

ISLAMISM AND SECULARISM IN NORTH AFRICA



Edited by

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Secularism and Nationalism: The Political Discourse of 'Abd al-Salam Yassin

Emad Eldin Shahin

Analyzing the role of secularism and Islamism in the process of political and social change in today's Morocco is a far more complex issue than contemporary development theory suggests. The theory assumes that religion is a traditional or, at best, a transitional, force that will wither in the process of modernization and growth of rationalism in society. In fact, the experience of the Middle East since the 1970s reveals that religion is becoming an ideological vehicle in the struggle for power. Traditional reassertions are increasingly playing a role in political and social mobilization that is inexplicable in terms of modernization theory and political change. This suggests that the phenomenon of Islamic revival may not be adequately understood or easily analyzed through a secular conceptual framework.

Post-independence Morocco has not publicly declared a secular state model for itself. The monarch, while having traditional, religious, and historical status, is equally comfortable with modern concepts. Religious symbols are invoked by a rationally manipulative monarchy for the purpose of legitimizing the social and political order. They are further used to give political meaning to the process of change to the apolitical and traditional masses, who have not yet assimilated the secular political values. Morocco's model of state-building unmistakably reflects the elements of a secular state: liberal

orientation, a constitution, parliament, political pluralism, professional organizations, and a modern educational system.

The modernizing model in Morocco has affected civil society by challenging the issues of identity, nation- and state-building, and the relation between traditional and modern society.¹ As will be seen, the confrontation of Islamism and secularism transpires in religious rather than secular terms. Since the Islamic principles are at odds with the secular norms (Islamic *shari'a* not being implemented), religious symbols are used as an ideological articulation to achieve modernizing ends. In this case, a competition of loyalty to the traditional value system occurs between the modernizing polity and the lay leadership of the Islamic movements, which perceive the elites to be divorced in orientation from the rest of the society. These movements are committed to attempting to establish alternative Islamic social and political systems.

In addition to the dilemma of modernity versus authenticity, the issue of effective political participation poses a serious challenge to the current regime. The limited circulation of the political elites, the centrality of the decision-making process and the nature of the political alliances dominating the Moroccan state have all contributed to widespread cynicism and apathy among the population and to the alienation of the elites from the rest of the society.² Despite its attempts to expand the levels of political participation, the regime has not effectively renewed or enlarged the circle of political elites or its base of support. A small network of political elites continues to control the dynamics of the political process notwithstanding the emergence of new counter-elites.³ As a result, there are emerging forces that do not accept the rules of the political game as dictated and practiced by the monarchy.

LEGITIMACY AND THE ISLAMIC REVIVAL IN MOROCCO

Islamic revivalist groups are challenging the policies of the state and its modernization model. Despite differences in orientation and objectives, many of these groups are highly politicized and aim at the reconstruction of the Moroccan polity and society according to Islamic ideals.⁴ These activist Islamic groups are critical of the monarchy and its monopolization of religious legitimacy, which it uses to control the official religious institutions and to bolster its status in society.

They consider the hereditary nature of the monarchy as un-Islamic and therefore do not accept the constitutional stature of the king as the Commander of the Faithful nor as the pinnacle of political author-

ity. Similarly, the Islamic groups in Morocco strongly oppose the use of a "superficial" or "ceremonial" Islam by King Hassan. They accuse the Western-educated elites of steering the country toward secular values and Westernization that distance it from Arab and Islamic roots. The Islamists disapprove of the elite orientation that has led to the introduction of a model for social and political change that in essence contradicts the time-honored beliefs and practices of the majority of the Moroccan society. The Islamic groups also identify these elites with political and social corruption. They charge them with the disintegration of the moral values of the society and the spread of secular ideals in the collective consciousness of the Moroccan people.

Though still in no position to pose a direct threat to the stability of the regime, the Islamic groups attract supporters from the different social segments of the traditional and official religious structures, the Sufi orders, and unemployed and young graduates of state-sponsored religious institutions. These groups have also gained a following among the recently urbanized population, students, and educated professionals. Support for the Islamic opposition continues to grow as a consequence of rapid urbanization, which is eroding the traditional base of support of the monarchy.⁵

YASSIN'S APPROACH⁶

One voice that effectively articulates the Islamic discontent is that of 'Abd al-Salam Yassin. Yassin is an Islamic thinker whose writing addresses Morocco and the rest of the Islamic world. His Berber origins have confirmed his commitment to an Islamic framework of reference and religious basis of identity, thus exacerbating his criticism of the modernization model implemented in Morocco since independence. An original intellectual in his own right, Yassin's thought reflects his broad understanding of the various Islamic trends, such as Sufism, Al-Tabligh wal-Da'wa, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the *salafiyya*. In exploring these practices and movements, he combines their most salient elements.

From the Sufis and Al-Tabligh, Yassin emphasizes the issues of socialization, moral education and spiritual preparation. From the Muslim Brotherhood's experience, he stresses the importance of organization, activism, and the sociopolitical dimension of change. Yassin incorporates the *salafi* trend by basing his ideological discussions on the fundamental sources of Islam, the Qur'an and the Sunna.

Yassin adopted terms used by some leading thinkers of the active Islamic movements, particularly Abul Ala' al-Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb, to describe the contemporary Muslim societies. He employs the concept of "*jahili*" (un-Islamic) in characterizing the present condition of the Moroccan society. This perception has evident political overtones understood in religious terms. It reflects Yassin's activist thought and his idealist commitment to Islamic values. His ideological position also exhibits his deep realization of the crises and conflicts that confront Moroccan society, and the Muslim countries in general.

From the viewpoint of Yassin, "the nation is torn between two worlds, which do not meet in its conscience. However, it wants to reconcile them to preserve its cultural and national values as well as those of human perfection."⁷ The discussion of 'Abd al-Salam Yassin's ideas will focus on four main issues: nationalism, secularism, the ruling elites and ideology of development, and the social structure (the role of Berbers and women, in particular). The objectives behind raising these issues are to understand their impact on the legitimacy and stability of the current political regime and to analyze Yassin's conception of sociopolitical change in Moroccan society.

NATIONALISM: AN IMPORTED IDEOLOGY FOR THE STATE

Firmly rooted in Islamic faith, Yassin does not accept the secular forms, linguistic or ethnic, of national identity. He views the evolution of the ideas of secular nationalism in the Arab world as part of a grand Western imperial project that began with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and ended with the occupation of Palestine. For Yassin, the secular era introduced new ideas into Arab and Muslim culture and worked for the development of a secular national consciousness. Dual identities have emerged within the Arab social order: secular national and Arab-Islamic. The relationship between the two has been characterized by mistrust and confrontation, particularly since the establishment of the Arab system of nation-states and the control of the secular elites over the political and cultural institutions of these countries.⁸

Yassin abhors the marginalization of Islam in contemporary Arab nationalist thought, which considers Islam a product of the Arab heritage and not its basic component. He blames the Christian Arabs for the spread of secular nationalism and their attempt to secularize the Arabic language in the nationalist discourse by stripping it of its Qur'anic content. He also takes umbrage with the secular nationalist

thesis that recognizes the Arabic language as the inspiring force behind Islam and the Qur'an rather than acknowledging that it was the faith that raised Arabic to its highest form.

Here, Yassin refers to the intellectual orientation of the Ba'ath Party, which, influenced by the German school of nationalism, glorifies language and race as the major components for national identity.⁹ He delineates this vision by analyzing the decadent conditions of pre-Islamic Arab history that were characterized by severe tribal conflicts, unjust practices, and a lack of cultural progress. Islam rather than Arabism instilled human and moral values, eliminated the tribal basis of solidarity and provided the Arabs with a universal message. Yassin warns the secular Arab nationalists that, if Islam is marginalized, the Arabs will not be able to restore their lost power and their culture will continue to decline.¹⁰

While lodging harsh criticism against the secular Arab nationalists, Yassin sees the possibility of bridging the gap between the Islamic and secular views. He urges them to acknowledge Islamic Arabism as a common ground for mutual understanding and recognition. As Yassin explains, "the loyalty of the Arab nationalists to the Arabic language, in which the Qur'an was revealed, is similar to our [Islamist] loyalty to the Qur'an itself. We both admire this language and consider it a glorious and honorable one. Here we have found a solid ground for dialogue, reconciliation and understanding."¹¹

Yassin sees the transplantation of Western concepts and the adoption of Western-inspired "material language" as a real threat to the future of Islam. This process precludes the evolution of an independent Muslim mind. He cautions against learning modern concepts and methodologies without understanding their embedded contents and epistemological basis because they are a furtive means for cultural domination. In his view, this process leads to submission to Western values, philosophies, paradigms, and languages.¹²

Yassin proposes the need to learn the language of the Qur'an as a religious and cultural armor against the taint associated with Western languages of knowledge. He points out the dangers of attempts to secularize the Arabic language under the pretext of its incompatibility with universal rationalism. He emphasizes the significance of Arabic as a tool in the cultural conflict between a Westernizing secular orientation and the Islamic perspective. For Yassin, language is an expression of sovereignty and a means for achieving independence, free will, and technological progress.¹³

To substantiate his views, Yassin juxtaposes the modern concept of nationalism with the Islamic historical experience. The collapse, under foreign and nationalistic pressure, of the Ottoman caliphate, a symbol of the political unity of the Muslim *umma*, ushered in a new phase in Islamic history. For centuries, Islam managed through its universal and humanistic values to preserve the identity and coherence of the Muslim *umma* despite social and ethnic diversity. Modern nationalism, on the other hand, has enhanced the state of fragmentation and disunity among the Arabs and Muslims by emphasizing ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differences.¹⁴

Acutely aware of the intellectual dilemma of secular nationalism and its inability to provide an indigenous model of development, Yassin harshly criticizes the eclectic nature of the ideologies of the secular Arab nationalists. During the 1950s and 1960s, Yassin recalls, they attempted to synthesize Arabism and secularism as Arab or Islamic socialism. However, at times of crisis, they had to resort to Islam to mobilize their people—as Nasser did during the 1956 crisis. For Yassin, the 1967 defeat marked the collapse of the Arab nationalist project and its intellectual currents, which had regarded Islam only as an “emotional reservoir.” A progressive, socialist, and nationalist Islam was required to confront the old image of a feudal, sectarian, and regressive Islamic state.¹⁵

Islam for Yassin stands against ethnic and territorial identification. It preserves the unity of the various social segments in Arab society and transcends the issues of race, ethnic origin, tribal identification, and geographic boundaries. He therefore rejects nationalism based on race and language as an alternative to the Islamic state and introduces a new definition in conformity with Qur’anic concepts. He proposes a humanistic religious perspective that views the evolution of a human being into a family, tribe, society, and nation, as a natural process that should promote cooperation and not distinctions, discrimination, or conflicts among different peoples and nations. The only criterion for distinction among nations is the commitment to, and achievement of, the positive values that religion demands.¹⁶

In brief, Yassin links the idea of nationalism with the modern process of state-building. He strongly opposes it because it enhances divisions among the Arab and Muslim peoples. It also runs counter to the universal characteristics of Islam that considers the *umma* as the umbrella of the social and political Islamic order and the bond of faith as the force for cohesion and social integration. Therefore, for Yassin, modern nationalism and secularism are intertwined.¹⁷

SECULARISM: FAITH OR MODERNIZATION

Yassin regards secularism as a consequence of the “state of poisoning,” characterized by cultural domination of the Muslim world, the spread of a sketchy understanding of Islam in the Arab and Muslim mind, and the use of a modernizing orientation to restrict the role of religion in society. He links secularism to the historical development of the Western Christian societies. In Europe, the Christian church opposed political freedom and resisted intellectual progress.¹⁸ Christianity was also associated with feudalism, religious sectarianism, and intolerance. Hence, secularism gathered momentum and was associated with the reform and renewal of Western thought and society.

Based on this argument, Yassin shares Ali Shariati’s belief in the “geography of concepts,” which holds that concepts may be applicable in their original locale, but not necessarily so in other cultural contexts. Yassin admits that secularism, for instance, has liberated the Western mind from the shackles of religious dominance and the authority of the clergy, but he contends that Islam was the cause of freedom and progress in Muslim societies.¹⁹

Yassin views secularism as one aspect of the cultural conflict between Islam and the West. Secularism penetrated the Muslim societies through the forces of imperialism and worked to separate religious values and politics, and to promote new models for society under the names of enlightenment, reform, nationalism, and rationalism.²⁰

According to Yassin, sectarianism also played a role in the spread of secular concepts in Arab society. He presented a historical review of the role of non-Muslim Arabs in promoting secular ideas in the region (Western liberalism, Darwinism, socialism, and communism). Yassin attributed this development to their early exposure to Western intellectual currents through missionary schools and to their longing for a guarantee of equal status and complete freedom. Therefore, they embraced equality to replace such concepts as *mili* (belonging to a sect or religion) or *dhimmi* (non-Muslim), espoused liberalism to achieve economic success, and adopted rationalism to liberate themselves from the hegemony of religion. In this process, they efficiently utilized the press, modern schools, and the administration to propagate the new ideas of secularism and couple them with progress.

He marks the spread of this current among Muslim intellectuals by the writings of Ali 'Abd al-Raziq and his book *Al-Islam wa usul al-hukm* (Islam and the Fundamentals of Governance), which appeared

around the time of the collapse of the Islamic caliphate and denied the presence of a political system in Islam. Such views received the support of the advocates of Western secular liberalism.

Yassin criticizes the Muslim secular intellectuals for their infatuation with Western civilization, citing Taha Hussein and his book, *Mustaqbal al-thaqafah fi misr* (The Future of Culture in Egypt) as an example. Yassin considers him and liberal intellectuals, such as Lutfi al-Sayyid, Salama Musa (a Copt), Mahmoud Azmi, and Ismail Mazhar, as the proponents of this secular trend. He condemns their attempt to undermine the role of religion by devising a modern cultural current that pieces together the elements of Darwinism, nationalism, pharaonism, Arabism, constitutionalism, and democracy.²¹

In reviewing the theses of the secular Arab intellectuals on religion, Yassin maintains that they view Islam as a source of revisionism, which limits the human will and progress because it does not organize society on a democratic basis or promote equality among the different elements in society. The secularists also blame Islam for not generating a rationalism deemed necessary for advancing societies and building a modern state that possessed a scientific outlook and technological expertise. To these thinkers, religion is a metaphysical power that contradicts and undermines rationalism.²²

In Yassin's view, the secularists make selective use of Islamic history by focusing on the Ottoman caliphate to generalize the entirety of the Islamic experience. They do this to thwart the implementation of Islamic principles and to minimize the impact of religion on the Muslim majority in society, and cast doubt on the applicability of Islamic principles to the contemporary Muslim order.

Yassin dismisses outright the analogy between the historical evolution of Christianity and that of Islam as inaccurate and misleading. He refutes the secular depiction of Islam as an authoritarian or a clerical religion in which the *'ulama* (knowledgeable persons) constitute a clergy monopolizing the interpretation of the scriptures. He does not see religion as the reason behind Muslim weakness and backwardness; instead, he attributes this condition to the implementation of the Western-inspired models of development, which aggravated the political fragmentation of the Muslim peoples, overlooked their indigenous political culture, and used force and violence to impose and perpetuate these models.²³

In line with this argument, Yassin articulates his perceptions of the role and extent of secularism in Moroccan society. Historically, Islam

has constituted an integral component of Moroccan political and social culture as well as a source of legitimacy for the state. The political system and its official discourse must declare a commitment to Islam and its principles if only at a symbolic level. For Yassin, the post-independence Moroccan state is secular in content, even though it does not explicitly adopt a secular path.²⁴ As we will see in the following sections, he believes that secularism is the real model of the state and the driving force behind its institutions and modernization programs. He considers the Western-educated elite the pawns for implementing these modern projects.

THE RULING ELITES AND THE IDEOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT: INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL DEPENDENCE

Yassin laments the current state of underdevelopment of Moroccan society, and of the Arab world in general. In his opinion, the secular elites in control of the political regimes in the Arab countries and their hegemony over the "means and wills," through a strategy of cultural domination, play a central role in the shaping of current Arab conditions. He considers these elites to have been produced and socialized by the colonial experience and Western schools of thought. In addition, the educational policy of the colonial power aimed at the creation of a parallel school system, which led to the cultural bifurcation of the society and to the spread of a Western mentality and behavior among the educated elites.

An education inspector by profession, Yassin considers the present system of Francophile education as alien, backward, and designed in part to disorient and dislocate the future generations of the country.²⁵ It is a system designed by an alienated elite and administered by a group of educators—"with an employees' mentality"—who have been seduced by the consumerist values of a conquering culture. They transfer these values to their students and turn them into job-seekers, competing to join the service of the state apparatus. In a society in which the unemployment rate is very high, this process increases the frustration of university graduates and generally exacerbates social problems.

Yassin proposes an alternative educational orientation, geared toward change and aimed at the mobilization of wills, the development of human intellect, and freedom of the mind. He recommends the reorganization of the school system, its administration, and curricula.

These recommendations involve the resocialization of school administrators and teachers, changing the relationship between teacher and student, and designing indigenous educational programs that combine belief with reason and a scientific outlook, while avoiding emulation of Western models.²⁶

Yassin denounces the ideologies of political and economic development embraced by the modernizing elites. He considers them to be eclectic in orientation and a medium for imposing foreign models: "In order to acquire the instruments of confrontation, the leadership of the national movement had to improvise an intellectual blend of Qarawiyyin [Islamic] culture and the liberal, and later socialist culture. Future practices were based on this cumulative thought. The result is what we see now: factionalism, division and a bitter class struggle."²⁷

For that reason, Yassin believes that the colonial period has not ended. It has been sustained by the native elites who implemented inappropriate development schemes and policies of change in the Arab and Muslim societies. In this regard, Morocco is no exception.

After independence, we expected Morocco to assume the correct path, restore its Islamic life and return to Islamic principles. What happened was the opposite. The colonial powers left our country only after it had entrusted those it had raised with power and authority. More than a quarter of a century has now passed since independence. Yet our dependence on the infidels (former colonial powers) is increasing because the policies and systems controlling every aspect of our lives are those of the infidels.²⁸

Yassin is convinced that these imported values and concepts have built a *jahili* society in Muslim Morocco. "The *jahili* systems which are equipped with technology and material resources intent upon eliminating Islam cannot hide behind different colors, names and ideologies."²⁹ Yassin asserts that the culture of Moroccan society is inherently an Islamic one that rejects Western concepts. "The Moroccan people of this Muslim nation do not accept a Qur'an-based constitution or a prophetic approach that has been molded by a political class and intellectuals produced in the factories of Westernization."³⁰ He criticizes the development models adopted in Morocco for overemphasizing economic aspects while neglecting the cultural and social dimensions of development. He attributes this shortcoming to the materialistic philosophy behind these frameworks and the Western view of the human being as merely an instrument, rather than an

objective, of development. In Yassin's judgment, these models have failed to solve chronic economic and social crises of Moroccan society, such as those of social justice, fair distribution, and productivity.

Yassin believes that Islam offers a solution for economic crises. Anticipating that such a solution will be very difficult, he points to the need for an economic transformation and restructuring as prerequisites for the foundation of a sound economic system. In rejecting the liberal and socialist models of economic development, he presents a model that is based on the following moral and practical principles: (1) a fair distribution of rights and duties in order to prevent the disproportionate accumulation of wealth; (2) the reallocation of national resources to achieve the general prosperity and welfare of the nation; (3) the elimination of social injustice and poverty; and (4) the full mobilization of the nation's resources and potential.

Yassin considers the elimination of class differences as the most important barrier to a solution. He expects the concept of Islamic moderation (*rifq*) to replace class struggle.³¹ It is a pivotal task to replace the socioeconomic conditions inherited from *fitna* (disorder and weakness) with a sound Islamic order, without destroying the economic institutions of the country or resorting to radical measures. Yassin holds that "the Islamic solution for the problem of distribution is the achievement of justice; for the problem of productivity, it is reliance on individual initiative; for the contradiction between just distribution and sufficiency, it is nationalization, not as a rule but as a possible means."³² Thus he recommends that the members of the Islamic movement align themselves with the *mustad'afin* (the oppressed).

According to Yassin, the pressing need to overcome the problems of underdeveloped economies can be met by fulfilling the following requirements:

1. The full mobilization of national resources, while respecting private property, in order to reach the level of self-sufficiency.
2. The liberation of the labor force of the country from capitalist exploitation.
3. The encouragement of private initiative, which should be well integrated within the general framework and objectives of the national economy.
4. The establishment of Islamic industrial cooperatives to divert capital from nonproductive investments and fixed assets.
5. The nationalization of banks and their gradual transformation into interest-free institutions in order to stimulate productivity.

6. The nationalization of the major industrial means of production that are related to public interest.
7. The formulation of a development plan to enable the state to direct, encourage, and organize the production process of the country without impeding private initiatives by state bureaucracy.
8. The implementation of labor-intensive techniques to provide benefits to the workers, while realizing the need for capital-intensive techniques for heavy industry and the armed forces.
9. The training of the necessary technical cadres and the initiation of prompt educational reforms to rectify the problem of brain drain.
10. The creation of a domestic market for Islamic products by enhancing the purchasing power of the impoverished masses and curbing the wealthy from squandering the surplus of domestic investment returns in foreign markets.
11. The implementation of land reform.
12. The expansion of a market for Islamic products by establishing an economic coalition among the Islamic countries, regardless of their types of regimes.
13. The provision of patterns of technology, planning, production and consumption appropriate to Islamic values in order to liberate Muslims from the *jahili* model.³³

During the transformation period, the national resources of the Muslim community should be directed towards achieving development, self-sufficiency, food security, and economic and military power. In this phase, it may be necessary to rely on the available patterns of technology, planning, production, and consumption until alternatives are developed.

More important, he argues that the Islamic economy cannot be established in a non-Islamic society. The process of production and distribution of wealth cannot work in isolation.³⁴ Yassin calls for the renewal of the ideology of Islam to resolve the crises facing Moroccan society, to break the cycle of underdevelopment, divisiveness, and cultural dependence, and to achieve unity and prominence.

The renewal of Islam aims at ending the state of *fitna* of the Muslim nation, shifting the Muslim people away from the practice of individualistic Islam, engaging them in the practical and scientific level of the faith. It also aims at transforming the underdeveloped, fragmented Muslim societies to a level of self-sufficiency, independence and strength. Then it seeks to unite these societies and sever their dependence on the *jahili* systems to assume a leadership role and carry the message of Islam.³⁵

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

A) The Berbers

Berbers and the status of women are two topics that are directly related to the model of nation-building and the modernization process in Morocco. Yassin recounts the French colonial experience and its Berber policy. During the early 1930s, the French introduced the Berber *zahir*, which allowed the Berbers to implement their customary laws in lieu of the Islamic *shari'a*, while simultaneously expanding the implementation of the French legal code in the country's civil courts. The French authorities also tried to separate the Berbers from the Arabs through the administrative and educational systems. They issued a decree forbidding the use of classical and colloquial Arabic in the areas inhabited by the Berber tribes, and encouraged the use of Berber dialects and French. Missionary schools and activities were expanded in these areas and Berbers were enticed to reject the "Arab" dominance.

Referring to the French role in dividing Moroccan society, Yassin cites Junnier Labonne, a prominent French intellectual in North Africa.

North Africa should be divided. The question was how? I realized that, historically, half of the population was of Arab origins and the other half was of Berber origins. However, it was hard to distinguish between them. After extensive research, I noticed that the Berbers had strong ethnic identifications, while the Arabs had strong religious affiliations. I, therefore, recommended the spread of national ideas and scientific values among the Arabs in order to undermine their religious affiliations, and the spread of religious influences among the Berbers so that they could be separated from the Arabs after they had been assimilated through Islamic bonds. The way to achieve that was through nationalism.³⁶

Although Yassin does not view the issue of the Berbers from an ethnic or minority-majority perspective, he does acknowledge that the French Berber policy rallied interest in ethnic identification.³⁷ He views the Berber issue against the background of Islam and history. Islam has infiltrated the social fabric and popular culture of Morocco's Arabs and Berbers. Issues of ethnic diversity did not pose the same problems in the Maghrib as did the presence of non-Muslim minorities in the Arab East. This is attributable to the fact that the relation between religion and politics contributed to the integration of these

two ethnic groups in Moroccan society. Culturally speaking, there has been no distinction between the Arab and the Islamic identity. The integration of the two groups was also reinforced by the sharing of the same Maliki legal doctrine that has been in place in Morocco throughout its Islamic history. The unity of the legal doctrine resulted in a positive religious, social, and political relationship between the Arabs and the Berbers.

The historical experience indicates the coexistence of the Berbers and the Arabs and their preservation of their original characteristics without the occurrence of political rifts similar to those in other societies that have religious or ethnic minorities. The Arabs and Berbers share a common history of collaboration against internal and external challenges. Throughout history, the two groups have been intermingled through social ties, economic interests, and political conditions either in support of or in opposition to the regime. Yassin views the relation as characterized by coexistence and not by conflict.

B) Women

Yassin associates the call for women's emancipation with the modernizing model being implemented in Morocco. He believes that Western perspectives have dominated the treatment of this issue and infiltrated Moroccan society, among the modern educated elites in particular. He bases his arguments on purely Islamic and functional perspectives. According to Yassin, under the pretext of modernizing society along Western models, women have been misled and burdened by slogans calling for their equality and emancipation. He deplores the current condition of women in Morocco, which he attributes to cultural deterioration and not to the teachings of Islam.

Today, the role and status of woman are determined by foreign influences derived from Western culture, and by the burdens of underdevelopment. Yassin makes a clear distinction between the social condition of rich and poor women. Wealth enables the rich woman to experience emancipation as it may have been intended in the West, while only further increasing the deprivation of the poor woman, who falls victim to need and hard labor. The secular outlook lowers rather than raises the standard of the majority of Muslim women and is detrimental to their dignity and psychological makeup.³⁸ He describes the typical poor woman as "a victim of the fields and urban life. In the city, she is more encumbered."³⁹ In addition, wealth has affected

Moroccan men. In an implicit reference to many members of the Moroccan elites, Yassin is critical of the marriage of Muslim men to non-Muslim women; he considers it an avenue for undermining Islamic values in the Muslim household, as the children are raised under Western influences.

He sees family relations as based on justice and the concept of *qawama*, the duty of men to sustain and protect women. The authority granted to men is understood and determined only by this concept, and not by any inherent privilege of gender. It is the responsibility of men to work and preserve the integrity of their families, while it is women's duty to maintain the moral and social integrity of the family. Yassin is not opposed to women working outside the home, in conformity with Islamic principles, especially in the case of need.⁴⁰

Yassin sees Western values regarding gender as a direct threat to the social balance in society. They produce new patterns of social relationships that eventually undermine the values of the Islamic society, particularly in areas pertaining to the family, work, and production. They also result in a state of conflict and competition between the sexes. In the end, women in an underdeveloped society can only be further exploited and their families are negatively affected by the confusion in social functions.

Yassin notes that, regarding marriage, divorce, and inheritance, the Islamic legal system grants women complete emotional and financial independence and guarantees them full rights in a manner unparalleled by Western positivistic laws. He also takes issue with secular trends that deplore the status of Muslim women, pointing to the issues of veiling, divorce, and inheritance. He considers that such views lack substance, and fail to understand the Islamic social system and the basis for social stability.⁴¹

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE

Yassin's evaluation of modernization in Moroccan society reveals his dissatisfaction with the process. He counters by proposing his own ideas of change. In Yassin's perception, the human being is the objective of change. Education and awareness are the means to change and develop that human being. In order to play its central role in the process of social change, the Muslim family must become capable of maintaining social functions and ties in the face of perversion. In this regard, the Muslim mother assumes a leading role in the moral and

religious education of future generations. Yassin considers young people the focus and objective of programs for change.⁴²

He views progress as a complete process in which the material and spiritual needs of the human being are met. Progress is a revolution against oppression and inequality, redeeming the dispossessed and preserving the social and moral dignity of the individual. Progress also means freedom from cultural and economic control. He explains, "Progress and liberation require the mobilization of the people and efforts to achieve economic independence and development. Our independence should be from *jahiliyya*, East and West."⁴³

Although Yassin levies strong criticism against the submissiveness of the religious scholars and their co-optation by the Westernized elite, he perceives a central role for the *'ulama* and the Muslim intellectuals in the process of social and political change. He bases his criticism on the ground that these Muslim scholars, who were traditionally models of veneration, are no longer fulfilling their duty of defending the moral integrity of the Muslim community. The corruption of the Westernized elites has transformed them into nothing more than pawns, employed by the state to legitimize the right of these elites to run the affairs of the country. This policy has in part been achieved through a process of coercion and the dismantling and bureaucratization of religious institutions. Scholars are not free to speak out against or prevent un-Islamic practices in society. They must serve, moreover, in the capacity of state employees, thus isolating themselves further from the masses and leaving themselves no alternative but to defend the regime or to lose their job.

Yassin also condemns the manipulation of the *'ulama*, whom the king uses to defend his legitimacy. He harshly describes them as "*ulama al-qusur*" (court scholars); custodians of traitors, who corrupted Islam.⁴⁴ As Yassin perceives the situation, "The scholar has no choice but to comply, and this type of corruption is based on the fear and intimidation that runs through every Moroccan."⁴⁵ He therefore calls upon the scholars to "look to the example set by their counterparts in Iran—who have restored the turban with its integrity and glory—in order to liberate the Muslim mind from the domination of imported values and invading cultures, free the people from *fitna*, and rid them from hunger and poverty."⁴⁶

He urges them to assume their moral and religious responsibility by: representing a true model for the Muslim scholar; relinquishing their official posts and privileges; liberating Muslim minds from alien cultures;

standing against the political tyranny of the rulers and their authority; mobilizing the people against the current conditions; and reviving the concept and the duty of jihad among the Moroccan people.⁴⁷

To effect change and achieve mobilization, Yassin calls for the revival of Islamic institutions, particularly the mosques. He presses for the renewal of the cultural and social role of the mosques, which must become the organizational base for Moroccan society. He declares:

We will make the mosque our barrack for combating the state of *fitna* which is shrouded in *jahiliyya* and inspired by its slogans. From the mosques we will start. We want to make it our *ribat*, as had been the case in early Islam. We learn our religion in it, settle our disputes, contemplate the revival of Islam, and organize our activities to accommodate the rush of young people towards Islam.⁴⁸

Yassin's criticism of the Western models of change inherited from the colonial experience stems from a profound belief that they have deepened the differences among the social classes in Morocco and widened the gap and social stratification between the urban and rural areas. The economic, political, cultural, and social control of the urban aristocracy has disturbed the social balance of Moroccan society and perpetuated the privileges of a tiny elite at the expense of the deprived majority of the society.⁴⁹ Yassin complains:

Despite the presence of a constitution declaring Islam as the religion of the state, the systems and policies that control our life are those of the non-Muslims. Where are the signs [principles] of Islam in our life? Are they revealed through the oppressive laws that rule us through our economic system which impoverishes the poor and enriches the wealthy or in our democratic political system which produced crises in our society?⁵⁰

In Yassin's view, the reconstruction of a new Islamic society in Morocco requires confronting several problems and providing workable answers. Chief among these problems are: the issue of rule and law, the role of the Qur'an as the source of the legitimacy of the regime, submission and cooperation with the forces of imperialism, the economy and dependence on foreign powers, the dichotomy between urban and rural areas, Westernization and cultural submission, and social and moral perversion caused by media, tourism, and administrative and economic policies.⁵¹

Yassin does not advocate violence as a means for changing society. He considers the formation of clandestine organizations and the use of violence in politics as illegal acts that would lead to political suicide. Instead, he calls upon the Islamic movements to formulate clear and detailed Islamic programs.⁵² He urges them to participate in the political process in the systems that have adopted democracy and he views this as a sign of the intellectual and political maturation of the Islamic movements.⁵³

CONCLUSION

Yassin epitomizes the concerns of an Islamic modernist. He operates out of an intense sense of the need for change at the individual and community levels: at the individual level, through a comprehensive process of socialization and mobilization; and at the community level, through the integration of Islamic values into the political, economic, and administrative structure of society.

As noted, the main themes of Yassin's ideas bear resemblance to those of other Islamic thinkers. This is evident in his critical view of the West; his call for renewal and reform along Islamic lines; and his rejection of the secular forms of nationalism and Western-inspired development models.

Yassin adopts a gradualist stance with regard to social change and economic reform. His activism and discourse take place at a purely intellectual or theoretical level. However, the significance of his views lies in his vision of an activist Islam as an alternative to the current ideology of the state and the society. This clearly distinguishes him and his followers from secular-oriented political parties in Morocco that are easily co-opted by the regime.

At the present, the Islamists in Morocco do not represent an imminent threat to the stability of the system. However, the continuation of this situation is not guaranteed, especially in light of possible crises associated with the issue of transition of power in the near future or the success of their efforts to move from the margins to the center of the political process through organized political action.

Notes

I am grateful to my wife for her patience and support, and would like to express my profound thanks to Khaled Awamleh and Rachelle Naab for their insightful comments on an earlier version of this article.

1. For the secular aspects of Moroccan society, see Rémy Leveau, "Islam et contrôle politique au Maroc," *The Maghreb Review*, no. 1-2 (January-April 1981): 13-14.
2. William Zartman, "Political Dynamics in the Maghrib: The Cultural Dialectic," in Halim Barakat, ed., *Contemporary North Africa* (Washington, D.C.: The Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1985), pp. 28-30.
3. See John Entelis, *Culture and Counterculture in Moroccan Politics* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1989), pp. 77-100.
4. For a detailed discussion of the Islamic movements in Morocco, see Mohamed Tozy, "Champ et contre champ politico-religieux au Maroc," Thèse Pour le Doctorat d'État en Science Politique, Marseille Faculté de Droit et de Science Politique d'Aix, 1984; Emad Shahin, "The Restitution of Islam: A Comparative Study of the Islamic Movements in Contemporary Tunisia and Morocco," unpublished Ph.D. diss., The Johns Hopkins University, School of International Studies, 1989; and Henry Munson, "Morocco," in *The Politics of Islamic Revivalism: Diversity and Unity*, Shireen T. Hunter, ed. (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1988).
5. Dale Eickelman, "Religion and Power in Polity and Society," in *The Political Economy of Morocco*, I.W. Zartman, ed. (New York: Praeger Publications, 1987), pp. 89 and 92.
6. 'Abd al-Salam Yassin is the leader of the 'Adl wal-Ihsan (Justice and Benevolence) group, and is considered an influential ideologue among the current Islamic revival movements in Morocco. He was born in 1928 to a poor Berber peasant family. Yassin received a traditional education, but educated himself in foreign cultures. After independence, he became inspector, then an inspector-general, in the Ministry of Education. He joined the Boutchichiyya Sufi order for several years, but later parted company with them to begin an activist career on his own. He wrote several books on Islam and activism in Morocco and was imprisoned for three years in 1974, after writing a critical letter to the king. In 1979, he began publishing his periodical *Al-Jama'a*, which was banned four years later. Yassin was again imprisoned in 1984 for two years. Since 1989 he has been under house arrest and his repeated requests to form an Islamic political party have been denied. See 'Abd al-Salam Yassin, *Al-Islam aw al-tufan* (Islam or the Deluge) (Marrakesh: n.p., 1974), pp. 4-6.
7. 'Abd al-Salam Yassin, *Al-Islam ghadan* (Islam Tomorrow) (Casablanca: Matba'at al-Najah, 1973), p. 693.
8. 'Abd al-Salam Yassin, *Al-Islam wal-qawmiyya al-'ilmaniyya* (Islam and Secular Nationalism) (Casablanca: Dar al-Khattabi li-Tiba'a wal-Nashr, 1989), pp. 28-29.
9. *Ibid.*, 10-11.
10. *Ibid.*, 12.
11. *Ibid.*, 9.
12. *Ibid.*, 14-5.
13. *Ibid.*, 17-23.
14. *Ibid.*, 88-90.
15. *Ibid.*, 119-22.
16. *Ibid.*, 133-37.

17. Ibid., 144-70.
18. Ibid., 45-6.
19. Ibid., 48-63.
20. Ibid., 85-8.
21. Ibid., 116-8.
22. Ibid., 124-5.
23. Ibid., 121-3.
24. See Muhammad 'Adid al-Jabri, *Al-Maghrib al-mu'asir: Al-Khususiyah wal-huwiyyah, al-hadathah wal-tanmiyah* (Contemporary Morocco: Uniqueness and Identity, Modernity and Development) (Casablanca: Mu'assat Binshira lil-Tiba'a wal-Nashr, 1988), p. 73.
25. Yassin, *Al-Islam ghadan*, 722 and 727.
26. Ibid., 685-95, 707-28, and 739-68. See Shahin, op. cit., 251.
27. *Al-Jama'a*, no. 1 (March-April-May, 1979): 66.
28. A letter to the editor, published in *ibid.*, no. 4 (1980): 70.
29. Ibid., 103.
30. Ibid., 101.
31. Yassin, *Al-Islam aw al-tufan*, 109-10.
32. *Al-Jama'a*, no. 2 (1979): 66.
33. 'Abd al-Shalam Yassin, "Al-Minhaj al-nabawi," *Al-Jama'a*, no. 10 (1982): 98-101.
34. Ibid., 101-5.
35. Ibid., no. 5 (Rabi' al-Awwal and Rabi' al-Thani, 1980): 45-46. See also, Shahin, op. cit., 268-71.
36. Yassin, *Al-Islam wal-qawmiyyah*, 39.
37. Ibid.
38. Yassin, *Al-Islam ghadan*, 652 and 654.
39. Ibid., 654.
40. Ibid., 659.
41. Ibid., 657-58.
42. *Al-Jama'a*, no. 10 (July 1982): 23.
43. Ibid., no. 1 (March-May 1979): 10-11.
44. 'Abd al-Salam Yassin, "Al-Jihad tanziman wa zahfan" (Jihad: Organization and March), *Al-Jama'a*, no. 11 (May 1983): 51.
45. Ibid., 54-5.
46. 'Abd al-Salam Yassin, "Ifitahiya wa istiftah" (Prologue), *Al-Jama'a*, no. 1 (March-April-May 1979): 12. See also Shahin, op. cit., 248.
47. Ibid., 12.
48. Ibid., 62-63.
49. Al-Jabri, op. cit., 51-53.
50. *Al-Jama'a*, no. 4 (1980): 71.
51. Ibid., no. 10 (July 1980): 21-22.
52. Ibid., no. 1 (March-April-May 1979): 54.
53. Ibid., 55-6.

۶ کُتِبَ دَرِ جَنْكِ آبِ، تَرْكِبِهِ اَزْ چِه كَشُورِي خِوَاَسْتِ بَا كِشُورِ سُوْرِيَه ؟

§5.6. Read this description of the next text.

مَنْ بَعْدِي مَرْبُوطٌ بِه عُنْوَانِ هَايْ مَقَالَتِ رُوزْنَامَه هَاَسْت. هَر رُوزِ دَرِ رُوزْنَامَه اِطْلَاعَاتِ بَيْنِ الْمِلَلِي سُنُونِي بِه اِسْمِ «تَيْتِرْ هَايْ صَفْحَه اَوَّلِ مَطْبُوعَاتِ اِيْرَانِ» چَاپ مِيَشُود.

§5.6.1. Read these multiple choice statements out loud.

- ۱ تَيْتِرْ صَفْحَه اَوَّلِ رُوزْنَامَه «اَخْبَارِ» مَرْبُوطِ اسْتِ بِه اِسْتِفَاذَه اَزِ
 - كَارَشِنَاسَانِ
 - مَوْسَسَاتِ
 - بُوْدِجِه
- ۲ تَيْتِرْ صَفْحَه اَوَّلِ رُوزْنَامَه «اِيْرَانِ» مَرْبُوطِ اسْتِ بِه
 - اَخْبَارِ دَاخِلِي
 - خِوَابَرِ
 - هِوَاَشِنَاسِي
- ۳ تَيْتِرْ صَفْحَه اَوَّلِ رُوزْنَامَه «رِسَالَتِ» مَرْبُوطِ اسْتِ بِه
 - اَمْرِيكَا
 - اَلْمَانِ
 - اسْتْرَالِيَا
- ۴ تَيْتِرْ صَفْحَه اَوَّلِ رُوزْنَامَه «سَلَامِ» مَرْبُوطِ اسْتِ بِه
 - تِيَاَدَلِ
 - تَدَارَكِ
 - تَصَادُفِ
- ۵ تَيْتِرْ صَفْحَه اَوَّلِ رُوزْنَامَه «كَيْهَانِ» مَرْبُوطِ اسْتِ بِه
 - اَمُورِ خَارِجِه
 - اِقْتِصَادِ
 - دِيْنِ اِسْلَامِ

§5.6.2. Now read the text here to find answers. Report answers in complete sentences with the foregoing phraseology.

تَيْتِرْ هَايْ صَفْحَه اَوَّلِ مَطْبُوعَاتِ اِيْرَانِ

§5.6.3. The verbs *كَتَبَ* (write) and *يَاوِدُ* (they should/must solve) are *مَرْبُوطَانِ* (we are ready to pay) are present tense, subjunctive mood [we are ready to pay] are present tense, subjunctive mood [we are ready to pay] forms. Present subjunctive verb forms usually exhibit a ب prefix in place of a م prefix and appear in subordinate verb situations where the governing verb expresses duty, obligation, desire, possibility, readiness, and the like. Reread the text.

۵.۶.۴ پس از مرور این ترجمه انگلیسی متن بالا را دوباره بخوانید.

Front page headlines from Iranian newspapers. *Akhbar*: Experts have to solve the nation's problems. *Iran*: Almost unprecedented cold weather in the country: down to 22 degrees below zero (Centigrade). *Resālah*: The superpower age of America has come to an end. *Solām*: Australia is ready to expand cooperative ventures with Iran. *Kozhān*: The deputy leader of parliament: To preserve national independence we are prepared to pay any price.

§5.6.5. Read the words and phrases in the right column below. Then read the words in the left column. Then match the Persian words and phrases in the right column with their synonyms to the left.

۱ مشکلات	—	بها
۲ روزنامه ها	—	کارشناس
۳ توسعه	—	آزادی
۴ استقلال	—	مسائل
۵ بر طرف کردن	—	شماره
۶ قیمت	—	چراغ
۷ تعداد	—	گسترش
۸ متخصص	—	از بین بردن

§5.7. Spend a few minutes locating these items in a copy of the *اطلاعات بین المللی* newspaper and reporting on them.

17. Ibid., 144-70.
18. Ibid., 45-6.
19. Ibid., 48-63.
20. Ibid., 85-8.
21. Ibid., 116-8.
22. Ibid., 124-5.
23. Ibid., 121-3.
24. See Muhammad 'Adid al-Jabri, *Al-Maghrib al-mu'asir: Al-Khususiyah wal-huwiyyah, al-hadathah wal-tanmiyyah* (Contemporary Morocco: Uniqueness and Identity, Modernity and Development) (Casablanca: Mu'assat Binshira lil-Tiba'a wal-Nashr, 1988), p. 73.
25. Yassin, *Al-Islam ghadan*, 722 and 727.
26. Ibid., 685-95, 707-28, and 739-68. See Shahin, op. cit., 251.
27. *Al-Jama'a*, no. 1 (March-April-May, 1979): 66.
28. A letter to the editor, published in *ibid.*, no. 4 (1980): 70.
29. Ibid., 103.
30. Ibid., 101.
31. Yassin, *Al-Islam aw al-tufan*, 109-10.
32. *Al-Jama'a*, no. 2 (1979): 66.
33. 'Abd al-Salam Yassin, "Al-Minhaj al-nabawi," *Al-Jama'a*, no. 10 (1982): 98-101.
34. Ibid., 101-5.
35. Ibid., no. 5 (Rabi' al-Awwal and Rabi' al-Thani, 1980): 45-46. See also, Shahin, op. cit., 268-71.
36. Yassin, *Al-Islam wal-qawmiyyah*, 39.
37. Ibid.
38. Yassin, *Al-Islam ghadan*, 652 and 654.
39. Ibid., 654.
40. Ibid., 659.
41. Ibid., 657-58.
42. *Al-Jama'a*, no. 10 (July 1982): 23.
43. Ibid., no. 1 (March-May 1979): 10-11.
44. 'Abd al-Salam Yassin, "Al-Jihad tanziman wa zahfan" (Jihad: Organization and March), *Al-Jama'a*, no. 11 (May 1983): 51.
45. Ibid., 54-5.
46. 'Abd al-Salam Yassin, "Iftitahiya wa istiftah" (Prologue), *Al-Jama'a*, no. 1 (March-April-May 1979): 12. See also Shahin, op. cit., 248.
47. Ibid., 12.
48. Ibid., 62-63.
49. Al-Jabri, op. cit., 51-53.
50. *Al-Jama'a*, no. 4 (1980): 71.
51. Ibid., no. 10 (July 1980): 21-22.
52. Ibid., no. 1 (March-April-May 1979): 54.
53. Ibid., 55-6.



Militant Islam and Its Critics: The Case of Libya

Marius K. Deeb

The main thrust of this study is to explain why Libya has not witnessed a militant Islamic opposition movement like, for instance, Al-Nahda in Tunisia, Al-Jabha al-Islamiyya lil-Inqadh (FIS) in Algeria or, on a somewhat lower scale, Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya in Egypt, and Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun in Syria. I maintain there are five major determinants that are dialectically interrelated and that could shed light on this phenomenon. The first two determinants are the "given" on the eve of the revolution, or the Hegelian thesis. The first of these is the Islamic legacy of the Sanusiyya in prerevolutionary Libya, that is, the relationship between religion and the state under the monarchy; the second consists of the salient characteristics of Libyan society that have inhibited the rise of a dominant militant Islamic movement. The third and fourth determinants constitute the antithesis: what Qadhafi has imposed on Libya as a political and a socioeconomic system that is at once nonmonolithic and egalitarian; and the way Qadhafi has interpreted the relationship between Islam and politics in two more or less distinct periods, 1969 to 1974 and 1975 to 1981. Both of these determinants have made the emergence of a militant Islamic movement more difficult. The fifth determinant is a synthesis that is still in the making, namely the Libyan opposition and its vision of the post-Qadhafi era.