these scriptures. They are usually politically assertive, although they sometimes oscillate between periods of militancy and quiescence. They are fueled in large part by moral outrage at what their supporters see as violations of the laws of God. At the same time, such moral outrage is often meshed with nationalistic and social grievances. We see this in the revolt of the Maccabees in the second century B.C.E. – and also in the revolt of Al Qaeda in our own time.

The Islamists of Al Qaeda are, in effect, Muslim Maccabees fighting the American rather than the Seleucid empire, and Westernization rather than Hellenization. Of course, Judah the Maccabee, unlike Osama bin Laden, did not blame his people's problems on Jewish conspiracies. Nor did he ever destroy the tallest building in the economic heartland of the empire he attacked. But in other respects, Judah the Maccabee and his followers can be compared to the militant Islamic revivalists of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

For millennia, traditional believers have had to confront cultural innovations that violate their basic beliefs and values – Hellenism, after all, embodied modernity in the Judea of the second century B.C.E.

Traditional believers confronted by new, widespread values in conflict with their own have, in principle, three options. They can withdraw from the broader culture, like a turtle under its shell. They can adapt to cultural innovations, as liberal Christians, Jews, and Muslims all have. Or they can fight back, militantly defending their traditional beliefs. These three options are not mutually exclusive. Even those who withdraw from the broader culture are inevitably affected by it. Even those who fight against innovations often end up adapting to them. Mattathias and his sons initially tried to withdraw from what they saw as the violation of God's laws. Then they felt compelled to fight back. But eventually the Maccabees adapted to Hellenistic culture and ruled under the auspices of the very empire they had once fought.

Many scholars have questioned the use of the term 'fundamentalism' as an analytical category in the comparative study of religious movements.[1] Their criticism tends to revolve around the following points:

- the term 'fundamentalist' is both polemical and prejudicial, insofar as it portrays all those who refuse to dilute

1 The most influential – and controversial – comparative study of the phenomenon has been the monumental *Fundamentalism Project* directed by Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby. Sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, this project produced five encyclopedic volumes, all published by the University of Chicago Press in the 1990s. These volumes are an indispensable resource for anyone interested in the comparative study of militant religious conservatism in the late twentieth century.

the fundamental tenets of their religions as bigots and fanatics;

- the term is of Protestant origin and to apply it in other religious contexts distorts the true nature of the movements so described; and
- the term is used to refer to such a wide range of movements that it glosses over many of their distinctive features.

It is true that – except for Christian fundamentalists who take pride in applying the term to themselves – 'fundamentalist' has negative connotations of bigotry, fanaticism, and even terrorism, given the current widespread use of the phrase 'Islamic fundamentalism.' This is one reason most specialists on the Islamic world prefer 'Islamism' or 'political Islam.' Even conservative Protestants sometimes see 'fundamentalist' as a term of abuse used to discredit those who insist on defending the traditional beliefs of their religion.

Scholars should of course avoid demonizing militant religious conservatives. At the same time, however, they should also avoid idealizing them. Many specialists on the Islamic world are so determined to avoid demonization that they end up minimizing the bigotry and violence often associated with militant Islamic movements, which generally threaten the rights of religious minorities, women, and all those who do not believe what they believe. These movements reject the idea of a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. And some of them have no qualms about using violence to achieve their goals. Such movements have acquired their reputation for fanaticism the old-fashioned way: they have earned it. So while we should resist embracing the 'axis of evil' idea of Islamic militancy, we should not view all Islamists as the innocent victims of Western 'Islamophobia.'

Yet no matter how critical we may be of Islamic militancy, if we wish to explain movements of any kind, we need to understand how the people in them see the world, and why they see it as they do. This entails the careful study of the words and actions of their leaders and supporters in the social-historical contexts that have shaped them. Understanding the insider's point of view is essential not only on scholarly grounds, but also with respect to shaping government policy. If, for example, a government seeks to limit the appeal of an extremist group like bin Laden's Al Qaeda, it must know the sources of the group's appeal. Policies based on empirically baseless assumptions about the appeal of such movements are likely to be ineffective.

'Fundamentalism' ancient & modern

Unlike words like 'zealot' and 'puritan,' which have transcended their original Jewish and Christian contexts, it is sometimes hard to separate the generic use of the term 'fundamentalism' from its original Protestant meaning. This is one reason most people would not speak of 'Catholic fundamentalism.' Moreover, Protestant fundamentalists have traditionally condemned Catholicism as an illegitimate perversion of Christianity, so the very phrase 'Catholic fundamentalism' seems absurd. Yet to compare Catholic conservatism with other forms of religious conservatism, both militant and moderate, is useful.

The case of Catholic conservatism raises one of the most serious problems with the use of the term 'fundamentalist' in comparative analysis: the danger of producing an arbitrary and misleading sense of uniformity. The term is often used indiscriminately to describe a wide variety of movements in which religion actually plays very different roles. A striking example of this is the

use of the term 'Hindu fundamentalist' to describe Hindu nationalism. This movement stresses the linkage between Hindu and Indian national identity – not strict conformity to sacred scripture and a moral code based on it.[2] This is not to suggest that there is no value in comparing Hindu nationalism with movements that insist on strict conformity to scripture; there is, so long as we do not assume that religion plays the same role in all of them.

In short, then, there are real problems with using the term 'fundamentalism' in comparative analysis. My own preference is to avoid using the term as much as possible. Yet one *can* speak of a fundamentalist impulse in some Christian, Jewish, and Muslim movements, in terms of their insistence on strict conformity to sacred scripture. This fundamentalist impulse is not equally significant in all cases. Comparing the various roles it plays in these very different movements is useful so long as we pay close attention to the other kinds of grievances and goals with which it is often intertwined.

The word 'fundamentalist,' traditionally written with an uppercase 'F,' was coined in 1920 to refer to militantly conservative evangelical Protestants ready to fight for the basic tenets presented in *The Fundamentals*, a series of twelve pamphlets published in the United States from 1910 to 1915 whose central theme is that the Bible is the inerrant word of God. The early-twentieth-century Christian Fundamentalists believed they should live according to a strict, biblically based moral code, were outraged by the 'higher criticism' of the Bible, opposed the teaching of evolution, and supported the temperance movement.

The conventional wisdom is that after the Scopes trial of 1925, most Christian Fundamentalists avoided the political arena until the late 1970s. This is only partially true. Fundamentalists like Gerald B. Winrod (1900 – 1957) and Gerald L. K. Smith (1898 – 1976) ran for public office in the 1930s and 1940s on platforms that combined anti-Semitism, anticommunism, populism, and Christian revivalism. From the 1950s through the 1970s, Fundamentalist preachers like Billy James Hargis combined similar themes with opposition to racial integration. Most Christian Fundamentalists in the South opposed the civil rights movement and the federal government's attempts to deny tax-exempt status to the many Christian schools founded to circumvent the court-ordered racial integration of public schools.[3] In 1963, when Governor George Wallace refused to integrate Alabama's schools, Hargis's Christian Crusade called him "Christian Patriot of the Year."[4]

The Christian Right that emerged with the formation of Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority in 1979 was a response to the cultural transformations of the 1960s and 1970s. Fundamentalists were outraged by Supreme Court rulings that legalized abortion and banned school prayer. The increasingly permissive sexual morality that came to prevail in American culture also outraged religious conservatives. On the other hand, the new Christian Right distanced itself from the racism that had marked earlier Christian Fundamentalist movements in the South.

2 Henry Munson, "Not All Crustaceans Are Crabs: Reflections on the Comparative Study of Fundamentalism and Politics," *Contention* 4 (3) (1995).

3 William C. Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996), 173.

4 Ibid., 79.

Some would argue that to oppose abortion, feminism, and civil rights for homosexuals, and to sanction school prayer, is inevitably to oppose 'modernity.' Religious conservatives would respond that such an argument is biased and based on liberal religious and political assumptions. They would say that it is possible, for example, to oppose abortion on the grounds that it constitutes murder, and yet endorse the idea of a tolerant society in which all citizens have equal rights regardless of their religious identity.

'Fundamentalism' ancient & modern

In the late twentieth century, the term 'fundamentalist' was often applied to three main trends in Orthodox Judaism: militant religious Zionism, Ashkenazi ultra-Orthodoxy, and the Sephardic (Middle Eastern) ultra-Orthodoxy represented by the Shas Party. All three groups stress the need for conformity to sacred texts and to a moral code based on such texts, and they have all played important roles in Israeli politics. To understand these movements, a brief overview of modern Jewish history is needed.

In the late nineteenth century, some Jews concluded that the only solution to anti-Semitism was the creation of a Jewish state. Instead of waiting for God and the Messiah to bring the Jews back to the Land of Israel, Zionists such as Theodor Herzl (1860 – 1904) argued that Jews should take it upon themselves to return to this land. Most Orthodox rabbis opposed Zionism on the grounds that it involved humans trying to do what only God and the Messiah should do. Another reason for Orthodox hostility to Zionism was that most of the early Zionist leaders were not interested in a state based on strict conformity to Jewish religious law.

In speaking of Orthodox Judaism, one has to distinguish between the modern Orthodox and the ultra-Orthodox. The modern Orthodox insist on strict conformity to Jewish law, but they have nonetheless devised ways to participate in modern society. The ultra-Orthodox are more demanding, insisting on strict separation from gentile society and from Jews who do not rigorously observe religious law. Hostility toward Zionism prevailed among both modern Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox rabbis in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But such hostility virtually disappeared among the modern Orthodox when the Holocaust appeared to confirm the Zionist argument that Jews could be safe only in their own state.

Some modern Orthodox rabbis sought to legitimate Orthodox participation in the Zionist movement by severing it from the idea of the Messiah. Rabbi Isaac Jacob Reines (1839 – 1915), who founded the religious Zionist movement in 1902, agreed with the ultra-Orthodox that Jews should not try to 'force the End.' He embraced the traditional belief that Jews should passively await the coming of the Messiah, but he argued that the Zionist settlement of the Land of Israel had nothing to do with the future messianic redemption of the Jews and thus did not constitute a heretical defiance of God's will. The manifestly messianic implications of the 'ingathering of the exiles' in the Land of Israel limited the appeal of this idea, which was soon displaced by a radically different view, namely that Zionism was itself part of the gradual messianic redemption of the Jewish people and the Land of Israel. The secular Zionists were doing the work of God and the Messiah but they did not yet know it. Rabbi Abraham Kook (1865 – 1935) made this argument, and it has remained a basic theme in religious Zionism.

Religious Zionists are usually referred to as the 'national religious' (*datim le'u-*

mim in Hebrew). This term captures the fusion of religion and nationalism that has come to characterize religious Zionism. Unlike the ultra-Orthodox, the religious Zionists have always been willing to cooperate with the far more numerous secular Zionists who were primarily responsible for creating the modern state of Israel. Traditionally, the National Religious Party (NRP) and its predecessors were most concerned with domestic religious issues, such as the observance of Shabbat, and left foreign affairs to the Labor Party. The Six-Day War of 1967 awakened the dormant messianic dimension of religious Zionism. Many religious Zionists saw the war as a miracle and as a major step forward on the way toward the redemption of the Jewish people. East Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, Judea, the very heart of ancient Israel, were now once again in Jewish hands. To return any of this land to the Arabs would be to defy God's plan for the redemption of the Jewish people and the Land of Israel. The religious Zionists who felt this way (and not all did) began to settle in the territories occupied or – as they saw it – 'liberated' in the war.

The militant religious Zionists in the vanguard of the settlement movement formed a group called Gush Emunim, 'the Bloc of the Faithful.' They clashed with the more dovish religious Zionists who still led the NRP in the 1960s and 1970s. The doves like the militants believed that God had given all the Land of Israel to the Jews, but they felt that making peace, and thus saving Jewish lives, took priority over retaining the land. For the militant settlers, however, settling the land and preventing the government from withdrawing from it took priority over everything else.

Militant religious Zionists advocate the creation of a state based on the religious laws to which they strictly adhere in their everyday lives. But their political activities have focused primarily on settling and retaining the land won in 1967 rather than on creating a state and society based on strict conformity to religious law. While there is no denying the fundamentalist dimension of religious Zionism, it is also important to remember its nationalist dimension and its roots in the revisionist Zionist idea that force must be used to fight the inherently anti-Semitic gentile.

To understand how the fundamentalist impulse came to be meshed with a militant form of nationalism in religious Zionism, we can turn to the writings of Rabbi Meir Kahane (1932 – 1990). In his book *Listen World, Listen Jew*, Kahane offers a Zionist interpretation of the concept of *Qiddush ha-shem* (Kidush Hashem), 'the sanctification of the name [of God],' which is the traditional Hebrew expression meaning 'martyrdom':

> A Jewish fist in the face of the astonished gentile world that has not seen it for two millennia, this is Kidush Hashem. Jewish dominion over the Christian holy places while the Church that sucked our blood vomits its rage and frustration. This is Kidush Hashem. A Jewish Air Force that is better than any other and that forces a Lebanese airliner down so that we can imprison murderers of Jews rather than having to repeat the centuries-old pattern of begging the gentile to do it for us. This is Kidush Hashem . . . . Reading angry editorials about Jewish "aggression" and "violations" rather than flowery eulogies over dead Jewish victims. That is Kidush Hashem.[5]

The rage that suffuses this passage was not provoked by 'modernity.' Like Judah the Maccabee, Kahane revolted against

5 Meir Kahane, *Listen World, Listen Jew* (Jerusalem: Institute of the Jewish Idea, 1978), 121 – 122.

both gentiles who oppressed Jews and Jews who rejected the laws of God. (He often referred to secular Jews as Hellenists.) His slogan "Never again" referred to his goal of ensuring that the gentile would never again slaughter the Jew. In Israel when one sees or hears the expression "Kahane was right," one immediately understands that this refers to Kahane's goal of expelling all Arabs from the Land of Israel, and not to his goal of a state based on strict conformity to Jewish religious law. So while there was a fundamentalist dimension to Kahane's political orientation, it was meshed with other issues that were far more important sources of his political significance.

Kahane's militant nationalism should have been anathema to ultra-Orthodox Jews, who are often called *Haredim* – Hebrew for 'those who tremble' in the presence of God. Like Christian fundamentalists in the United States, the Haredim have been torn between the desire to withdraw from society and the desire to reform it. Unlike the modern Orthodox, virtually all of whom are religious Zionists, the ultra-Orthodox continue to reject Zionism – in principle at least. In practice, many ultra-Orthodox Jews admire Kahane and the militant religious Zionism he represents. Indeed, the boundary between the ultra-Orthodox passively awaiting the Messiah and the religious Zionists actively working for his arrival is more porous than one might assume.

It is important to distinguish between the Ashkenazi Haredim – that is, the ultra-Orthodox of Eastern European origin – and the ultra-Orthodox of Middle Eastern origin, who will be discussed below. Unlike the religious Zionists (mostly Ashkenazim), whose political activities since 1967 have focused primarily on settling and preventing withdrawal from the territories occupied in the Six-Day War, the Ashkenazi ultra-Orthodox political parties have continued to concentrate primarily on obtaining funding for their community and on enforcing strict conformity to their interpretation of Jewish religious law with respect to issues like observance of the Sabbath, conversion, kosher dietary laws, and the desecration of the dead by archaeologists. Since the Six-Day War, however, most Ashkenazi Haredim have tended to support the hard-line position of the militant religious Zionists regarding 'land-for-peace,' despite their continued theoretical opposition to Zionism. Conversely, religious Zionists have increasingly embraced the stricter behavioral code of the Haredim. The Ashkenazi Haredim traditionally withdrew from surrounding gentile society in the Diaspora and continue to separate themselves from mainstream Israeli society. Yet in the last few decades of the twentieth century, they became increasingly aggressive in trying to incorporate their moral code into Israeli law.[6]

The Shas Party typifies the third major form of militant Orthodoxy in Israel often called fundamentalist. 'Shas' is a Hebrew acronym for 'Sephardim Guardians of the Torah.' Although the term 'Sephardim' originally referred to Jews of Spanish origin, it has come to be used to refer to Jews of Middle Eastern origin (the *Mizrahim*, or 'Oriental Jews'). In Israel's 1999 elections, the Sephardi ultra-Orthodox Shas Party won seventeen of one hundred twenty Knesset seats, thus becoming the third most powerful party in Israel, whereas the Ashkenazi ultra-Orthodox and religious Zionist parties won only five seats each.

6 Samuel C. Heilman and Menachem Friedman, "Religious Fundamentalism and Religious Jews: The Case of the Haredim," in *Fundamentalisms Observed*, ed. R. Scott Appleby (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

In addition to celebrating Sephardic identity and advocating strict conformity to God's laws, Shas provides schools and other social services for poor Sephardim, and much of its popular support is rooted in the frustration and resentment of those Jews of Middle Eastern origin who feel they have been discriminated against by Israelis of European origin. Aryeh Deri, who played a central role in making Shas the third most powerful Israeli political party in the 1990s, has said: "Shas was established on the basis of a sense of discrimination. Shas arose because the Sephardi public felt it did not belong. That it had no framework, no home, either within the Haredi world or within the State of Israel overall. Shas gave those people pride."[7]

To focus only on the fundamentalist dimension of Shas while ignoring the ethnic rage that it articulates would distort a principal source – if not *the* principal source – of the party's appeal. Shas demonstrates that movements called 'fundamentalist' often owe their political success to secular grievances as well as religious ones. We also see this clearly in the case of militant Islamism.

In speaking of the modern Islamic movements that seek to create strictly religious states, we need to bear in mind that they emerged in radically different contexts than the movements in the United States and Israel with which they are usually compared. These two countries have technologically advanced industrial economies, and democracy is firmly entrenched in both. The Islamic world is by and large a part of the third world, and the grievances that fuel Islamic fundamentalism, or 'Islamism,' are in part at least third world grievances. This is notably true of the resentment toward Western domination that pervades the Islamist literature.

At the core of political Islam is the argument that success and victory are signs of God's favor, while failure and defeat are signs of His wrath. (This logic is of course also found in conservative Judaism and Christianity.) Islamists apply this argument as follows: When Muslims obeyed God's commandments, He enabled them to create great empires and civilizations; when they ceased to obey divine law, they became weak and God enabled the infidels of Europe, and later the United States and Israel, to subjugate them.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most of the Islamic world was conquered and colonized by the European powers. By the mid-1950s, most predominantly Muslim countries were independent, but the Islamic world remained relatively weak, and many Muslims saw the establishment of Israel in 1948 as a manifestation of their weakness vis-à-vis the West. Meanwhile, the Islamists argued that if Muslims once again obeyed the laws of God, they would again be strong and capable of defeating not only Israel, but all the Western powers. This argument was made, for example, in 1972 by Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of Iran's Islamic revolution of 1978 – 1979:

> If the Muslim states and peoples had relied on Islam instead of relying on the Eastern or Western bloc – had placed before their eyes the luminous and liberating teachings of the Noble Qur'an, and then practiced those teachings – they would not be enslaved today by the Zionist aggressors, terrorized by American Phantoms, and at the mercy of the satanic cunning of the Soviet Union. It is the gulf between the Muslim states and the Noble Qur'an that

7 Ari Shavit, "He will be back," *Ha'aretz*, 21 July 2000.

> has plunged our people into this dark and catastrophic situation and placed the destiny of the Muslim peoples and countries in the hands of the treacherous policies of imperialism of the right and the left.[8]

In 1964, the Shah of Iran expelled Khomeini from the country for making a speech in which he condemned the government for granting Americans immunity from Iranian law in return for a $200 million loan from the United States. In this speech, Khomeini declared:

> Our dignity has been trampled underfoot; the dignity of Iran has been destroyed. The dignity of the Iranian army has been trampled underfoot. . . . They have reduced the Iranian people to a level lower than that of an American dog. If someone runs over a dog belonging to an American, he will be prosecuted. But if an American cook runs over the Shah, the head of state, no one will have the right to interfere with him. . . . The government has sold our independence, reduced us to the level of a colony, and made the Muslim nation of Iran appear more backward than savages in the eyes of the world.[9]

The sentiment expressed in this speech is clearly one of nationalistic resentment of foreign domination. It is true that Khomeini also viewed Westerners as impure infidels; that he rejected the modern idea of a secular state; that he attributed much that he disliked about the modern world to Jewish conspiracies; and that he persecuted Baha'is and issued a fatwa urging all Muslims to kill Salman Rushdie. To ignore the fundamentalist dimensions of Khomeini's worldview would be a serious mistake, as many Iranians of a secular nationalist orientation discovered after the establishment of Iran's Islamic Republic in 1979.

By the same token, however, to ignore the nationalist and anti-imperialist dimensions of Khomeini's rhetoric would be to ignore some of the key factors that enabled him to overthrow the Shah of Iran. Although Islamists like Khomeini condemn the ideology of nationalism, which they contend Western imperialism introduced into the Islamic world to divide and weaken it, the Iranian revolution of 1978 – 1979 was, among other things, a nationalist revolution against American domination.[10]

Similarly, if we consider the public statements and writings of Osama bin Laden, we find that while he too clearly rejects the idea of a modern secular state in which everyone has equal rights regardless of their religious and sexual identities, he became politically active as a result of his resentment of Western domination – not because of his rejection of 'modernity.' From 1979 to 1989, he actively supported the resistance to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, which he saw as a jihad. He felt it was his duty to help the oppressed believers fight the infidels who were oppressing them.

When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in August of 1990, bin Laden, a Saudi citizen, offered to raise an army to defend Saudi Arabia. Instead, the Saudi government invited American troops, among others, to defend the kingdom against a possible Iraqi invasion, and then allowed the Americans and their various allies to attack Iraq from Saudi bases. *This* is what led to bin Laden's

8 Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, trans. Hamid Algar (Berkeley, Calif.: Mizan Press, 1981), 210.

9 Ibid., 182.

10 Nikki R. Keddie, *Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Modern Iran* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Unversity Press, 1981).

active opposition to both the Saudi regime and the United States.

In 1996, bin Laden told Robert Fisk, "Now the people understand the speeches of the ulema [religious scholars] in the mosques – that our country has become an American colony. They act decisively with every action to kick the Americans out of Saudi Arabia."[11] Also in 1996, bin Laden issued his first public declaration of jihad against the United States. It was entitled "Declaration of Holy War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places" (*I'lan al-Jihad 'ala al-Amrikiyyin al-Muhtallin li-bilad al-Haramayn*).[12] In this text, as in the 1998 "World Islamic Front's Declaration of Jihad against Jews and Crusaders" (*Bayan al-Jabha al-Islamiyya al-'Alamiyya li-Jihad al-Yahud wa'l-Salibiyyin*), bin Laden focused primarily on the American 'occupation' of Saudi Arabia and on what he portrayed as the oppression of the Palestinians and the Iraqis by "the Zionist-Crusader alliance" – that is, the alliance between Israel and the United States.[13] Islamists like bin Laden articulate such grievances in archaic terms of evil infidels oppressing virtuous believers, and they inevitably throw in anti-Semitic nonsense like "these Americans brought . . . Jewish women who can go anywhere in our holy land."[14] But to dismiss the resentment of Western domination articulated by Islamists like bin Laden as mere xenophobia would be a mistake.

Like Khomeini, bin Laden rejects the modern notion of a secular state. But so does the government of Saudi Arabia – a government bin Laden seeks to overthrow. This is a state that insists on strict conformity to the Wahhabi conception of Islam. It does not allow non-Muslims to build houses of worship. It beats Muslims who do not pray five times every day. It forbids women to drive. And yet bin Laden wants to overthrow the Saudi regime because he believes it has turned "the Land of the Two Holy Places" into an American colony. This is not a specifically 'fundamentalist' grievance.

Bin Laden clearly rejects modern notions of pluralism and tolerance. But this rejection does not in itself explain his political appeal, which is derived in large part from the perception that he has dared to defy the West. Gilles Kepel found that even Arab girls in tight jeans saw bin Laden as a hero, even though they did not share his conservative religious views.[15] For them, as for millions of other Muslims, bin Laden was like Judah 'the Hammer' – a liberator come down from his mountain cave to defeat infidel oppressors.

In a 2001 videotape, bin Laden tried to recruit Muslims for Al Qaeda by showing graphic pictures of Palestinian, Iraqi, and Chechen suffering – not by discussing abortion, gay rights, or school prayer.[16] He would undoubtedly agree with conservative Christians and Jews on these issues, but he has not focused on them in his public statements. In-

11 Robert Fisk, "'Saudis Know: The Real Foe Is America': Interview with an Islamic Rebel," *World Press Review*, October 1996, 12 – 13; reprinted from *The Independent*, 10 July 1996.

12 Available at <www.religioscope.com/info/doc/jihad/jihadfile.htm>; accessed 21 July 2002.

13 Available at <www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm>; accessed 5 August 2002.

14 Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 26.

15 José Garçon and Véronique Soulé, "La quête du martyre s'est propagée," *Libération*, 19 November 2001.

16 Accessible at <http://www.ciaonet.org/cbr/mcbr00/video/cbr_v/cbr_v.html>.

stead, he has focused on what he sees as the oppression of Muslims by the United States, Israel, and Russia. He has exploited the despair of Muslims who feel powerless to confront the United States and Israel in particular.

One can discern a common thread running through all the twentieth- and twenty-first-century Christian, Jewish, and Islamic movements commonly called fundamentalist: despite obvious differences, all of these movements have insisted on strict conformity to sacred texts and a moral code based on these texts.

But the specifically fundamentalist dimension of these movements is not of equal significance in each case and is often meshed with social and nationalistic grievances. Rather than conjure up empirically baseless explanations – such as the notion that these movements are the result of the stresses and strains of rapid modernization – we need to base our explanations on what the people in these movements actually say and do, and on the specific historical contexts that make them say what they say and do what they do. Rather than force all these forms of religious conservatism into a single procrustean model, we need to examine the various ways they all do and do not resemble each other.

Meir Kahane is not simply Jerry Falwell in a yarmulke – and Osama bin Laden is not simply Falwell in a turban.

Martin E. Marty

Our religio-secular world

In recent decades, many experts have marshaled empirical data demonstrating a secular trend in modern societies. Still other experts, marshaling different data, have documented a resurgent religiosity in these same societies. As a result of these paradoxical findings, my bookshelf is crowded with contradictory titles: next to *The Secular City* is *The Unsecular City;* a volume that refers to *Secular Man* adjoins one exploring *Unsecular Man*.

Who is right? The answer, I believe, depends on the context of the question, the dimensions of the realities under discussion, and the perspective an author brings to the topic.

From my perspective – that of a theologian who has spent a lifetime pondering the impact of secularism on religion – we need a new model for describing the world that we actually inhabit. It is neither exclusively secular nor exclusively religious, but rather a complex combination of both the religious and the secular, with religious and secular phenomena occurring at the same time in individuals, in groups, and in societies around the world.

The old debates revolved around binary categories: societies were *either* secular *or* religious; worldly *or* otherworldly; materialist *or* spiritual; favoring immanence *or* transcendence, etc. The use of such polarizing concepts is valid in some contexts, but it does not adequately express the ways that individuals, groups, and societies actually behave; most people blur, mesh, meld, and muddle together elements of both the secular and the religious, the worldly and the otherworldly, etc. In adjusting to the complex world around them, people confound the categories of the social scientists, theologians, and philosophers: they simply 'make do' with a syncretic and characteristically modern blend of attitudes – call it *religio-secular*.

In the summer of 2001, I was driving on the Indiana Toll Road. At a service plaza near Mishawaka and Kokomo, a tourist brochure for Amish Acres caught my eye. Most of us assume that the Amish deplore all modern things; after all, they travel in horse-driven buggies and shun electricity. The brochure highlighted such other-worldly aspects of Amish life

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– beside advertisements of a range of restaurants, hotels, and craft shops, all conveniently located on a nearby farm – and invited readers to visit the website www. amishacres.com.

As it happens, the farm is not actually run by the Amish. But there is no escaping the conjunction in this curious enterprise of a nostalgia for religious purity and a need for modern secular amenities. And the conjunction is true of the Amish as well. They drive buggies and ignore modern media – but in order to market their milk, they must meet modern health standards. They do not spurn the benefits of modern medicine. They wear glasses and visit hospitals. The Amish are very religious – but even they cannot keep the secular utterly at bay.

The same paradoxical trends are evident among evangelical Protestants. In a classic analysis published in 1927, H. Richard Niebuhr could still describe an intact "religion of the disinherited" in which conservative Protestants rejected the world of ungodly materialism. But those attitudes are long gone. Conservative Protestants today flock to religious theme parks like The Holy Land Experience in Orlando, Florida. They buy Christian rock CDs and read fundamentalist pulp fiction; several weeks each year, explicitly religious novels dominate the ostensibly 'secular' *New York Times* best-seller list. On television they can tune in to a variety of evangelical and religious programs. And in cyberspace they can visit an even more amazing variety of sanctified websites, from "Skaters that Hang with Jesus" to "Generation X-Treme Ministries."

These conservative American Protestants are obviously not un-secular. Does that make them un-religious?

Both Amish Acres and Generation X-Treme Ministries exemplify the syncretic blend of attitudes that I have called religio-secular. Such a blurring of lines is evidently as old as recorded history – one thinks, for example, of medieval mystery plays and religious festivals that verged on pagan orgy, as critics regularly complained. What is new is the coincidence of this traditional blurring at the level of 'folk' religion with three largely unanticipated global phenomena:

- the rise of fundamentalism;
- a continuing growth in religiosity; and
- the emergence of new forms of 'spirituality.'

Taken together, these three global phenomena have transformed, almost beyond recognition, a world that social scientists long assumed was becoming ever more secular.

Our religio-secular world

The first phenomenon with which scholars in the West especially must cope is the rise of modern fundamentalism and fundamentalist-like movements in all the major religions. Both developments have a long prehistory, but each took its existing form early in the twentieth century. In the United States, conservative Protestants coined the term 'fundamentalism' in the 1920s. That same decade, the Muslim Brotherhood was organized in Egypt. The Rashtriya Svayamsevak Sangh (RSS), so prominent in Hindu-Muslim clashes on the Asian subcontinent today, was founded in 1925.

In the Fundamentalism Project of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences that I helped organize in the 1990s, we found similar movements dating back to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Originally, the partisans of the Enlightenment pictured a world that had either been progressively purged of religion, or outfitted with milder forms of faith that were tolerant and rational. In reaction to this vision, partisans of traditional faith

organized political movements that reasserted the value of religions organized around passion and zeal.

As the third millennium began, fundamentalists were more prominent than ever. In the United States, the New Christian Right was a key interest group with which political candidates from both major parties had to contend. At the furthest extreme, Al Qaeda, a terrorist group influenced by Wahhabi fundamentalism and the teachings of Sayyid Qutb of the Muslim Brotherhood, struck targets around the world, climaxed by the attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. In India, the RSS, thanks to its murderous assaults on Muslim citizens, poses a standing threat to the survival of the nation's secular constitution of 1947.

One might assume that fundamentalists like these would abjure all things secular – but one would be mistaken. The RSS, like Al Qaeda and the New Christian Right in America, has chosen to mimic, adapt to, absorb, and exploit many of the strategies, tactics, hardware, lifestyles, and even the rational arguments of the secular forces it opposes. Like the crass entrepreneurs behind Amish Acres, these fundamentalists can well be described as religio-secular.

The second largely unanticipated development that demands reappraisal has to do with religiosity itself. In his most recent large study of world religious trends, David B. Barrett, in collaboration with Todd Johnson, has attempted to conduct a megacensus, documenting *World Christian Trends A.D. 30 – A.D. 2200*. Though Barrett's methods are inevitably speculative, his findings are not without interest – not least because they picture a world that makes a mockery of those who have been projecting a long-term trend toward secularization.

Whereas the world numbered 3.7 billion people in 1970, it now numbers 6.1 billion, with an anticipated population of 7.8 billion in 2025. While in parts of the 'Euro-American' world Christianity may be relatively in decline, worldwide the picture is completely different. In 1970, Barrett and Johnson estimate, there were 1.2 billion Christians; today, they count 2 billion; and Barrett believes there will be 2.6 billion by 2025.

That growth rate, however, is dwarfed by the expanding world of Islam. In 1970 (according to another megacensus conducted by Barrett and his colleagues), there were 553 million Muslims; in mid-2001 there were about 1.2 billion; and Barrett thinks it likely that there will be 1.8 billion by 2025. A century ago every eighth person in the world identified with Islam; in 2002, every fifth person does so.

A similar picture emerges from other megacensuses conducted by Barrett. In 1970, there were 463 million Hindus worldwide, there are now 824 million, and by 2025 there are likely to be more than 1 billion. Meanwhile, Buddhists numbered 233 million in 1970, presently total 363 million, and projections show an estimated 418 million in 2025.

Exactly how Barrett and his team define 'nonreligious' is a little unclear. But their figures for this category reflect a slower rate of growth: 532 million nonreligious in 1970, 774 million today, and a projected 875 million in 2025. Meanwhile, avowed 'atheists' declined, from 165 million in 1970 to 150 million today.

Such statistics are by no means trustworthy. But the trends described by Barrett and his colleagues are borne out by anecdotal evidence. In the United States today, the mass media pay far more attention to religious events than they did before 1970. Religious coverage in the press, once segregated onto a Saturday

'religion page' in newspapers, now appears on front pages almost every day. Stories of papal travels, clerical abuse scandals, and the involvement of religious groups in debates over Middle East policy are standard fare.

A world that is properly described as secular should not be seeing such a burgeoning interest in religion and religiosity. Modern adherents of all the world religions of course bear the marks (as their forebears did not) of the modern secular societies they inhabit; but that does not make their professed religiosity spurious. Indeed, a dissatisfaction with secularism itself may, in part, explain the rise in religiosity – and the spread of a new kind of hybrid religio-secularism.

A third development that demands attention goes by the code name 'spirituality' in the United States, though I am tempted to describe it as a kind of religiosity-in-disguise. While the rise of fundamentalism and the growth in religiosity more generally are global phenomena, the rise of spirituality is concentrated in Europe, Japan, and North America – in the heartland of post-Enlightenment worldviews, technological enterprise, and secular capitalism.

In some respects, this is the most unanticipated development of all. In 1963, in the third and climactic volume of his *Systematic Theology*, entitled *Life and the Spirit, History and the Kingdom of God*, Paul Tillich, perhaps America's most prestigious theologian at the time, tried to revive interest in the word 'spirit.' But even Tillich despaired of the attempt to resuscitate the adjective 'spiritual'; in his view, it was "lost beyond hope."

Ironically, the rest of that decade would prove Tillich wrong. Before the 1960s had ended, spirituality had been rediscovered – and not just the word. In the United States and Europe, young people were gripped by a growing popular fascination with altered states of consciousness and new varieties of religious experience, from Zen Buddhism to exotic cults that revolved around Indian holy men and gurus. When Tillich's *Systematic Theology* first appeared, American bookstores typically stocked a variety of Bibles – plus one book each by Bishop Fulton Sheen, evangelist Billy Graham, and rabbi Joshua Loth Liebman. Today, a typical American bookstore usually features shelf after shelf of books concerned with mysticism, wholistic medicine, astrology, metaphysics, witches, the occult, Eastern religion. The ongoing popular preoccupation with the 'spiritual,' broadly understood, could not be clearer – and this in what is arguably the most this-worldly and materialist of modern societies.

One of the most striking facts about the religio-secular world we actually inhabit is how consistently most scholars and social scientists have mistaken its mixed composition, and underestimated the strength and durability of its religious components, however one characterizes them – whether as fundamentalist, mainstream, or new-age 'spiritual.'

Take, for example, the argument of a book published in 1967, with the support of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In *The Year 2000: A Framework for Speculation on the Next Thirty-Three Years*, Herman Kahn and Anthony J. Wiener of the Hudson Institute offered their assessment of what they immodestly dubbed "the basic, long-term multifold trend" of contemporary history. Discussing the future of religion, Kahn and Wiener confidently predicted that global cultures would grow ever more "Empirical, This-Worldly, Secular, Humanistic, Pragmatic, Utilitarian, Contractual, Epicurean or Hedonistic, and the Like."

The authors made their prediction largely on the basis of Pitirim Sorokin's 1962 book, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*. In that work, the Harvard sociologist described in detail what he called 'sensate' cultures. The 'sensate' system of truth, according to Sorokin, was characterized further by terms such as 'skeptical,' 'materialistic,' 'mechanistic,' 'agnostic,' 'instrumental,' and the like. Kahn and Wiener would have preferred if Sorokin had called these cultures "worldly, humanistic, or empirical"; that is why they fleshed out the 'sensate' with this string of adjectives.

Most scholars distrust sweeping generalizations, with good reason. But Kahn and Wiener's work reflected more than a century of speculation by social scientists that the modern world would gradually stamp out religion and religiosity – one need think only of Marx. Moreover, most of the adjectives marshaled by Sorokin, Kahn, and Wiener – 'skeptical,' 'materialistic,' 'mechanistic,' 'agnostic,' 'instrumental,' etc. – do capture important dimensions of many cultures around the world today. So pervasive are the reaches of these secularizing forces that even those who would resist their effects have difficulty doing so. Indeed, in a great many contexts of modern life – in the academy, the scientific community, the mass media – even relatively religious professionals are expected to leave behind, or at least bracket, the religious aspects of their lives.

Still, the fact remains that Kahn and Wiener didn't get it right. They failed to anticipate some of the most salient features in the world of 2000. Among other things, they did not foresee the collapse of Soviet communism and the concomitant retreat of aggressively secularist credos, such as Marxism. They certainly did not foresee the rise of militant fundamentalism, the burgeoning of popular religiosity, or the growth of interest in spirituality in the most advanced and affluent societies.

But in fairness to Kahn and Wiener, it is worth stressing that they added a suggestive footnote to their prognosis:

> Sorokin and almost all of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century philosophers of history seem to believe it likely that some new kind of 'religious' stage will follow a termination of Sensate culture. This stage could be spiritual and intellectual, rather than arising out of technology, as [suggested by] Julian Huxley; or it could be a properly religious, simple development of Christianity (as [suggested by the young] …Arnold Toynbee); or it could be a new synthesis of East and West, as [suggested by the] later Toynbee, or something completely different. In any case, it is usually argued that there will be some unpleasant events between the Late Sensate Chaos and the new religiosity.

One may question whether we are now living through an era of 'Late Sensate Chaos.' But there is no doubt, as I have said, that we are living in an era of renewed religiosity.

What explains the surprising strength and durability of the religious dimension of societies that are in other respects profoundly secular? Without going into details, we can summarize some of the most frequently cited factors:

- Some researchers make much of the fact that humans may be genetically 'wired' to seek meaning beyond the empirical, secular, ordinary, in the realm of what they perceive as transcendent.
- There is considerable discontent with the barren aspects of modern life; secular rationality works for much of the 'operational' side of life, but does little to satisfy the human heart.

- Humans are, to cite the title of a book by Huston Smith, *Condemned to Meaning* because they are "present to a world" (as Merleau-Ponty put it). I recall the sociologist Talcott Parsons in conversation in 1969 observing that humans cannot tolerate existence in an utterly random universe. To endow their joys and sorrows, their failures and successes, with meaning, they tend to seek patterns of meaning that take on the character of the religious.
- One can adduce any number of inherited reductionist accounts for religion, be they economic (e.g. Marxist), psychological (e.g. Freudian), anthropological (e.g. Durkheimian), etc.; few of them have gone unchallenged or proved themselves sufficient, but they all throw some light on the subject.
- Religion provides adherents with community in a fragmented world, a haven in a heartless one.
- Religion claims to heal, and millions want healing.
- Many secular ideologies of the century past, most of them political, some of them economic, have either failed to deliver on their utopian promises, or – worse – turned out to be tyrannical.
- New situations demand a new approach to ethics, and much of ethics is grounded in the religious.

All of these factors help make sense of the resurgence of religiosity that we observe in our world today, as they help explain why secularism is in some respects in retreat. But we would be quite mistaken to suppose that the secular dimensions of modern society are likely to disappear anytime soon. They are not: they are too integral to the global economy and scientific culture we all inhabit. That is why I think it worth insisting on the mixed character of our contemporary culture. The term I have used is inelegant, but our world is neither primarily religious, nor predominantly secular. It is religious. And secular. *At the same time*.

Our religio-secular world

Let me refer to a surprising source, one that I think can point us in the right direction as we struggle to comprehend the contradictory world we currently inhabit.

Leaning on Augustine, Martin Luther developed a formula for the human being of faith. For him, anyone who believes in God is *simul justus et peccator* – at one and the same time justified and a sinner. One was never only justified, never free of sin: no, one was always paradoxically justified and a sinner at the same time. What facet one chose to stress depended on the context and dimension of human experience to which one referred. It depended on the perspective one took. And from the Divine perspective, the sinner was at the same time just, the just was at the same time a sinner.

Forget the theology for now, and try the analogy.

Individuals, cultures, nations, and societies, in certain contexts, dimensions, and perspectives, are really secular, in any plausible definition of the term. *At the same time* they are, in another dimension and from another perspective, really religious, in almost unguarded ways.

Secularization is a real phenomenon. That is why fundamentalists rise in rebellion against it – and simultaneously appropriate many of its features, beginning with the mass media and modern technology. But the resurgence of popular interest worldwide in religiosity and spirituality is a real phenomenon, too.

That is why I am stuck, for now, with the awkward and hyphenated term 'religio-secular.'

Failure to do justice to both sides of what we experience simultaneously in

global societies, and applying a single description to cover what has developed, can lead to gross miscalculations and bad strategies. To those who want to see religion and secularism as mutually exclusive, my hyphenated term may well seem to represent an attempt to have it both ways – as if Yogi Berra's familiar counsel could be applied metaphorically to individuals and cultures: "When you come to a fork in the road, take it."

It may also be, however, that definitions of the religious and the secular have for too long now been too confining. They drew too much on peculiarly Western developments during and after the Enlightenment. The encounter with cultures of the East and of the south may enlarge the imagination of those who tomorrow will do the observing, the naming, and the projecting of trends.

As for the "basic, long-term multiform trend" of our own moment, I say: Be ready, again, to be surprised.

Thomas Jefferson

A bill for establishing religious freedom

Editor's note: Three years after writing the "Declaration of Independence," Thomas Jefferson drafted a bill "for establishing religious freedom" in the state of Virginia. After declaring its independence from England, Virginia had stripped the Anglican Church of official status and financial support. As a result, a debate erupted over whether or not the new state should use its revenues to support religion. Some leaders, such as Patrick Henry, argued in favor of a tax on all citizens to support a variety of religious institutions. In response, Jefferson and his staunchest ally, James Madison, argued that state support for religion was a form of tyranny, and that religious beliefs should be solely a matter of private conscience – not public policy.

Then, as now, the issue of religion in politics was contentious. Only in 1786 did James Madison convince the Virginia legislature to pass a slightly revised version of Jefferson's bill, which formed one basis for the religion clauses in the U.S. Constitution. Both Jefferson and Madison numbered the act among their greatest accomplishments. And Jefferson's original text remains the classic expression of American secularism: His bill protects freedom of religious expression, and also declares a new natural right – freedom from religion.

The third president of the United States (from 1801 – 1809), Jefferson was born in 1743 and died in 1826. He was elected a member of the American Academy in 1787, a year after his bill became law in Virginia.

SECTION I. Well aware that the opinions and belief of men depend not on their own will, but follow involuntarily the evidence proposed to their minds; that Almighty God hath created the mind free, and manifested his supreme will that free it shall remain by making it altogether insusceptible of restraint; that all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments, or burthens, or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the plan of the holy author of our religion, who being lord both of body and mind, yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either, as was in his Almighty power to do, but to extend it by its influence on reason alone; that the impious presumption of legislators and rulers, civil as well as ecclesiastical, who, being themselves but fallible and uninspired men, have assumed dominion over the faith of others, setting up their own opinions and modes of thinking as the only true and infallible, and as such endeavoring to impose them on others, hath established and maintained false religions over the greatest part of the world and through all time: That to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors, is sinful and tyrannical; that even the forcing him to support this or that teacher of his own religious persuasion, is depriv-

ing him of the comfortable liberty of giving his contributions to the particular pastor whose morals he would make his pattern, and whose powers he feels most persuasive to righteousness; and is withdrawing from the ministry those temporary rewards, which proceeding from an approbation of their personal conduct, are an additional incitement to earnest and unremitting labours for the instruction of mankind; that our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions, any more than our opinions in physics or geometry; that therefore the proscribing any citizen as unworthy the public confidence by laying upon him an incapacity of being called to offices of trust and emolument, unless he profess or renounce this or that religious opinion, is depriving him injuriously of those privileges and advantages to which, in common with his fellow citizens, he has a natural right; that it tends also to corrupt the principles of that very religion it is meant to encourage, by bribing, with a monopoly of worldly honours and emoluments, those who will externally profess and conform to it; that though indeed these are criminal who do not withstand such temptation, yet neither are those innocent who lay the bait in their way; that the opinions of men are not the object of civil government, nor under its jurisdiction; that to suffer the civil magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles on supposition of their ill tendency is a dangerous fallacy, which at once destroys all religious liberty, because he being of course judge of that tendency will make his opinions the rule of judgment, and approve or condemn the sentiments of others only as they shall square with or differ from his own; that it is time enough for the rightful purposes of civil government for its officers to interfere when principles break out into overt acts against peace and good order; and finally, that truth is great and will prevail if left to herself; that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate; errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them.

SECTION II. We the General Assembly of Virginia do enact that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer, on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.

SECTION III. And though we well know that this Assembly, elected by the people for the ordinary purposes of legislation only, have no power to restrain the acts of succeeding Assemblies, constituted with powers equal to our own, and that therefore to declare this act irrevocable would be of no effect in law; yet we are free to declare, and do declare, that the rights hereby asserted are the natural rights of mankind, and that if any act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present or to narrow its operation, such act will be an infringement of natural right.

Azzam S. Tamimi

The renaissance of Islam

In Western accounts of the Middle East since 1789, Islam is often treated as a primary impediment to the spread of technology, science, and modern democratic values in the region. As a review of the historical record demonstrates, nothing could be further from the truth – for Islam encourages, and even demands, that Muslims acquire knowledge and reform society.

In this respect, the modern Middle Eastern experience stands in stark contrast to that of medieval Europe, where Christianity was indeed a real obstacle to intellectual progress. In Europe, where it first arose, the ideology of 'secularism' gave direction to a lengthy effort to emancipate humans from the hold of a corrupt religious institution. When the same ideology was belatedly introduced into the Middle East late in the nineteenth century, it became a tool of domination used to weaken local religious institutions as part of an effort to consolidate the cultural and social power of despotic authorities.

There was nothing inevitable about this development, as the record will show. In the first half of the nineteenth century, a variety of Muslim intellectuals responded warmly to the prospect of spreading technology, science, and democratic values into the Middle East, believing that modernization did not conflict with the established values and principles of Islamic law (Shariah). It was only later, and under the influence of a small group of Christian Arab intellectuals, that secularism was cast as the enemy of Islam – and turned into a tool of domination.

As a result of this unhappy experience with 'secularism,' the Middle East today is at a historic crossroads. A resurgent Islam at home with modernization promises a revival of free inquiry and technological progress. But it has been impeded by local despotic regimes that cling to the ideology of secularism – and by an American regime that feels threatened by any signs of a Muslim renaissance.

The first efforts to modernize the Middle East were a by-product of European involvement in the region. Napoleon

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Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt between 1798 and 1801 dealt a humiliating blow to the Muslim Ummah, rather reminiscent of the Crusades more than five centuries earlier. Though it was brief, the French 'incursion' into the heart of the Arab world, the very center of *darul-Islam*, exposed the weakness of the Ottoman Empire and her scandalous retardation behind Europe.

The task of regaining Egypt and expelling the French expedition was assigned by the Ottoman sultan to an Albanian task force led by a former cigarette seller named Muhammad Ali (1769 – 1849). Egyptians greeted Ali as a liberator not only from the French but also from the tyrannical Ottoman governor, Khurshid Pasha. Thanks to his military successes, first against the French at Abu Qir in 1799 and then against the Fraser-led English expedition in 1807, Ali emerged as Egypt's new governor. He promptly proceeded to establish a dynastic autocracy, one of the first in the Middle East to explicitly devote itself to 'modernization.'

Perhaps because he was European himself, or perhaps because he had vanquished two European armies, Muhammad Ali became obsessed with the pursuit of science, technology – and political power. Like two more recent Arab leaders, Jamal Abd al-Nassir of Egypt and Saddam Hussein of Iraq, Ali embarked on a variety of ambitious industrialization projects. He dug irrigation canals, promoted cotton as a cash crop for export, centralized taxes, and established monopolies in industry and foreign trade. He hired European experts and professionals who helped him set up special schools and training facilities to educate and train army officers, state officials, and technicians.

In the meantime, on behalf of the Ottoman sultan in Istanbul, Ali sent his son Ibrahim to crush the expanding Wahhabi movement in Arabia between 1811 and 1819. He conquered the Sudan and quelled a rebellion in Greece. Emboldened by these successes, he seized Palestine and Syria. Alarmed by his growing power, French and British forces returned to the Middle East. In exchange for the hereditary governorship of Egypt for his line, Ali agreed to pare down his army.

At the same time, something similar was taking place on the eastern wing of what is today the Middle East. The second Qajar Shah Fath Ali, who ruled Iran from 1797 to 1834, found himself courted by the French and the British, who both wanted Iran to side with them against the Russians. His Azerbaijan crown prince, Abbas Mirza, sought Western training for Iranian forces and, as Muhammad Ali did, sent students abroad to improve the military. But the modernization of the military in Iran proved even more difficult than in Egypt, and under the Qajars, Iran lost more territory to the Russians.

The setbacks suffered in Iran and Egypt inevitably provoked debate over their causes. In both regions, the erratic and whimsical policies of despots made the systematic pursuit of technological capabilities difficult, if not impossible.[1] At the same time, despots like Muhammad Ali lashed out at the power of the ulama (Muslim scholars), fearing it posed a potential threat to their plans for modernization – and also to their political authority.

It was in this context that intellectuals in the Arab world began to debate the

1 Antoine B. Zahlan, "The Impact of Technology Change on the Nineteenth-Century Arab World" in Charles E. Butterworth and I. William Zartman, eds., *Between the State and Islam* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 31 – 58.

causes of the difficulties Muslim countries were having with modernization. Religion was of interest to such intellectuals – but *not*, oddly enough, as a barrier to progress.

Take the case of an Al-Azhar scholar by the name of Rifa'ah al-Tahtawi (1801 – 1873). His preoccupation with the question of modernization grew out of a stay in France, where he served as a religious guide for a group of Egyptian army cadets who were studying science and modern military technologies. The scion of a scholarly family, Tahtawi threw himself into the study of European culture with enthusiasm. He acquired a precise knowledge of the French language and read books on ancient history, Greek philosophy and mythology, geography, mathematics, logic, and, most importantly, the French thought of the eighteenth century – Voltaire, Rousseau's *Social Contract*, and other works.[2]

Returning home after five years, Tahtawi made no secret of his admiration for what post-revolution France had accomplished. He advocated introducing democracy into the Middle East. And he criticized those who opposed the idea of taking knowledge from Europe, saying: "Such people are deluded; for civilizations are turns and phases. These sciences were once Islamic when we were at the apex of our civilization. Europe took them from us and developed them further. It is now our duty to learn from them just as they learned from our ancestors."[3]

Still, as a religious scholar, Tahtawi insisted that Muslims should only borrow elements of European culture that did not conflict with the established values and principles of Shariah. In 1834, shortly after his return to Cairo from Paris, Tahtawi published his first book, *Takhlis al-Ibriz Ila Talkhis Bariz*. This summarized his observations of the manners and customs of the modern French,[4] and praised the concept of democracy as he saw it in France and as he witnessed its defense and reassertion through the 1830 revolution against King Charles X.[5]

Trying to show that democracy was compatible with the laws of Islam, he compared political pluralism to forms of ideological and jurisprudential pluralism that existed in Islam itself: "Religious freedom," he wrote,

> is the freedom of belief, of opinion and of sect, provided it does not contradict the fundamentals of religion. An example would be the theological opinions of the *al-Asha'irah* and the *al-Matiridiyah*; another would be the opinions of leading jurists within the doctrine of the branches. For by following any one of these schools, a human feels secure. The same would apply to the freedom of political practice and opinion by leading administrators, who endeavor to interpret and apply rules and provisions in accordance with the laws of their own countries. Kings and ministers are licensed in the realm of politics to pursue various routes that in the end serve one purpose: good administration and justice.[6]

2 Albert Habib Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798 – 1939* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 69.

3 R. S. Ahmad, *Al-Din Wal-Dawlah Wal-Thawrah* (Cairo: Al-Dar Al-Sharqiyah, 1989), 34. Translation from Arabic source into English is mine.

4 Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 70 – 71.

5 M. S. Al-Dajani, "Tatawur Mafahim al-Dimuqratiyah fil-Fikr al-Arabi al-Hadith" in *Azmat al-Dimuqratiyah fil-Watan al-'Arabi* (Beirut: Arab Unity Studies Center, 1984), 121.

6 Faruq Abdessalam, *al-Ahzab al-Siyasiyah fil-Islam* (Cairo: Qalyoob Publishing House, 1978). Translation from Arabic source into English is mine.

Tahtawi was not an isolated figure. Other nineteenth-century Islamic reformists – including Khairuddin Al-Tunisi (1810 – 1899), Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani (1838 – 1897), Abdel Rahman Al-Kawakibi (1854 – 1902), and Muhammad Abduh (1849 – 1905) – were often referred to as 'Muslim modernists' and followed Tahtawi in stressing that Muslims could benefit from European successes without undermining Islamic values or culture.[7]

Typical of this generation of Muslim modernizers was Al-Tunisi, leader of the nineteenth-century reform movement in Tunisia. In 1867, he formulated a general plan for political and administrative reform in the Arab world in a book entitled *Aqwam al-Masalik fi Taqwim al-Mamalik* (*The Straight Path to Reformation of Governments*). He appealed to politicians and scholars to explore all possible means to improve the status of the community and develop its civility, and cautioned the general Muslim public against shunning the experiences of other nations on the misconceived basis that all the writings, inventions, experiences, and attitudes of non-Muslims should simply be rejected. He further called for an end to absolutist rule: "Kindling the *Ummah*'s potential liberty through the adoption of sound administrative procedures and enabling it to have a say in political affairs," he argued, "would put it on a faster track toward civilization, would limit the rule of despotism, and would stop the influx of European civilization that is sweeping everything along its path."[8]

Another of the Muslim modernizers, Al-Afghani, called for adherence to Islamic fundamentals combined with a repudiation of despotism. In his view, a key cause of the decline in the Muslim world was the absence of *'adl* (justice) and *shura* (council).[9] The remedy, he believed, was republican government: the people of the Arab world ought to be allowed to assume a larger political and social role by participating through *shura* and elections.[10] "For those governed by a republican form of government," argued Al-Afghani, "it is a source of happiness and pride. Those governed by it alone deserve to be called human; for a true human being is only subdued by a true law that is based on the foundations of justice and that is designed to govern man's moves, actions, transactions, and relations with others in a manner that elevates him to the pinnacle of true happiness."[11]

From Tahtawi to Al-Afghani, Muslim scholars of the nineteenth century seemed to have had no doubt that the failure of the Muslims to modernize had more to do with a lack of freedom than a lack of technology. The latter was seen as a fruit of the former, and in any case Islam was not responsible for the absence of either.

In the later years of the nineteenth century, a quite different analysis of how to modernize the Middle East was elaborated by a smaller but quite influential group of Christian modernists. Among them were such important figures as Shibli Shumayyil (1850 – 1917), Farah Antun

7 R. Ghannouchi, *al-Hurriyat al-'Ammah fil-Dawlah al-Islamiyah* (Beirut: Arab Unity Studies Center, 1993), 252.

8 Khairuddin Al-Tunisi, *Aqwam al-Masalik fi Taqwim al-Mamalik* (Tunis: Al-Dar Al-Tunisiyah, 1972), 185. Translation from Arabic source into English is mine.

9 Al-Dajani, "Tatawur Mafahim," 123.

10 Ahmad, *Al-Din Wal-Dawlah*, 44 – 47.

11 Abdulbasit Hasan, *Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani* (Cairo: Wahbah, 1982), 267 – 268. Translation from Arabic source into English is mine.

(1874 – 1922), Georgie Zaidan (1861 – 1914), Ya'qub Suruf (1852 – 1917), Salama Musa (1887 – 1958), and Nicola Haddad (1878 – 1954). The real problem with the Arab world, they argued, was its culture – and, specifically, its dominant religion. Most of these men had been educated at the Syrian Protestant College and then settled in Egypt, which was the cultural hub of the Arab world. Their ideas were propagated through *Al-Muqtataf* and *Al-Hilal*, Arabic publications founded respectively in 1876 and 1892. These journals promoted a brand of aggressive nationalism, in which love of country and fellow countrymen would transcend all other social ties, even those of religion.[12]

Through their copious writings, these thinkers laid the foundations of an indigenous brand of secularism in the Arab world. Praising the liberal thought of France and England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and condemning the hegemony of tradition over the human mind, they stressed that reason should set the standard for human conduct. For modernization to take place, they demanded that only traditions that were compatible with this objective should remain.[13] The main aim of these intellectuals was to lay the basis of a secular state in which Muslims and Christians could participate on a footing of complete equality.[14]

After graduating from the Syrian Protestant College, the oldest member of the group, Shibli Shumayyil, went to Paris to study medicine. He is reputed to have first introduced the theories of Darwin to the Arab world through his writings in *Al-Muqtataf*. He belonged to the late-nineteenth-century movement that saw science as the key to unlocking the secrets of the universe, even as a form of worship. He believed that the religion of science necessitated a declaration of war on older religions. For him, social unity was essential for a general will to exist and involved the separation of religion from political life, since religion was a cause of division. He insisted that nations grew stronger only as religion grew weaker, and pointed out that this was true of Europe, which had only become powerful and truly civilized once the Reformation and the French Revolution had broken the hold of religious leaders on society.[15] He criticized both *shuyukh* (Islamic scholars) and Christian priests for resisting progress and development.[16]

Farah Antun, who migrated from Tripoli to Cairo in 1897, claimed that the conflict between science and religion could be solved – but only by assigning each to its proper sphere. He dedicated his book to "those men of sense in every community and every religion of the east who have seen the danger of mingling the world with religion in an age like ours, and have come to demand that their religion should be placed on one side in a sacred and honoured place, so that they will be able really to unite, and to flow with the tide of the new European civilisation, in order to be able to compete with those who belong to it, for otherwise it will sweep them all away and make them the subjects of others."[17] Antun laid special emphasis on the separation of temporal and spiritual authorities. If European countries were now more tolerant than Arab, he argued, it

12 Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 246 – 247.

13 Ahmad, *Al-Din Wal-Dawlah*, 51.

14 Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 256 – 257.

15 Ibid., 250 – 252.

16 Ahmad, *Al-Din Wal-Dawlah*, 53.

17 Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 254 – 255.

was not because they were Christian, but rather because science and philosophy had driven out religious fanaticism and a separation of religion and politics had taken place.[18]

By the end of the nineteenth century, a growing number of Muslim intellectuals fell under the influence of the Christian modernizers. For example, Qasim Amin (1865 – 1908) argued that the problem with the Muslims was their backwardness and resistance to social change. "Perfection," he wrote,

> is not to be found in the past, even the Islamic past; it can only be found, if at all, in the distant future. The path to perfection is science, and in the present age it is Europe which is most advanced in the sciences and therefore also on the path to social perfection. Europe is ahead of us in every way, and it is not true that while they are materially better than us we are morally better. The Europeans are morally more advanced; their upper and lower classes, it is true, are rather lacking in sexual virtue, but the middle class has high morals in every sense, and all classes alike have social virtues.[19]

Educated in law in France, and a judge by profession, Amin became famous for his campaign for the emancipation of women. His call on women, in his 1899 book entitled *Tahrir al-Mar'ah* (*The Emancipation of Women*), to take off the traditional Islamic head cover, which he believed obscured their intellectual as well as physical abilities, invited angry response from the ulama of late-nineteenth-century Egypt. He responded to his critics in 1906 with a book entitled *Al-Mar'ah al-Jadidah* (*The Modern Woman*).

18 Ibid., 256 – 257.

19 Ibid., 164 – 169.

Amin's contemporary Ahmad Lutfi Al-Sayyid (1872 – 1963) was similarly eager to leave Islam behind. Religion, Islamic or not, was relevant to his thought only as one of the constituent factors of society.[20] Seen as a leading figure in the national movement in Egypt, Al-Sayyid made a significant impact on the agendas of social and educational institutions in modern Egypt. A lawyer and a judge by profession, he served in successive Egyptian governments in various positions, and his ideas first found a platform when he became chief editor of *Al-Jaridah* in 1906. In 1925, he was appointed dean of Egyptian University and, three years later, education minister. Moving back and forth between the government and the university, he was appointed minister of foreign affairs in 1946 and, immediately afterward, deputy prime minister.

But the most important of the indigenous Muslim secularists, by far, was Ali Abdel Raziq (1888 – 1966), a graduate of Al-Azhar and Oxford whose key work appeared one year after the abolition of the caliphate in 1924. This work – *Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm: Bahth fil-Khilafah wal-Hukumah fil-Islam* (*Islam and the Fundamentals of Governance: A Thesis on Caliphate and Government in Islam*) – turned out to be one of the most controversial works in modern Islamic history.

In it, Raziq denied the existence of a political order in Islam and claimed that the Prophet had never established one, that it had not been part of his mission to found a state. In turn, Raziq's work became a main source of ammunition in the vigorous campaign, launched by 'secularists' in later times, against the validity of Shariah. The book pioneered the idea of rejecting conventional interpretations and replacing them with

20 Ibid., 170 – 172.

innovations based mostly on Orientalists' opinions and writings on Islam.[21]

But the pioneers of Arab secularism founded the principles of their thought on a number of incorrect assumptions. They likened Islam to Christianity and assumed it to be just another religion that could, or even should, be restricted to the spiritual sphere of human life. They assumed Islam's spiritual authority hindered progress and prohibited freedom of thought, and should therefore be prevented from interfering in temporal matters. But these assumptions about Islam's conflicts with logic or science were merely extrapolations from the Euro-Christian context. The presupposition that Islam and Christianity held identical positions on the freedom of thought and the emancipation of the mind led to the conclusion that, just as Europe had rid itself of the influence of religion as a prelude to progress, the Arabs needed to constrain Islam. And Westernization was said to be the sole means of modernization, which further blurred the distinction between secularization and modernization.[22]

What the secularists have advocated has been pursued with varying intensity across the Muslim world since the start of the twentieth century. Secular nationalist elites took over from the colonial authorities and claimed to embark on a quest for progress, development, and industrialization. In territorial states created within artificial borders, mostly by colonial power at the turn of the twentieth century, Islam has been nationalized, marginalized, and suppressed in the name of reaching out to modernity and catching up with the advanced world. If anyone is in doubt, consider the achievements of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk of Turkey (1881 – 1938), Ahmad Sukarno (1902 – 1970) and then Suharto of Indonesia (1921 –), Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia (1903 – 2000), Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt (1918 – 1970), Houari Boumedienne of Algeria (1925 – 1978), Hafiz Asad of Syria (1930– 2000), and Saddam Hussein of Iraq (1937 –).

What do they share in common? They are secularist dictators who succeeded in building huge corrupt bureaucracies and failed miserably in their fiscal and industrial policies.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Arab writers, who could see salvation in nothing short of espousing European modernity, failed to recognize that Islam is a religion that continues to shape and influence the lives of its adherents, who believe its values and principles are aimed at liberating mankind, establishing justice and equality, encouraging research and innovation, and guaranteeing freedom of thought, expression, and worship.

Like their nineteenth-century Muslim forebears, many contemporary Arab intellectuals believe that Islam is not incompatible with modernization. We argue that the scientific and technological underpinnings of modern civilization are reducible to categories of knowledge and practice that Muslims can learn and benefit from without having to give up their cultural identity.[23] We also believe

21 M. Al-Bahiyy, *Al-Fikr al-Islami al-Hadith wa-Silatuhu bil-Isti'mar al-Gharbi*, 12th ed. (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1991), 206 – 209.

22 For more details see Azzam Tamimi and John L. Esposito, eds., *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East* (London: Hurst; New York: New York University Press, 2000).

23 R. Ghannouchi, "Islam and the West," a lecture given at the Center for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminster, October 1992.

that Islam is consistent with republican and democratic forms of self-rule.

Indeed, today Arab secularists routinely try to justify the suppression of democratic trends. Their attitude toward the aborted Algerian legislative elections is illustrative. The victory of the Islamic Salvation Front was a clear indication that the majority of the Algerian people sought a change after three decades of enforced secularization. Free democratic elections have proved secularization to be unpopular with the masses.

Fearing defeat, contemporary secularists appealed to the army to intervene. They cheered as tanks crushed the ballot boxes and as thousands of citizens were apprehended and jailed in detention camps set up in the desert. They claimed they were protecting democracy from the majority, because according to them the majority could not be trusted.

Islam is a divinely ordained set of commandments, values, and directives. Its claims are not incompatible with those of science, technology, and democratic self-government. Its appeal is profound and profoundly popular. And it is not liable to be vanquished anytime soon by a form of secularism that has been foisted by colonizers and despots on Muslims in order to weaken, if not destroy, the basis of our social order, and render us colonizable and controllable.

M. Hakan Yavuz

The case of Turkey

Although most partisans of republican Turkey expected modernization to lead to a decline in religious attachments, that did not happen.

Instead, the processes of modernization transformed traditional Islamic beliefs and groupings and moved Muslims into the public sphere. As a result, elections held in November of 2002 gave power to Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AK), the nation's first overtly Islamic political group.[1]

These developments suggest that it is impossible to maintain a rigid separation of religion and politics in Turkey or anywhere else in the world. Religious networks and organizations are essentially voluntary associations organized for the purpose of fostering a variety of values, from ethical conduct to social justice. Some sense of spirituality revolving around the quest for hope and meaning informs the deepest core of individual consciousness. If religious sensibilities of one sort or another are for many deeply rooted in everyday practices, then we must somehow harmonize religious attachments with the demands of a modern society.

The Turkish republic, however, was founded on a very different set of assumptions. In 1923, Mustafa Kemal implemented a series of reforms in an effort to forge a modern nation-state. Instead of being neutral on the question of the religious practices and beliefs of its citizenry, the Kemalist state seeks to remove all manifestations of religion from the public sphere and put them under the strict control of the state. In the decisions of the Turkish Constitutional Court, for instance, the secular public sphere is assumed to offer peace by removing any form of difference rooted in ethnicity or religion; religiously derived claims are treated as divisive and dangerous for the tranquility of society.

As an intellectual and political project in Turkey, Kemalism has a long history of differentiating, marginalizing, and excluding large sectors of society. Indeed, the twin pillars of Kemalist ideology, Turkish nationalism and secularism,

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1 M. Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

are the main sources of the country's current crises. There secularism has not meant simply the formal separation between religious and political authority and institutions, but rather a Jacobin form of social engineering that differs markedly from Anglo-Saxon traditions of religious pluralism. It has tended to be an authoritarian state ideology to stamp out religious and ethnic differences in the name of Enlightenment values.

In examining Islamic social movements in Turkey, one needs to take this exclusionary history of secularism into account. There the history of the contestation between religion and secularism is the story of the struggle between a state-imposed modernization run by a circumscribed Kemalist political elite and a popular resistance that has often assumed a religious cast. The Kemalists outlawed Islamic identity claims, as well as Kurdish ethnic claims. Instead of being viewed as a strength, the Ottoman-Islamic tradition of pluralism, tolerance, and cultural diversity was viewed as a debilitating weakness. The elite used secularism to consolidate its power against society and undermine potential centers of opposition in the name of science and progress. Secularism became a strategy of exclusion and an instrument of oppression.

Yet despite the efforts of the Kemalist elite, Islamic idioms have played a dynamic role throughout modern Turkish history, offering a framework for thinking about the meaning of the good life and the just society. Modernization did not lead to the demise of Islam in Turkey, but rather transformed it and – paradoxically – brought it into the public sphere. Secularism itself raised key questions about identity, the ethics of difference and co-existence, and social justice. As a result, Islamic groups in Turkey have been forced to address such questions. Different groups have reacted in different ways: some have rejected modern Turkish society, others have sought to escape from it, while still other Islamic groups have tried to accommodate their religious beliefs to the exigencies of the modern world.

Those who 'reject' modernity are called fundamentalists. They struggle against the secularized world. Some groups do it peacefully, others violently. Still other religious Muslims have opted to drop out of politics in an effort to seclude themselves against the effects of secularism: for example, some Sufi orders do not even allow new converts to enter their communities, in order to avoid contamination from the outside world.

In Turkey, however, most Muslims are neither political militants nor religious purists. Instead of trying to restore 'Islamic government' or impose 'Islamic law,' they have formed new voluntary associations in the media, in the schools, and in the business world. This has allowed religious identities and commitments to move into the public sphere of civil society.

A prime institutional example would be the Nur movement of Fethullah Gülen, the largest and most influential movement in Turkey. Gülen argues that "Islam empowers Muslims to decide 'how we should live as modern Muslims' within a democratic system." The movement represents a shift in the institutional location of Islamic authority, from mosque to the media, from ulama to public intellectuals. This faith-based social movement brings Islam back to the public sphere by cross-fertilizing Islamic idioms with global discourses on human rights, democracy, and the market economy.

As a consequence of these developments, there are two competing visions

of secularism in Turkey today: one authoritarian, the other pluralist. The Kemalist version of secularism is a system of controlling religion and subordinating it to an official state form. The pluralist version requires a neutral state and a new tolerance for Islamic voices and institutions in civil society.

Since religion infuses all aspects of human life, one cannot, and should not, try by force to exclude it from public life. The expanding role played by Islamic groups in Turkey's media, schools, and businesses has the potential to create a new, and more liberal, society – and also a new, and more tolerant, version of Islam.[2]

2 I would like to thank Mujeeb R. Khan for his critical comments on this essay.

T. N. Madan

The case of India

British India was partitioned in 1947, at the very moment the nation became independent of England.[1] Partition followed the failure, despite prolonged efforts, of the British government and the Indian National Congress (the oldest and largest organization of 'freedom fighters') to convince the Indian Muslim League (arguably the most representative political body of Muslims) that – notwithstanding the validity of separate religious identities in their own context – the political, economic, and social interests of all the peoples of British India would best be served by establishing a state based on the principle of a common nationhood.

Since consensus could not be reached and nobody wanted to prolong colonial rule, a decision was made to divide the country and to create, besides an independent India, the new state of Pakistan, meant to be a homeland for the majority (about 75 percent) of the Muslims of the subcontinent. Several hundred autonomous Indian principalities were expected to accede to one or the other new state on the basis of territorial contiguity and the religious composition of the population. Much faster than most people expected, the process of 'integration' of princely states was completed within a year. Only the Muslim-majority Kashmir state, which acceded to India in October of 1947 following Pakistan's effort to annex it by force, became a problem that still awaits solution.

As soon as Pakistan was created, its first head of state, Mohammed Ali Jinnah (1876 – 1948), who had led the movement for partition, quite ironically argued for the creation of a secular state, saying that religious identities were irrelevant for citizenship rights. But this excellent idea died with him a few months later, and his successors proclaimed Pakistan an Islamic state. And that is the way it has remained ever since, although not without controversies about the implications of this choice.

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1 As Nikki Keddie has noted in her paper in this volume, recent scholarly contributions to the debate on secularism in India (mostly but not exclusively by Indians) have grown into a large body of publications. In my reading of it, this corpus comprises three distinct points of view. What follows is a brief elaboration of the same.

In India, by contrast, a more successful variant of secularism emerged. That the new nation's leader, Jawaharlal Nehru (1889 – 1964), an avowed secularist and socialist, would opt for a secular state was only to be expected. What is noteworthy is that its republican constitution, promulgated in 1950, deliberately avoided the terms 'secularism' and 'secular state.' It rather depended upon clearly worded provisions guaranteeing equality of citizenship rights and freedom of conscience and protecting the cultural and educational rights of religious minorities.[2] Incidentally, an amendment in 1976 added the words 'secular' and 'socialist' to the characterization of India as a democratic republic in the preamble of the constitution.

In the years immediately after the trauma of partition, religious toleration and secularism were regarded in India as self-evident verities. The dismay over violent religious conflict did not, however, mean that Indians turned their back on religious belief and practice anymore than the Europeans did in the wake of the wars of religion in the seventeenth century. There was a tension between secularization and religiosity, however. Eleven years after independence, Nehru told André Malraux that the two greatest problems he had faced as a nation-builder were "Creating a just society by just means . . . [and] a secular state in a religious society."[3]

Nehru himself was an agnostic, and his overall assessment of the role of religion in human history was negative. He considered the cultivation of scientific temper and the technological approach essential to the making of a modern society,[4] but he knew that his mentor, Gandhi, a man of religion par excellence, had a deep rapport with the people, and considered respect for all religious faiths the first principle of a good society. Others whose advice Nehru respected, most notably the eminent philosopher S. Radhakrishnan who became the country's second president, also maintained that an India bereft of religiosity was inconceivable and that, therefore, an Indian concept of religious pluralism had to be elaborated. Pursuantly, and perhaps in his own mind as a temporary measure, Nehru defined the secular state as one "which honours all faiths equally and gives them [their followers] equal opportunities."[5] His admiration for Lenin notwithstanding, he abjured the Leninist and Kemalist paths of coercion.

Nehruvian secularism developed cracks as one-party dominance in Indian electoral politics declined through the 1960s. In the years that followed, India moved in the direction of a multiparty state, governed in different regions and at different times by secularist parties on the left as well as communal parties (with their membership drawn exclusively or primarily from one religious community) on the right. In the middle, the Congress Party vacillated and showed a willingness to accommodate the interests of one religious community or another, and to otherwise indulge in opportunist politics, in order to stay in power.

2 T. N. Madan, "Freedom of Religion," *Economic and Political Weekly* 38 (11) (15 March 2003): 1034 – 1041.

3 Quoted in André Malraux, *Antimemoirs* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1968), 145.

4 T. N. Madan, *Modern Myths, Locked Minds: Secularism and Fundamentalism in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 238 – 247.

5 S. Gopal, ed., *Jawaharlal Nehru: An Anthology* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980), 330 – 331.

Things came to a head in the early 1980s when Hindu revivalism, Muslim separatism, and Sikh fundamentalism gained salience, mutually reinforcing one another through a convergence of political, economic, and social stresses. The churning of politics was soon matched by more widespread ideological controversies.

While some secularist intellectuals in the Nehruvian mold called for a reassertion of the principles of the Enlightenment (including scientific temper as well as the primacy of science and technology as instruments of social transformation), others boldly questioned these principles, drawing attention to the flawed character of 'the modernity project' and advocating the revival of traditional cultures. Ashis Nandy wrote in 1988 about the importance of "the recovery of a well-known domain of public concern in South Asia – ethnic and, especially, religious tolerance – from the hegemonic language of secularism."[6]

A year earlier I had argued that the idea of privatization of religion, which is central to the ideology of secularism, had succeeded in the West because of certain antecedent developments within Christianity itself, most notably the Reformation. But the acceptance of this idea was problematic in India because the country's major religious traditions did not assume any radical antinomy between the sacred and the secular. As I have said, secularism in South Asia, understood as interreligious understanding and the equality of citizenship rights, could succeed only if we "take both religion and secularism seriously, and not reject the former as superstition and reduce the latter as a mask for communalism or more expediency."[7] In effect, I was advocating a religio-secular society of the sort described by Martin Marty.

Ignoring significant differences between my position and Nandy's, some secularist critics castigated us for holding views that, they said, could only provide support to the proponents of Hindu political and cultural domination who take shelter under the abstract principle of equality of rights that could, given that Hindus account for nearly two-thirds of India's population, only mean permanent majoritarianism. The point is not that my position or Nandy's is immune to criticism, but that the secularists apparently claimed that privilege for themselves; for them, secularism is simply India's destiny.

As it happened, Partha Chatterjee (the third contributor to the secularism debate in India mentioned by Nikki Keddie) pointedly asked in 1994 if secularism is "an adequate, or even appropriate, ground on which to meet the political challenge of Hindu majoritarianism" because "the Hindu right . . . is perfectly at peace with the institutional procedures of the 'Western' or 'modern state.'"[8] The best way to protect minority cultural rights, which are a central concern of Indian secularism, Chatterjee suggested, is toleration "premised on autonomy and respect for persons" but made "sensitive to the varying political salience of the institutional contexts."[9]

While the upholders of the orthodoxy of the 1950s continue to consider every

6 Ashis Nandy, "The Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Religious Tolerance," republished in Ashis Nandy, *Time Warps: The Insistent Politics of Silent and Evasive Pasts* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001), 61.

7 T. N. Madan, "Secularism in its Place," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46 (4) (1987): 759.

8 Partha Chatterjee, "Secularism and Tolerance," in Rajeev Bhargava, ed., *Secularism and its Critics* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 345 – 346.

9 Ibid., 375.

attempt to carry the debate forward as an attack on secularism, others have moved ahead in several directions. As I have already mentioned, close attention is being paid to the issue of minority rights. It has been suggested that the notion of toleration is inadequate and that the state should be required to put in place supportive structures that enable minorities to prosper like anybody else without losing their cultural identity.[10] Others worry that this will delay the emergence of a common civic identity.[11]

Some Indian social theorists have argued that the term 'secularism' has ethical and political varieties: the former variety "seeks the separation of religion from politics by virtue of the contribution it makes to the realization of some ethical ideal"; the latter seeks the same separation but "merely because it makes for a more livable polity."[12] For political secularism, "the right is prior to the good"; "it merely provides a way of living together, not a way of living together well," which too is affirmed as a valid project.[13]

It has been contended that in view of its multiple connotations, secularism has always been a fuzzy idea in India. Earlier, ambiguity was considered its strength, but many now believe that its vagueness is a poor foundation for clear-headed public policies. This in effect is a call to the Indian state to discharge its responsibility to govern firmly and impartially within the four walls of its constitution. After the Gujarat carnage of early 2002, one can no longer be sure that a blatantly partisan, although elected, government will not bend the institutions of the state to serve party objectives rather than to protect and promote the common interests of the citizenry. There is an urgent need to keep the state itself under watch, lest "the war of all against all" be unleashed under its auspices.

The institutions of civil society – especially voluntary associations, which can express general concerns, provide the means for collective action, and mediate between citizens and primary groups – have a constructive role to play in furthering the goals of a tolerant society. This role is perhaps best illustrated by current controversies about religious liberty.

India's constitution grants citizens as a fundamental right the freedom to "profess, practice and propagate" their faiths. The right of propagation has turned out to be a thorny issue in the context of mass conversions from Hinduism and tribal religions to Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. The role of foreign missionaries and funding has been highlighted and even exaggerated by the Hindu Right. Attempts by some of the states of the Union of India to put severe limitations on conversions – including the assignment of district-level bureaucrats and judicial officers to determine if force, fraud, or allurement has been employed to effect the conversions – have been criticized as a frontal attack on religious liberty. It is arguable that citizens groups backed (but not controlled) by the state may be the best guarantors of

10 Neera Chandhoke, *Beyond Secularism: The Rights of Religious Minorities* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999).

11 Mukul Kesavan, *Secular Common Sense* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2001).

12 Rajeev Bhargava, "What is Secularism For?" in Bhargava, ed., *Secularism and its Critics*, 492.

13 Ibid., 498, 508 – 509.

freedom of conscience and the best promoters – through educational, cultural, and other initiatives – of the secular ethos mentioned above.[14]

A serious problem in this context is that some communities may contend that religious liberty entails a plurality of personal laws or civil codes. Indeed, Muslims, the largest minority at 12 percent, have taken this stand. Needless to say, such a stance jeopardizes those common bonds of citizenship that are a critical component of secularism.[15]

Despite the political difficulties it now faces, secularism remains a primary term in Indian political discourse today. Communalism (or religious nationalism) and fundamentalism are defined negatively in opposition to it. Those who would go beyond secularism consider it a benchmark.

Limitations of space preclude a discussion of 'fundamentalism' here, but I share Henry Munson's distrust of the term and its tendency to produce "an arbitrary and misleading sense of uniformity." This is best illustrated, as he points out, by the misidentification of Hindu religious nationalism (which is on an aggressive course) as fundamentalism. But Hinduism does not have a core revealed text comparable to the Bible and the Koran. And the proponents of the ideology of Hindutva have so far shown far more interest in the cultural and political domination of non-Hindus than in the religious life of Hindus.

14 Madan, "Freedom of Religion," 1038.

15 John H. Mansfield, "Religious and Charitable Endowments and a Uniform Civil Code" in Gerald J. Larson, ed., *Religion and Personal Law in Secular India* (New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2001).

Vali Nasr

Lessons from the Muslim world

Secularism has come under assault over the course of the last two decades, in developing as well as industrialized societies, in democracies as well as dictatorships. Christian, Hindu, Islamic, and Jewish fundamentalisms, with different political aspirations representing diverse constituencies, have spearheaded the resurgence of religious values, institutions, and organizations. On a global scale, the fundamentalist juggernaut has eroded the place of secularism in politics, policy-making, law, and social relations, and has posed a profound challenge to old ways of thinking about modernity, its prerequisites, directives, and institutions.[1]

In time, the legacy of Western history – of the Enlightenment and the Renaissance – which postulates an impassable chasm between religion and secularism, and predicts the inevitable domination of the latter, will give place to what Martin E. Marty has referred to in this volume as the "religio-secular world." To understand the shape of things to come we have to take stock of the changes that have taken place over the past few decades and also look closely at changes that are currently unfolding. This we should do not through the lens of old paradigms, but with a view to identifying emerging trends.

Nowhere is the scope of change produced by fundamentalism more evident than in the Muslim world.[2] It was here

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1 José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 5 – 39; Mark Jurgensmeyer, "The New Religious State," *Comparative Politics* 27 (4) (July 1995): 379 – 391; Brian H. Smith, "Religion and Politics: A New Look Through an Old Prism" in H. E. Chehabi and Alfred Stepan, eds., *Politics, Society, and Democracy: Comparative Studies* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995), 73 – 88.

2 For general discussions of Islamic fundamentalism see John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, 3d ed. (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1991); Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982); Emmaneul Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval*

that fundamentalism found its most vociferous and disruptive expression and mounted its most direct and poignant challenge to secularism and its institutions. It is also here that the intensity of the struggle between religion and secularism is producing new paradigms and institutions that will shape our world for years to come.

In the Muslim Middle East and Asia, secularism was not a product of socioeconomic, technological, or cultural change – it was not associated with any internal social dynamic. In fact, it was not even an indigenous force. Secularism was first and foremost a project of the state – first the colonial state, and later the postcolonial state.[3] It was a Western import, meant to support the state's aim of long-run development. As a result, from the outset a religious-secular divide came to reflect the increasingly contentious relations between the society and the colonial state.

The postcolonial state in the Muslim world reproduced these tensions in a voluntary effort to emulate the Western state, which it understood to be inherently secular. The Turkish Republic established after World War I serves as the most lucid example here. It was militantly secular and adopted nationalism in lieu of religion to forge a modern nation. The Turkish state soon became a model for state formation in much of the Muslim world; Iran during the Pahlavi period, Arab nationalist regimes, Indonesia, Pakistan – all to varying degrees emulated the Turkish model.[4]

In the Muslim world, the postcolonial state thus sought to drive religion out of politics and public life – just as Atatürk had done in Turkey. Attempting to use nationalism or socialism or both to mold citizens into a secular whole, the state showed a great concern for regulating the daily lives and cultural outlook of its subjects.[5] Social engineering went hand in hand with the conscious secularization of the judiciary and the educational system, and with the nationalization of religious endowments, thus truncating the sociopolitical role of religion.[6]

Still, the process of secularization was problematic in the Muslim world, insofar as it did not seek to separate religion from politics, but rather to subjugate religion to political control.[7] This had the effect of politicizing religion as Muslim institutions struggled with the state, often in an effort to loosen the state's control over society. Though forcibly marginalized, religion thus remained rele-

Theology and Modern Politics (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985); Nikki R. Keddie, "The Revolt of Islam, 1700 to 1993: Comparative Considerations and Relations to Imperialism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 36 (3) (July 1994): 463 – 487.

3 S. V. R. Nasr, "European Colonialism and the Emergence of Modern Muslim States," in John L. Esposito, ed., *The Oxford History of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 549 – 599.

4 Alan Richards and John Waterbury, *A Political Economy of the Middle East* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1990), 187 – 218.

5 H. E. Chehabi, "Staging the Emperor's New Clothes: Dress Codes and Nation-Building Under Reza Shah," *Iranian Studies* 26 (3 – 4) (Summer/Fall 1993): 209 – 229.

6 See, for instance, Shahrough Akhavi, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran: Clergy-State Relations in the Pahlavi Period* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1980).

7 M. Hakan Yavuz, "Political Islam and the Welfare (*Refah*) Party in Turkey," *Comparative Politics* 30 (1) (October 1997): 64 – 65; Daniel Crescilius, "Nonideological Responses of Egyptian Ulama to Modernization," in Nikki R. Keddie, ed., *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions Since 1500* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 167 – 210.

vant: in the struggle between state and society, religion in some cases became a focus for resisting authoritarian forms of secularism. In Egypt for instance, Gamal Abd al-Nasser's imposition of reforms on the al-Azhar Islamic educational institution to bring its values into alignment with the goals of the state had the effect of imparting political attitudes on religious leaders and institutions, which eventually culminated in the growing influence of fundamentalism and parties dedicated to a 're-Islamization' of Egyptian society after 1980.[8]

Secularism in the Muslim world never overcame its colonial origins and never lost its association with the postcolonial state's continuous struggle to dominate society. Its fortunes became tied to those of the state: the more the state's ideology came into question, and the more its actions alienated social forces, the more secularism was rejected in favor of indigenous worldviews and social institutions – which were for the most part tied to Islam. As such, the decline of secularism was a reflection of the decline of the postcolonial state in the Muslim world.

The crisis facing states from Malaysia to Morocco in the latter part of the twentieth century fostered an Islamic challenge to secularism and the postcolonial state.[9] The emerging trend became most spectacularly evident with the Iranian revolution of 1979. The revolution was the first instance of a fundamentalist movement replacing a secular state, and it inspired similar challenges to state authority and its secular underpinnings across the Muslim world.

Since 1979, revolutionary movements in Algeria, Lebanon, Egypt, Palestine, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Indonesia, as well as international umbrella groups such as Al Qaeda, have harkened to the Iranian model.[10] But in Iran itself fundamentalism is no longer the revolutionary force that it once was;[11] the Islamic Republic of Iran has failed to produce a viable model for Islamic government and is today facing a crisis that will likely end the political dominance of religion

8 Malika Zeghal, "Religion and Politics in Egypt: the Ulema of al-Azhar, Radical Islam, and the State (1952 – 1994)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31 (3) (August 1999): 373 – 375.

9 Robert Malley, *The Call from Algeria: Third Worldism, Revolution, and the Turn to Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 328 – 341; Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Denis J. Sullivan and Sana Abed-Kotob, *Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society vs. the State* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1999); Vali Nasr, "Secular States and Religious Oppositions," *SAIS Review* 18 (2) (Summer/Fall 1998): 32 – 37; Charles Tripp, "Islam and the Secular Logic of the State in the Middle East," in Abdel Salam Sidahmad and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, eds., *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), 57 – 60; John P. Entelis, "The Crisis of Authoritarianism in North Africa: The Case of Algeria," *Problems of Communism* 41 (May/June 1992): 71 – 81.

10 David Menashri, ed., *The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1991); and Nikki R. Keddie and Rudi Matthee, eds., *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002).

11 Fariba Adelkhah, *Being Modern in Iran* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Olivier Roy, "The Crisis of Religious Legitimacy in Iran," *The Middle East Journal* 53 (2) (Spring 1999): 210 – 211; Vali Nasr, "Iran: State Power, Identity, and Development," in Jeffrey Kopstein and Mark Lichbach, eds., *Comparative Politics: Interests, Identities, and Institutions in Today's Small World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 348 – 380.

there. Equally important, elsewhere in the Muslim world fundamentalism has proved to be neither as successful nor as intractable and uncompromising as the example of revolutionary Iran suggests. It has interacted with secularism and the state to produce new approaches to modern society and politics and the role of religion therein.

In the process, fundamentalism has by and large matured. Although it still inspires extremism, that tendency is no longer the dominant force in many Muslim societies. Indeed, fundamentalism has developed new perspectives on society and politics, compromised on its narrow ideals, and become an ingredient in the broader movement toward the modernization and development of Muslim states. And what comes out of this process will inevitably determine the relation between religion and secularism in the Muslim world and beyond.

Islamic fundamentalism was not successful in its assault on secularism and the state in the wake of the Iranian revolution – but it was able to institutionalize a role for Islam in society and politics. In so doing, it both gave impetus to a greater popular role for Islam in the public sphere and made Islam a legitimate – and in many cases attractive – tool with which to achieve political goals, thus encouraging many more social and political actors to use Islam in a largely secular public arena.[12] Though unable to achieve its own avowed goal of replacing the postcolonial state, fundamentalism was able to make Islam a critical force in society and politics.

The advocates of a return to Islam have been able to make religious values, however rigid, seem relevant to modern society.[13] They have been able to bridge traditional and modern segments of society. At the same time, fundamentalists have done much to politicize Islamic symbols and to formulate new Islamic concepts of relevance to politics – such as 'Islamic economics,' 'Islamic education,' 'Islamization of knowledge,' and the 'Islamic state.'[14] They have both articulated the manner in which these symbols should serve political ends and convinced large numbers of citizens that 'Islamization' is a necessary and beneficial process.[15] Despite their opposition to secularism, many fundamentalists have supported extensive state intervention in the economy and society, and, in some countries, have given fresh legitimacy to the idea of a domineering state.

As a result, fundamentalists have been able to redefine the concept of politics in much of the Muslim world, shaping how politicians, state institutions, dissident groups, even how educated youth and

12 Geneive Abdo, *No God but God: Egypt and the Triumph of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

13 Roxanne Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999); S. V. R. Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

14 John L. Esposito and John Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Farid Alatas, "Reflections on the Idea of Islamic Social Science," *Comparative Civilizations Review* 17 (1987): 60–86; Timur Kuran, "The Economic Impact of Islamic Fundamentalism," in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appelby, eds., *Fundamentalisms and the State* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 302–341; Ishtiaq Ahmed, *The Concept of an Islamic State: An Analysis of the Ideological Controversy in Pakistan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).

15 Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Jenny White, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).

segments of the intelligentsia define their goals.[16]

Islamic fundamentalism became ensconced in the politics of Muslim societies at a time when the secular conception of the state and its nationalist underpinning were losing legitimacy and, hence, political efficacy. Still, because fundamentalism was not able to completely replace existing political and social structures,[17] it has set the stage for an ongoing and intense struggle over the proper balance between religion and secularism in Muslim societies.

Many secular states have responded to the fundamentalist challenge by appropriating aspects of its discourse, to bolster their legitimacy and thus augment their power. Malaysia and Pakistan exemplify this trend. In both countries, the leadership has successfully confounded its fundamentalist opposition while reaping the fruits of its propaganda. By introducing 'fundamentalism from above,' they have been able to exploit the fundamentalist challenge from below, while strengthening their control over politics and society.

Faced with the staying power of the secular state, still other fundamentalist forces in other countries have opted to change.[18] By compromising, they have been able to gain a foothold in the political process. Here it is Islamic forces rather than the state that have been at the forefront of political change, defining the ways in which Islam and secular politics could blend to produce new models for state and society to follow.

Turkey is perhaps the best example in this regard. Faced with the uncompromising secularism of the state, Turkish Islamic forces have abandoned their narrow fundamentalist views in favor of an inclusive and pragmatic approach to the role of religion in politics: they have dropped their demands for strict adherence to Islamic law, they support Turkey's relations with the West, and they even accept the need to maintain relations with Israel. The pragmatism of Turkey's Islamic forces has produced a model for the rest of the Muslim world to follow, one in which modern state and social institutions that are secular in nature also reflect Islamic values.

Iran – a secular state that fell to an Islamic revolution that now faces a secular backlash – represents a very different model of what the future may hold. Through the crucible of revolution, and the rise and fall of popular support for creating an Islamic republic, Iran has been experimenting with a unique combination of religion and secularism. There the state is now the repository of Islam and the society is pushing for secularization – the obverse of what is happening in the rest of the Muslim world.

Iran's Islamic Republic enjoyed only temporary success in implementing its vision. Its theocratic ideal quickly became a facade behind which religious and political authorities stood increasingly apart from one another.[19] The state was never able to completely control its sizable secular social stratum, which has become a primary source of

16 S. V. R. Nasr, "Ideology and Institutions in Fundamentalist Approaches to Public Policy," in Sohrab Behdad and Farhad Nomani, eds., *International Review of Comparative Public Policy* 9 (1997): 41 – 67.

17 Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996).

18 John L. Esposito and John Voll, *Islam and Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

19 H. E. Chehabi, "Religion and Politics in Iran: How Theocratic is the Islamic Republic?" *Dædalus* 120 (3) (Summer 1991): 69 – 92.

secular resistance to the Islamic Republic. So in time the Republic had to bow to other pressures that, for one, have necessitated the use of elections to settle struggles for power. And the practice of voting has, in turn, inadvertently produced a certain degree of pluralism and also a distinct political momentum for institutionalizing more democratic practices and modes of political behavior.[20]

This dialectic – a growing secularism in society reinforced by a gradual opening of the Islamic state – is peculiar to Iran. It represents a unique model in which secularism and the sociopolitical institutions associated with it are not merely imported ideals imposed from above, but homegrown trends that have emerged to curtail the power of the Islamic state. As a result, Iran promises to produce a religio-secular model whose point of origin is Islamic rather than secular – and quite different from what one finds elsewhere in the Muslim Middle East and Asia.

As the example of Iran suggests, the Muslim world is in the midst of a process of change, experimenting with models that, by balancing the competing demands of religion and secularism, can create viable ways for these societies to modernize. What is likely to emerge at the end is nation-states that strike a very different balance between religion and secularism from that drawn in the West. These states will call upon the cultural resources of religion to address their social and economic needs – but not necessarily in the manner that European history suggests.

20 Nasr, "Iran: State, Power, Identity, and Development," 348 – 380.

William Galston

Jews, Muslims & the prospects for pluralism

The question of the hour is whether Islamic fundamentalism can be compatible with democracy. Though important, that question is subordinate to another: whether Islamic fundamentalism can make its peace with religious pluralism. After all, a democratic majority could well bring a Shiite theocracy to power in Iraq. A wide variety of institutional forms, many of which do not resemble American constitutionalism, can express and secure respect for pluralism. If that respect is absent, however, nation-builders will have no choice but to enforce tolerance, or to abandon beleaguered minorities to their fate.

James Carroll puts it well: "The challenge for religions of all kinds, but perhaps especially for religions based on narratives of divine revelation, is to make positive assertions of faith that do not simultaneously denigrate the different tenets of faith held by others." Those who believe that there are many paths to God, or that it is not given to finite humans to know which is the right path to the Infinite God, will find it relatively easy to embrace religious pluralism.

Genuine fundamentalists cannot accept either of these beliefs. Fundamentalists may however believe that other faiths are on the same (right) path although they cannot reach the end – the one true faith. They may also believe that it is wrong to use coercion as an instrument of religious conversion.

Each of these beliefs finds textual support as well as opposition within Islam. For example, in the Koran (al-Baraqah 2:62) we find the following: "Verily, those who believe and those who are Jews and Christians and Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last day and do righteous good deeds shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve." Much depends on the ability of the proponents of a genuinely Islamic pluralism to broaden public support for a generous and accommodating interpretation of their shared tradition.

Acceptance of pluralism comes more easily to religions that emphasize inner conviction, because they need to ask little of politics beyond being left alone. By contrast, religions that take the form of

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law, as do traditional forms of Judaism and Islam, are forced to take seriously the content of public law. The terms of engagement between religious law and public law then become critical.

Speaking broadly and schematically, there are three possible relations between political and religious authority. Political authority may be comprehensively dominant over religion and thus put it in the service of state power (for this reason it is often termed 'civil'). Second, political and religious authority may coexist, each with authority over different aspects of communal life. (Maxims such as "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's" create the basis for such a pluralist understanding.) Finally, religious authority may coincide with, or comprehensively dominate, political authority, yielding theocracy.

When it comes to theocracy, there are important historical differences between Judaism and Islam.

I want to begin by reflecting on Henry Munson's retelling of the Maccabean revolt, which he treats, plausibly enough, as an archetype of what we now call fundamentalism. Breaching a long-standing modus vivendi between Jews and their Seleucid rulers, King Antiochus Epiphanes arrogantly and unwisely ordered Jews to violate their most fundamental commandments. When one of the resisters, the priest Mattathias, fled Jerusalem, the king's men pursued him. Mattathias resorted to violence only after it became apparent that the government would allow him no refuge and would not permit faithful Jews to observe their commandments without persecution.

This sequence of events is instructive in several respects. In the first place, unlike the Ottomans and the Hapsburgs, Antiochus was not satisfied to rule over a culturally diverse empire. Instead, he embarked on an aggressive campaign of cultural homogenization, unrelated to the requisites of stable and secure rule, that ultimately triggered resistance. Second, Mattathias's revolt originated not as a thrust toward theocracy but as a desperate defensive measure. He may well have been seething with resentment against Seleucid rule throughout his life, but the evidence suggests that he was prepared to accept it, so long as the authorities did not interfere with Jewish practices. Once his revolt began, however, its aims expanded to include the de-Hellenization of the entire society.

While bearing in mind Munson's sensible caveats concerning dissimilarities among different varieties of fundamentalism, I will hazard a generalization from the Maccabean story: We should distinguish between religious movements that are essentially *defensive* in nature and those that are *offensive*.

Defensive fundamentalist movements are content to withdraw from the arena of power, or to participate in it on equal terms with others, so long as they are free to practice their faith. They may not accept other faiths as equal to their own. They may deplore the copresence of 'foreign' or 'strange' gods within their political community. But they are prepared to accept competing practices, out of necessity, as the price for being left alone.

Offensive movements, by contrast, seek power to impose their way on others. Four characteristics of offensive fundamentalist movements render them especially dangerous: their outlook is intolerant; their stance, uncompromising; their aspirations, totalist; their tactics, latently if not actually violent. These are the movements that pluralist societies and those seeking to build such societies (as in Iraq) have good reason to fear, and must resist.

Taken literally, the authority established by the laws of Moses was theocratic and, if the Book of Judges is to be taken as history, was exercised theocratically for an extended period. Gideon famously refused the people's demand that he become king over Israel: "I will not rule over you myself; nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord alone shall rule over you" (Judges 8:23).

But in practice, the legal structures of traditional (rabbinic) Judaism developed over a period of nearly two millennia during which Jews were a nearly powerless minority in the states they inhabited. The religious practices, such as the rituals of the Temple, that presupposed Jewish sovereignty in Israel fell into desuetude and were not revived – even after the reestablishment of a Jewish state in Israel in 1947.

In the meantime, Shmuel, an authority of the early Talmudic period, laid down the principle that became central to all subsequent discussion: "The law of the kingdom is law." Civil law loses its claim to be obeyed only when it commands something that the Torah explicitly forbids, or forbids something that the Torah commands.

As the discussion of these matters developed during the Talmudic and medieval periods, kingship became not a particular form of political regime but rather a metaphor for secular government in general. Nissim Gerondi, a leader of the Barcelona Jewish community, argued explicitly for two "separate agencies" – one to render decisions on a range of civil matters in accordance with religious law, the other to uphold public order. The precedent for this, he insisted, was established during the biblical period: "At a time when Israel had both Sanhedrin and king, the Sanhedrin's role was to judge the people according to just [Torah] law only and not to order their affairs in any way beyond this, unless the king delegated his powers to them." The secular authority, he argued, had one sphere of authority, religious leaders another. The two spheres overlapped to some extent, and it was not incumbent on secular authority to yield in cases of conflict. Jews were required to resist secular authority – at the cost of their lives if need be – in only a handful of instances, such as mandatory idolatry. Otherwise, the law of the kingdom was binding, the Torah notwithstanding.

Throughout the medieval and early modern periods, Jewish populations sought to maximize communal autonomy and to minimize conflict between the law of secular authorities and the commandments of the Torah. Efforts to enforce the fundamentals of the religion were invariably *defensive*, never offensive. And when, after World War II, Israel was established, it was barely thinkable that the religious law developed over centuries of political marginality in the diaspora could serve as civil legislation for the new state. For the most part, Orthodox communities and political parties in Israel ranked other goals ahead of the aspiration to rest civil legislation on Torah law, in part because applying it to political power wielded by a Jewish majority might well require sweeping revisions in the content of that law.

Nikki Keddie reminds us that the total intertwining of religion and politics is rare in Muslim history, and that calls for codifying Islamic law as the law of the state are "distinctly modern." Still, we need to explain the receptivity of many contemporary Muslim populations to such ideas. I would suggest that in contrast to Talmudic law, Shariah (the Muslim religious law founded on the Koran and the conduct and statements of the Prophet) developed in an extended peri-

od during which Muslims wielded political power, often over populations that were overwhelmingly Muslim. The structure of that law thus reflects the expectation that it would have political as well as communal authority. As Khaled Abou El Fadl states, classical Muslim jurists described the best system of government as "the caliphate, based on Sharia'ah law [which] fulfills the criteria of justice and legitimacy and binds governed and governor alike." The idea of a secular state in which Shariah is both distinct from and subordinate to political authority stands in uneasy relation to this ideal, and many Muslims experience that idea as an alien (Western) imposition.

For example, in 1959, Iraq's new revolutionary ruler, General Abd al-Karim Qasim, promulgated a Code of Personal Status that contradicted Shariah in areas such as polygamy and inheritance. Clerical resistance to the Code helped undermine General Qasim's regime, and the repeal of the Code was among the first acts of the new government that took power in 1963 following a successful coup. Calls to rest civil law on Shariah and to recognize the autonomy of religious judges have a resonance in Islamic communities without parallel for most Jews, no matter how observant.

It would be too hasty to conclude, however, that Islamic fundamentalism must entail some form of theocracy or always take a violent and intolerant form. There are a number of political arrangements that might express an Islamic outlook without ceasing to respect pluralism. Clearly, Atatürk's severe anticlericalism is not one of them. Nor is an American-style separation of church and state.

But one might well imagine an Islamic version of the Netherlands, a state in which a number of different faiths enjoy public funding and public standing, especially in the arena of education. Another possibility is a new version of the multiconfessional structure of the Ottoman Empire (reproduced to some degree in Israel), in which a dominant religious group shares civic space with other faiths that enjoy substantial autonomy and authority, especially over family law.

In short, there is no reason, other than the perennial *libido dominandi*, why a moderate official 'establishment' of Islam need eventuate in religious persecution and repression. As Noah Feldman, author of *After Jihad: America and the Struggle for Islamic Democracy,* has written:

> If man in the West cannot imagine democracy without separation of church and state, many in the Muslim world find it impossible to imagine legitimate democracy with it. Fortunately, democracy does not require an absolute divide between religion and political authority. Liberty of conscience is an indispensable requirement of free government – but an established religion that does not coerce religious belief and that treats religious minorities as equals may be perfectly compatible with democracy.

In this regard, the trajectory of Iran since 1979 is instructive. As Keddie and Munson show, Khomeini's rhetoric responded both to the cultural dislocations of modernity and to imperialism's affront to national pride. Over time, however, the majority of Iranians began to react against what they experienced as theocratic oppression. In their eyes, what initially presented itself as a cure had become part of the disease. For all we know, ordinary citizens in Saudi Arabia are equally impatient with the severity of Wahhabi fundamentalism. The difference is that the Iranian Constitution allows for elections that express popular

sentiment and that influence the distribution of political power.

There is thus reason to hope that, given time, the exposure of Islamic regimes to the culture of modernity and to institutions of democratic accountability will produce a tolerable degree if not of respect at least of liberty for diverse faiths and ways of life. In contemporary circumstances, that liberty is the principal requisite of political decency.

Jean Bethke Elshtain

Against liberal monism

Despite the separation of church and state in America, religion and politics in this country have long influenced one another in ways direct and indirect. This theme was advanced by Alexis de Tocqueville in his masterwork, *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville argued that the nation's religiously formed democratic optimism was something new under the political sun, for it led, in practice, to the associational enthusiasm he observed when he toured America during the Jacksonian era.

Contemporary analysts too frequently assume that the mutually fructifying influence between religion and politics applauded by Tocqueville either no longer exists or is deeply problematic. Their mistake is a result of focusing too narrowly on the recent constitutional trend toward strengthening the separation of church and state, rather than looking more broadly at the worlds of religion and politics as they actually intersect, and mutually flourish, in America today.

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That church and state in America are in fact separate means that ours is a secular government – but it does *not* mean that ours is a secular society. It isn't now. It has never been.

In fact, the terrain on which religion and politics have most often met in American history is the realm of nonstate institutions we call civil society. In every aspect of human endeavor, faith matters to people and to particular communities, and, when as citizens these people and communities participate in politics, to the nation at large.

These facts suggest a logic for religious engagement in the civic realm that clashes with a dominant strand of argument in academic philosophy that, although prominent in scholarly debates, has very little to do with how people actually talk and act. The academic philosophers insist that the convictions of the religious need to be translated into a purely secular idiom if the faithful are to join in political deliberation. If the religiously minded are not comfortable translating their convictions into such a secular idiom, they had best remain silent.

Some versions of this argument – for example, that associated with the late John Rawls – are subtle and complex. Others are much simpler. They assume that there is a single vocabulary for political discussion; if your speech lies out-

side the purview of a secular language of 'public deliberation,' it isn't legitimately public speech at all.

The draconian requirement that a purely secular mode of speech supplant all other ways of making public argument cuts against the grain of American political history and civic culture. In the real world of religion and politics as they actually coexist in America, citizens resort to 'god talk' at least as much as they use 'rights talk.' Faith informs the way America speaks and has always spoken. The U.S. Constitution never required that people give up the communal dimensions of their faith as the price for civic admission. Catholics, Lutherans, Jews – all built networks of schools and charitable institutions. Jews, in particular, distinguished themselves publicly through visible markers of their identity in dress and in dietary regulations. Even a cursory glance at our history shows the manner in which confessional pluralism and social pluralism have been linked in the American polity as religious differences were marked publicly through a variety of modes of communal identification. One reason that America's religious institutions are such an indispensable part of American civil society is that religion in America has never been compelled to privatize itself along the lines suggested by Rawls.

For the first 150 years of the American republic, primary responsibility for religious rights and liberties was lodged in the states. No federal law governing religious institutions in their relation to the government was ever passed. The federal government got into the act where religion is concerned – at least in a big way – only during the last half century.

In recent years, a constitutional position has emerged that might be called strong separationism. This position seeks to do on the level of law what a strict version of Rawlsian philosophy aims to do in the realm of discourse – namely, to strip public life of religious markers, emblems, and ceremony.

I have called this position *liberal monism*, for its origins lie in certain strands of classical liberal political philosophy. This position holds that all institutions within a democratic society must conform to a single authority principle; a single standard of what counts as reason and deliberation; a single vocabulary of political discussion. Within this position, religion is routinely discounted – as the secularization hypothesis would have it – as irrationalism, or as a search for epistemological privilege.

According to liberals like Rawls, citizens who are believers are obliged to translate every view supported by their beliefs into a purportedly 'neutral' secular language. Only in this way, so the argument goes, can Americans achieve some kind of workable civic consensus.

From the standpoint of religious belief, however, 'the problem' looks quite different: for what Rawls proposes would dramatically narrow the purview of religion as it actually exists within American civil society.

Rather than asking how much religion can, or should, the polity tolerate, we might pose a different question instead: What sort of political arrangements "enable religion to play the constructive public role that religious commitments themselves demand?"[1]

One enters political life as a citizen. But if one also has religious convictions, these convictions naturally will inform one's judgments as a citizen. My religious views help to determine who I am, how I think, and what I care about. This is as it should be. In America it makes no sense to ask people to bracket what they care about most deeply when they debate issues that are properly political.

1 This is the provocative suggestion of the theologian Robin Lovin.

Daniel C. Tosteson

Unhealthy beliefs: religion & the plague of war

In response to the savage terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, my country has resolved to wage the first war of the third millennium. The terrorist attack unjustly murdered thousands of human beings. In retaliation, many thousands more will die prematurely, infected by the lethal plague of war.

Unlike many infectious diseases, the plague of war is not caused by some virus or bacterium or parasite, but rather by a pathogen that is even more potentially lethal: the beliefs created by the human mind.

Of course, the mind is responsible for the remarkable improvement in human health that has occurred during the last two centuries and, particularly, during the most recent few decades. Through the patient and careful observations and reasoning of many generations of scientists and scholars, we have learned to recognize the microbial origins of many infectious diseases and discovered ways of preventing and curing many of them. In this sense, the human mind is our most powerful resource for protection against illness. The recent emergence of SARS and the recognition that it is caused by a hitherto undescribed mutant of coronavirus reminds us of our increasing skill in managing our endless competition with pathogenic microbes.

Still, for all the remarkable discoveries wrought by biomedical science, the human mind continues to breed murderous convictions. It has proved infinitely ingenious in creating ever more deadly weapons of war: clubs, swords, arrows, lances, shells, biological and chemical poisons, conventional and nuclear explosives delivered by airplanes or guided missiles or minivans. And, given its ingenuity, attempts to reduce or eliminate war by preventing any particular mechanism of murder are unlikely to succeed, since other options for killing are, sooner or later, always invented.

The necessary and sufficient conditions for outbreaks of the plague of wars of terror are mutual hatred between two or more groups of people and the suspension of civil constraints against murder – indeed, the official glorification of mass murder that occurs during wartime. Many factors contribute to the de-

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velopment of these conditions: poverty, starvation, persecution, slavery, revenge, envy, greed, an insatiable desire for power – to name only a few.

But a particularly salient recurrent cause of the plague of war is conflicting religious convictions.

Often, the murderers are self-righteous in their belief that they are acting according to the will of the god or gods in whom they believe. By acts of persuasion or coercion or, as a last resort, by killing those who continue to disagree, they aim to bring all human beings into agreement with their beliefs. Their deep passion for hegemony arises partly from the desire to control the behavior of the infidels, and partly to avoid the confusion and anxiety aroused by the awareness that different groups of people may hold radically different religious beliefs.

In the past, geographic isolation curbed the frequency and intensity of plagues of war between groups of human beings with conflicting belief systems. But modern technology has enabled the rapid transport of people and information, radically intensifying the encounters between peoples with conflicting convictions. Globalization accelerates not only the spread of infectious diseases caused by microbes, but also the plagues of war caused by incompatible religious convictions.

As the globalization of all human activities continues inexorably, as I believe it will, despite the protests of many disadvantaged and resentful citizens of the planet, the mutual hatred of groups of people with conflicting concepts of god will intensify and increase the probability of wars of terror.

What can the great majority of people who seek a peaceful life do to prevent or remedy the plague of unconditional hatred that infects the small minority who wage wars of terror?

It is easy to understand why some would choose to discourage religious belief altogether. It is not unreasonable to infer from the historical record that the price in human misery of wars between peoples with conflicting conceptions of god is too high.

Perhaps, at last, we could acknowledge that god is not the creator but a creature of the brain, a fiction that is useful for maintaining the fabric of a society that persists beyond the span of our individual lives. Perhaps we could accept and celebrate our individual deaths as an essential component in the vast system of living creatures of which we are a part. Perhaps we could elaborate a secular vision of the human situation that all might embrace, a vision that could sustain a healthy society without recourse to the outworn myths of our childhood. Perhaps we could all have the vision and courage to sing with the American poetess, Emily Dickinson, that, despite the inevitability of death, this life that we have, with all of its complexities, confusions, and hopes, is enough:

> I reckon – when I count at all –
> First – Poets – Then the Sun –
> Then Summer – Then the Heaven
> of God –
> And then – the List is done –
>
> But, looking back – the First so seems
> To Comprehend the Whole –
> The Others look a needless Show . . .

But it is very unlikely that mankind will renounce religion altogether. Again drawing evidence from the historical record, the penchant to conceive a god or gods to account for our experiences, and, particularly, our personal deaths, is evident in almost all human societies. For this reason, we would do well to celebrate the capacity to discover (or invent) god as an essential step toward

constructing a personal identity that allows us to respect and honor ourselves and our fellow human beings; but if we do so, we should also realize that differences of religious conviction are both likely and essential for learning – not expressions of disrespect.

But if all individuals are free to choose their own system of religious belief, then the possibility, even probability, of passionate conflict will persist. How then to inhibit the emergence of the unconditional hatred and suspension of civil constraints that produce the plagues of war?

We must recognize that our all-too-human propensity to resort to violence is a form of mental illness, related to but even more dangerous than addiction to mind-altering drugs. Recent research on the neurobiological basis of warlike behavior reveals many paths worthy of exploration. But such research also suggests that the aggressive impulses of human beings, like the microbial infections that plague them, are unlikely to disappear anytime soon.

In the meantime, the best remedy is the global adoption of the principle of the separation of church and state, and the primacy of secular over sacred law. This will require the formulation, articulation, and adoption of a worldview that all of the earth's diverse citizens can embrace. We must search for new ways of thinking and feeling about ourselves and our fellow human beings that will lead toward a form of tolerance that is more mutually respectful and more accommodating to diversities of belief than anything we have yet achieved.

The need is urgent – for the failure to find a way could be catastrophic for life on earth.

Christopher Hitchens

The future of an illusion

1

Karl Marx was neither a determinist nor a vulgar materialist and never said that religion was "the opium of the people." What he did say, in his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, was that it was at once the expression of inhuman conditions and the protest against them: "the heart of a heartless world; the sigh of the oppressed creature; the spirit of a spiritless situation." Secular criticism, he said, had endeavored to "pluck the flowers from the chain, not in order that man shall wear the chain without consolation but so that he can break the chain and cull the living flower." It was only in this context and with these metaphors that he described religion as an opiate, and even then not as we would now define a mind-dulling (or mind-expanding) 'controlled substance,' but rather as an analgesic on the Victorian model.

On his analysis, the likelihood that religion would ever wither away or go into a decline must be reckoned as very slight. However, the possibility of its becoming a private belief or a purely personal source of comfort – rather than a matter of state and society – should not be dismissed either. Freud only extended this idea in his celebrated essay *The Future of an Illusion*, by pointing out the extraordinarily close correlation between doctrines of immortality and redemption, and the inextinguishable human desire to defeat or transcend death. For him, faith was ineradicable as long as humans were in fear of personal annihilation – a contingency that seems likely to persist. But the strength and tenacity of the belief did not make it any less of an illusion

2

The moral superiority of atheism (and also of what I prefer to call anti-theism and has been called miso-theism) is less often stressed than its intellectual superiority. The intellectual advantage hardly needs elaboration: we do not normally accept unprovable assertions at face value, however devoutly they are maintained, and we possess increasingly convincing explanations of matters that once lay within the province of the supernatural. Skepticism and inquiry and doubt are the means by which we have established such a civilization as we possess; professions of sheer faith are a hindrance to investigations both moral and material.

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However, there are some moral claims for atheism that may be worth putting forward. First, and most conspicuously, the atheist cannot be entirely happy with his conclusion. To be resigned to death and extinction is not always a consolation even to the Stoic – though it does have its satisfactions. Among these satisfactions, at any rate, one can include the reasonable certainty that mere wish-thinking did not help to stack one's intellectual deck. Second, the atheist can expect to be free of the pervasive solipsism that disfigures religious thought. If an earthquake should occur, or a comet fill the sky, he can be sure that this development is not all, indeed not at all, about his own brief existence and vain human aspirations. W. H. Auden put it deftly when he wrote (as a hopeful Anglican):

> Looking up at the stars, I know quite well,
> That for all they care, I can go to hell.

3

We live in a time when physics is much more awe-inspiring than any faith or any man-made deity, and when Galileo's realization – that the solar system is not earth-centered – has itself been eclipsed and re-eclipsed, so that we can see the solar system itself as a dim and flickering bulb in an unimaginable sweep of galaxies and constellations. Paradoxically, it is those who calmly recognize that we are alone who may have the better chance of investing human life with such meaning as it might be made to possess.

Those who decide to try and lead ethical lives without an invisible authority are also 'blessed' in another way, because they do not require a church, a priesthood, or a reinforcing dogma or catechism. All that is needed is some elementary fortitude, and the willingness to follow the flickering candle of reason wherever it may lead. Despite many recent fluctuations in religious fervor and allegiance, the evidence is that millions of adults now live this way (probably including in their number a fair proportion of the congregations at churches, mosques, and synagogues). The Dutch, by some accounts, now have an actual secularist majority. In Northern Ireland recently, despite British government inducements to register as Protestant or Catholic in the census – if only on the false promise of compensation for past wrongs – 12 percent of respondents declined to adopt a confessional allegiance. For me, however, the country with the most impressive and intelligent secularist movement is India – most recent victim of the stupidity and cruelty of mobilized faith.

4

Those who write about religion and who tell me that it stands for, or substitutes for, various nationalist or emotional or historical needs, are telling me what I already know and what nobody is trying to deny. Those who maintain that it is a strong and continuing force in human affairs are simply bashing their shoulders against an open door: I knew that too. Those who write about religion and tell me that "God does not merely create something other than himself – he also gives himself to this other," are claiming to know something that they cannot possibly know. If I made a concession in an argument with the religious, it would be this: I am willing to admit that there may be unknowable things. It's a poor return for this admission to be told that the devout already know the mind of god. That was the ground of argument to begin with – and what's the point of an ineffable deity if he can be so readily comprehended by banal mammals like ourselves? At least the faithful should be expected to display a little reverence

here. But apparently they can't wait to seize their little shred of local and temporal authority.

And why is that? Their god already controls the past and the future, and has dominion over paradise and hints on how to get there. His kingdom, as the Christians say, is not of this world. But in which world does religion actually exact the demand for obedience? In this one. How confoundedly odd.

Now you may choose to tell me that Osama bin Laden (say) is upset about Jerusalem and Mecca and Medina, and still raw about the Crusades, and that this analysis of his agitation explains his appeal. What could be more intelligible, or more trite? But how would it explain his *theology*? According to him, all is decided by heaven, and the true believer is assured eternal luxury and congratulation: a vast promise compared to the brevity and vicissitude of this vale of tears. Versions of this fantasy appear in all creeds, with discrepant degrees of literal-mindedness depending on the date and on the society.

If I truly had such a belief, it would make me happy, or at least would have a chance of doing so. But does it bring contentment to its adherents? Not at all! They can know no peace until they have coerced everyone else into sharing their good news. Does this argue for confidence in the belief? Not self-evidently. My provisional conclusion, then, is that the religious impulse lies close to the root of the authoritarian, if not the totalitarian, personality.

5

Some obvious connections can't avoid notice even from the most casual observer: religious absolutism makes a good match with tribal feeling and with sexual repression – two of the base ingredients of the fascistic style. This is also true of the 'secular' forms taken by the religious mentality. Ostensibly irreligious despotisms based on faith and praise and adoration invariably take the form of cult worship. North Korea today manifests this idolatry to an extent not attained even by Hitler or Stalin or Mao. But this observation does not just mean what many take it to mean – that fanaticism or tyranny can take an atheist form. It means, rather, that fanaticism and tyranny have a strong if not ineluctable tendency to take a theistic form. The connection between Stalin and the predecessor system that regarded the Czar in the light of the divine is fairly obvious. China and especially North Korea can be shown to have modeled their precepts of authority on Confucianism. The Japanese emperor-worshiping militarists took the principles of Zen as their inspiration and employed them as a training manual. (See the fascinating new study *Zen at War*, written by Brian Victoria, a Buddhist savant.) Hitler was a pagan in some ways but he got the Roman Catholic bishops to celebrate his birthday from the pulpit every year. The other fascist leaders in Europe – Mussolini, Pavelic in Croatia, Franco in Spain, Salazar in Portugal, Horthy in Hungary – were in more or less explicit alliance with the Vatican, and one of them (Father Tiso in Slovakia) was actually in holy orders.

Ah, but what about Martin Luther King, Jr., and Gandhi? I would reply, first, that if religious believers are not willing to accept the connection between faith and horror as necessary, they should be careful in proposing any close connection between faith and good works. The emancipation of black America and the independence of India were not sacred causes: they were fought for by many people of no religion (and opposed by many people of profound faith). No supernatural commitment

was or is necessary in either case, and no religious claim is vindicated by it. Take the references to god out of Dr. King's speeches and they lose none of their moral force. Take the ostentatious Hinduism out of Gandhi's worldview and you increase the chance that sectarian fratricide in India could have been averted. In neither outcome, in any case, can it sensibly be argued that god intervened in human affairs.

Again, those who wish that he would had better be careful what they ask for. If their god can claim credit for miracles, then he cannot avoid responsibility for many other drastic occurrences. I would think it base and illogical to argue that suffering disproves the existence of god: there seems to be no ground for connecting the two ideas in the first place. But if I were arguing for the existence of a god, I would be careful to avoid citing happiness or good fortune, lest I arouse that same base and illogical (and corollary) thought in the minds of the unconvinced.

6

If Karl Rahner really said that "the mystery enfolds [me] in an ultimate and radical love which commends itself to [me] as salvation and as the real meaning of [my] existence," then why should he not be asked how anybody can know this? His statement is inoffensive enough: it does not propose a jihad or a crusade or an Inquisition. But it is circular and meaningless. So is his related claim that "The world receives God, the infinite and the ineffable mystery, to such an extent that he himself becomes its innermost life." This is just as interesting as being told by some saffron-cloaked mendicant that all things are part of the great whole. Few of us have not had some moment of 'transcendence': a feeling that there is more to life than the strictly material. And few of us have not been tempted by harmless superstition: a sensation that something may have happened for a purpose. However, nobody has proposed any nontautological reason to suppose that this is more than an emotion, and it is quite possible to survive cheerfully enough, once having recognized that the problem of interpretation that superstition proposes has no resolution.

I was being intentionally gentle when I referred to superstition as 'harmless.' I suppose I mean that it is forgivable to be impressed by, say, apparently fateful coincidences, or moments of unusual beauty in the natural order. However, while credulity and solipsism are to be found in every person, it is not usually thought advisable to praise someone for his credulous and solipsistic aspects. It is, rather, the work of education and civilization to train the mind to employ reason and to respect evidence, and to train the individual to be modest. Somebody claiming to detect a divine design in respect of himself may phrase the idea in terms of humility, even submissiveness. But this false modesty is, as always with false modesty, a symptom of the most majestic self-centeredness. ("Don't mind me – I'm just busy doing god's work.") In individuals, I must say that I find this mainly irritating. But by all means let them devote some of their day to prayer and reflection, and to an awareness of the transience of all things.

Religion, however, is not the recognition of this private and dutiful attitude. It is its organized eruption from the private into the public realm. It is the elevation and collectivization of credulity and solipsism, and the arrangement of these into institutional dogma and creed. It is the attempt to decide what shall be taught, what shall be allowed by way of sexual conduct and speech and even

thought, and what shall be legislated. And it is the attempt to make such decisions beyond challenge, through the invocation of a supernatural authority.

In many places, the attempt to do these things has been implicitly accepted as a resounding failure as well as a historical outrage, and it will be noticed that those societies that honor pluralism and liberty the most are those that have learned to keep religion in bounds. However, there are constant efforts to undo the secular state and it is important for us never to forget what happened, and what happens, when these attempts are successful.

7

A word in closing on the 'anti-theist' position.

I discover when I read the claims of even the more meek Tillich-like theologians that I am relieved that they are untrue. I would positively detest the all-embracing, refulgent, stress-free embrace that they propose. I have no wish to live in some Disneyland of the mind and spirit, some Nirvana of utter null completeness. Religion's promise to deliver this is in my opinion plainly false. But what it *can* deliver me is the prospect of serfdom, mental and physical, and the chance to live under fantastic and cruel laws, or to be subjected to frantic violence.

Nobody asserts that there is a straight line of connection between faith and murder and slavery. But that there is a connection is undeniable.

When I analyze the sermons of bin Laden, I cannot see how his claim to divine authority and prompting is any better or any worse than anybody else's. And I am not content to dispute his conclusions only with people who share his essential premise.

Akeel Bilgrami

The clash within civilizations

There is some reason to worry that Samuel Huntington's messianic vision of a "clash of civilizations," even though it seemed to many of his commentators to be based on a rather superficial understanding of various parts of the world, might become a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy as a result of the military schemes and actions of the present U.S. government and its coterie of advisers.

What seems the best hope against the prophecy being fulfilled is the fact of a quite different kind of clash, one *within* the civilizations of which Huntington writes. Let me focus on Islam in particular, since it is so much the focus of current events and thinking.

Reflective and knowledgeable people acknowledge and often assert that most Muslims are not absolutists or 'fundamentalists,' to use the more misleading term. Even the president of the United States said so repeatedly in waging wars against two countries with predominantly Muslim populations. Most Muslims, even when they are devout, have no particular absolutist vision of their creed. That is to say, they have no particular desire to perpetrate atrocious (and self-defeating) acts of terrorist violence in Islam's name, no particular desire to live lives observant in the last detail of Shariah laws, no particular desire to live under the tyrannies of oppressive governments that impose the strictest of Islamic ideologies upon them, such as for instance in Saudi Arabia or Iran. And finally, though they may often justifiably conceive of the West, and especially America, as a *political and economic* threat to them (because of its sometimes naked pursuit of corporate interests, its support of Israeli occupation and expansion in Palestinian territory, its cynical support over decades of Islamic fundamentalist groups whenever that suited its geopolitical interests), unlike the absolutists, they do not particularly reject, as a *religious* threat coming from 'infidels,' the various ideas and freedoms entrenched in Western political practice.

The clash I have in mind, then, is between the values of these Muslims and those of the absolutists, whom they far outnumber. That brings me to the theme of my paper: It is right, I think, to describe this clash within Muslim popula-

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tions as a clash between secularists and absolutists. Let me explain why.

A few years ago, the journalist Christopher Hitchens gave an interesting lecture on secularism at Columbia University. Inevitably, the question of Islam came up. I raised a point during the discussion and in his response he made the extraordinary claim that the very category of a 'moderate Muslim' was incoherent, that it was doubtful that you can have religious convictions and not be given to fundamentalist tendencies and sympathies. I don't think he was especially picking on Islam. This was a reaction to religion in general, familiar from a robust British intellectual tradition stretching from Bertrand Russell to Richard Dawkins.[1] So, thinking he must have something more subtle and plausible in mind, I asked him a question that I thought could not possibly get an affirmative answer: "It seems to follow from what you have said that it is impossible to have genuinely secular societies until everyone, or at any rate most people, are irreligious – but you don't mean that, do you?" He said, "Yes, I do."

If he is right, then it is quite wrong to describe the 'clash' of values in the way I just did, as a conflict between the secularist and the absolutist. If he is right, then we are not likely to have genuinely secular societies virtually anywhere in the world for a very long time.

But he is wrong. The term 'secularism' today, whatever its origins and history of use, describes only a political doctrine, a doctrine about how citizens, even citizens who are devout people, agree to live and try and flourish in a polity that is not governed by religious principles and practices. This of course means that they may have to give up strict adherence to some elements of their religion – those that aspire to a political relevance and that clash with familiar liberal laws. To be prepared to do so is the mark of what I was calling 'ordinary' or 'moderate' or 'non-absolutist' Muslims. Since everyone acknowledges that such Muslims considerably outnumber the absolutists, the prospect of secularism, soberly understood along these lines, is in principle far better than Hitchens's view suggests.

This is not to deny that a great deal of very difficult and important effort is needed to realize that prospect. But whatever the needed effort is, it does not amount to what Hitchens has in mind, viz., to bring about a society of unbelievers, attractive though that might be for atheists like Hitchens and me.

What needs to be done depends on how we diagnose the moral psychology of Islamic politics today in different parts of the world.

Hitchens is perhaps led to his conclusion of a somewhat heavy-handed ideal of an irreligious conception of the secular because of a certain powerlessness and even unwillingness on the part of 'ordinary' Muslims to confront the absolutists. Though I do not on this basis come to his conclusion (because to do so is premature and does not dig deep), I do have the anxiety and disappointment that many of us feel when we see most 'ordinary' Muslims sit silently by while the much smaller group of absolutists gets the limelight. The right response to this no doubt troubling phenomenon is not to give up on the very idea that a practicing Muslim can be secular; it is rather to try and diagnose why the ordinary Muslim *is* sitting silently by, why he or she is not more critical of the absolutist with whom he or she shares so little by way of ideology and ideal.

1 This tradition has mostly targeted doctrinal religions such as Christianity and Islam rather than, say, Buddhism.

Before taking up that question, it is worth noting first the manifest relevance here of an elementary link between arithmetic and politics. If most Muslims everywhere (including Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan) are not absolutists, it seems remarkable that these non-absolutist voices are not heard as the representative voices of Islam, wherever it exists. It is remarkable that the much smaller group of absolutists seems more central to the image and the voice that Islamic nations project.

Since an explicit rationale of democratic politics is that it calibrates representation with numbers, the failure of democratization in these societies is one obvious diagnosis for this remarkable discrepancy. We know that in elections in Iran and Pakistan the fundamentalist parties never get anything close to a majority. In Pakistan whenever there have been elections, they do not get even 10 percent of the vote. In fact, it is a perfectly safe generalization to say that fundamentalist Islamic parties meet with very little success in democratic elections everywhere in the world, unless they have been persecuted or suppressed, such as in Algeria.

The problem is slightly different in countries where Muslims are a minority, such as in India (or for that matter, Britain), and where there are functioning democracies. In these countries, the state (responding for political reasons to possibly disruptive pressures from an aggrieved and aggressive interest group) generally pays far greater attention to absolutist Muslim voices than to the vastly more numerous (but relatively muted) voices of moderates. In this circumstance, absolutists implicitly become the voice of the community, and exercise an influence quite disproportionate to their numbers.

Here, by the nature of the case, the arithmetic points to a slightly different political diagnosis. Since these are democratic nations with all the formal apparatus of a democratic state, what is evidently needed is not merely a democratic polity, but far greater democracy within the Muslim community, which will allow the absolutist voices to be shown up for what they are: a shrill but unrepresentative minority.

What forms such democratization should or could take within minority communities in democratic states like India and Britain is a complex question with no easy and obvious answer. It is a subject that is unduly neglected in political sociology and political theory.

Still, democratization itself will be hard to achieve – whether within Muslim minorities in democratic countries like India or in Muslim countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia – unless moderate Muslims are able to come out of their shells. To do so, they must become much more openly critical of the fundamentalists, with whom they share so little.

But criticism of fundamentalist Muslims by moderates has to date been relatively muted, largely, I think, because of a deep-seated moral psychology: As a result of a long colonial history, with its detailed subjugations and attitudes of condescension, and as a result of continuing feelings of helplessness in the face of what is perceived as American domination and Israeli occupation and expansion, even moderate Muslims feel that to criticize their own people in any way is letting the side down, somehow capitulating to a long-standing history of being colonized and made to feel inferior.

This suggests that there is yet another clash that is pertinent, a clash of attitudes and values, not this time between moderates and fundamentalists, but a

clash *internal to the psychology of moderates themselves*. Most moderate Muslims are torn between their dislike for fundamentalist visions of their religion and societies on the one hand, and, on the other, their deep defensive feelings of resentment against forces that they perceive to be alien and hostile in one colonial form or another for a very long time, forces that have often supported the fundamentalists when it suited their political agendas.

This second layer of internal clash within Islam is a vital factor in understanding the scope for a secular Islam. There can be no scope for secularism if this conflict in the hearts of moderate Muslims is not resolved in one direction rather than another – that is, if they do not find a way to overcome these defensive feelings of resentment. Without overcoming them, they will not be able to take the creative and assertive steps necessary to oppose the absolutists – and no amount of democratization of Muslim societies will help to subdue the fundamentalists unless the moderates are confident enough to launch that opposition.

There is no space here to elaborate in any detail what it would take to overcome such a defensive cast of mind. But it is a form of convenient and self-serving obtuseness on our part to think, as some do, that addressing the issues that give rise to this defensive resentment is irrelevant and unnecessary.[2] It is perhaps true that it will not affect the fundamentalists to address these issues – but even that is questionable, since they (including Osama bin Laden) have openly declared that these issues are central to them.

But, in any case, it is not primarily the fundamentalist who needs to be addressed. It is the far more ubiquitous moderate who needs to be convinced that criticizing his own people and his own stultifying silence in the presence of shrill revivalist Islamic voices is not simply the handing over of ultimate victory to forces of long-standing external domination. The cruelty of wars, of bombings, of occupations, of expansionist settlements, of embargoes and sanctions, of support of corrupt elites, does nothing to convince them of this, does nothing to give them the necessary confidence – nor does the often transparently exploitative pursuit of Western corporate interests in these regions. They only encourage and increase the defensiveness.

It is extraordinary that humane and intelligent people do not see this quite obvious point. Even someone like Salman Rushdie, who has come around to saying that his brilliant, irreverent writings about Islam were intended not to

2 It is quite common to hear people say things like: "Nothing will help with these Muslims; the issues are not about corporate presence and exploitation in Arab lands, not about Israeli intransigence and expansionism, not about American support for corrupt elites and governments that have suppressed their people politically and economically in Iran under the Shah, in Saudi Arabia, in Egypt – these are all irrelevant issues. Muslims may *say* that these things are relevant, but that is all a veneer of false political rhetoric on top of the real underlying cause of the problem: their religious fanaticism. And even if they *think* that these things are relevant, even that is false; it is *false consciousness*. At bottom, all that is crucial is that Islam has bred fanaticism, and addressing all these issues will not help at all with that." It's not hard to see that it is a short step from this view of things to conclude that nothing will help but 'shock and awe.' This attitude is more than just self-serving or obtuse; it is a form of impertinence, as all such charges of false consciousness are, because it makes claims to having more insight into people's motivations than the people themselves have.

merely ridicule the fundamentalist conception of Islam but also to give encouragement to the moderate Muslim opposition to the fundamentalist, goes on to support two wars that have done everything possible to undermine any motivation that a moderate might have in forging that opposition.

But all this is to take up matters that are current and controversial, and I did not want this essay to be primarily polemical. The diagnostic points I am making are much more general. To put them in summary, I have been arguing: 1) that there is an implicit clash within Islamic societies between moderate and fundamentalist Muslims, and sheer arithmetic suggests that democratization (including intracommunity democratization) in Muslim societies will help end this clash in a secular direction; and 2) that resolving a second, quite different sort of clash by paying humane attention to the very specific sort of internal moral and psychological conflict that the moderate Muslim faces may be a necessary and prior condition for resolving the clash between secularists and fundamentalists.

Why is it that political positions such as Huntington's and Hitchens's are blind to these more subtle clashes, which should be the basis of any effort to defuse the more portentous clash that they predict?

I suspect it is because of a line of thought that goes something like this: Populations that identify themselves with Islam could not possibly resolve these clashes along these lines, because to do so would be to give up on that identification with Islam, to give up on Muslim identity.

As I said at the outset, if these conflicts were resolved in the ways I think possible, then moderate but nevertheless religious Muslims would have to oppose the fundamentalists and therefore relinquish some aspects of their religion. They would have to relinquish certain ideas about relations to non-Muslims, ideas about gender relations in institutions such as marriage, divorce, alimony, etc., and commitments to censorship and punishment of blasphemy. But to do so, it will be said, would be to give up on one's Muslim identity, to cease to see oneself as a Muslim.

This line of thought is based on a numbingly false picture of cultural identity that fundamentalists would like to encourage. But a person's identity is not given by a checklist, such that if every item is not checked off one loses one's identity. Identity is simply not a codified phenomenon in that way. It is fluid and malleable and survives enormous amounts of revision and erosion, as we all know even from Muslim societies in many parts of the world today. The idea that if one gives up a Shariah law about blasphemy or alimony, or even a customary religious practice such as purdah, that one is ceasing to be a Muslim altogether is an egregious misrepresentation of what it takes to be a Muslim. I know any number of Muslims, not *déracinés* like me but religious people, whom it would be a travesty to count as anything but Muslims, and who have altogether shed these offending convictions and practices. To say that they don't count as having Muslim identity is to assume a conception that only an absolutist would affirm. Huntington and Hitchens, therefore, should worry a bit that their views here are too perfectly of a piece with the absolutist's.

Since there is scope for misunderstanding here, it is important to state that the point I have just made about identity not being codifiable should not be confused with the quite different and

much more glib idea of what is sometimes called 'hybridity' or 'multiple identities.' There is a tendency, mostly in contemporary literary theory, to say that in a world of postcoloniality and large-scale immigration, there are no identities, only cultural flux that dissolves notions such as 'self' and identification with religion and other forms of cultural belonging.

Of course, the idea that we all have multiple identities is a banality. Who can deny it? But it's not an idea that could possibly overturn the plain fact that in many historical and social contexts, for quite specifiable functional reasons, some of these multiple identities loom much larger for us than others, and abide for much longer than others. What makes the picture of constant flux and hybridity (or, to use Salman Rushdie's wonderful word 'chutneyfication') so implausible is that it cannot accommodate this plain fact, and actually finds it theoretically misguided to try to do so.

The notion I am invoking is not hybridity at all, but a lack of codification in one's understanding of identity, which can allow for revision of commitments and values without the necessary loss of identity. The only thing that such an idea shares with hybridity is the negative goal of repudiating the essentialism of primordial and immutable conceptions of identity. But to achieve this goal, it posits not some postmodern conception of an incoherent psyche produced by immigrant or postcolonial experience, but rather a quite different neo-Hegelian idea – of a psyche informed by an internal conflict of values. These conflicts, which are engendered by historical or even sometimes by personal encounters, do not altogether dissolve notions of self and identity. Rather, they become the occasion for a community's (or individual's) internal deliberation and negotiation, which will sometimes, though by no means always, produce a new identity. Identities, conceived and shaped in these 'dialectical' rather than 'hybrid' terms, are hard won; they reflect the constitutive relationship that history and experience have to the self and its moral psychology.[3]

But to return from these more theoretical reflections to the central point of this paper, which they are intended to make possible: There is much scope for Muslims retaining their identity as Muslims, even as they de facto shed this or that aspect of their faith. It has already happened in many parts of the world. That is to say, there is much scope for them to acquire an increasing and cumulative secularism even within their commitment to Islam. But they will find it very hard to do so if we do not cease to gear *our* rhetoric and political agendas to the ideal of a 'clash of civilizations,' and focus instead on these clashes within Islamic civilization itself.

3 For more on these themes, see my essays "What is a Muslim? Fundamental Commitment and Cultural Identity," *Critical Inquiry* 18 (4) (Summer 1992); "Identity and Identification" in *The International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (New York: Elsevier, 2003); "Secularism and the Moral Psychology of Identity" in Rajeev Bhargava, Amiya Kumar Bagchi, and R. Sudarshan, eds., *Multiculturalism, Liberalism, and Democracy* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Poem by Lucie Brock-Broido

The One Thousand Days

There is the mourning dish of salt outside
My door, a cup of quarantine, saucerless, a sign

That one inside had been taken down
By grieving, ill tongue-tied will or simple

Illness, yet trouble came.
I have found electricity in mere ambition,

If nothing else, yet to make myself sick on it,
A spectacle of marvelling & discontent.

Let me tell you how it came to this.
I was turning over the tincture of things,

I was trying to recollect the great maroon
Portière of everything that had ever happened,

When the light first stopped its transport
& the weather ceased to be interesting,

Then the dark drape closed over the altar
& a minor city's temple burnt to ground.

I was looking to become inscrutable.
I was longing to be seen through.

It was at slaughtering, it
Was at the early stain

Of autumn when the dirt-
Tinted lambs were brought down

From the high unkempt fields of Sligo, bidden,
Unbidden, they came down.

Poem by Lucie Brock-Broido

It was then that I was quit
Of speech, a thousand northbound nights of it.

Then was ambition come
Gleaming up like a fractured bone

As it breaks through the bodiced veil of skin.
I marry into it, a thistle on

The palm, salt-pelt on
The slaughtering, & trouble came.

That the name of bliss is only in
The diminishing – as far as possible – of pain.

That I had quit the quiet velvet cult of it,
Yet trouble came.

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Fiction by Lee K. Abbott

Men of rough persuasion

Almost lost among the gabbies and goombahs, fakeloos and funnelheads, catamites and hypes, rajahs and ringers, and can-openers and Visigoths in the twenty-plus chapters that are *The Gates of Hell*, a semi-sci-fi mystery with no little tallyho at the end of it, is the skel Harbee Hakim Hazar – Triple H himself – an Ur-Dravidian whose opening line of dialogue, addressed to his image in a mirror, is this: "Behold, dips and dewheads, the baddest, blackest bindlebopper to bo your peep."

He's a dropper, contract-style, working this evening for the Solatzo sect. Blades are his specialty – the shiv, the ice pick, the Flora Dora. His mark is Terry "Little T" Blount, a thief built like a flagpole, and an hour before Triple H guts him in the alley, the half-loaf is camped at a burp-n-urp on Euclid Avenue in New Cleveland, Khalid and Ling's O-Town of Music, nearly twenty large in the breast pocket of his Omar Sharif. The stotinki, of course, is ill-gotten gelt, two K of which are the tala-taka for a patty-cake Open Sesame at a poobah's palace off the Forbidden Square. Little T is jumpy – "sweating bullets," you're tempted to say – and is medicating himself with corn from the well. When he's not making too loud chitchat with the bar rag, Lonesome Abe, he's trying to figure out, given the givens of the wide and craven world, who to hose first. Seventeen thousand samolians, after all, buys a lot of loose. A lot of uptown leg. A lot of downtown boogaloo. A shoofly as financially fit as he could trip some beaucoup light fantastic. Still, what complicates his thinking is that of late he, too, has been in the employ, albeit sporadic, of the Solatzos, in particular of the High Pillow himself, Don Marco, an elder too wrathful even for the Old Testament. A "hard man," the Brunos say. Specifically, The Don has put the fear of God into Little T – fear with a head and tail and impressively large teeth. It's fear with lots of x's and y's in it, a parlez-vous more spit than speech. So here the hooch-head is, Little T, breath ragged, heart rattling, gorge in the gullet – only time, he suspects, between him and an ugly end. And here he comes, out of the dive, looking both ways – at once, if possible – he a

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disease with mucous and red eyes and clammy feet.

The atmospherics are minimal – mizzling rain, light sufficient enough to see how alone you are, the scrape and hiss and clatter, all the effects you expect in this genre – and Little T is making his way to his bucket, a bona fide land yacht (a Volgograd with custom largo and rust on the kootenai), which is parked around the corner. Several steps behind, hewing to the shadows, follows Triple H, whose brain, we're to infer, is part fish, part ferret. You can't imagine him as a boy, at least not an unarmed boy or otherwise coffee-and-doughnut. When Little T reaches his iron – you can all but hear his quote big sigh of relief unquote – Triple H makes his move: the Damascus high in the back, free arm around the neck, trap close to the trapper.

"Into the alley, sweat sock," he growls.

Little T goes wet in the whistle. What else can he do? A force of nature, irrational and heartless as a hurricane, has him throttled, something perilously sharp digging hard into the tender flesh between his wings.

"The Don?" he says.

"None other," says Triple H, spinning Little T around. Harbee prefers the face-to-face, respects the various truths, ripe or raw, you can read in the eyes of an Opie about to land mug up outside the locked gates to Paradise. Little T, Harbee is pleased to think, looks like a Jasper eager to take direction, to curry favor.

"You Harbee Hazar?" Little T asks. "Triple H?"

"Chains and chips," he says.

"I heard about you."

It's repartee you find under D, Triple H thinks. D for Despair – yip to yap when the ipso gets facto.

"Figured you were Fiji. Maybe somebody's outback."

"African American," Harbee tells him.

You can imagine a sound track here – strings, Mother Nature rinsing her delicate underthings.

"I suppose I got no choice," Little T says. "I suppose we couldn't negotiate, say."

Little T is doing a lot of supposing, Harbee says.

"It's curtains," Little T says. "Supposing's called for."

Harbee can appreciate that. Truly. A humanoid, even gink as pubic and inconsequential as Little T, is entitled. You got your bottom-feeders. But, not unhappily, you got your bottom-feeders with backbone. The low-down getting upright.

"You a family man?" Little T asks.

Past tense, Triple H tells him. The cupcake and carnage didn't work out. There were tensions, obvious points of contention – hairs split, nits picked. Now it's just chippies, bims, tea bags, and the like – Janes no longer worrying about their choice in chuck.

"Me, too," Little T says. "Got a daughter somewhere though. Margaret. Her mother named her after the saint."

There's another page and a half of biography, the bulk of it touchingly ordinary (Little T owns a cat, it turns out, a monster with one ear named Mister Pitiful; Triple H prefers Knott's Berry Farm over Disneyland, cartoons make him nervous – "It's a syndrome," he says, "you can look it up"), before Triple H orders Little T to fork over the moola, whereupon Little T, The End rushing at him in bold type and exclamation points, grows emotional – a catch in the throat, several tears, some pathetic trembling of the flippers.

"Get a grip," Triple H says with exasperation. "That isn't becoming at all."

"Sorry," Little T says, sniffling. But, Uncle Jesus, this is a dire moment – gloom and doom, expiration and such, the Kibosh itself. "Yardarms and lampposts," he says. "The Big Sleep."

"Too true," Harbee says.

Here Little T pulls out the Knox, a wad the size of a welterweight's fist, enough geetus to put some satisfying distance between you and the vulgar life.

"You don't have to do this," Little T says.

"A contract is a contract," Triple H says. "Plus, there's a reputation, pride in the job, and related issues. Passion and action, Heidegger puts it."

"A mope, this Hi-guy?"

"Light reading," Triple H tells him. "A paragraph or two before bedtime. Religiously. Data to crunch before the Sandman visits and it's thereafter cataracts and Coney dogs."

The mazuma has changed hands now, disappeared into the Adam & Eve Triple H is wearing.

"Why me?" Little T says.

Our hero shrugs, the question more schoolroom than clubhouse. "You're a loose end," he says. "The Don prefers the tidy. Duck soup and getaway sticks."

Little T seems to take this information in, pick it over for dry spots, maybe glom a way to leave the air.

"How you going to do it?" Little T asks.

Harbee says, "With dispatch."

Little T looks around. No Angels of Mercy. No Tartars. No Air Cav. Just night as the arty-farties at MGM imagine it, the last of his allotted thousands.

And then, quick as the weasel pops, Little T is zotzed, efficiently if brutally, the blade thrust under the breastbone, beneath the right nipple and through the pump, Little T to bleed out in less than a half hour while Harbee Hakim Hazar – nothing between his ears but three bars from what he thinks is an old-timey Isle of Dogs bootleg – walks with purpose right out of Chapter Two.

You don't read about Harbee again until the middle of *To Hell and Gone*. Years have passed. The Don is dust – a stroke in the middle of a sit-down across from a precinct viceroy dressed in vulcanized go-go boots and a leather breastplate – so the High Pillow now is The Don's nephew, Jake Fox, for whom, dingus or no, Harbee is effecting a necessary diplomatic service on the eighth floor of the downtown Hyatt, the particulars of which the dish had been quizzing him on only seconds before she said she could stand some skee. "Parched."

"Help yourself," Harbee says, indicating the minibar.

Her sashay from the sofa in the suite is a story with four endings, three of them unique to doomsday. Lots of if-only and holy-cow in those hips. Lots of swear-to-God upon that full-sprung hindmost.

"So the deal is – "she starts, which exposition Harbee once again tries to detail by saying that they, the Ozzie and Harriet they are, stay put, watch the paint peel, pass the time, until the phone call, maybe a couple hours from now, whereupon she returns to her fourscore as Mrs. Ernest Hoom, mobster's housefrau, and he, fully recompensed, goes back to his as the proud owner of a Gold's Gym franchise on Euclid near the clinic and the Plaza of Previous Humiliations.

"You ever met my brother?" she says.

"Seen pictures," Harbee tells her.

The croak's got hands the size of shovelheads. Deals in hop and ice and snow, has a back-scratching arrangement with the Greene gang from the Kingdome of Lyndhurst and parts. Represented by a lip named Leach with a nest in the Terminal Tower. Shags a looker – Doreen or Noreen, some such – lives in Bay Village, Miss Pneumatic Tool and Die once upon a time.

"He's an animal," the sister is saying. "My high school prom, the kid who takes me out doesn't get me back by midnight or whatever. Dennis takes a bat to his knees. The Rocky Colavito

model, if I remember. Thirty-six ounces."

A family man, Harbee thinks.

"The Neck – my husband? – he's no better." The sultana is pointing at the minibar, door open, hers a profile that is all mutton and handful of ideas as wonderful as they are woeful. "You want?"

Harbee shakes his head. "Business before pleasure."

"Your loss," she says.

Triple H pulls *Harlem Sunset* out of his pocket, flips to the page where the Ralphie, dark meat named Feet, is crawling free from still another instance of dire straits. The chapter before featured a two-ply, C. J. Pucker – "the hostess with the mostest" – and Brother Hazar is hoping she'll show up again, heater in hand and hitting on all eight.

"So, technically," the kitten is saying, "I'm a hostage, right?"

Harbee lays it out – the sukiyaki and the succotash. "Insurance," he tells her. "My guy and your guy are in powwow, setting parameters. Your brother's plugs got one of ours, we got you – a way of guaranteeing that nobody gets jobbed."

She's back to the sofa now, legs crossed, and Harbee's having a hard time thinking about anything that isn't blonde, shimmy, and sassafras. She's pure rumble, she is, a biped with slant and hoorah and wire, a torcher you wouldn't object to finding in your wiki-up.

"So what do you want to do?" she says.

He points to his book. C. J. has just put in an appearance, thoroughly darb and dolly.

"We could – you know," she says, like a clerk or a teller, funny business evidently still business after all, and Harbee is trusting his puss doesn't say too much about the racket his thumper is making. "I mean, I never had a black man before."

"African American," Harbee says, his pants suddenly too tight.

"No offense," she says.

"None taken," he tells her, having lost interest in the to and fro of C. J. Pucker and her look-Ma-no-hands attitude.

"I'm a Democrat," Mrs. Hoom is saying, turning off the floor lamp next to the sofa, whereupon the ambience morphs from Broadway to boudoir almost immediately. Heat's not rising anymore; it's settled, close and wet, nothing to do but sweat and try not to breathe overmuch.

"Look, Mrs. Hoom – "

"Doris," she says, a given name finally for the 3-D havoc he is guessing will follow.

"You ever been to the House of Slaves?" he asks. "It's in Goree, an island off western Africa."

She's never been anywhere, she tells him. New York City, sure. Florida. The Neck's got a condo near the Shula compound in Miami. But anyplace without nocturnes and Neptunites – who's kidding who?

"They speak Wolof there," he's saying, hoping to pile up sufficient je-ne-sais-quoi to hide behind, scoot in low, and score some hey from the diddle-diddle before the cock-a-doodle does. "I've been to Banjul, too. The mouth of the Gambia River. They got hibiscus you would not believe."

"If you say so," she says, all the angles here now Chinese and outer space, and Harbee feels too large for himself, the mob inside him ready to riot, especially now that she, mostly belly and kneecap and ooh-la-la, has abandoned the sofa for parts spectacularly unknown.

"So I'm saying," our hero begins, "that I'm a serious man. Maybe you shouldn't be trifling with me."

She's not trifling, she insists. She's the bulge and the breeze, a clean sneak with

no nasties to fret about, keen to pitch woo.

"And Ernest?" he asks.

"The Neck?" She's not a giant step away, a red-hot in high heels. "The Neck – Ernest – is a gourd, Mister Skipout in the flesh, a loogan with nix in his noodle. He's my concern, not yours."

Tripe H has a moment with his higher self here, weighing the right against the not-so. He suffers no special affection for The Neck, sure. He also suffers no special desire to be a sharper himself. You got the tomato, he tells himself. Or you got trip for biscuits. Your call. Maybe somebody throws lead one day. Maybe you toot the wrong ringer. Or, chicken and cheese, you get ribbed up and it's thereafter glad rags and eggs in the coffee. Harbee consults the book again. What would Feet do?

"Time's a-wasting," Doris is saying. "Let's hootchy-koo, Mr. Hazar. My pump is primed."

Another light has gone off – she's part electrical storm, he decides, part work of art – and, what with the curtains closed, it's dark as a French movie.

"My tribe was the Dinka," he says. "A very proud people."

Doris has made a noise, sound with muscle in it. And gland.

"My tribe was the O'Boyles," she says. "A very drunk people."

Without any more "but" and "might," they've made contact, and soon the physics have begun, tabs and slots everywhere, everything coming to hand either hot or easily pushed out of the way, seconds falling away from the future in handfuls, the landscape in Harbee's mind seventy-five percent storybook oasis, Doris Hoom a secret a country or two might fight over, and the only word going back and forth too vowelly for English – one and one not making two anymore, just a last act full of blocking peculiar to desperation and glee both, their clothes the product of forces of inconvenience, a stone to pray to behind that big swirling mass overhead, the telephone – noisy as the sixteenth century itself – ringing berries and buttons and bings, Harbee grabbing the thing, his a "hello" in spirit only, not another "ugh" to utter before he is to vanish into space white as the walls of Wonderland.

"It's The Neck," the voice grumbles, full of nails and sandpaper. "Put Doris on."

Which Harbee does, the phone disappearing into the bedding like quicksand.

The last time you see Triple H is in *Hell's Hounds*, where he's just left a can house, the scent of a redhead catfish named Charisse in every crease and pore of him. His ashes have been hauled, his clock cleaned, his buck wheated, and now, less than a half-block from his boiler, last year's Anglo-Saxon, his head is stuffed with images of a bop most horizontal, the heels round and the sugar sweet. Threw down enough spondulix to make her squeak "Eefff," and then tipped his mitts to say, "Who's your daddy, cheeks?" At which point, Charisse, to the possible what the tongue is to taste, went all but jingle-brained with delight, a lid to be lost if she were wearing one.

So here he walks, the memory of her get-along getting nicely along, a fit to be pitched and a hoity gone toity, until he's reached his crate, opened the door and settled himself behind the wheel when from the inexplicable darkness of the backseat comes a voice as unexpected as it is feminine: "Grab a little air, Brother Hazar."

Triple H needs a moment to get his breathing in order, to rake the sand back on his beach.

"You gave me a fright, Miss," he says.

Fiction by Lee K. Abbott

"Ms.," she says. "I'm a modern girlie."

Nothing in the rearview mirror, just the suggestion of a shape, darkness measurably darker than usual. A ghost, he thinks. Probably what you see when you've gone over the edge with the rams or hit the pipe, when the gas is Nevada and the cap snapped. Still, he's hearing things, too – specifically the direction to put his hands on the steering wheel.

"That the crop?" he says. "This a bump?"

Harbee doesn't know, and won't for several minutes, that this is his final hour. He's about to exit – an adios attended by gunpowder and badinage – so we won't know, for example, much more about his fondness for seafood (grouper foremost) or about his many but anonymous donations to PAL and the Fund for the Terribly Wistful. He's a Leo, too, and taking an extension class in Personal Expression at Tri-C – the "wanton word," says the teacher, a Dagwood with flesh the shade of week-old pork. His mother's dead, a lunger, and all that's left of the Hazar clan is a cousin with a fondness for bangtails and an uncle – Fergus maybe, or Ferdie – more ding than dong. Why, but for a blip or a broderick, Triple H is virtually retired.

"How's Charisse?" the skirt asks. "She still all high-hat and happenstance?"

Here Harbee takes an inventory: head, heart, the Alderman – all the parts he could count on only a second ago.

"So you know the lady," Harbee says, keeping the mustard off his cornbread.

"We used to drink out of the same bottle," the modern girlie says. "Worked the Argentine squeeze one time. Did doobs in Chi-town. Habeas, Mister Hazar, and corpus."

Still nothing specific in the backseat. Not a kisser. Not a mush. Not a map. Just the voice, doubtlessly a rod attached. Jumping Jesse James, a Vincent Price scenario and who-knows-what in the offing.

"You remember a wrong number named Terry Blount?" the woman asks. "Little T?"

"This in the Dark Ages?" Harbee wonders.

"The darkest," she says.

"Could be."

"Take your time, slip knot."

He does, his time getting bunched and tumble-down, too many yesterdays to paw through. There's a derrick named Goodnight and a clout called Shirttail Shelly, never mind various conks and flatties and frails, Mustang Sally among them – but so far, nothing T-related.

"A sap, mostly B & E," the woman is saying, "a little goosey, I'm told. Liked the eel juice too much, the pins when he could afford the luxury. Had a pan with blue eyes."

"You're *told*, you say?"

"My father," she says. "Terrence Xavier Blount."

Harbee tries again. Less who's who, though, than what's what. Lots of Big's, however. Biggie Smalls, for instance. Big Bob Harris from Harrisburg, as much gaycat as gonif. And a horn-head called His Bigness, raised bees, hustled a lot of jack for the Philly folks. But no Little's, not for the longest time – until, a rock having tumbled free in his brain, Harbee Hakim Hazar remembers, and the root of him goes grainy and rank. The Don. The many large. The burble of blood. Uncle Jesus.

"You're Margaret," he says. "After the saint."

"The one and only," she tells him.

"That's what – mid-Nineties?"

"Ninety-one," she says. "I'm twelve at the time. Go to St. Mary's of the Weeping Wood. The plaid jumper, the white blouse – the whole bit. Vocabulary champ three years running."

Harbee's ready to blow. Out the door, up the street – climb the beanstalk if necessary.

"Legerdemain," Margaret says. "That was one of my words."

The threads are popping now, the seams of him giving way. After all, he knows up from up, the kite from the string, what one whizzer whispers to another.

"Staphylococcus," she is saying. "Any of various spherical parasitic bacteria occurring in grapelike clusters – "

"I could apologize," Harbee offers, considering his what-if's.

The silence back there has heft and hue.

"Make restitution," she says eventually.

"Exactly. Put you next to respectable cush. We dip the bill, an hour passes with some chin, I work the blower, and – bingo – you're lousy with lint. No peach. No Shoshone."

"Everything silk and swift."

"Indeed," he says. "The world wise and white."

This time the silence is frigid, the bad air at the bottom of a grave.

"You're forgetting the Shakespeare," she says.

"The tit for tat, you mean?"

That's precisely what she means. The bossa and the nova. The eye for an eye. Not to mention the teeth and hair and hands.

Now it's Harbee's turn to turn yapless. He's in a corner, Dutch any way he cuts it, his whip lashed and his shot put. Modern Margaret has the hooey on him, the powder very nearly dry in his vitals. He finds himself wishing for a lucky star, a ding-a-ling – any hombre with supernatural powers and more than common compassion for a smoke being fitted for a wooden kimono.

"So I'm wondering," he says.

"How you and me come to be in your heap on the last night of your life, right?"

She's on the nut there, he tells her. Right as a hook.

"You remember Doris Hoom?" she says. "Downtown Hyatt. You and her and a rumpled king-size."

How could he forget, he says. She was jip and juju both, mesca and marbles, the hubba-hubba and the alaban left.

"Then you remember The Neck, too?"

Instantly, Triple H has no need for any additional up-and-down. The picture's clear to him – savvy and sin and singular. You got your Numero Uno, Jake Fox, and your Butter and Beans Buster, The Neck. You got the rap and the details that bring it to life, your poke and your preaching. You mix it together, let sit for three decades or so, and, quicker than you can cop a smell from the barrel, you got a tin-talking tamale in the dark and a dinge about to be filled with daylight.

"You ready?" Margaret says.

Harbee nods. "But not willing."

She's got a butt lit, and in the rearview Harbee sees she's more speed trap than parking lot, something in the eyes that says "Happy Birthday, Mr. President." He's pinched now, unwanted tonnage collapsed atop his innermosts, time grinding forward with a screech, his pipes starting to clog.

"Zucchetto," he says, a light way at the end of the tunnel.

She gives him a pointedly amused look – one-part margarita, one-part mother of pearl. Buck, yeah, but no Rogers.

"From the Italian," she begins. "A skullcap worn by Roman Catholic clergymen." She sighs – too much air, too little space. "You finished, Harbee?"

Triple H consults that tunnel anew. Yeah, he guesses he is.

Dialogue between Kwame Anthony Appiah & Robert S. Boynton

on philosophy, race, sex &c.

ROBERT S. BOYNTON: You recently became a U.S. citizen. Why?

KWAME ANTHONY APPIAH: There are very few differences between the things you can do as a resident alien and as a citizen, but I wanted to be able to vote and to be on juries. And I felt that there was a possibility that there would be a backlash against dark-skinned immigrants and it might be difficult to stay here unless one was a citizen.

Q: Your close collaborative friendship with Henry Louis Gates, Jr., has been enormously productive for the both of you. What role has Gates had in your intellectual development?

A: Well, for one thing, I wouldn't be in this country if it weren't for Skip Gates. He was a Mellon Fellow – the first black one, I think – at Clare College, Cambridge, which was my college as well. There weren't many brown or black people at Clare – I think there were three of us at the time – and Skip says that people kept asking him whether he'd met me, and that when white people keep asking you that question you can usually assume that the other person is black.

We became very close. He was already living with Sharon, his wife, and I would often go over for dinner. Wole Soyinka was at Cambridge, and the three of us would talk about Pan-African issues. It had never occurred to me to come to the United States before he persuaded me. As a child growing up in a Pan-Africanist household I was aware of people like Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, and if you followed those stories it was natural that one's general impression, on the

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A Fellow of the American Academy since 1995, Kwame Anthony Appiah is Rockefeller University Professor of Philosophy at Princeton's University Center for Human Values. Born and educated in England – he is reputed to be the first African to have received a Ph.D. at Cambridge – he has written widely on issues of race, multiculturalism, and questions of ethnic and sexual identity. He is also the author of three mystery novels. His most recent book is "Thinking It Through: An Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy."

Robert S. Boynton is director of the graduate magazine journalism program at New York University. His profiles and essays have appeared in "The New Yorker," "The New York Times Magazine," "The Atlantic Monthly," and "Lingua Franca," among other publications. His conversation with Appiah took place on January 7, 2003. A longer version will appear next fall in "Critics at Work: Interviews 1993 – 2003," a collection of interviews with intellectuals edited by Jeffrey J. Williams for NYU Press.

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whole, was that the United States wasn't the best place for a non-white person to be.

Q: Your father was a prominent Ghanaian barrister and politician who was deeply involved in the Pan-African movement. Your mother descended from a prominent British family composed of Fabian socialists and landed gentry. How did they meet?

A: My father was studying law and was the president of the West African Students Union. My mother knew Colin Turnbull, who had founded an organization called Racial Unity, and as the secretary of Racial Unity she met the president of the West African Students Union.

My mother's father was Sir Stafford Cripps, the chancellor of the exchequer in the first postwar government, who helped create the welfare state. Her great-aunt was Beatrice Webb who, with her husband Sidney, founded the London School of Economics, and were leaders of the Labour Party.

Q: I assume interracial couples were rare then. How was their marriage perceived?

A: People *say* that it was the first British Society interracial wedding, although I don't know whether that is true. My maternal grandmother and grandfather knew the leaders of the colonial empire – Indira Ghandi stayed at their house, etc. – so they were quite familiar with non-English, non-white people from various countries. My grandfather had recently died, and my grandmother told my mother, "Well, if you are going to marry him, you've got to go live in his country and find out what it is like."

So my mother showed up at the Gold Coast (as Ghana was called at the time). My father was a very good friend of Nkrumah's at that point, so my mother found herself in an odd position: the daughter of a British cabinet minister traveling around with all these anticolonial types who were trying to get Britain out of the country. And she couldn't tell anyone why she was there. She came back to England and said it was a lovely country.

My father's family were typical aristocrats, so all they cared about was that she came from a 'good' family – which she did. Once that was explained, they said the marriage was fine with them.

Q: Where were you born?

A: I was born in England and went to Ghana when I was one. I went to primary school in Ghana, and when I was eight Nkrumah threw my father in prison, for reasons that were never entirely clear. It was a difficult time for the family, and I was sick as well. I had toxoplasmosis, which wasn't very well understood at the time, and it took a while to figure out what was wrong. I spent a number of months in the hospital, and at about the time they figured out what I had, the queen of England made her first trip to Ghana.

I was in my hospital bed, and Nkrumah and the queen toured the hospital. Nkrumah didn't speak to me, and as he was leading the queen and the duke of Edinburgh away, the duke turned to me and said, "Do give my regards to your mother," whom he knew. This mightily upset Nkrumah, because the spouse of a visiting head of state was saying nice things about the spouse of someone he had thrown in jail. It was an international incident. My doctor was deported,

and the event was on the front page of the British newspapers.

So my mother decided that it was perhaps best for me not to be in Ghana at that point. I was very close to my maternal grandmother in England, so I went to stay with her. And from the age of nine I was at an English boarding school.

Q: How did you decide to attend Cambridge?

A: This is moderately embarrassing, but if you were on the track that I was on at school, you went either to Oxford or Cambridge. I also had a lot of relatives who had gone to Oxford, so going to Cambridge was a way of getting away from them. I intended to be a medical student, and Cambridge is better than Oxford for that. I wanted to be a doctor because I was so infatuated with the doctor who took care of me when I was ill as a child.

Q: So how did you end up studying philosophy?

A: What got me into philosophy was religion: I was an evangelical Christian at the time. We were serious people, so we thought about religion and read theologians like Barth, Bultman, Tillich, etc. So it was in the context of thinking about my faith that I got interested in philosophy. A lot of what I read for myself was philosophy of religion.

I told the philosophy tutor that I had made a terrible mistake and wanted to study philosophy rather than medicine. He told me that I had to finish the term, and gave me a stack of philosophy books to read over the summer. If I still wanted to study philosophy after reading them, it was fine with him. I remember reading Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* that summer. It was one of the most exhilarating books I had ever read at the time.

Q: What was the dominant school of philosophy at Cambridge at the time?

A: Philosophy of language was the thing, and the big topic was the debate that Michael Dummet had started about "truth conditions and assertability," which was what I wrote my first monograph on. The debate was whether the essential concept in the theory of meaning was assertion or truth.

There was a group that modeled themselves on Wittgenstein, which I thought was quite phony and pretentious. The Wittgenstein world was a world of disciples. For me, philosophy had been about liberating myself, so I was very put off by this.

My teachers were Phillip Petit, Hugh Mellor, Ian Hacking. There was a sort of Cambridge tradition of thinking about probability. I attended the lectures that became Hacking's wonderful book, *Why Does Language Matter to Philosophy?*

Q: The philosopher Jonathan Lear was a philosophy student at Clare College at the same time you were. Both of you moved from logic and the philosophy of language to 'softer,' more interpretive forms of philosophy – psychoanalysis in his case, and cultural theory in yours. Any similarities?

A: I think that what was true about Jonathan and myself was that we were intellectuals who became philosophers. We were people of ideas, not people driven by a particular technical agenda.

Q: What then drew you to something as technical as analytic philosophy? What satisfaction do you get from it?

A: There is a certain pleasure in thinking about how things hang together, or coming up with a solution. Although a large part of what I did was either critical or the working out of some details of thoughts that originated with someone else, I *did* feel that I was making progress; after working through the philosophical problems, I *knew* that certain strategies in the theory of meaning wouldn't work. There is an ocean of possibilities, and knowing that the truth *doesn't* lie in that direction is a kind of knowledge. It may be the only kind of knowledge that is available in this area, although perhaps I shouldn't put it in quite that way.

Q: Did you go directly from your undergraduate philosophy studies to your graduate studies?

A: No. When I finished my undergraduate degree, I had no idea what I was going to do next. It hadn't occurred to me to continue studying philosophy. I thought it was something one did at college, and then one went out into the world and got a job. So I went back to Ghana. I packed all my books into a crate, and my mother had bookshelves made for me at home.

I hadn't yet received my exam results, and one day I got a telegram from Cambridge informing me that I had received a First. So I went back to Cambridge. In those days there were no courses. You simply hung around and read until someone said, "Why don't you start writing something?" I returned in 1976, and in 1979 Skip persuaded me to teach a course on Pan-Africanism at Yale. That was when I first started investigating the history of Pan-Africanism. While I was there I wrote my dissertation proposal in order to get a research fellowship back at Cambridge. This meant I had room and board and a small stipend, library privileges, and that I could teach.

Q: Your most recent book is an introduction to philosophy called *Thinking It Through*. How would you describe your conception of philosophy?

A: I think of philosophy as a tradition of arguments about certain topics, and the way a topic becomes a philosophical topic is by connecting itself to that tradition. That means the status of strings in string theory in physics can become a philosophical topic by way of discussions of realism and nominalism. To put it in a slogan form, I think that philosophy has a history, but no essence. It doesn't seem to me appropriate to take a view about whether this is a good or a bad thing. It simply seems inevitable.

The only normative question that one ought to ask of philosophy is, "Is it good for society that the practice exists?" And I'm convinced that the answer to that question is yes. Having an intellectual grasp of how we fit into the world is intrinsically valuable in the sense that a life with it is *eo ipso* more successful than a life without it. And it is also true that a culture in which people are thinking about the questions of philosophy is better equipped to deal with deciding such questions as whether it is okay to lock up dissidents on the say-so of the attorney general. Philosophy isn't the only set of discourses whose presence is helpful for thinking about these questions – I'm glad there are Quakers around as well – but it helps you think it through and make distinctions.

Q: Did your training in analytic philosophy help or hinder you as you began to retool yourself as a cultural critic?

A: When I started to write about race I made quite swift progress, by comparison with much of the recent discussion, because I did what I had been trained to do: cut it up, clarify the question, point out the logical inconsistencies in various proposals, etc. I think I made a useful contribution to the field with that work.

I came to be able to do this kind of work through the discovery of a form of writing that I enjoy, which is the philosophical essay. These essays aren't the kinds of things that would be published in philosophy journals because they are too essayistic and anecdotal. Even though by the standards of cultural or literary studies what I do is quite abstract, I try to be *less* abstract than most philosophers are, and always to have examples in mind when I write.

Q: You have famously argued not only that racial rhetoric is the product of bad science, but furthermore that race itself doesn't exist. Do you still believe this?

A: The way I'd formulate that claim now is that while there aren't any 'races,' there are 'racial identities.' They don't have any biological significance, but they are important socially. I want to hold on to the first claim as an important part of understanding what is true about the second claim. That is, I believe that racial identities don't make sense unless you understand that *some* of the people who participated in the creation of them have these false biological beliefs. I do not think that racial identities would have the shape they do if they were not tied to biological ideologies.

You need the following distinction: forms of identity that are genealogical, that are based on descent; and forms of identity that are biological. Families, for example, are genealogical: I'm an Appiah and a Cripps. But saying that doesn't commit me to any view about there being any biological properties that the Appiahs share. What the race-like identities have in common – including the ethnic ones – is that they are genealogical. But commitment to genealogy isn't a commitment to there being anything biologically significant about it.

The very *idea* that there was a distinction between what *we* call biological characteristics and other characteristics is itself the *product* of a theoretical development. When you read the eighteenth-century natural historians, they talk about clothing and beards and skin color all in the same paragraph. They don't yet *have* the distinction between those characteristics and biological ones. The distinction in its modern form depends on a genetic theory. Genetic theory was discovered by Mendel in the nineteenth century but wasn't really noticed by anyone at the time, and is really an early-twentieth-century creation. So the very notion that you should have a property that is inherited in the body in the way that genes are is a very modern idea, and the idea that you should have a form of classification in which *those* characteristics are central is extremely modern – well into the twentieth century.

In the case of the West, genealogical identities were theoretically understood as genetic or biological. And this was a mistake.

Q: What concrete differences do these theories make?

A: I think that if everybody genuinely gave up the false biological belief, whatever fed our definitions of our racial identities would have to change. You wouldn't even *call* them racial identities.

Q: Do you have any concrete proposals for how race should be dealt with in America?

A: If you ask me my thoughts about how to make progress on race in America, I believe that it has very little to do with things we *say*. If you wanted to invest political and financial resources in one thing, I would say that we should mix up the neighborhoods. As long as we have a society in which huge proportions of African Americans grow up in neighborhoods which are 80 percent or more African American, these will remain powerful, salient identities – in *bad* ways, as well as good.

Q: In your book *Color Conscious* (1996), you discuss the process by which the "politics of recognition" requires that a group (whether defined by ethnicity, gender, or orientation) writes a new "script" for how it should behave and be perceived. Would you describe your current work as writing a new script for identity?

A: I've mostly been interested in trying to understand these processes, rather than trying to get people to do things. I somewhat resist being identified as a public intellectual. I'm an intellectual and I care about politics, but I don't think of my responsibility as an intellectual in politics as in any way greater, or different, from that of any citizen. I'm not against people taking those responsibilities, but I haven't done so. There is a kind of fussiness about intellectual distinctions that I think is inappropriate in a struggle where there are two sides and you know which side you're on. In philosophy there aren't two sides, so scrupulousness is not fussy.

Q: Another way to proceed might be to analyze different aspects of identity; to do for, say, your sexual identity what you've done for your racial identity. Is that an interest for you?

A: People have asked me why, given that I've written so much about race, I haven't written about sexuality in, say, the mode of queer studies. The answer I've given is that I *did* think philosophically about sexuality when I was starting out, and what struck me is that most of what one has to say was just responding to terribly bad arguments, and this did not seem very interesting to me.

Q: But how is this different from the critical philosophical work you've done in the case of race, which also required that you respond to terribly bad arguments?

A: Part of it is that I was better equipped to deal with bad arguments concerning the case of race because I had had a rather substantial education in biology. And evolutionary theory was one of the topics I was most interested in, so I actually know a lot about genetics and evolutionary biology.

In the case of race, I mostly concentrated on criticizing the best form of the wrong theory. The bad science in the case of homosexuality has mostly been psychoanalytic and, partly because I came to psychoanalysis through reading critiques of it, I've never had any time for it. Probably to an inappropriate degree, it makes me want to barf. It is just not a sensible way of thinking about sexuality. So disentangling my general skepticism about *all* explanations of homosexuality from my skepticism of these particular explanations would be difficult.

There is a separate problem, which has to do with the nature of ethics. Clearly attitudes toward homosexuals have a lot to do with views about the proper use of sex – the role of sex in pleasure, etc. And I must say that it is unclear to me why those are topics on which one ought to have any intrinsic moral thoughts. Sex is important because it produces pleasure, because it produces relationships, because it produces children, and all of *these* are of intrinsic moral importance. But sex itself is like, say, eating – it produces pleasure, it produces sociality, etc. – but we don't have the sense that we should take eating seriously as a moral topic. I don't feel as if I have anything special to say about sexuality, nor do I feel that it is my obligation to do so.

There is another difference between sex and race as philosophical topics. I am not a radical constructivist about sexual identity. I think there is something biologically there in the sexual sense. I think there is *less* there than most people think, but I don't believe there is *nothing*. Whereas with race, I don't think it is at all interesting from the biological point of view.

Nathan Glazer

on Americans & inequality

Americans, unlike the citizens of other prosperous democracies, not to mention those of poor countries, do not seem to care much about inequality. One might think that our attitude toward it must sooner or later change – especially now that the newspapers are filled with stories of the money and perquisites CEOs have extracted from their companies. But even after the Enron and other scandals, most Americans remain apathetic about inequality: What we have today is outrage against those who do not play fair – not outrage over inequality as such. In recent surveys, furthermore, Americans have named the state of the economy, terrorism, and education – but not inequality – as the most important issues facing the nation.

In a way, this is surprising. After all, the United States is the most unequal of the economically developed countries – and that inequality has been increasing. If Americans don't care about inequality, it obviously isn't because inequality doesn't exist here.

One could argue that they don't care about inequality because the poor do pretty well in America, if one looks at measures of consumption rather than income. And in this vein one could argue that while Americans don't care about inequality, they do care about poverty and have provided an adequate 'safety net' to protect against impoverishment. But the presence in the United States of the homeless, beggars, soup kitchens, and the like does not suggest great concern for the poor. In fact, the United States does much less than European countries to redistribute income to the worse-off. According to the OECD, transfers and other social benefits (which we may assume go mostly from people with more income to people with less income, though that is not uniformly the case) amounted in 1999 to 11 percent of GDP in the United States and 18 percent of GDP in the countries of the European Union, with a range among the larger European nations from 20 percent in Germany and France to 16 percent in the United Kingdom. The United States is particularly deficient in family benefits and unemployment and labor-market programs – 1 percent of GDP for these, against 5 percent in the European Union and a whopping 8 percent in Sweden. The United States also lags behind in old-age, disability, and survivor's benefits – 7 percent versus 12 percent in the European Union.

These differences also extend to the treatment of the working poor, making it difficult to sustain the argument that Americans do care about the condition of the poor but make a distinction between the working and the non-working

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Note by Nathan Glazer

poor. The legal minimum wage in the United States in the early 1990s was 39 percent of the average wage, as against 53 percent in the European Union. And our unemployment benefits are below that of most EU countries. Only the United Kingdom matches us in miserliness – but in the United Kingdom one may get these benefits for fours years, as against six months in the United States. Notoriously, the United States does not require employers to provide any paid vacations, while European countries mandate on average four weeks – France and Sweden, five. The contrast between American and European family benefits is also striking. European family benefits (payments for each child, which do not exist in the United States) are for *all*: the state offers such aid as a means of strengthening the nation. (One wonders whether such benefits will maintain their popularity as the immigrant and Muslim populations in the European welfare states expand. A visiting Norwegian economist notes in conversation the large families of Pakistani immigrants in Norway who can live, without working, on family benefits, and who continue to receive these benefits if they return to Pakistan. Even the model services of the Scandinavian countries may be strained by such developments.)

Recently two important studies have helped us to think about the puzzling difference between European and American attitudes toward poverty and inequality. One is a long paper by three economists – Albert Alesina, Edward Glaeser, and Bruce Sacerdote – titled "Why Doesn't the United States have a European-Style Welfare State?" (published in 2001 in the *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*), from which most of the facts given above have been taken. The other is a book by Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks, *It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States* (2001).

Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote assert that the American pattern of a small government and a smaller welfare state has deep historical roots: "From the very beginning of the expansion of the public sector in the late 19th century, the United States and Europe show very distinctive patterns .... [T]he absolute difference grew as the welfare state expanded both in Europe and the US ...." This makes it difficult to explain the current pattern by recent political events such as the Reagan administration. This is not to exclude the political factors that affect inequality and poverty and the size of the welfare state, which would be silly, but it does remind us that there may be large, historically rooted factors that operate independently of given administrations and their philosophies.

What then are these factors? According to Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote, they could be aspects of the American economy, of the American political system, or of something else. They use the term 'behavioral' to characterize this 'something else' – those noneconomic and nonpolitical factors that may explain why the United States is divergent. (I would call such factors 'social' or 'cultural.')

The authors begin by deploying an economic model to compare the United States with European countries. Despite its formidable mathematical form, their model operates on some simple assumptions: that economic factors will affect the self-interested political decisions of people, and that these in turn will affect the policies of government in a democracy. What this model shows is that Americans, unlike Europeans, do not act as much on the basis of direct economic

self-interest: even though inequality is greater in America than in Europe, Americans are less inclined than Europeans to demand energetic governmental action to redistribute income from the well-off to the less well-off.

So why don't Americans vote for more government action against inequality? One possible explanation is that there is more social mobility in the United States than in Europe, so if those with less income expect that in time they will have more, they may be less concerned with the protection provided by a true safety net – that is, a developed welfare state.

The evidence on whether there is actually more social mobility in the United States than in Europe is unclear – surprisingly enough, it has been unclear since Seymour Martin Lipset and Reinhard Bendix began studying the question forty years ago. But whatever the *facts* about social mobility, it is clear that the *beliefs* about social mobility are very different in the United States from what they are in Europe: Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote report, using the World Values Survey, that "71% of Americans, but only 40% of Europeans, believe that the poor have a chance to escape from poverty."

After their consideration of economic factors, which explain little, and political factors, which explain more (because of our complex political arrangements – think of the electoral college), Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote come to their 'behavioral' factors. Here they regard one as decisive, far outranking any others in their various regressions: the racial factor. A cross-country comparison relates social spending to a measure of 'racial fractionalization,' and a cross-state comparison in the United States relates the percentage of blacks in a state to the size of the welfare benefit. Race seems decisive in explaining indifference to inequality.

At the same time, they remark on certain regnant beliefs that seem to me equally compelling here, and not at all easy to disentangle from racial prejudice: "Opinions and beliefs about the poor differ sharply between the United States and Europe. In Europe the poor are generally thought to be unfortunate, but not personally responsible for their own condition. For example, according to the World Values Survey, whereas 70% of West Germans express the belief that people are poor because of imperfections in society, not their own laziness, 70% of Americans hold the opposite view . . . ." Recall that Americans believe, and Europeans don't, that the poor can work their way out of poverty.

The poor, from other evidence, seem to share in these distinctively American beliefs. According to Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote, work patterns in the United States seem coherent with this belief: there is a strong positive correlation between earnings and hours worked. People in the top quintile in the United States work longer hours than people in the middle quintiles, and people in the lowest quintile work much fewer hours. If you work more in the United States, you are less likely to be poor. Patterns in Europe are different. In Sweden, all work the same number of hours. In Italy and Switzerland, the poor work *longer* hours. Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote note, too, that there is a relation between the belief that luck determines income and the amount of social spending in a country. The United States spends the lowest amount on social welfare and also has the lowest percentage of people who believe that luck determines income. In other words: when people are impoverished, Americans

Note by Nathan Glazer

don't chalk it up to 'bad luck' – they rather assume the poor are responsible, in large part, for their poverty.

Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote's bottom line: "Americans redistribute less than Europeans for three reasons: because the majority of Americans believe that redistribution favors racial minorities, because Americans believe that they live in an open and fair society, and that if someone is poor it is his or her own fault, and because the political system is geared toward preventing redistribution. In fact the political system is likely to be endogenous to these basic American beliefs." In effect, we have the political system we do because we prefer its results – such as limiting redistribution to blacks.

Lipset and Marks agree on the role of beliefs and the importance of the political system in explaining American attitudes toward inequality. But they give much less attention to the racial factor, incorporating it into the larger theme of the ethnic and racial diversity of the American working class, one of the many factors that has been noted in the century-old discussion of why there is no large socialist party in the United States.

I do believe the specific racial factor that emerges so sharply in the regression analysis of Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote has to be acknowledged. But I also believe it is linked to the larger structure of American diversity, in religion, in ethnicity, and that it is this larger structure that is the key factor in shaping the American welfare state.

We can see the effects of this distinctively American diversity and its impact on the provision of welfare more than two hundred fifty years ago, when the increasing sectarian divisions in the original colonies began to affect the welfare institutions of the New England colonists; one hundred fifty years ago, when the incoming Catholic Irish created their own welfare institutions; one hundred years ago, when we saw similar institutions created by Jewish, Italian, and other immigrants.

What originally had been institutions created by the state or established religions in the early colonies, following the patterns of Europe, were broken up and privatized under the impact of increasing religious and ethnic diversity. And so Harvard College, founded as an institution of higher education by the Bay State Colony and its established religion, mutated into a private and independent institution, no longer supported or governed by the state or by a dominant religion. The establishment of what might have become in time a uniform state public educational system was broken by the immigration of the Catholic Irish. The new immigrants were cared for in large measure by their own religion-based social welfare institutions.

In the United States, the government began late making provisions for those affected by the industrializing society, and never fully replaced religious groups and other nongovernment charitable institutions in providing social welfare. Of course, this network of institutions still exists and is very extensive. Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote give us the astonishing estimate that charitable contributions in the United States in 2000 amounted to $691 per capita, compared to $141 in the United Kingdom and $57 in Europe as a whole.

So where do blacks factor in? The situation of African Americans was indeed different. No other ethnic group in the United States had to face anything like the conditions of slavery, or the fierce subsequent prejudice and segregation to which blacks were subjected. And the preexisting conditions of fractionated

social services affected them too. Like other groups, they established their own churches, which provided some services, within the limits set by their prevailing poverty. Like other groups, too, they turned to preexisting systems of social service.

Owing to their economic condition, African Americans were much more dependent on America's primitive public services, and in time they became the special ward of the American welfare state. Having become, to a greater extent than other groups, the clients of public services, they affected, owing to the prevailing racism, the public image of these services.

But there is something more than race and diversity that shapes our characteristic system of beliefs – something distinctively American, connected to our founding values as a pioneer society created by English settlers. Lipset and Marks place great weight on these initial founding values.

What is English or Scottish or Welsh or Scotch-Irish, and what is Calvinist or Presbyterian or Anglican, in our founding would be very difficult to sort out. Still, there is a distinctive pattern of values we see in the United Kingdom as well as in the United States, and that we can also discern to some extent in the other settler societies founded by the English, centered on the belief in effort and merit and opportunity as against egalitarian provision by the state. We can see this pattern in public opinion polls. The United Kingdom lags behind Europe on most measures of inequality and redistribution, and it also places more blame on the poor.

In sum, a satisfying answer to the puzzle of America's relative indifference to inequality must, I think, consider a number of factors: common institutional origins in the British Isles; the impact of religious diversity and immigration; a greater faith in equal opportunity than in government-established equality – all have played a role in shaping American attitudes. The racial factor is important, too.

All this, and our distinctively complex political structure, has produced great inequality in the United States – and there is no evidence that Americans today want it otherwise.

Michael Traynor

on environmental law

Many countries as well as some U.S. states recognize a constitutional human right to a healthful environment. But the federal government of the United States does not. Given restrictive trends in the federal courts, an anti-environmental president, and an unsympathetic Congress, it is barely conceivable that any branch of the U.S. federal government will soon recognize such a human right, or even a rudimentary constitutional right not to be poisoned.

By welcome contrast, judges from across the globe have affirmed their commitment "to spare no effort to free all of humanity, and above all our children and grandchildren, from the threat of living on a planet irredeemably spoilt by human activities." These forward-thinking judges convened in Johannesburg, South Africa, in August of 2002 at the Global Judges Symposium on Sustainable Development and the Rule of Law. Their symposium preceded the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, which I attended as a representative of the Environmental Law Institute (ELI).

In many ways, the conceptual leadership demonstrated by the Global Judges outstripped the thinking at the summit. The judges readily acknowledged the connection between human rights and sustainable development and affirmed the need for an independent judiciary and judicial process to decide environmental disputes. They pointedly observed that it is the poor who suffer most from environmental deterioration and that there is a pressing need to strengthen the public's rights to enforce environmental laws. They called for expanded public participation in decision-making, help from the judicial system in environmental disputes, and open access to information.

As an American lawyer who has been an environmental advocate for more than forty years, I was inspired by the courageous, forthright, and innovative ideas of the Global Judges and by the possibility that they may lead to effective implementation in concrete cases. Judges from elsewhere in the world seemed surprisingly willing to envision a vital role for the judiciary in forging the link between environmental law and human rights. It seems the courts of the world may go well beyond what is achievable presently in the United States.

Had the delegates to the UN meeting been listening to the judges and acting in concert with them, the summit would have been a far more valuable exercise. Although the delegates achieved modest (and nonbinding) consensus on items such as controlling harmful chemicals,

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restoring depleted fish stocks, and protecting biodiversity, they failed to match the principled leadership of the Global Judges.

Most of the government leaders who attended the summit seemed to share a progressive spirit – with the notable exception of those representing the United States. President Bush elected not to attend the summit and conveyed the impression to many that he disdained it; the delegation he sent instead, led by Secretary of State Colin Powell, concentrated on protecting oil interests while undermining human rights.

For example, the United States refused to join Europe and most of the rest of the world in key proposed provisions of the consensus document, known as the Plan of Implementation. Instead, allying itself with China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and a few other notable polluters, the U.S. delegation worked to defeat a specific target to increase the global share of renewable energy sources to at least 15 percent of the total by 2010. It only grudgingly agreed to a commitment to halve the number of people without safe drinking water and adequate sanitation by 2015 and linked that concession to its demands on energy policy. On such a basic issue as decent water and sanitation, the U.S. delegation thus used the prospect of alleviating continuing human misery and disease as a bargaining chip to sustain American consumption of oil and other nonrenewable fossil fuels.

The U.S. delegation did not stop there. It lobbied to delete a proposed statement calling for "public access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice." It also succeeded in diluting a proposed statement that would have acknowledged "the importance of the interrelationship between human rights promotion and protection and environmental protection for sustainable development." Instead, the Plan of Implementation now merely acknowledges "the consideration being given to the possible relationship between environment and human rights, including the right to development." The policymakers thus left access to information, public participation, citizen enforcement, and the development of an environmental human right primarily to judges and environmental advocates. Sadly, the Johannesburg summit took a backward step from the 1972 Stockholm Declaration that affirmed the fundamental right to "adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being" and the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development that reaffirmed it.

The world leaders and official government delegations assembled at Sandton, an upscale suburb of Johannesburg that contains a convention center, office towers, and many elegant shops and restaurants. It might well have passed for a wealthy part of Houston, another city built on the extraction of riches from the earth. Under the rules of the assembly, each leader spoke for only a few minutes. Most followed the harmless formula of thanking South Africa for being a splendid host, agreeing that the world's environmental problems deserve serious attention, and expressing his country's dedication to resolving them. Although many speakers struck bland notes individually, together these became a crescendo of shared concern. Meanwhile, as the U.S. delegation maneuvered to defeat strong environmental commitments, including renewable energy sources and the reduction of agricultural subsidies, another malevolent force rumbled from a different direction through the booming voice of Zimbabwe President R. G. Mugabe.

Note by Michael Traynor

A powerful speaker – adept at manipulating world opinion while advancing a repressive and violent regime – Mugabe spoke in no uncertain terms: "The multilateral programme of action we set for ourselves at Rio has not only been unfulfilled but it has also been ignored, sidelined and replaced by a half-baked unilateral agenda of globalisation in the service of big corporate interests of the North. The focus is profit, not the poor, the process is globalisation, not sustainable development, while the objective is exploitation, not liberation." He justified the "agrarian reform" ruthlessly underway in his country and said that "this fundamental question has pitted the black majority who are the right-holders, and, therefore, primary stakeholders, to our land against an obdurate and internationally well-connected racial minority, largely of British descent and brought in and sustained by British colonialism." Departing from his prepared text, he adlibbed with a message for Tony Blair: "Keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe." Mugabe's remarks received greater and more sustained applause from the official delegations and their guests than the remarks made by any other world leader.

The United States picked Secretary of State Colin Powell for the unenviable task of responding to Mugabe's challenge. Good soldier and decent man that he is, he did his duty. He pointedly noted that "In one country in this region, Zimbabwe, the lack of respect for human rights and rule of law has exacerbated" poverty, AIDS and other infectious diseases, drought, wasteful land use, and economic mismanagement, "to push millions of people toward the brink of starvation." He called for "sound economic policies that encourage entrepreneurs and that spur growth" and for "effective partnerships to unleash the talents and resources of developed and developing countries, civil society and the private sector." He referred specifically to the South African Housing Initiative "to help private contractors build 90,000 houses for a half million people in over the next five years" and to four new "'signature' partnerships in water, energy, agriculture, and forests," including sustainable forestry in the Congo basin.

Secretary Powell identified a few constructive approaches that the United States is taking, and he and his key staff seemed to be the most open and helpful among the U.S. delegation. However, the delegation's overall retrograde tactics overshadowed its few good ideas for public/private partnerships and foreign aid. It is no surprise that in contrast to the thunderous applause for Mugabe, Powell had to endure the sustained jeers of both official representatives and unofficial guests from the rest of the world. The U.S. delegation's promotion of its nonrenewable energy agenda and its suppression of environmental values, together with the consequent hostility among people from other countries, enhanced Mugabe's strategy of playing the cards of race and colonial imperialism.

During one of the summit's NGO programs, which were held a long bus ride away from the main conference, environmental advocates invited by the ELI from various countries in Africa gave compelling reports on their efforts to address severe challenges. An advocate from Nigeria described his tribe's effort to withstand and confront one company's venture to exploit oil located under a reservoir of natural gas. Instead of using available technology to preserve the natural gas before reaching the oil, he reported, the company simply lit it on fire, thereby wasting the resource, polluting the air, and poisoning the lungs of

nearby residents. Without the laws and enforcement we have in the United States – even though they are being undermined by our own government – the struggles that environmental advocates undergo in places such as Nigeria are comparatively fierce and extraordinarily difficult, and they require countervailing intelligence, spirit, and community action, as well as help from the courts.

What did the summit mean for business interests? They were visibly present, particularly at a concurrent meeting of the World Business Council on Sustainable Development that was attended by representatives of the oil, chemical, utility, mining, and automobile industries. Greenpeace and an organization called Business Action for Sustainable Development (created by the World Business Council and the International Chamber of Commerce) made an important announcement about a novel collaboration on climate protection. My impression is that many business leaders and plant managers want to achieve sound environmental results under intelligent laws that provide attainable and sustainable goals without undue governmental intrusion and control. However, the lack of vision and leadership from our own government and its overall anti-environmental strategy make positive business action difficult. Without the impetus of effective laws and enforcement, businesses may find it difficult, particularly in today's economy, to justify the investments and long-range planning that could result in important future gains but that do not result in an immediate profit reportable in a quarterly or an annual report. Without leadership that helps people and countries pull together and that improves and unifies our own laws, the loose concept of 'sustainable development' may simply become a cover for free riders or a recipe for exploitation cloaked by deceptive advertising.

Overall, my impressions were mixed. I came away from Johannesburg feeling positively about the widely shared commitment of people throughout the world, including many judges, lawyers, and business leaders, and many Americans, to improving, sustaining, and saving the environment for our children and future generations. But I also came away more concerned than ever about the harm to our environment as well as to our security and economy that may occur from the convergence of three powerful forces: first, the current administration's misguided dedication to nonrenewable resources and heavy agricultural subsidies, and its arrogant disregard of environmental interests and human rights; second, the increasing poverty and environmental distress and, consequently, the increasing rage of much of the rest of the world, as exemplified by demagogues like Mugabe; and, third, the possibility that as her temperature rises, Mother Earth will go beyond floods and drought to demonstrate how angry she is at being developed rapaciously but not sustained.

With its unrivaled power and prosperity, the United States is in a unique position to counter these forces. It could provide global leadership by setting an inspiring environmental example, instead of undermining environmental protections. But until the Bush administration modifies its approach, I am afraid that sustainable development, together with a universal right to a healthful environment, will remain an elusive goal.

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Inside back cover: Friday services at the Kouba Mosque in Algiers, Algeria: a cloth screen separates the women from the men at prayer. Islam's appeal "is profound and profoundly popular. And it is not liable to be vanquished anytime soon by a form of secularism that has been foisted by colonizers and despots on Muslims in order to weaken, if not destroy, the basis of our social order." See Azzam S. Tamimi on *The renaissance of Islam,* pages 51 – 58. Photograph © 2003 by Abbas/ Magnum Photos.

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