TOTALITARIANISM AND RADICAL ISLAMIC IDEOLOGIES

David A.J. Suurland

That whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body. This means nothing less than that he will be forced to be free.
(J.J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 1762)

The government in a revolution is the despotism of liberty against tyranny. Terror is nothing else than swift, severe, indomitable justice.
(Maximilien Robespierre, *On the Principles of Political Morality*, February 1794)

If we insist on calling Islamic Jihad a defensive movement, then we must change the meaning of the word 'defence' and mean by it 'the defence of man' against all those elements which limit his freedom.
(Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, 1964)

We believe that the accused essentially does not have to be tried. He or she must just be killed… The lives of people must be secured through punishment, because the protection of the masses lies beneath these very punitive executions.
(Khomeini, *Speech on the day of celebration of the birth of Muhammad*, 1981)

1. Introduction

It is the unique quality of mankind that he is able to consciously adapt his surroundings in order to fit his needs. Unlike animals, which remain indivisible of their natural surroundings, human history can, amongst others, be seen as the progressive transcendence of nature[1]. Mankind's

---

[1] Due to limitations on the length of this chapter, I will refrain from elaborating on this statement. What is meant is that most animals do not possess the ability, as far as we know, to make conscious and well thought out choices in regard to their natural surroundings. Perhaps an exception should be made for certain types of primates but most animals act on instinct, their actions being a result of natural selection rather than a process of deliberation. The cognitive abilities of the human race in that respect set it apart from the bulk of animal life.

adaptation of his surroundings did not remain limited to nature itself; wherever one lives in the company of others, the particular needs of the many need to be in some sort of harmony if social disorder is to be prevented. This question of social harmony touches upon one of the central issues of political philosophy namely the concept of freedom. In the Hobbesian state of nature for example, a free man is he who "is not hindered to do what he hath the will to do",[2] as such this unlimited freedom can only lead to discord, since scarcity will always lead to a competition of wills in which all are free to do as they see fit, thereby ensuring a brutal existence in which all are equally wolves and thus slaves to each other. In order to escape the brutality of this existence, one should

> be willing, when others are so too, as far-forth as for peace and defense of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other people, as he would allow other people against himself.[3]

Comparable to the conquest of nature, the conquest of man in the sense of regulating his behaviour aims to create a social order in which man can survive and live together in a more desirable, peaceful way. This conquest of mankind, whether it be founded on principles of reason, morality or divine commandments, is thus at its core about a balancing act between individual freedom and the rather abstract concept of 'the greater good'. To what degree the individual freedom of man "to do what he hath the will to do"[4] needs to be adapted or modified, in order to fit into this idea of 'the greater good', is a question that has resulted in a multitude of theories regarding the legal and political order, ranging from the libertarian to the totalitarian, the religious to the secular.

In the next paragraphs, I shall attempt to demonstrate how certain developments in society led to the formulation of a peculiar strand of political thought known as totalitarianism. The precise dynamic relation between the history of ideas and the history of changes in society, however, remains one of reciprocity. Untangling this intricate web of relations is clearly beyond the scope of this chapter. I will therefore limit myself to the description of some elements that all totalitarian movements seem to have in common.[5]

---

[2] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, London 1651, II, xxi.
[3] Op. cit.
[4] Op. cit.
[5] This model is devised through the study of totalitarianism in the following countries: Germany, Russia, China, North Korea and Cambodia. Although all these countries

2. Theories on Totalitarianism

As a starting point, I will begin with a brief overview of the existing theories on totalitarianism and a word of warning. The term 'totalitarianism' incontestably carries a grave negative connotation. Whereas prior to the Second World War a number of writers had great hopes for the totalitarian model,[6] the actual practice of National-socialism and Stalinism has shattered all noble illusions these writers may have had. Consequently, 'totalitarianism' has become synonymous with evil incarnate and thus has acquired a symbolic meaning, which often times undermines its use as a political-analytical concept. Since this research is primarily interested in ascertaining the validity of the application of the totalitarian paradigm to radical Islam, we should first of all come to grips with the legal and political typology of totalitarian movements.

Difficulties Surrounding the Use of the Totalitarian Paradigm

Within the academic and political use of the term 'totalitarianism', two problems exist which should be pointed out before we begin our inquiry into the applicability of totalitarianism to radical Islam.

Emotive Use and Misunderstanding

The first problem is the *perceived* lack of a clear definition and of clear boundaries of the totalitarian paradigm. The problem, as I see it, is that whenever someone feels the need to indicate that a certain system of government is particularly oppressive in its nature, the term 'totalitarianism' is applied. This is *not* because of its inherent constituting unique legal and political components but because of its presupposed meaning of being a super-dictatorship, i.e. to set it apart from other more 'normal' dictatorships, therewith the term is not used on its own merits. Moreover, this misuse of political typology is not restricted to the term totalitarianism alone; the casual use of such terms as totalitarianism, fascism or dictatorship is evident in today's description of radical Islamic movements. These movements are often times referred to as

---

have a number of unique elements that led to their specific brand of totalitarianism they do share a number of similarities in the most important fields that warrant this simplification.

[6] The book Roger Griffin, *Fascism*, *Oxford Readers*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1995, offers a truly insightful collection of pre- and post-second world war thinkers, reflecting the differing attitudes towards the fascist and totalitarian mindset.

'Islamofascist', 'Islamic totalitarianism', 'Islamic dictatorship', 'clerical fascism' or 'fascist theocracy' without consideration for the precise meaning of such definitions in political, legal and most importantly ideological sense. Whilst all of these typologies might be accurate, depending on the specifics of any particular radical Islamic movement, they are often times used as a generalization doing a service neither to our understanding of the movement in question nor to the advancement of our knowledge of political and legal typology in general. It is my contention that the underlying reason for this problem is a common lack of appreciation for the progression from authoritarian, dictatorial, fascist to totalitarian systems of government, all of which are systems with their own specific set of aims, means and strategic strengths and weaknesses. For instance, historically fascism frequently played an important part in paving the way for totalitarian movements. Unfortunately, this has often lead to the conclusion that totalitarianism is an exaggerated form of fascism. If however one pays close attention to the intricacies of both systems one would find that totalitarianism is diametrically opposed to fascism in its constituting ideological foundations[7], its means and ultimately its long term goals and that it should thus be categorized as an entirely different system of governance. To complicate matters even further, dictatorial, fascist and totalitarian movements often times *appear* to use very similar institutions and practices such as a single leader, propaganda and repression, while in fact the similarity is merely skin-deep. The rationale behind the use of similar institutions and practices might be radically different depending on which system one is studying. It is only when one looks closely to these different types of systems that one notices that although these similarities exist, their mere occurrence does not automatically make them defining hallmarks of the political system in question. For example; the leadership principle, which is the founding stone of dictatorships, is adopted by fascism but takes on a completely different nature. It transforms it into a leadership cult and a sacralisation of the state, which is alien to the more opportunistic dictatorship. In turn, totalitarianism

---

[7] Whereas National socialism as a totalitarian movement aimed to create a thousand year Reich and transform reality into utopia, fascism is "….opposed to all individualistic abstractions based on eighteenth century materialism and it is opposed to all Jacobin utopias and innovations … it therefore rejects the teleological notion that at some future in time the human family will secure a final settlement of all its difficulties". Mussolini, *fundamental ideas* in Stephen Eric Bronner, *Twentieth Century Political Theory: A Reader*, 2nd ed. London: Routledge 2006, p. 206.

adopts both the leadership principle and the sacralisation of the state but adds to it an ideologically motivated ambition for total domination, which is fundamentally lacking in fascist and dictatorial systems. Moreover, both fascist and totalitarian systems often times follow the same path to power only to develop their relative differences once such a position of power has been assumed. Without a proper understanding of the differing constituting elements and genealogies of these types of government, one cannot be expected to fully grasp the implications of such a definition as 'totalitarianism'. Indicative of this problem is the speech the UN weapons inspector Hans Blix gave at a Security Council hearing in 2003 where he dubbed Saddam Hussein's regime totalitarian.[8] In cases like these it appears that the use of the term 'totalitarian' is motivated by an emotive evaluation rather than an attempt to objectively describe the political typology of a regime. It seems fair to say that Hans Blix acted *bona fides* and did not intend to depict the reign of Saddam Hussein as totalitarian because of his own political motives. Rather, it seems his depiction suffers from the aforementioned diffuse use of the term 'totalitarianism'.

Deliberate misuse

The second problem however is of more concern in the current debate on radical Islam. It is quite understandable that the mere idea of equating radical Islam with totalitarianism will upset some people. To accuse a religious movement of having the same characteristics as murderous secular movements such as Nazism and Stalinism is sure to lead to heated debate. We should therefore be wary of using the term 'totalitarianism' *mala fides,* that is to say that the term is not used to make an accurate statement about the typology of a regime or ideological movement, but rather to use or refuse to use the term 'totalitarianism' because of its extremely negative symbolic connotation, in short, as a means of propaganda.

There are two possible scenarios, which should be taken into account. In the first scenario, the term is used to accuse a political opponent of

---

[8] Press briefing of: Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC and Mohamed El-Baradei, Director General of IAEA (unofficial transcript), 9 January 2003, United Nations, New York. Although a case can be made that the reign of Saddam Hussein was extremely oppressive and adopted *some* totalitarian characteristics (see for instance Kanan Makiya, *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1989. I hope to show that it does not meet the requirements needed to identify it as totalitarianism.

totalitarianism in order to rally public sentiment against him. One example of this is the tendency of anti-American political activists to describe the polices of the Bush administration as being 'totalitarian'. Anyone familiar with totalitarianism theories should know that America's policies do not meet the minimum requirement of totalitarianism, yet the use of the term for propagandistic value is not uncommon in islamist and far-left circles.[9,10] The same applies to radical Islam. When one wishes to label the Taliban or a movement like Hizb-Ut-Tahrir as totalitarian, one should be mindful of the difficulties regarding that typology lest one be accused of propaganda.[11]

The second scenario is the reluctance to define something as totalitarian when it clearly deserves that label. This problem existed within the academic debate on totalitarianism where it concerned communism. The Nazi's themselves already defined themselves as being totalitarian so there was no discussion on that issue.[12] The communists however portrayed themselves as being anti-fascist and ant-Nazi. It was therefore hard for their defenders and fellow travellers to accept that communism and National Socialism are in fact two varieties of the same species instead of diametrically opposed opponents. This resulted in a widespread reluctance amongst authors, academia and politicians to label communism as being totalitarian due to their own political standpoints and the negative connotation the term 'totalitarian' carried with it.[13]

---

[9] Harvey Wasserman Bob Fitrakis, 'The New Totalitarianism Defines Desperate Neo-Con End Game', review of Reviewed Item, *Columbuss Free Press*, May 1st 2006, http://www.commondreams.org/views06/0501-31.htm

[10] Sheldon Wolin, 'Inverted Totalitarianism', review of Reviewed Item, *The Nation*, no. may 19, 2003 (2003), http://www.thenation.com/doc/20030519/wolin

[11] For an example of such a counter-strategy see: Khilafah.com. The Khilafah Is Not a Totalitarian State. See: http://www.khilafah.com/kcom/the-khilafah/issues/the-khilafah-is-not-a-totalitarian-state.html

[12] To indicate the often times frustrating taxonomic difficulties associated with this research field, the Italian fascist often times referred to themselves as being totalitarian while in fact their aspirations never attained such a totalist character.

[13] One example is the prominent Dutch politician Paul Rosenmöller, member of parliament from 1989–2003 and chairman of the green-left party from 1994–2002. In the period preceding his entry to parliament he was a member of the 'group Marxists-Leninists' who during the period 1976–1979 openly collected money and conducted propaganda for Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge regime which killed over two million Cambodians in the name of communism. What is shocking is that the crimes and totalitarian nature of this regime were well known to the western audience. If a politician had performed the same services for a national socialist party, his entry into the parliament would no doubt have sparked national and international outrage. Astonishingly this did not occur with Paul Rosenmöller. Roelof Bouwman, "Van Bloedrood Tot Groenlinks", *HP de tijd* January 2004.

The same danger lurks with respect to radical Islam. Be it due to political correctness, fear of being labelled islamophobic or the sheer threat of violence, the deliberate reluctance to use the term 'totalitarian' when in fact it potentially should apply, constitutes propaganda in the same way as the deliberate misuse.

In summary, probably more than with any other typology, the term 'totalitarianism' is vulnerable to misuse due to limited understanding or misinterpretation of its constituting elements and its susceptibility to propagandistic use. When we proceed to examine the applicability of the totalitarian paradigm to radical Islam this should be kept in mind. Totalitarianism is a very specific form of government that can only arise under extraordinary circumstances. The fact that it has succeeded in a number of countries is actually quite surprising seeing the enormity of the challenges posed to such movements.[14]

A Short Overview of Existing Theories

According to research done in 1971, there were around 660 works on the subject of totalitarianism at that time.[15] Since the fall of the Soviet Union, a multitude of new theories have been devised that can be added to these 660 works. Needless to say, an inquiry into all of these theories and their respective differences is outside the scope of this chapter. There are however, a few authors whose works have defined the framework of the totalitarian paradigm. Just as with any other political philosophy, the exact point of origin of totalitarian thought is hard, if at all possible, to identify. Some writers see it predominantly as a phenomenon closely related to modernity (Arendt,[16] Linz,[17] Friedrich,[18]

---

[14] The book by Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, London: Allen Lane 2004, offers an overview of the fascist movements in Europe that never reached a level of maturity that could match that of Mussolini. Since, at least in Europe, fascism has been the springboard for totalitarian movements it offers an insight in the variables that needed to be accommodated if the totalitarian experiment were even to be given the opportunity to begin.

[15] Ernst Nolte "The three versions of the theory of totalitarianism and the significance of the historical genetic version" in Achim Siegel, ed., *The Totalitarian Paradigm after the End of Communism : Towards a Theoretical Reassessment*, *Poznaân Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities*, V. 65, Atlanta: Rodopi 1998, p. 109 referring to Martin Janicke, *Totalitäre Herrschaft, Anatomie eines politisches Begriffs*, Berlin: Duncker & Humblot 1971.

[16] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company 1948.

[17] Juan J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers 2000.

[18] Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, 2nd ed. New York: Praeger 1966.

Brzezinski,[19] Hayek,[20] Bauman,[21] Griffin[22]) whilst others trace its origin back to certain aspects of the French revolution and the Jacobins (Talmon,[23] van Ree[24]), aspects of medieval theology (Voegelin,[25] Versluis[26]) or even as far back as Plato (Popper[27]). Of course, this list is far from exhaustive and serves merely to indicate the multitude of theories regarding the totalitarian phenomenon. Furthermore, these theories oftentimes do not contradict each other but rather emphasize different elements in the genealogy of totalitarian thinking. Among the most authoritative theories on totalitarianism, we can discern a division line, which I, for the use of this chapter, shall call the two schools of totalitarian theories. On the one hand, we have the normative theories of Arendt, Talmon, Hayek and Voegelin and on the other, we find the empirical theories of Friedrich, Brzezinski and Linz. The focus of the normative school is on concepts such as freedom, individuality, collectivism and chiliastic-utopian thinking and as such tries to describe the intellectual essence of totalitarianism. The empirical school offers concrete political, economical and legal criteria to which a totalitarian regime ought to comply and as such complements the normative school, which for the greater part lacks such criteria.

In the next few paragraphs, I will be looking at two points emphasized by the normative school and one main point, which is emphasized by the empirical school. The reason for this seeming disparity is not favouritism but the fact that the empirical school deals mainly with established totalitarian states. It is my opinion, which I will elaborate later on, that such a state has not been achieved in the Islamic world and that thus the empirical approach is of limited use. The points I will discuss are the following:

---

[19] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Ideology and Power in Soviet Politics*, New York: Praeger 1967.

[20] Friedrich A. von Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, Routledge Classics, London: Routledge 2001.

[21] Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cambridge: Polity 1989.

[22] Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2007.

[23] J.L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, London: Sphere Books 1970.

[24] Erik van Ree, *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin: A Study in Twentieth-Century Revolutionary Patriotism*, London: Routledge 2002.

[25] Eric Voegelin and Manfred Henningsen, *Modernity without Restraint*, Columbia: University of Missouri Press 2000.

[26] Arthur Versluis, *The New Inquisitions: Heretic-Hunting and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Totalitarianism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006.

[27] Karl Raimund Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Routledge Classics, London: Routledge 2003.

1. Total submission of the individual's freedom to the greater good;
2. The rise of the masses and anomie as a *conditio sine qua non* for totalitarianism;
3. Totalitarian ideology and law.

Following this description of totalitarian thought, we will examine whether or not this model is applicable to radical Islamic movements.

3. INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND THE GREATER GOOD

The 17th and 18th century breakdown of the legal and political dominance of divine revelation in Western societies stems to a degree from divine revelation's inability to deal with the problems abundant in society at that time and the rise of the scientific method as a means of explaining phenomena formally explained by religion. The rise of rational models as the basis for legal and political theories was consequential to this process. Coinciding with the development of scientific methods that explained natural phenomena, this scientific approach was applied to the organization of mankind. Social contract theories shifted sovereignty from divinely sanctioned absolutist rule, which functioned as the intermediate between the transcendent and the immanent, to rule by and for 'the people', not on the basis of revelation but on the basis of reason. This shift opened the possibility of exploring radically new methods of political organization. Alongside the possibility for new political forms, the appearance of industrialism, urbanization and the rise of the mass man introduced the need for new modes of social organization. These two developments raised a profound question: if nature could be manipulated to conform to the needs of man, could not man themselves be manipulated to conform to the needs of mankind? This question can be divided into two sub-question which, when answered, can help us understand how this type of thinking can lead to the emergence of totalitarian thought.

New Models for Society

First of all the very idea that man *needs* to be transformed indicates a negative conception of the existing human condition. Whereas formerly religion would be the source of inspiration and legitimacy for a socio-political model that could ensure a positive human condition, this was

now sought in reason.[28] Generally speaking, two mutually exclusive modes of thought can be identified that tried to give an answer to this problem of the human condition.

The first one is based on the premise that our knowledge of past and present events is inherently limited, that the actors in a society interact in complex and unpredictable ways and that thus any model for society should be based on the principle of uncertainty. Since this uncertainty principle inherently prohibits any exclusive claims to truth and reality, it *a priori* excludes any possibility for a secular teleology, let alone eschatology.[29] These main emphases of these models therefore lies on what society *can* agree about and as such is usually limited to present day problems. Instead of some ultimate truth, its principle of action is agreement. From this basis one can safely claim that the greater the number of participants in a society is, the greater the need for a compromise becomes. The resulting model is a framework of laws that reflect these compromises and because of this, the laws are by definition incapable of reflecting some ultimate teleological truth. Human plurality will not allow it. By shifting sovereignty from the divine to the worldly and by supplanting 'truth' by uncertainty, the freedom of the individual can only be limited by what the majority of a society can agree upon. In its ultimate form, no one can be forced to obey rules he or she did not agree upon, i.e. the anarchic-libertarian society.

Quite the opposite of the 'uncertainty principle' based liberal line of thinking is the ideological model of socio-political organization. Whereas the former line of thinking is increasingly emptied of religious concepts, the ideological model adopts much of the principles and concepts of religion but replaces God with itself as the "original sacral

---

[28] This does however not mean that religion as a whole became redundant. From the starting point of reason as a basis for the 'new man', any number of theories can be developed which incorporate religious ideas, values and concepts in varying degrees in the lives of the individuals or society as a whole. The mere fact that reason becomes the basis or emphasis of a new socio-political order does not automatically prohibit or exclude religion. The modern democratic liberal state being an obvious example of neither an exclusively religious nor anti-religious form of social and political order.

[29] See for instance: Friedrich A. von Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, op. cit. p. 60 "The point which is so important is the basic fact that it is impossible for any man to survey more than a limited field, to be aware of the urgency of more than a limited number of needs. Whether his interests centre round his own physical needs, or whether he takes a warm interest in the welfare of every human being he knows, the ends about which he can be concerned will always be only an infinitesimal fraction of the needs of all men".

substance".[30,31] In sharp contrast to the uncertainty of liberalism, ideological thinking starts form the premise that past and present are completely knowable, that the advancement of human history proceeds according to understandable and predictable deterministic events. If knowledge would rise to such an extent that the historic processes could be understood, which Voegelin called the Gnostic speculation, then by applying logical deduction, the ultimate end state of mankind would reveal itself. In this line of thinking knowledge of the world and the subsequent application of reason to this knowledge becomes the new God and the new (secularized) religion.

> (W)hen god is invisible behind the world, the contents of the world will become new gods, when the symbols of transcendent religiosity are banned, new symbols develop from the inner-worldly language of science to take their place.[32]

This secularized religion gains a political dimension when it actively engages in transforming society towards the presupposed utopian end of history. The negative state of the human condition is therefore first of all a result of a lack of this knowledge. The second reasoning for the negative state of mankind is the plurality of man, who because of their free will can act in opposition to their and societies best interest. Inevitably, the laws that govern such a society would not be based on agreement, which is trivial to the 'truth', but on the envisaged path to utopia. In other words, the principal of action is not agreement amongst individuals but the forceful fabrication of utopia. Therefore, the freedom to act on one's own accord can only stall the inevitable arrival of utopia. It therefore becomes necessary to "force man to be free" (Rousseau). Whether or not the individual agrees that this is actually in his best interest is inconsequential. The deterministic forces of history have decided this for him, the individual need only to comply with the edicts of the ideological movement, which functions as the accelerator of this process. As such, these secular movements adopt much of the

---

[30] Eric Voegelin and Manfred Henningsen, *Modernity without Restraint*, Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000, p. 59.

[31] See for instance Carl Schmidt, *Politische Theologie*, Berlin: Duncker & Humblot 1922, p. 1: "all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts".

[32] Voegelin, *Modernity without Restraint.* op. cit. p. 60 Voegelin uses the terms "inner-worldly religion", "*ersatz*-religions" and "political-religions" to indicate this process. Interestingly enough when one reads the works of early fascists and especially totalitarian ideologues, the similarity between their language and religious language is striking.

concepts and vocabulary of religion effectively making them political religions. In their most extreme form, these political-religions would become known as totalitarian movements.

These two modes of thinking, the liberal and the ideological, both have their roots in the replacement of religion with reason as a model for 'the good society'. The liberal model, which applies reason to the premise that our knowledge is always limited, arrives at the conclusion that only individuals themselves can discover what is good for them at any given time. The greater good is therefore a product of the competing individual conceptions of the good; always in a state of flux, always susceptible to change. While this model has been prevalent in European societies in the last few centuries, it is the ideological model, which would put its bloodstained signature on the twentieth century. Before that could happen, drastic changes in the fabric of society were needed to allow the ideological model to gather momentum.

4. ANOMIE AND THE RISE OF THE MASSES

The next question deals with some of the events that can ultimately lead a society to embrace the ideological model. Whilst the advent of the scientific age and the ensuing rationalism was hoped to bring about an improvement in the human condition, things did not turn out the way many would have liked. Between the advent of the industrial age in the late 18th and 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century a number of events occurred which transformed European societies in such a way that it enabled the rise of totalitarian thought.[33] The relevance of this paragraph lies in the fact that the same general pattern appears to have taken place in the Islamic world over the last few decades. These similarities will be discussed in the concluding paragraph.

The Rise of the Mass Man

The transformation from the traditional agricultural and rural society, with all its social institutions and certainties, into an industrial society was accompanied by a transformation of the individual in community into the mass man. There were of course always individuals who had no

---

[33] Similar events occurred in Russia and Asia but, for reasons of brevity, I have excluded them from this summary.

specific qualities, no specific talents or anything that differentiated them from others, but these individuals existed as a 'multitude', an undefined majority, scattered throughout society and absorbed in their respective communities. It is exactly this capacity for being absorbed into a social order, which created a sense of 'worldliness'. Unaware of their numerical superiority the multitude was a mere quantitative concept. What was new however was that the industrial age removed these individuals from their respective communities and brought them to the cities, which led to the self-realization of their numerical superiority and the realisation that they were no longer an integrated part of society but a vast anonymous mass of interchangeable, undifferentiated individuals. What was first merely an undefined integrated multitude became a social phenomenon with formidable political potential: the qualitative concept of the mass man.[34] The masses in this sense did not bestow a sense of identity upon the individual; they are the masses precisely because they lack the unique features that distinguish man from each other. As such, the shapeless mass does not in any way have a link to pre-existing class distinction.[35]

Anomie and the Search for Order

Whilst to some reason was the founding stone of liberal freedom, to others reason did not bring salvation, but the tyranny of cold

---

[34] See for a more elaborate description of this process: Jose Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses*. Authorized Translation from the Spanish, New York: Norton 1993.

[35] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit. pp. 319–326. "The term masses applies only where we deal with people who either because of sheer numbers or indifference, or a combination of both, cannot be integrated into any organization based on common interest (….) The truth is that the masses grew out of the fragments of a highly atomized society whose competitive structure and concomitant loneliness of the individual had been held in check only through membership in a class". According to Arendt, the problems described here caused the break down of the old class society and aided in the creation of the masses. Precisely because the existing social-economic, religious and political institutions were failing these masses were no longer interested in or felt represented by the traditional political party structure. Their disinterest and feeling of loneliness thus created a host of opportunities for new radical alternatives. It is interesting to see how in Germany these conditions were created due to the crisis of the Weimar republic and the economic depression whereas in Russia, Cambodia and China, these conditions had to be artificially forced upon the population. The partial or complete extermination of certain classes of people in these countries was not the hallmark of totalitarian terror but merely the destruction of the old society and the forced transformation of the population into the mass man without whom the totalitarian movement could not begin its march towards political power.

calculating industrialism in which people were all mere cogs in a giant unfamiliar machine. Freedom does not bestow any sense of purpose on an individual let alone on the masses and for these masses, who were increasingly devoid of any sense of order, freedom quickly became a burden. Their sense of alienation, of being alone in a strange inhuman and harsh environment created a renewed longing for spiritual salvation and for a unity of men, something practical science could not provide for.[36]

Compounding the sense of anomie that plagued the masses, the political, social and economic establishments were increasingly confronted with problems that they were unable to overcome. The first problem exists on the social plain; the aforementioned sense of superfluousness created by industrialization and urbanization and a perceived loss of purpose or destiny. The second problem was the decline of faith in the political order. When the masses realized that the existing political order did not act on their behalf but on behalf of a privileged elite and was furthermore unable to deal with the social disorder, politics as a whole lost its credibility. Although the masses at that time were still too fragmented, too undefined to be able to found a party based on common interest, some radicals would soon find out that these masses represented a previously untapped source of political power. The failure of politics reached its pinnacle in the first few decades of the twentieth century. One need only think of the First World War, the enormous amount of stateless refugees, mass poverty in eastern Europe, the economic crisis of 1929, mass unemployment and the failure of the few existing young democracies to cope with these issues. Partly because of these calamities, the masses were becoming increasingly ready to be mobilized by forces who did not appeal to freedom, reason or conventional political systems but by entirely new modes of political organization. The rallying call of these movements is exemplified by Mussolini who stated: "Men grow tired of freedom". Traditional politics and social institutions had failed the masses, what would be the masses salvation was the total negation of the concept of the political. Instead of reason came faith, instead of the individual came the sacralisation of the collective, instead of freedom, total submission.

---

[36] This concept is also know as *palingenesis* or rebirth and is a central theme in both fascist and totalitarian thought. Palingenesis often refers to the resurrection (another religious concept) of a glorious past that is now lost.
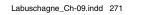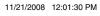
5. Totalitarian Ideology and Law

In the preceding paragraphs, I have attempted to illustrate some of the events in social-economic, political and intellectual history that paved the way towards the rise of totalitarian thought and its mass appeal. When one reads the works of radical Islamic ideologues, one cannot escape the impression that there seem to be a lot of resemblances between their ideas and some of the notions and socio-political developments discussed above. The transformation of rural society into an urbanized society, the confrontation with modernity and the inability of the current social-political establishment to deal with the problems of society[37] seem to provoke much of the same response as it did in 18th, 19th and early 20th century Europe. The most worrisome of these resemblances are those between the legal and political philosophical ideas pertaining to the pre-eminence of the collective, the need to force man to be free and the wilful fabrication of an imagined future or past utopia. As such, the hypothesis of my research is that radical Islam is a form of Western totalitarianism but with significant novel features. If this hypothesis holds true, the consequences for Western multicultural democracies and the Islamic world alike would be far different from the situation in which we would be dealing with a movement primarily concerned with practical instead of ideological objectives. In short, if the objectives of movements like Al-Qaeda are restricted to ousting western troops from Islamic lands, as their propaganda aimed at the West often states, then we could compare them to European terrorist groups such as the ETA. If however their aim is to submit all of mankind to Islam and force 'all to be free', as their propaganda directed towards the Islamic world states, we would have to compare them to movements such as the Nazi's or communists. Both types function in radically different ways, have different goals and means and call for different counter-strategies. Before labelling a radical Islamic movement as being totalitarian, we will need to find a working definition of the concept of totalitarianism.

The Normative Political Analytical Theory of Hannah Arendt

The research material available on the subject of totalitarianism is so vast that any singular definition presented here will necessarily be

---

[37] United Nations, 'Freedom and Good Governance', in *Arab Human Development Report*, New York: United Nations 2004).

a crude one. Notwithstanding the importance of empirical institutional theories, such as those of Linz,[38] Brzezinski[39] and Friedrich,[40] I will focus my attention on the normative political theory of Hannah Arendt.[41] Hannah Arendt defines totalitarianism as follows:

> A system of government whose essence is terror and whose principal of action is the logicality of ideological thinking.[42]

What Arendt means by 'the logicality of ideological thinking' is the following:

> Ideological thinking orders facts into an absolutely logical procedure which starts from an axiomatically accepted premise, deducing everything else from it; that is, it proceeds with a consistency that exists nowhere in the realm of reality.[43]

In the thought of the Nazis, the purification of the race was the answer to the disorder in the world, imbedded in the very fabric of history and nature.[44] Likewise, the Communists substituted race for class[45] and proceeded to deduce from this premise all the steps necessary to fabricate utopia. This all-explaining premise, which forms the basis of the totalitarian movements' ideology, is what Arendt calls 'the law of nature or

---

[38] Juan J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers 2000.

[39] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Ideology and Power in Soviet Politics*, New York: Praeger 1967.

[40] Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, New York: Praeger 1966.

[41] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit.

[42] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit. p. 398; Arendt defines an ideology as follows on p. 469: "An ideology is quite literally what its name indicates: it is the logic of an idea. Its subject matter is history, to which the 'idea' is applied; the result of this application is not a body of statements about something that is but the unfolding of a process which is in constant change. The ideology treats the course of events as though it followed the same 'law' as the logical exposition of its 'idea'. Ideologies pretend to know the mysteries of the whole historical process-the secrets of the past, the intricacies of the present, the uncertainties of the future- because of the logic inherent in their respective ideas".

[43] Op. cit. p. 471.

[44] Alfred Rosenberg deputized by Hitler with responsibility for the spiritual and philosophical education of the Party stated: "The meaning of world history has radiated out from the north over the whole world, borne by a blue-eyed blond race which in several great waves determined the spiritual face of the world". United States. Office of Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality. et al., *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, 8 vols. Washington, D.C: U.S. G.P.O. 1946.

[45] "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles". Karl Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party, by K. Marx and F. Engels*, Authorized tr. by S. Moore ed. London: n.p. 1888.

history'. The mechanism by which this premise transforms the world towards some ultimate end-state is called 'the law of movement'. The Nazis understood the biological movements within nature and the social movement within history as an unfolding historicist and deterministic process that preordained the Aryan race as the true inheritor of the earth, thereby signing the death warrant of all other races. The only truly significant difference between Nazism and communism is that the latter substituted race by class, but apart from that difference the communist operated along the very same ideological line of thinking. The problem was that it could take millennia for this deterministic process to reach its end. The Nazis and communists drew the only possible conclusion from this axiomatic premise: the accelerated execution of nature's death sentence as a necessary and logical step towards speeding up the process inherent to the fabric of nature. This line of ideological thinking dictates a new morality namely that the killing of those 'unsuited for survival' is necessary and morally right; a new moral standard that was ultimately reflected in its laws as well. From their ruthless application of this logic to the premise, an infinite number of decrees could be deduced that dictated every human action. Every human action can be viewed in light of this new morality, thereby dividing man in absolute Manichean categories of good and evil.[46] When this moral view is combined with a radically positive conception of freedom, it becomes clear that once discovered, these laws need to be applied to all in order for them to become truly free. It follows that the space between the private and the public has to be completely obliterated and that all public and even private life has to be monopolized by the totalitarian movement. Although these regimes are often described as being immoral or even a-moral, they are in fact highly moralistic. Instead of being subordinate to the whimsical desires of man, they are exclusively preoccupied with bringing mankind in line with the highest moral dictum from which all legitimacy and authority emanates. Therefore, totalitarian movements *in principle* do not differ from any other movement that claims to strive towards universal salvation through the purification of mankind. It is through the ruthless application of logic to the axiomatic premise,

---

[46] Friedrich A. von Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, op. cit. p. 62: "To direct all our activities according to a single plan presupposes that every one of our needs is given its rank in an order of values which must be complete enough to make it possible to decide between all the different courses between which the planner has to choose, it presupposes, in short, the existence of a complete ethical code in which all the different human values are allotted their due place".

and through the modern means of social engineering on a previously impossible scale, that totalitarian movements set themselves apart from any other experiment aimed at fabricating utopia.

Rationalizing Terror

Within the academic discussion on the nature of totalitarian movements, a point of disagreement is the function of terror. Following the death of Stalin and the transformation of the Soviet system of governance to a more bureaucratic Moloch, authors like Linz,[47] Friedrich[48] and Brzezinski[49] adapted the totalitarian paradigm to such a degree that terror was excluded from its defining characteristics. The reasoning behind this was the idea that terror was mainly a means of suppressing opposition and, since opposition was already nearly impossible, the movement could do without it. Although my research suggests that there are numerous reasons to assume that such a system would lose its defining characteristic, namely the forceful fabrication of utopia in favour of the stability of the regime in question,[50,51] this discussion is mainly of interest when it regards full-fledged totalitarian party-states in which no political plurality exists. Radical Islamic movements however, are predominantly movements without a monopoly on power or even a single national base of operations; instead, they are most often transnational movements of opposition.[52]

There are two dimensions to totalitarian terror. The first dimension is practical terror and is common to all authoritarian regimes. Its main focus is the elimination of opposition, intimidation and the display of power for propagandistic use. Practical terror occurs in totalitarian regimes in the earlier stages of the development, which is before its position of power is undisputed. Only after this stage does totalitarian terror

---

[47] Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, op. cit.

[48] Friedrich and Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, op. cit.

[49] Brzezinski, *Ideology and Power in Soviet Politics*, op. cit.

[50] N. Khrushchev, "On the Personality Cult and Its Consequences" (paper presented at the twentieth party congress, 1956). "Stalin (…) used extreme methods and mass repressions at a time when the Revolution was already victorious, when the Soviet state was strengthened, (…) when our Party was politically consolidated and had strengthened itself both numerically and ideologically".

[51] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit. p. 464 "What totalitarianism assumes is not power nor enrichment nor even political survival".

[52] Johannes J. G. Jansen, *The Dual Nature of Islamic Fundamentalism*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997.

begin to differentiate from terror in other forms of authoritarianism. I will explain this by example of Trotsky's concept of permanent revolution.

Tyranny, dictatorship and fascism all strive to political power for worldly ends. Although of these three fascisms has the highest claim to an ethical state, it lacks the ambition to 'immanentize the Eschaton'. Fascism according to Mussolini:

> ….rejects the teleological notion that at some future in time the human family will secure a final settlement of all its difficulties.[53]

When the monopoly on power has been attained, the need for practical terror takes a backseat to the forced fabrication of utopia. It is this forced fabrication of utopia that is unique to totalitarianism and which I shall call ideological terror. I shall briefly discuss three points, which are central to this type of terror.

First of all, the idea that the totalitarian revolution will create heaven or utopia on earth is based on abstract reasoning and logical deduction from an axiomatic premise, not from a real world experience gained from or susceptible to trial and error. If divine revelation, due to its emanation from God, is raised beyond all doubt so is the Gnostic speculation, as an inner-worldly religion,[54] an untouchable emanation of a perceived historicist and deterministic process.

> The system is justified by the fact of its construction; the possibility of calling into question the construction of systems, as such, is not acknowledged. That the form of science is the system must be assumed as beyond all question.[55]

This leads to a prohibition on questions and on unbelief. Since totalitarianism is concerned with transforming reality into the image of their ideology, its main focus is not the will of man but the execution of the law of nature and history:

> Terror is the realization of the law of movement; its chief aim is to make it possible for the force of nature or history to race freely through mankind, unhindered by any spontaneous action.[56]

As such, not only those who question or deny the totalitarian ideology become enemies, but in fact everyone who is not the perfect embodiment

---

[53] Mussolini, 'Fundamental ideas', in Stephen Eric Bronner, *Twentieth Century Political Theory : A Reader*, London: Routledge 2006, p. 206.

[54] Voegelin, *Modernity without Restraint*, op. cit. p. 33.

[55] Op. cit. p. 274.

[56] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit. p. 465.

of the ideology. The mere act of thinking for oneself becomes an act of treason. In reality, this means that practically all are enemies, all are sinners. The only way to prove ones loyalty, and save ones existence, is ever increasing fanaticism. It is for this reason, that it is common in totalitarian societies that children betray their parents or parents kill their children for the sole reason that the movement has dictated its ideological necessity.

Secondly, the mere existence of a world outside of the totalitarian universe contests its claim to truth. Nothing is feared more by the totalitarian regimes than a non-totalitarian reality that could prove its flaws.[57] It is only in isolation that the totalitarian reality cannot be falsified. For this reason the totalitarian revolution will always be *de facto* under threat from the non-totalitarian world and it is because of this that its quest for domination is truly universal.

> The completion of the socialist revolution within national limits is unthinkable. The socialist revolution begins on the national arena, it unfolds on the international arena, and is completed on the world arena. Thus, the socialist revolution becomes a permanent revolution in a newer and broader sense of the word; it attains completion, only in the final victory of the new society on our entire planet.[58]

Totalitarian terror therefore extends to both the non-totalitarian world and to those who are not yet fully indoctrinated enough to act out the movements edicts without thinking. It is clear that both do not form a true enemy in the sense of opposition, but are enemies because of ideological necessity.

Thirdly, any possible failure of the revolution cannot be explained by any fault inherent in the ideology but can only be attributed to some outside force, i.e. sabotage, conspiracy and counter-revolutionary activity.[59] Since it is unlikely that either heaven or utopia will be created, the revolution will constantly have to identify or invent new categories of enemies who impede the revolution, for if there were no enemies left

---

[57] In my view, this is the reason why totalitarian regimes such as the USSR and North-Korea painstakingly shield their subjects from any contact with the outside world.

[58] Leon Trotsky. 'The Permanent Revolution', Place Published 1929, http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1931/tpr/index.htm

[59] Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, op. cit. p. 112: "The more a regime attempts to transform the social order to create the "new man", to change the values of the people, and the greater the speed with which it attempts to achieve those ends, the greater the perception of the resistance to those changes, the more the terror".

to blame it would become apparent that the ideology is flawed.[60] Whilst the totalitarian *raison d'être* is to be found in the future utopia, its principal connection to the present is located in the identification and subsequent extermination of the enemy that impedes the movement towards utopia, whether they be Jews, capitalists or bourgeoisie. Every single totalitarian movement in history has gone through this process of identification and extermination precisely because it is a logical necessity of the totalitarian paradigm. It was the very existence of the gas chambers, the Gulag and the killing fields in which killing was indiscriminate of particular guilt or innocence that proved that ideological terror was solely conceived for the purpose of releasing the forces of nature.[61]

In conclusion, the totalitarian revolution is a state of permanent war on three fronts:

1. Totalitarianism does not conform itself to reality but transform reality into its own image. As such it is at war with reality until utopia is manufactured;
2. Since the movement is the embodiment of freedom, all those who are not under its reign cannot be free. As its goal is freedom for all, all must be submitted to its reign;
3. Any disparity between reality and the ideological utopia is due to enemies of the movement, not due to any inherent logical failure. Because of this, even enemies that only exist within the logical framework of the system become objective enemies.

Totalitarian ideological terror is comparable to what Robespierre called 'swift, severe, indomitable justice'. If the just society is an Aryan society, all non-Aryans should be exterminated without restraint. It would be morally wrong not to do so. Arendt's definition of totalitarianism as "a system of government who's essence is terror and whose principal of

---

[60] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit. p. 464: "Totalitarian politics which proceed to follow the recipes of ideologies has unmasked the true nature of these movements insofar as it clearly showed that there could be no end to this process. If it is the law of nature to eliminate everything that is harmful and unfit to live, it would mean the end of nature itself if new categories of the harmful and unfit could not be found (….). In other words, the law of killing by which totalitarian movements seize and exercise power would remain a law of movement even if they succeeded in making all of humanity subject to their rule".

[61] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit. p. 449: "This principle was most fully realized in the gas chambers which, if only because of their enormous capacity, could not be intended for individual cases but only for people in general".

action is the logicality of ideological thinking",[62] however, seems somewhat surreal. Arendt herself stressed that fully developed ideological terror was only witnessed in the extermination camps and Gulags, because it was there that these experiments in total domination could take place, unhindered by outside interference. The scale on which these experiments in total domination have succeeded depends on the movement in question. Nazism, due to the ongoing war, succeeded in creating this totalitarian universe only in the other-worldly reality of the extermination camps. The perfect isolation of North Korea on the other hand, has allowed its communist rulers to turn a whole country into a laboratory of totalitarian domination.[63]

Summary

In summary, totalitarian ideological thinking creates a paradigm, which operates well outside of the parameters of 'normal' politics. For politics to exist, human interaction is a necessity, one cannot become a *zoon politikon* in isolation. Furthermore, before one can even begin to formulate political thoughts, let alone communicate them to others, the capacity for thought itself has to be possible. It is exactly this capacity for spontaneous, unobstructed thought that totalitarianism wishes to eradicate, for it can only frustrate the fabrication of utopia. The formulation of totalitarian ideologies has always been based on the application of reason and science to the history of mankind. Claiming to have discovered the definite law underlying all human history, the act of formulating this Gnostic speculation immediately elevates the ideology beyond the realm of reason and falsification and thus acquires much of the characteristics of faith. The only role that the individual has to play in light of the totalitarian eschatology is his complete submission to the edicts of the law of nature and the law of motion. As I have tried to show, totalitarianism shares many of the components one would normally associate with religion: a totalistic eschatological ideology, a messianic leader, the concepts of rebirth, purification and salvation, the

---

[62] Op. cit. p. 398

[63] I cannot fail to mention that sixty-three years after the liberation of Auschwitz, which sparked the formulation of international humanitarian law, human rights treaties and the repeated slogan of "never again", the international community has utterly and willingly failed to address the horrors of the North-Korean totalitarian regime. The inability of the international community to say "wir haben es nicht gewusst" and idly stand by as these horrors continue to unfold creates an unbearable burden of guilt and makes one wonder, if this is possible, then what is impossible?

creation of a new man in the image of the ideology, the complete integration of the individual into the community of believers and the existential struggle against a Manichean enemy. Whilst the totalitarian movements of the past have always founded their ideologies on (pseudo-) scientific analyses of human history, a new breed of totalitarianism may be found in what we call radical Islamic movements.

6. Radical Islamic Ideologies

The tapestry of Islamic political thought, which has developed since the seventh century, is a wide and varied one. Whilst one could conclude that Islamic rule since Muhammad has relied on some sort of divinely sanctioned authoritarianism, the intricacies of each successive period make it well nigh impossible to determine accurately to what degree the demands of religion interacted with the demands of real-world politics. As is the case with its Christian counterparts, Islamic rule has always been a balancing act between these two demands. Furthermore, in the same way the answer to the question "what is Christianity" could only have been answered by Jesus Christ himself, the question "what is Islam" was only fully known to its founder, Muhammad. The rest of us are forced to interpret, evaluate or even speculate as to what Christianity or Islam actually stands for. The ensuing debates have resulted in a multitude of theories, sects and religious schisms that simply will not allow for any overt generalisation of 'Islam'. This concept of uncertainty is not unfamiliar to Islamic theology and the limit of what one *can* know about the essence of God and Islam is acknowledged within the rational tradition of Islamic thought (*Mu'tazilite*). In the same way as the uncertainty principle of Hayek prevents the adoption of an enforceable secular totalistic ethical code, so the basic assumption of uncertainty about the nature of the transcendent ought to prevent any attempt at its immanentization. This tradition of rationalism however was one of many traditions and certainly not one of Islam's most long lived. For the purpose of this chapter, I will be looking at a relatively modern tradition that stands in stark contrast to the rationalist tradition of uncertainty and that attempts to forcefully create a society in which all are the perfect embodiment of what they see as Islam. The best-known example today of such a radical Islamic movement is without doubt Al-Qaeda. The next paragraphs intend to illustrate the religious and intellectual taxonomy on which Al-Qaeda is built.

Religious Ideology and Terror

The Muslim brotherhood

The Muslim brotherhood (henceforward MB) is an organization that was created by Hassan al-Banna (1906–1949) in Egypt in March 1928. Originally created to combat social injustice, colonialism and western influences in Muslim societies it aimed at the resurgence of a great Islamic past, *Palingenesis,* and the exclusive role of the Quran and Sunnah as a totalist model for society. The MB over the years has become the largest voice of opposition within Egypt and large parts of the Arab world and has served as a model for other political Islamic movements around the world. The doctrine of the MB in the words of its founder is as follows:

> Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our leader, Qur'an is our law, Jihad is our way, Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope.[64,65]

One of its main goals is plainly titled "Mastering the world with Islam".[66] Although the MB in the last few decades claims to have rejected violence and embraced inter-faith dialogue, this seems at best unreliable[67] judging by its members and associates:

---

[64] MB homepage: http://www.ummah.net/ikhwan/

[65] It should be explained that the concept of jihad has two forms: The first being the large jihad, which is a life-long obligatory struggle against one's inner-evil, and the small jihad, which is actual armed warfare against unbelievers and those who actively oppose Islam. In this credo, Hassan al-Banna is also directly referring to the small jihad: Jamal Banna, *Al-Jihad*, al-Qahirah: Dar al-Fikr al-Islami 2002, p. 4 "Refer to the verses (4:71–81) in the Noble book to understand how Allah urges the Muslims to remain alert and to acquire experience in warfare, in armies and troops, as individuals, as circumstances may dictate. (…) Notice how Allah associates warfare with prayer and fasting, establishing it as one of the pillars of Islam". The book Al-jihad by Hassan al-Banna was written to prove to his fellow Muslims that the small jihad was an integral part of Islam. In this book, one can find versus from the Quran, the hadith and the legal opinion of authoritative theologians on this subject and as such provides tremendous insight into the theological foundation of modern day terrorism.

[66] http://www.ummah.net/ikhwan/main objective number 6.

[67] Interestingly enough, since 9/11 the MB has changed its homepage at least two times. The first change was the omission of Zawahiri and Bin-Laden as its disciples (www.ummah.net/ikhwan). The second change to its current homepage http://www.ikhwanweb.com/no longer lists any famous adherents, but contains in its library the writings of contemporary influential scholar Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who became notorious for issuing a fatwa legalizing suicide bombings against innocent Israeli civilians. The message of peace, pacifism and inter-faith dialogue appears to be mainly directed at the west, not necessarily at its own constituents. Indicative of this is that Qaradawi has been accused of using and distributing the now infamous anti-Semitic "protocols of the elders of Zion" in his teachings. http://www.zmo.de/pressekit/material/Wall_Street_BG.pdf

- Sayyid Qutb;
- Amin Al-Husseini, chief Mufti of Jerusalem and associate of Eichmann;
- Sheikh Ahmad Yaseen, founder of Hamas;
- Abdullah Yusuf Azzam, influential ideologue and patron of Osama bin laden;
- Ayman al-Zawahiri, second in command and ideologue of Al-Qaeda.

In the next paragraphs, I will be discussing some of the ideologues and movements that were closely associated to the MB and that ultimately led to the creation of Al-Qaeda. Of course, their history is far more complex then I can describe here but the ideological pattern that runs through this history and inspired numerous terrorist organizations to action appears to coincide with a number of elements exclusive to totalitarianism.

Sayyid Qutb

The Egyptian Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) is widely regarded as one of the founders of radical political Islamic thought. Although his ideological and theological[68] ancestry can be traced back to other Islamic

---

[68] Sayyid Qutb can be placed, albeit in a broad scope, within the Salafi School of theological thought. The central tenet of this theology is that the generation of the companions (Salafi) of Muhammad and the following two generations represented Islam at its finest. After these generations, Islam became increasingly 'polluted' by un-Islamic influences and innovations and thus gradually diminished the perfection of Islam. The aim of the Salafi theology is to purify contemporary Islam of these influences and to restore (*Palingenesis)* the Islam of the days of the Salafi. The Salafi theology is often at odds with other forms of Islam especially because of their insistence on the exclusivity of the Quran and Hadith. According to Salafi theology, a number of dogma's and conventions that have evolved throughout the history of Islam are deemed un-Islamic innovations or *bid'a*. One of these innovations is the strict reliance for the explanation of Islam on one of the four schools of religious jurisprudence or *Madh'hab*. From the beginning of Islam, scholars have, throughout the course of centuries, made legal decision based on the Quran and hadith, decision that over time attained the status of doctrine, and ultimately formed and defined the four schools of jurisprudence. With the formation of these schools of jurisprudence and the establishment of doctrine the ability for independent judgment, *itjihad*, became supplanted with the concept of imitation, *Taqlid*. This is a far too complex subject to be discussed here but the main point from the Salafi point of view is that imitation has 'closed the gates of itjihad' and caused man to imitate other man instead of relying primarily on the Quran and hadith. As such, imitation can take the form of worship of one of these schools which borders on polytheism, *Shrik*, and is considered blasphemous and opposed to the concept of the oneness of Allah, *Tawheed*. Although the Salafi do not oppose the schools of jurisprudence as such, they deny these schools any claim of exclusivity. By comparing these schools with one another and cross referencing them with literal interpretations of the

thinkers such as Ibn Taymiyyah (1263–1328),[69] Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab[70] (1703–1792), Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi (1903–1979)[71] and Hassan al-Banna. Qutb is widely seen as one of the founders of modern radical Islamism. Qutb studied in the United States between 1948 and 1950 and was shocked by what he saw as the moral depravity of that society, in particular its individualism, materialism, open sexuality,[72] racism and economic system. Upon his return to Egypt in 1950 Qutb joined the MB and quickly rose to their highest ranks. In 1952, the free officers' movement, headed by Gamal Nasser, instigated a coup aimed at overthrowing Egypt's monarchy with the help of the MB. The reason for the Brotherhood's assistance was the commonly held view that the monarchy was subservient to British colonial interest and generally un-Islamic. Although they hoped that the revolution would lead to an Islamic state, encompassing the implementation of Shari' a law, this did not happen. Nasser's policies of secular pan-Arabism alienated his former Islamist allies and ultimately led to an attempt on his life in 1954. The assassination failed, but the regime of Nasser did use it as a pretext for a crackdown on the Brotherhood. Together with many other

---

Quran and hadith the Salafi have 'reopened the gates of itjihad', something that sets them apart from other theological schools of Islamic thought. This process of purifying Islam from innovations and un-Islamic influences poses in some respects a threat to traditional religious authority and the political authority that is legitimized by the latter. As such, the Salafi's can be seen as reformers and to a degree as modernists due to their defiance of tradition and of political and theological authority. However, the idea of opening the gates of itjihad to the common believer may sound liberal and democratic, it often times simply means that the believer in question has to take the text of the Quran and hadith literally, allowing for no discretion form the wording of the texts.
See: Joseph Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1982. Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002.

[69] A Syrian Sunni scholar often credited with being a major influence on what was to become the Salafi and in particular Wahhabi theology.

[70] Saudi Sunni scholar whose teachings would form the Wahhabi movement, a puritanical creed of Salafi theology. Following the teachings of Ibn Taymiyyah, the Wahhabi movement took it upon itself the cleanse the Saudi peninsula of all innovations it deemed un-Islamic and fought a violent jihad against non-Muslims and Muslims who did not agree with its theological premises. Today the Wahhabi movement is regarded to have inspired radical jihadist networks like Al-Qaeda.

[71] Pakistani born theologian Maududi is known for coining the term the-democracy, which he regarded as the anti-thesis for western democratic concepts. A theo-democracy in his view was a democracy in which the sovereignty lay not with the people, as in western democracies, but exclusively with god. These two concepts of sovereignty are mutually exclusive and the government of a country should base its law solely on the laws of god, as they can be known through revelation.

[72] Compared to the more strictly regulated sexual practices of his own culture.

figureheads of the Brotherhood, Qutb was jailed and not released until 1964. During his stay in prison he wrote two books, a commentary on the Quran, '*In the shades of the Quran*', and his main political work '*Milestones*'. Released in 1964, he was quickly arrested again in 1965 and put to death on account of an alleged conspiracy to overthrow the regime. Qutb's thought is exemplary to some of the basic characteristics that can be seen in totalitarian thought. Let's start with Qutb' observation that the world is no longer pure, that it in fact is in moral decline:

> Mankind today is on the brink of a precipice, not because of the danger of complete annihilation which is hanging over its head - this being just a symptom and not the real disease - but because humanity is devoid of those vital values which are necessary not only for its healthy development but also for its real progress. Even the Western world realizes that Western civilization is unable to present any healthy values for the guidance of mankind.[73]

The disease that has crippled mankind and threatens it with total annihilation is the lack of healthy values that will guide it towards the perfectly just society. This is reminiscent of the Counter-Enlightenment argument, which I mentioned earlier, that blamed the advent of liberalism, materialism and rationalism for the decline of those values that gave man a sense of identity and destiny. If there are no absolute truths, what is to prevent man from becoming utter hedonists? How does one create order in a society in which all truths are 'absolutely relative'? Qutb views Islam as being the only system that can provide for these values. If mankind is to be saved, it needs to turn towards Islam for guidance, submit itself to the laws of Islam. So whereas in totalitarianism man themselves need to discover the laws of history or nature, Voegelin's Gnostic speculation, in Islam, as is the case in any other religion, these laws are already given by God himself. Qutb observes how Islam was revealed to humanity but how humanity eventually turned its back on Islam and reverted to a state known as *jahiliyyah,* very roughly translatable as ignorance. At some point in time, man no longer relied on Allah and his commandments but instead they relied on mankind itself.[74] Man created institutions that were not ordained by Allah and they relied on them. Man created systems of governance such as

---

[73] Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (1964). Translated in Andrew G. Bostom, ed., *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims*, Amherst: Prometheus Books 2005.
[74] Sayed Khatab, *The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb : The Theory of Jahiliyyah*, Routledge Studies in Political Islam, London: Routledge 2006.

democracy, which were tyrannical because now some man ruled over others thereby enslaving them. Man-made laws are a particularly malicious form of *jahiliyyah* because what they actually represent is the fact that men trust each other more than they trust Allah. It is blasphemy of the worst sort because it ascribes partners to God. Since God is one, a concept known as *Tawheed*,[75] you cannot worship anything besides him. Certainly not anything man-made. In short, what we today call the modern world, with its institutes, its laws and its secular systems of government, all of which have no basis in Sharia, is a form of tyranny bound to enslave man and keep them from realizing that their true freedom lies in the religion of Allah and submitting to its commandments. All those who do not submit, oppose. Those who oppose obstruct the freedom of all and are thus inevitably enemies. In this way Qutb demonstrates how by applying the logicality of ideological thinking to the axiom that only Islam can truly guarantee freedom for all, the world is divided into the Manichean forces of good and evil.

We must ask ourselves a number of questions:

• How does Qutb want to liberate mankind?
• Does he intend to liberate by force or merely by preaching?
• How does he intend to act on those who oppose this process of liberation?
• How does he view the freedom of people who do not oppose but do not convert either?

Qutb summarizes the process of universal liberation as follows:

> Islam is a universal message, which the whole of mankind should accept or make peace with. No political system or material power should put hindrances in the way of preaching Islam.…If someone does this, then it is the duty of Islam to fight him until he is either killed or until he declares his submission.[76]

In order to free men and to establish the rule of Allah, Muslims should be able to preach to non-Muslims and convince them that the only way out of slavery is by submission to the laws and commandments of Allah, a concept known as jihad by word (*jihad bil lisan) or Da'wa.*

---

[75] Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, *Kitab at-Tauhid*, trans. compilation and research department dar-us-salam, Riyadh: Darussalam 1996.
[76] Qutb, *Milestones*, op. cit. It should be noted that one of the meanings of the word *Islam* is submission.

> The way to establish God's rule on earth means that His laws be enforced and the final decision in all affairs be according to these laws.[77]

Anything or anyone that opposes this ability to preach and that keeps the system of servitude intact is deemed an enemy of the freedom of man, an enemy of Islam. Therefore, opposition needs to be fought until it either declares its submission or is killed.

Classical Islamic law allows a Jihad to be fought under certain circumstances:[78]

- against those who attack Muslims or Muslim lands also known as the defensive Jihad
- secondly Jihad is ordained against the polytheists, unbelievers *and* the people of the book (Jews and Christians) who show open animosity against Islam[79]

For the people of the book three options were open:

- conversion
- agree to pay the *jizaah*, a form of taxation, in exchange for protection and thus attain the status of *Dhimmi*
- be killed

For the polytheist and unbelievers two options were open:

- conversion
- be killed

Qutb argues that any system that enables servitude of men is inimical to Islam, opposes it and is therefore its enemy. Any law that, for instance, separates religion and state is inimical to the Sharia and therefore to the freedom of man. The logical consequence of this ideology is that the

---

[77] Loc. cit.
[78] Bostom, (ed.), 'The Legacy of Jihad', Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service, *From Dawa to Jihad*, 2004. It should be noted that there are two concepts of jihad, the greater and smaller jihad. The greater jihad is an inner struggle against one's own shortcomings. The smaller jihad is armed warfare.
[79] Loc. cit. Animosity is a term open to wide interpretation and historically could mean anything from open hostility to a rejection of the 'invitation' to conversion or criticism of Islam.

Jihad is necessary until everything that contravenes Islam has been vanquished. Jihad, according to Qutb, is *explicitly* not fought

> because of any threat of aggression against Islamic lands or against the Muslims residing in them. The reason for jihad exists in the nature of its message and in the actual conditions, it finds in human societies, and not merely in the necessity for defence.[80]

So what happens when all the institutions and laws that enslaved man have been vanquished? What happens to the freedom of those who do not oppose Islam but do not wish to convert either? The answer is that, although they remain free to adopt Islam, they lose their freedom to live in a system that is *not* Islamic.

> Whatever system is to be established in the world ought to be on the authority of God, deriving its laws from Him alone.[81]

Qutb goes through great lengths to underpin that Islam does not force its beliefs on anyone. Jews remain free to be Jewish and Christians can remain Christian. There is however ample historic documentation available, especially from Islamic sources themselves, to prove that this freedom actually entailed a sever limiting of their ability to have an active religious community.[82] It was forbidden for them to build or restore places of worship, to openly practicing their faith, to preach their faith or to vent criticism of Islam. Any transgression, even if it was done by an individual, could annul the *Dhimmi* treaty for the whole group thus putting them all at risk of being killed. Therefore, although violent conversions were not allowed, it is clear that a system of legal discrimination was enacted in order to 'help' the people of the book to convert. Qutb is most clear about the fate of non-Muslims in his description of the end of history, which is reminiscent of Trotsky's permanent revolution:

> Thus, this struggle (Jihad) is not a temporary phase but an eternal state… as truth and falsehood cannot co-exist on this earth. The eternal struggle for the freedom of man will continue until the religion is purified for God.[83]

---

[80] Qutb, *Milestones*, op. cit.
[81] Loc. cit.
[82] Bostom, ed., 'The Legacy of Jihad', op. cit. This book offers a great number of primary documents by Muslim historians and theologians of that age themselves and eyewitness accounts many of which have been translated into English for the first time. They offer an intriguing look on the realities of Muslim rule over non-Muslims.
[83] Qutb, *Milestones*, op. cit.

This all culminates in the familiar sounding Robespierrian credo:

> If we insist on calling Islamic Jihad a defensive movement, then we must change the meaning of the word 'defence' and mean by it 'the defence of man' against all those elements which limit his freedom.[84]

The great caliphate that was formed during the first 150 years of Islamic expansion eventually broke up into smaller territories and the predominance of the violent offensive Jihad took a backseat to a time of mutual, and often times opportunistic, tolerance between Muslim and non-Muslim states. The ideological thoughts of Sayyid Qutb may have given it new life but they certainly were not the only ones. His thoughts would merge with the work of an earlier Islamic thinker and would eventually form the basis of today's violent extremism. Whereas the reach of the violent Jihad in Qutb's ideology meets its limits in the temporary boundaries set in place by the protected status of the Dhimmi's, there is another school of ideology that extends it to include the Jews and Christians and even Muslims who don't follow their puritanical creed.

Muhammad Ibn Abd-al-Wahhab

like Sayyid Qutb, Muhammad Ibn Abd-Al-Wahhab (1703–1792), belongs to the same Sunni form of Islamic theology known as Salafism. Without going into too much detail, Salafism claims to advocate the tradition of *itjihad,* interpretation but in practice often times amounts to *taqlid,* imitation of the time of the prophet and his companions, the salafi. As such, it sees the long standing and rich tradition of Islamic legal argumentation and interpretation as *bid'a*, an unlawful innovation. In practice, this means that the followers of Salafism opt to take the sources of Islam literally, allowing very little room, if any, for interpretation and reasoning. The creed of Wahhab however, aptly named Wahhabism although the followers prefer to call themselves *Muwahhidun or Unitarians*, goes a step further. Those who fail to abide by their literal interpretation stand the risk of falling under *takfir,* meaning being to be denounced as apostates, a crime punishable by death.[85] Following the

---

[84] Loc. cit.

[85] Dr. Abou El Fad, Islamic jurist and scholar, Professor of Law at UCLA school of Law quotes Wahhab as saying: "All those who use opinion or reason in legal interpretation are apostates". He furthermore describes Wahhab' religious creed as follows: "Ibn Abd al-Wahhab doesn't teach love and peace. He gives permission to kill". In John Kearney, "The Real Wahhab", review of Reviewed Item, *The Boston Globe*, no. August 8, 2004, http://64.233.183.104/search?q=cache:c8XxnB-iZTkJ:www.boston.com/news/globe/ideas/articles/2004/08/08/the_real_wahhab%3Fpg%3Dfull+quote+wahhab&hl=nl&ct=clnk&cd=7&gl=nl

teachings of Ibn Taymiyyah, a highly influential salafi theologian who advocated a literal interpretation of the Quran and hadith, Wahhab declared:

> The ways of the people of the book are condemned as those of the polytheists.[86]

By this declaration, he reinterpreted the already existing commandment to fight the polytheist and unbelievers until all religion were for Allah. By describing the people of the book as polytheists, he actually declared that it was legally obligatory to fight them until they were either killed or converted. To Wahhab, Jihad was the ultimate manifestation of Islam, a furnace in which Muslims are melted out, that allows the separation of the bad Muslim from the good one and that grants its fighters instant access to paradise. The Jihad of Wahhab had little to do with the noble notion of inner struggle; instead, it was focused on purifying the world through the murder of the unbelievers, the infidels, the Christians, the Jews and those Muslims who did not conform to his puritanical version of Islam. In the ideal Wahhabi society, the freedom of the believer is reduced to following the instructions of the faith to the letter. Any diversion, dissent or innovation is in their eyes an act of polytheism, or even worse, apostasy, and thus punishable by death.

The extent to which this puritanical creed has influenced Saudi society is disquieting. Religious freedom is nonexistent and all Saudi citizens are by law required to be Muslim. Furthermore, non-Sunni Muslims and non-Muslims are not permitted to publicly practice their faith and their right to do so privately is not always respected. Informers monitor classrooms to prevent western philosophy or non-Sunni religions from being taught. Proselytizing by non Sunni Muslims and the distribution of likeminded materials is also illegal.[87,88] The constitution

---

[86] Dore Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism*, Washington, DC: Regnery Publishers 2003.

[87] Freedomhouse, 'Saudi Arabia', review of Reviewed Item, 2007, http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2007&country=7265

[88] U.S. Department of State, *International Religious Freedom Report 2006*, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor 2006. "There is no legal recognition or protection of religious freedom, and it is severely restricted in practice. Although millions of Muslims and non-Muslims did practice their faith on a daily basis, both Muslims whose beliefs do not conform to the Hanbali School of Islamic jurisprudence and non-Muslims must practice their religion in private and are vulnerable to discrimination, harassment, and sometimes detention. Islam is the official religion, and all citizens must be Muslims. Religious freedom is not recognized or protected under the Government's interpretations of Islamic laws, and basic religious freedoms are denied to all but those

of Saudi-Arabia is based solely on the Quran and the hadith and the strict appliance of what Saudi-Arabia considers to be Sharia law has led to the institutionalization of religious and gender based discrimination.[89] In Saudi-Arabia the enforcement of the Sharia extends to most spheres of public and, to an extent, private life. The task of ensuring adherence to the obligatory prayers, separation of the sexes and wearing of correct Islamic garments for women is entrusted to the 'Commission to Promote Virtue and Prevent Vice'. This semi-autonomous religious authority has its own police force called the *mutaawi'ah*.[90] An example of its activities is the following: On the 15th of March 2002, the *mutaawi'ah* tried to prevent young girls from fleeing their burning school building. Their crime was that they were not wearing the proper Islamic attire for women namely the headscarf and black robe.[91] As a result, the religious police beat them back into the flaming building. Those who tried to help the girls were warned of the consequences, since helping these obviously sinful girls was in itself a sinful act and, in addition, the mixing of the sexes was in such a fashion that it was deemed in defiance of Islamic law. Fifteen girls burned to death because of the puritanical fervour of the religious police. Although this incident sparked outrage in Saudi-Arabia itself, and certain steps aimed at moderation of the *mutaawi'ah* have since been taken, its mere existence and the fact that this was possible is indicative of the influence of Wahhabism on Saudi-Arabia's society.

More alarmingly however is the fact that the greatest threat from Wahhabism is not directed at Saudi Arabia itself. In the formative years

---

who adhere to the state-sanctioned version of Sunni Islam. Citizens are denied the freedom to choose or change their religion. The Government limits the practice of all but the officially sanctioned version of Islam and prohibits the public practice of other religions".

[89] Loc. cit. "Islamic law considers Hindus to be polytheists; identification with polytheism is used to justify discrimination against Hindus, inter alia, in calculating accidental death or injury compensation. Christians and Jews, who are classified as "People of the Book", are also discriminated against, but to a lesser extent than Hindus. For example, according to the country's "Hanbali" interpretation of Shari'a, once fault is determined by a court, a Muslim male receives 100 percent of the amount of compensation determined, a male Jew or Christian receives 50 percent, and all others (including Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs) receive 1/16 of the amount a male Muslim may receive. Women's testimony is worth only half that of men, and a non-Muslim woman's testimony is worth less than that of a Muslim woman".

[90] Cyril Glasse, *The New Encyclopedia of Islam: Revised Edition of the Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*, Rev. ed., Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press 2001, p. 333 "those who enforce obedience".

[91] RAND Corporation, *The Muslim World after 9/11*, Santa Monica: 2004.

of the Saudi kingdom, Muhammad ibn Saud, then the ruler of the small town Diriyah, entered into an alliance with Wahhab. Both Saud and Wahhab endeavoured to enlarge their sphere of influence although Saud was mainly interested in territory whilst Wahhab was looking to impose his version of Islam upon neighbouring Muslim tribes. Saud was to provide Wahhab with the military means to conduct their ideological and religious warfare, thereby eliminating Saud's competitors for political power, in return for which Wahhab would offer his reign religious legitimacy. This covenant was solidified by the marriage of Wahhab's daughter to King Saud. Following this alliance, Wahhab unleashed a campaign of terror in the Arabian Peninsula and for the first time in Islamic history legitimized jihad against fellow Muslims.[92] In accordance with the basic tenets of Salafism, Wahhab declared that since the formation of the schools of jurisprudence, the Muslim community had lived in a state of unbelief. According to Wahhab, true Islam was the Islam of the prophet and his companions. Their example of how to live an Islamic life, together with the text of the Quran, had to be taken literally and any diversion from it was an act of *kufr,* disbelief. As a result, all those who did not adhere to his version of Islam gave evidence to their unbelief and therefore became apostates. When the terror of the *ikhwan,* the brotherhood of Wahhabi Muslims, grew too large for Saud to contain, he made a deal with them: they were given sanctuary by the Saudi kingdom but were not to intervene with the affairs of the kingdom too much, much less be allowed to continue their campaign of terror within the kingdom. In return for religious legitimacy, the kingdom provided them with all the funds necessary to spread their radical Islamic ideology to the outside world.[93] This money eventually laid the foundation for what was later to become Al-Qaeda, the Taliban regime and countless so-called relief or charity funds, which under the banner of benevolence promote religious hatred and intolerance around the world in Wahhabi schools and mosques, including in the Netherlands, and funded numerous terror organizations such as Hamas.[94,95] It is ferociously anti-Semitic, anti-Christian and anti-Shiite,

---

[92] Dore Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism*, op. cit. p. 22.

[93] Loc. cit.

[94] Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service, *Saudi Influences in the Netherlands - Links between the Salafist Mission, Radicalisation Processes and Islamic Terrorism*, 2004.

[95] Loretta Napoleoni, *Modern Jihad: Tracing the Dollars Behind the Terror Networks*, London: Pluto 2003.

inciting genocide of these groups irrespective of their individuality and employing much of the same rhetoric as the Nazis, a rhetoric that it integrates in its school curriculum.[96,97,98] To give an idea of the enormity of this operation: over the last 27 years Saudi-Arabia has spent over 70 billion dollars, that is 2.5 billion dollars a year, in spreading the Wahhabi ideology. In comparison, the USSR at the height of its power spent only 1 billion dollars a year on propaganda.[99] Just two of its many 'charitable' institutions, the al-Haramain foundation and the international Islamic relief foundation have printed over 13 million books, trained and sent out over 9000 preachers and founded more than 5000 mosques.[100] Both organizations operate from Saudi embassies or have their own office buildings in Western countries. Both are implicated by US authorities in terrorist activities. A document called "the golden chain" was obtained in by Bosnian police in a raid on the Saudi 'charitable' fund "Benevolence International Foundation" in 2002. The document lists the names of sponsors of AL-Qaeda. The list consists of more than twenty top Saudi and Gulf state financial sponsors including bankers, businessmen, and former ministers.[101] The aim is to spread Wahhabism into every corner of the world and undermine the non-Islamic and non-Wahhabi societies in which they reside by violent or non-violent means, whichever is more opportune.

Whereas jihad in classical Islam is limited to the polytheists, unbelievers and active opponents of Islam, Wahhabism also legitimizes jihad against all those Muslims who do not subscribe to their views. In this sense, Wahhabism is a deviation, or ironically *bid'a,* from classical Islam. In addition, although it can be said the well known credo of "no forced conversion" is lacking in credibility, one is hesitant to decline an

---

[96] Hans Janssen, *Van Jodenhaat Naar Zelfmoordterrorisme*, Heerenveen: Groen 2006.

[97] Gabriel Schoenfeld, *The Return of Anti-Semitism*, London: Politico's 2005.

[98] Centre for Religious Freedom of Freedom House and Institute for Gulf Affairs, *Saudi Arabia's Curriculum of Intolerance*, 2006, p. 11: "As demonstrated by excerpts from the dozen current Islamic studies textbooks analyzed in this report, the Saudi public school religious curriculum continues to propagate an ideology of hate toward the 'unbeliever', that is, Christians, Jews, Shiites, Sufis, Sunni Muslims who do not follow Wahhabi doctrine".

[99] David E. Kaplan; Monica Ekman; Aamir Latif, 'The Saudi Connection: How Billions in Oil Money Spawned a Global Terror Network', *U.S. News & World Report*, December 15 (2003).

[100] United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Wahhabism: State-Sponsored Extremism Worldwide*, 2003.

[101] Library of Congress, 'Saudi Arabia: Terrorist Financing Issues', in *Congressional research service*, 2004.

'invitation to Islam' when heavily outnumbered or faced with legal discrimination, forced conversions are not the rule in the long and varied history or Islam.[102] Wahhab's unrestricted jihad explicitly allows for forced conversions and as such introduces an amount of religious terror, which came as a shock even to contemporary Muslims. Whilst the alliance with Saud limits the amount of influence of Wahhabism within Saudi-Arabia, it also allowed for an enormous amount of money to go into exporting Wahhabism to the world. One of the consequences of this policy was the financing of numerous religious schools or *madrassa's* in almost every continent. These schools were to become well known when their Pakistani students, also known as *talibs,* entered into Afghanistan to fight alongside the Afghani mujahedeen in order to rid the country of tyranny of the warlords. Initially welcomed by the population, the talibs, who were organized under the leadership of Muhammad Omar (born ca. 1959), came to establish the Taliban regime that lasted from 1994–2001. Omar, who was an ardent follower of Sheikh Abdullah Azzam (1941–1989), mentor of Osama bin laden, endeavoured to create an Islamic state that would be the embodiment of Sharia and was heavily influenced by the Wahhabi conception of Islam. The Taliban regime would come to function as a training ground and as a base of operations for an organization that was until then stateless, Al-Qaeda.

Al-Qaeda and Al-Zawahiri

Ayman Muhammad Rabaie al-Zawahiri, born in Egypt in 1951, is the second in command and chief ideologue of Al-Qaeda.[103]

---

[102] Bernhard Lewis in Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism* op. cit. p. 24 "While the universal Caliphate broke up into smaller states, the irresistible and permanent jihad came to an end, and a relationship of mutual tolerance was established between the Muslim world and the rest (…). Jihad was postponed from historic to messianic times".

[103] Zawahiri joined the MB at the age of fourteen and would later become one of the chief organizers and recruiters of the Egyptian Islamic jihad (EIJ), a radical offshoot of the MB. The EIJ was a terrorist organization, which like the MB, was heavily influenced by the writings of Al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb and the Salafi creed. Its main goal was the overthrow of the Egyptian government and the establishment of an Islamic state. Following the assassination of Anwar Sadat in October, 1981 by a cell of EIJ, Zawahiri and hundreds of other members of EIJ were arrested, tortured and subsequently imprisoned. Released in 1984, Zawahiri travelled to Saudi-Arabia, Pakistan and Sudan. In Pakistan, he met the founders of the Maktab al-khadamat (MAK), an organization which funneled money, arms and fighters from the Arab world to Afghanistan in order to wage a jihad against the soviets. The founders were Abdullah Azzam, a member of

With firm roots in the ideology of Sayyid Qutb, Al-Banna's MB and the theology of Ibn Taymiyyah, Zawahiri's organization, the Egyptian Islamic jihad (EIJ) attempted to replace the Egyptian secular government with an Islamic state based on the Sharia. As such, Zawahiri's political ideology adopted a top-down approach, believing that the rebirth of the Islamic state should be organized form above. After a number of setbacks, failed assassination attempts and numerous crackdowns on the EIJ by consecutive Egyptian governments, the EIJ in 2001 merged with Osama bin Laden's AL-Qaeda (founded in 1988). Disillusioned by the failure of the top-down approach, Zawahiri would come to abandon his policy of overthrowing the Egyptian government and instead aim at mobilization of the Muslim masses at large. Operating from Afghanistan, Al-Qaeda was not to be *the* instrument of revolution but rather function as the spiritual, ideological and in part, operational headquarters of a much larger Islamic Palingenetic movement aimed at awakening the Muslim masses. The conditions of the Islamic world, according to Zawahiri, overlap to a great degree with those of the masses in pre-communist Russia, China, Cambodia and pre-Nazi Germany. The masses face material poverty, have no political representation, suffer greatly from a lack of civil and political freedom and are in a search for order and destiny now that their traditional ways are increasingly confronted with modernity. Numerous reports by human rights organizations, the UN and the rise of Islamic revivalist movements across the Islamic world tend to agree with this observation.

---

the Palestinian branch of the MB who was already acquainted with Zawahiri, and Osama bin Laden. During his stay in Pakistan, Zawahiri endeavored to reestablish the EIJ and subsequently found refuge in Sudan where he could once again set up a base of operations. It was during this period in 1991 that Zawahiri assumed leadership of the EIJ. During this stay in Sudan, the Egyptian government was able to get their hands on a list of the majority of the members of the EIJ, which resulted in a major crackdown on the organization in Egypt, during which more than 800 members of the organization were arrested. In a reaction to this crackdown, the EIJ in Sudan attempted a number of unsuccessful attempts at destabilizing the Egyptian government, most notably on the leader of the crackdown, Egyptian Interior Minister, Hasan al-Alfi and Prime Minister Aref Sidqi in 1993. In 1995 the EIJ together with another Egyptian radical islamists group, al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, and the Sudanese government plotted to assassinate Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak. This attempt also failed and resulted yet again in a crackdown by the Egyptian authorities against radical islamists groups. To complicate matters even more, the Sudanese government, under pressure from the international community, forced the EIJ and bin Laden to leave Sudan. Finally, in 2001, the EIJ merged with bin Laden's Al-Qaeda, its official name being jamaa'at Qa'idat al-Jihad.

Propaganda and Indoctrination

Within the body of literature and statements of any radical ideological movement, a clear distinction should be made between propaganda and indoctrination. Propaganda is intended for those who are not a member of the inner circle of believers i.e. those who still need to be persuaded or those who need to be appeased by false information. Indoctrination on the other hand is strictly aimed at those who already subscribe to the movements ideology and are deemed ready to be exposed to the true aims of the movement.[104]

When reading the statements made by Zawahiri or bin Laden it should therefore be kept in mind to which audience they are addressed. Their statements to the west, when compared to statements directed to Islamic audiences, fall under the category of *taqiyya*[105] and propaganda. These statements have as their main theme an accusation of colonialism, occupation and the support of dictatorship and wish to transmit the message that if only the west would end their transgressions against the Islamic world, peace would be at hand. In other words, in their propaganda Al-Qaeda portrays itself as a pragmatic opponent that merely wishes to retaliate injustices incurred upon the Muslim world by the west. If the western hostilities would cease, so would Al-Qaeda's self-defined *defensive* jihad. Al-Qaeda however leaves no illusion as to the validity of these messages. What they state in their messages directed to the west is directly contradicted in their statements directed to the Islamic world. In "why we are fighting you", a statement addressed to Americans, bin Laden describes Islam as:
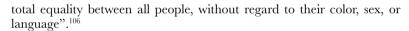
> the religion of showing kindness to others, establishing justice between them, granting them their rights, and defending the oppressed (…) and

---

[104] For example, the propaganda of the soviet-union would emphasize the happiness of the workers, the equal distribution of wealth and the improvement of the standard of living in the USSR. Indoctrination on the other hand would emphasize the need for an ongoing battle against the enemies of the people, within society and even within one's own family, eventually making the Gulag an obvious and necessary institution of soviet society.

[105] *Taqiyya* means that Muslims may under certain circumstances openly deceive infidels by feigning friendship or goodwill – even apostasy- provided that their heart remains true to Islam". Zawahiri elevates the concept of *Taqiyya* to a doctrine, something that is part and parcel of the Muslims attitude towards the non-Muslim, and legitimizes its use by a Quranic verse that states: "Let the believers not take for friends and allies infidels rather than believers: whoever does this shall have no relationship with Allah- unless you but guard yourselves against them, taking precautions", *Quran* 3:28. Raymond Ibrahim, Ayman Zawahiri, and Osama Bin Laden, *The Al Qaeda Reader*, New York: Doubleday 2007, pp. 64–65.

total equality between all people, without regard to their color, sex, or language".[106]

In a statement directed at the Islamic world, more specifically Saudi-Arabia which was already familiar with the puritanical Wahhabi creed of Islam, the emphasis is shifted from toleration, peace and kindness to a more threatening: convert, submit or die.

> There are only three choices in Islam: either willing submission; or payment of the jizaah, thereby physical not spiritual submission to the authority of Islam; or the sword-*for it is not right to let him [an infidel] live*. The matter is summed up for every person alive: either submit, or live under the suzerainty of Islam or die.[107]

What this suggests, if not proves, is that In stark contrast to what some may hope and what Al-Qaeda's propaganda may proclaim, the aim of Al-Qaeda is not practical, temporal, limited or defensive. If such claims are made, they serve to confuse, appease or blind the opponent and as such merely serve a strategic function. As Muhammad himself said: "war is deceit".[108] This of course is nothing new, it happens in every conflict, nor is it unique to Islam.

The ideology of Al-Qaeda focuses on two main concepts, the doctrines of 'loyalty and enmity', and offensive jihad. These concepts, according to Al-Qaeda, are nothing new or invented but are dictated by Islam itself. The statements made by Al-Qaeda concerning these doctrines all refer to the basic founding stones of Islamic theology, and in terms of structure, can be compared to that of a legal document. The texts are rife with references to the Quran, to the life of the prophet and his companions and to the corresponding views of Islamic scholars. All in all the texts give the impression that Al-Qaeda is not inventing a new doctrine but merely reviving a lost tradition.

Loyalty and Enmity
The central theme of the doctrine of loyalty and enmity is that a Muslim is obliged to love his fellow-Muslim and hate the non-Muslim. In the

---

[106] Osama bin Laden: Why we are fighting you, October 2002, translated in op. cit. p. 202.

[107] Op. cit. p. 19, italics by me. It should be noted that jizaah is only possible for people of the book, not for Hindu's, atheist or other categories not expressly mentioned in the Quran as having the rights of the Dhimmi. Furthermore, if the people of the book are found to be in opposition to the Muslims, as Wahhab mentioned, then the possibility for physical submission to Islam is no longer valid.

[108] Bukhari, 'Sahih Al-Bukhari', (864) Volume 4, Book 52, Number 267, Riyadh: Darussalam 1997.

texts "Loyalty and enmity, an inherited doctrine and a lost reality" and "Modern Islam is a Prostration to the West", Zawahiri and respectively bin Laden explain the content of this doctrine. For the purpose of this paragraph, I shall quote extensively form the Quran and the hadith since this in the end is the foundation of Al-Qaeda's ideology.

> Such, then, is the basis and foundation of the relationship between the infidel and the Muslim. Battle, animosity, and hatred- directed from the Muslim to the infidel- is the foundation of our religion. And we consider this a justice and kindness to them. The west perceives fighting, enmity and hatred all for the sake of religion as unjust, hostile and evil. But who's understanding is right- our notions of justice and righteousness, or theirs?[109]

The basis for this hatred is twofold. First of all, Allah stipulates in the Quran that the infidel hates the Muslim.

> O ye who believe! Take not into your intimacy those outside your ranks: They will not fail to corrupt you. They only desire your ruin: Rank hatred has already appeared from their mouths: What their hearts conceal is far worse. We have made plain to you the Signs, if ye have wisdom. (Q. 3:118)[110]

> They desire that you should disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you might be (all) alike; therefore take not from among them friends until they fly (their homes) in Allah's way; but if they turn back, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them, and take not from among them a friend or a helper". (Q. 4:89)

Secondly, and far more important and numerous, are the number of versus in the Quran that obligate the Muslim to hate and fight the non-Muslim. I shall name but a few that Al-Qaeda repeats *ad nauseum*:

> Infidels are those who say: 'Allah is one of three' [trinity] (Q. 5:73)

> Infidels are those who say: 'Allah is the messiah, son of Mary' (Q. 5:17)

> Let believers not take for friends and allies infidels rather than believers: whoever does this shall have no relationship left with Allah (Q. 3:28)

> O prophet! Wage war against the infidels and hypocrites and be ruthless. Their abode is hell-an evil fate! (Q. 9:73)

---

[109] 'Moderate Islam is a prostration to the West', translated in Raymond Ibrahim, Ayman Zawahiri, and Osama Bin Laden, *The Al Qaeda Reader*, op. cit. p. 43.

[110] The translation from the Quran is either the one given by Al-Qaeda in their own texts or from http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/if not derived from Al-Qaeda's texts.

> When your Lord revealed to the angels: I am with you; therefore make firm those who believe. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Therefore, strike off their heads and strike off every fingertip of them. (Q. 8:12)

For Al-Qaeda, these verses transmit an eternal truth.[111] Accordingly, in their view Islam *is* radical, moderate Islam is considered a 'prostration to the west' and something that deviates from the commandments of the Quran and the example of the prophet.[112] Concepts such as tolerance, interfaith dialogue and mutual respect appear to Zawahiri as laughable: "as if one of the foundations of our religions is how to coexist with infidels!!"[113]

Islam to Zawahiri follows the same principle that guided Muhammad when he stated:

> I have been sent with the sword between my hands to ensure that no one but Allah is worshipped- Allah who put my livelihood under the shadow of my spear and who inflicts humiliation and scorn on those who disobey my commandments.[114]

---

[111] It should be mentioned that the way in which these verses are interpreted is subject of discussion within the Islamic world itself. Some claim that these versus refer to specific circumstances at specific points in Islamic history and should only been seen in that respect. Others, such as Al-Qaeda, would insist that the validity of these verses is on the contrary universal and timeless. When one reads these verses, and the context in which they are situated within the text from which they are derived, one does not get the impression that the definition and fate of infidels and hypocrites is susceptible to change. If the Quran is the timeless word of Allah it would not seem correct to assume that these commandments could lose their validity over time. However that may be, and this is not the place for such a discussion, for Al-Qaeda it is clear that Allah has spoken to the community of believers and has informed them of the existential hatred of the unbeliever towards the Muslim, and the Muslims eternal duty to hate and fight the unbeliever.

[112] This is exemplified in their reaction to a statement by the Saudis entitled "How we can coexist". The latter was written by the Saudi's in reaction to an American statement: "What we are fighting for" and attempts to formulate a platform of interfaith dialogue. Upset with this deviation from what they see as true Islamic teachings, Al-Qaeda responded as follows: op. cit. p. 17 "The Islam preached by the advocates of interreligious dialogue does not contain loyalty and enmity; nor does it contain offensive jihad; nor boundaries established by Sharia -since it is these very doctrines that worry the west most (…) indeed the very essence of our problem with the west revolves around these principles".

[113] Bin Laden in 'Moderate Islam is a prostration to the west', *The Al Qaeda Reader*, op. cit. p. 23.

[114] Bin Laden in 'Al-Qaeda's declaration of war against Americans', *The Al Qaeda Reader*, op. cit. p. 11. Although no one verse could be found that described this statement it is probably a contraction of Bukhari, 'Sahih Al-Bukhari', volume 1 book 8 number 378, op. cit.: "Allah's Apostle said, 'I have been ordered to fight the people till they say: "None has the right to be worshipped but Allah". And if they say so, pray like our

The language of the Quran and hadith, as used here by Al-Qaeda and likeminded scholars, indicates that the establishment of Islam automatically created a world divided into two, namely the world of the believer and that of the unbeliever. In this worldview the Quran, which is the word of Allah himself, stipulates that the unbeliever is by definition a constant threat to the Muslim, and the Muslim is obliged to hate and fight the unbelievers until all submit either physically or spiritually to Islam. Whether or not it is *true* that the unbelievers are a threat to the Muslims is irrelevant, the Quran states it, therefore it *is* true. The ideological danger of this position is of course evident. When no fact derived from reality is allowed to interfere with the reality described by the doctrine, the only option left is to view the world from within the limited confines of the paradigm created by that doctrine. In other words, since the doctrine cannot be rewritten in order to conform to reality, reality has to be transformed in order to coincide with the doctrine. Either the doctrine is false, in which Allah himself would be false, or our understanding of reality is incorrect. For the true believer this should be an easy choice. This paradigm is essentially the same as the totalitarian and Gnostic speculative paradigm as described by Voegelin when he stated:

> The system is justified by the fact of its construction; the possibility of calling into question the construction of systems, as such, is not acknowledged. That the form of science is the system must be assumed as beyond all question.[115]

Offensive Jihad

The doctrine of loyalty and enmity automatically raises the question: how should the hatred toward the unbelievers be materialized? Al-Qaeda in this respect follows the same line of, amongst others, Sayyid Qutb and Wahhab who argued that it is in the very nature of Islam to wage an *offensive* jihad against the unbelievers. This position does not seem strange since it was Muhammed himself who proclaimed that he was ordered to fight until all religion was for Allah.[116] The basic position

---

prayers, face our Qibla and slaughter as we slaughter, then their blood and property will be sacred to us and we will not interfere with them except legally and their reckoning will be with Allah'". And Volume 4, Book 52, Number 73"Allah's Apostle said: "Know that Paradise is under the shades of swords".

[115] Voegelin, *Modernity without Restraint* op. cit. p. 274.

[116] It should be noted that Islamic jurisprudence allows for a jihad to be fought under the leadership of a Caliph or Islamic ruler. Both Qutb and Zawahiri find that such a ruler is absent from the Islamic world and that thus jihad becomes an individual

seems to be twofold; on the one hand all religion needs to be purified for Allah, meaning that the object of the struggle is Allah and the supreme reign of his word. On the other hand, the content of Islam is seen as being man's ultimate destiny and freedom, and the propagation of Islam is essentially to man's benefit. Both goals can be achieved, as we have seen earlier, by *jihad bil lisan* or Da'wa (preaching, good example) or other non-violent means, *provided* that the Muslims do not encounter violence or obstruction from the non-Muslims. Again, the definition of violence in this context is a very flexible one, Qutb already argued that

> No political system or material power should put hindrances in the way of preaching Islam. … If someone does this, then it is the duty of Islam to fight him until he is either killed or until he declares his submission[117].

So the question arises: what qualifies as a hindrance? Does Qutb demand a monopoly in the terrain of preaching the 'truth'? Or would he agree to a position of competition? Is a schoolteacher that teaches that Islam has no greater claim to truth than any other religion, inadvertently proclaiming war against Islam? Would a university that did not allow an Islamic prayer room to be used for Da'wa make the same mistake? Well, in a way, as a matter of logical deduction, they would be. Since Islam is seen as the epitome of freedom and the only true religion, anything contravening that message would amount to the promotion of tyranny.[118] Moreover, it would hamper the goal of purifying religion for Allah. The principle underlying Da'wa therefore is ultimately one of monopoly since: "truth and falsehood cannot coexist on this earth".[119] Anything contravening that monopoly would qualify as a hindrance and thus open the way to offensive jihad. It is easy to see how a society built upon the ideas of the enlightenment, secularity, Darwinism or even another religion than Islam can fulfill the criterion of 'hindrance

---

obligation. The theological and legal difficulties of this intricate discussion within Islam itself have been left out of this overview for reasons of brevity.

[117] Qutb, *Milestones*. It should be noted – once again – that one of the meanings of the word *Islam* is submission.

[118] Bassam Tibi, 'War and peace in Islam', in Andrew G. Bostom, ed., *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims*, Amherst: Prometheus Books 2005, p. 328: "Relations between dar al-Islam, the home of peace (territory where Islam is the sovereign) and dar al-Harb, the world of the unbelievers, nevertheless take place in a state of war, according to the Quran and to the authoritative commentaries of Islamic jurists. Unbelievers who stand in the way, creating obstacles for the Da'wa, are blamed for this state of war, for the Da'wa can be pursued if others submit to it. In other words, those who resist Islam cause wars and are responsible for them".

[119] Op. cit. p. 52.

in the way of preaching Islam'. In this view, the act of construction of Islam automatically creates the conditions in which offensive jihad becomes the norm. The only way to escape from this destiny is to submit willfully to the demands of Islam. In addition it should be remembered that classical Islamic laws regarding the jihad clearly state that *those who have 'been invited to Islam'* are left with only two choices, submit or be killed (or pay the jizaah in the case of Christians and Jews). This in not an invention of Qutb, but an example of the prophet Muhammad himself.[120] Thus the offensive jihad, the quest to liberate mankind and purify religion for Allah, seems logically inescapable. The only real way in which this permanent state of war can be avoided, and has been avoided in a great part of the Islamic history, is if this logical rigidity is put aside. If one, in contrary to Islamic prescripts, would accept the idea that Islam should only be allowed to 'conquer the world' in a truly free and open market place of ideas, in which all forms of intellectual and physical forms of pressure, such as dhimmitude and jihad, were eliminated, then the doctrine of offensive jihad would become void. The doctrine of loyalty and enmity would have no recourse to materialization. The question however is to what degree such a philosophy would remain consistent with Islam's basic tenets. This depends highly on the way in which the sources are judged. Are they specifically aimed at the circumstances at that time or are they universal and timeless?[121] The great expansion of the early Islam seems to indicate that jihad was offensive regardless of the peculiarity of the enemy it confronted and thus can serve as an example of timeless and universal interpretation. In addition, the decline of offensive jihad of later times appears to be caused by internal strife, disintegration, a lack of military might, loss of religious fervor and leadership or other real-world political demands, rather than any doctrinal change.
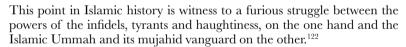
The concept of offensive jihad is explained in numerous statements by Al-Qaeda. The following quotation is of particular interest:

---

[120] See for instance the Battle at Khaybar in 628.

[121] The four madhab's of Sunni Islam, Hanbali, Shafi, Hanafi and Maliki, all seem to agree that jihad is permissible either in defense or when the call to invitation to Islam has been extended and been refused. Modern interpreters, such as Pakistani Javed Ghamidi claim that the jihad as it was fought in the time of Muhammed should only be seen to apply to the enemies of those times. After that only the defensive jihad was permissible and only if it was fought by an Islamic state. In Shi'a Islam, the jihad is postponed until the return of the Mahdi.

> This point in Islamic history is witness to a furious struggle between the powers of the infidels, tyrants and haughtiness, on the one hand and the Islamic Ummah and its mujahid vanguard on the other.[122]

With this simple sentence, the stage is set. The symbolism of the concepts used should not go unnoticed to those familiar with the history of totalitarian movements and Gnostic movements. First of all the current period in history is described in almost apocalyptical terms. The depiction of society as being in turmoil, depression and oppression is never truly questioned, for that would only bring to light inconvenient nuances, but just stated. In addition, the way in which Zawahiri describes the present condition of the Islamic world is almost a mirror image of the language used by the Nazi's and the communists when they tried to convey their *raison d'être* to their respective audiences. Secondly, the enemy is defined in existentialist terms according to the doctrine of loyalty and enmity. Thirdly; the group of believers, those who God, history or nature has designated as its 'chosen' people, comparable to *Volk* or *class*, and its enemies are all referred to as a collective and not as a collection of individuals.[123] This act of mass collectivization, which is based on the Quran itself, enables Zawahiri to circumvent the complexities of the socio-political reality that affects billions, *i.e.* the Hayekian uncertainty principle, and instead reduces all the intricacies of the human experience to a simple 'us versus them' equation which exists nowhere in reality. Again, the same can be seen in the Marxian[124] and the Nazi's[125] reduction of world history to simple axiomatic premises. Fourthly, the struggle at hand is in the first place fought by a 'mujahid vanguard'. The idea of a vanguard that fights in the front line and consists of those who are pure of heart is again nothing new. It can be seen

---

[122] "loyalty and enmity" translated in op. cit. p. 66.

[123] The Ummah in Islamic vocabulary is the whole body of Muslims. Whether or not Muslims around the world agree with this generalization of themselves is not put into question, rather, those who disagree automatically become unbelievers.

[124] Karl Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, loc. cit. "The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles".

[125] United States. Office of Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality. et al., *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*. Volume 1 chapter 7 3/55: "We stand today before a definitive decision. Either through a new experience and cultivation of the old blood, coupled with an enhanced fighting will, we will rise to a purificatory action, or the last Germanic-western values of morality and state-culture shall sink away in the filthy human masses of the big cities, become stunted on the sterile burning asphalt of a bestialized inhumanity, or trickle away as a horrific agent in the form of emigrants bastardizing themselves in South America, China, Dutch East India, Africa".

in Mussolini's *combatinmenti*, Hitler's SS and Lenin's Avant-garde. The idea behind this symbolic term is always the same, to serve as a role model of the perfect fascist, Aryan, communist or, as in this case, Muslim. Whereas in secular totalitarian and fascist movements the desire to sacrifice oneself for the greater good had to be skillfully created through indoctrination, the divine origin of Islam and its promise of paradise make this task a lot easier.[126] Lastly, the quote from Zawahiri is interesting because it truly underlines the essence of loyalty and enmity. The world outside of Islam is a world of 'infidels, tyrants and haughtiness' which the Muslim world must strive to overcome. If Zawahiri had intended jihad to be only *defensive*, the unbelievers would have to be fought only if they would enter Muslim lands. This however is not the case. In accordance with Muhammad's self-proclaimed mission, "I have been sent with the sword between my hands to ensure that no one but Allah is worshipped", the ultimate mission of jihad is to cleanse the world of unbelief. This can never be purely defensive for as long as unbelief remains, the goal of Muhammad, and perhaps even the ultimate end of creation, cannot be fulfilled. Unbelief, as Qutb has also argued, is the negation of freedom. Since those who have heard the invitation to Islam will go to hell if they refuse to submit.[127] Muslims are in fact acting in the best interests of the unbelievers when they force them to submit to Islam. Only in submission, either physically or spiritually, can one be saved from hell fire. Furthermore, Zawahiri emphasizes that it is not primarily love for ones fellow man, but more importantly love for Allah and Islam that drives the offensive jihad.

> befriending believers and battling infidels are critical pillars in a Muslim's faith. His faith is incomplete without it. ….Any Muslim zealous over the

---

[126] Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, 'Sahih Muslim'. Book 020, Number 4645 "It has been narrated on the authority of Abu Sa'id Khudri that the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said (to him): Abu Sa'id, whoever cheerfully accepts Allah as his Lord, Islam as his religion and Muhammad as his Apostle is necessarily entitled to enter Paradise. He (Abu Sa'id) wondered at it and said: Messenger of Allah, repeat it for me. He (the Messenger of Allah) did that and said: There is another act which elevates the position of a man in Paradise to a grade one hundred (higher), and the elevation between one grade and the other is equal to the height of the heaven from the earth. He (Abu Sa'id) said: What is that act? He replied: Jihad in the way of Allah! Jihad in the way of Allah!"

[127] *Quran* 33:64–66 "Verily Allah has cursed the Unbelievers and prepared for them a Blazing Fire, - To dwell therein for ever: no protector will they find, nor helper. The Day that their faces will be turned upside down in the Fire, they will say: "Woe to us! Would that we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger!""

triumph of Islam cannot accept any call to halt or postpone jihad or turn the Ummah away from it.[128]

As long as unbelief exists, jihad is proscribed. This brings us to the point raised by Arendt namely that the plurality of man, its most basic capacity for spontaneity, and the fact that each birth is a new beginning, in essence entails the possibility for unbelief.[129] The jihad is therefore not only directed at all current unbelievers, but also at the potential future unbelievers. The only way to avoid unbelief in the future is to install upon society such a system of indoctrination that any attempt at spontaneous, and thus possibly divergent, thought concerning religion would a priori become impossible. Jihad in that sense is a permanent institution. The Quran and hadith provide evidence that this jihad is to be extended to the inner circle of the family as well.[130,131] Lastly, secular totalitarianism have always promised the fabrication of utopia to those whom they had submitted to their reign. If utopia was not reached, or if in fact the opposite became reality, there were always classes of enemies who could be identified and held responsible for 'sabotaging' the revolution. The eschatology of Islam however places the 'end of history' firmly in the hands of Allah; it cannot be immanentized by man. There is therefore no concrete image of utopia by which the progress of the revolution can be judged. There is however an earthly Eschaton that can be immanentized and that is the status in which Islam rules supreme

---

[128] Loyalty and enmity translated in Ibrahim, Zawahiri, and Bin Laden, *The Al Qaeda Reader*, op. cit. p. 113.

[129] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit. p. 398: "This movement, proceeding according to its own law, cannot in the long run be hindered; eventually its force will always prove more powerful than the most powerful forces engendered by the actions and the will of men. But it can be slowed down and is slowed down almost inevitably by the freedom of man, which even totalitarian rulers cannot deny, for this freedom – irrelevant and arbitrary as they may deem it- is identical with the fact that men are born and die and that therefore each of them is a new beginning, begins in a sense the world anew".

[130] *Quran* 58:22 "Thou wilt not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, loving those who resist Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred. For such He has written Faith in their hearts, and strengthened them with a spirit from Himself. And He will admit them to Gardens beneath which Rivers flow, to dwell therein (for ever). Allah will be well pleased with them, and they with Him. They are the Party of Allah. Truly it is the Party of Allah that will achieve Felicity".

[131] Ibn Kathir, the authoritative commentator on the hadith describes how the companions and successors of the prophet would kill their fathers, brothers and cousins if they found them in opposition to Allah or his messenger. See Ibrahim, Zawahiri, and Bin Laden, *The Al Qaeda Reader*, op. cit. p. 76.

over earth and when 'all religion is purified for Allah'. In which case we turn back to the previous argument of the problem of plurality, spontaneity and the necessary permanence of jihad.
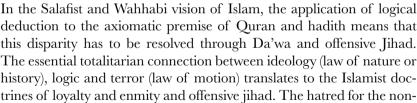
Summary and Conclusion

I have described the criteria that form the basis of totalitarianism as follows:

1. The formation of an exclusive eschatological ideology through logical deduction from an axiomatic premise;
2. An existential enemy;
3. Terror as the driving force behind the immanentization of the Eschaton;
4. The threefold permanence of war.

The axiomatic premise, as in any religion, is the exclusive character of the Quran and the hadith itself. The degree to which one is free to debate the contents of its commandments depends on which form of Islam one follows. For the Salafists, Wahhabis, Qutb and Al-Qaeda, the Quran and hadith are to be taken as literally as possible, in which case these sources take on an obligatory totalist ethical character which eliminates the capacity for spontaneous thought and where a failure to comply amounts to apostasy, punishable by death. This totalistic ethical code is deemed able to give a causal explanation and normative evaluation of the entire world's past, present and future events, and is thereby the exact opposite of the Hayekian uncertainty principle. As a result, all human actions that have taken and can take place in the world are evaluated in the light of this ethical code and in the light of the path towards an eschatology that is, in the long run, inescapable. The freedom to act spontaneously and the ensuing plurality of man are a temporal hindrance in the fulfilment of this movement towards the end of history. The purification of religion for Allah and the supremacy of Islam over the earth is something that, in the end, is bound to happen, for it is Allah's will. As such, it is comparable to the secular totalitarian notion of the law of history or nature. The human journey towards that end goal is, however, delayed by those who fail to submit themselves to Islam. The founding act of Islam therefore automatically created a class of enemies who are, by their very essence, existential enemies. Their existence stands between the present state of disorder and the eschatological vision of world perfection. In Islam, this is the position of the unbeliever.

In the Salafist and Wahhabi vision of Islam, the application of logical deduction to the axiomatic premise of Quran and hadith means that this disparity has to be resolved through Da'wa and offensive Jihad. The essential totalitarian connection between ideology (law of nature or history), logic and terror (law of motion) translates to the Islamist doctrines of loyalty and enmity and offensive jihad. The hatred for the non-Muslim is prescribed by Islam in the Quran and hadith, and is not susceptible to change. Failure to convert when invited to Islam (the obligation for Da'wa) is deemed an act of war in itself, for it prolongs the state of imperfection in the world and inhibits the purification of religion for Allah. The consequence thereof is conversion under the threat of the sword or the payment of *jizaah*, which amounts to legal discrimination and purposeful humiliation aimed at enticing conversion. The institute of jihad also shares the three aspects of the permanence of totalitarian war. First of all, the doctrine of loyalty and enmity is not based on reality but only on the logicality inherent in the paradigm of Islam. Where reality deviates from the ideology, the ideology is to transform reality until it conforms to the ideology. If the unbelievers were to live with Muslims in a state of total peace, then the ideology would still insist that a state of war was reality. The only way to accomplish this is to reason that the mere act of refusing to submit to Islam is a declaration of war in itself. Reality is thereby made to conform to the picture of permanent war as depicted by the ideology. Secondly, the aim of Islam is to free all mankind from oppression and falsehood and to purify religion for Allah. Its war against the unbelievers is therefore necessity not bound by limits of territory or time, but rather universal and permanent. Thirdly, if in those areas in which Islam rules supreme and in which the Islamic model of life has been imposed on its subjects, the expected utopia does not emerge, the fault can never be attributed to the ideology itself. By logical necessity, any failure to live up to expectations is due to an external enemy or lack of religious fervour, not to any failure inherent in the system itself. Since it is safe to say that utopia will never be reached on earth, new classes of enemies will have to be invented and identified, lest the ideology lose its credibility. As such, the ideology is permanently and *ever increasingly* at war with mankind and reality itself.

In conclusion, it is my contention that the doctrine of loyalty and enmity and offensive jihad, combined with a strict adherence to the sources of Islam as expounded by Qutb, Wahhab, Zawahiri and bin Laden, amounts to totalitarianism.
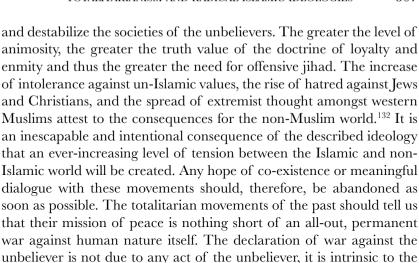
Although still in the phase of a grass-roots movement, it shares the essential link between ideology and terror that is only found in totalitarian movements. How these movements will behave should they evolve to a position of a monopoly on power is hard to say; but the regime of the Taliban already indicated that a softening of doctrine is not to be expected. What differentiates Islamic totalitarianism, as I have described it here, from the secular types of totalitarianism is worrisome. Unlike secular totalitarian movements, Islamic totalitarianism appears to be leaderless. There are certain figures, such as Wahhab, Qutb or Zawahiri and bin Laden, who act as its spokespeople, but they do not have the amount of control that leaders such as Hitler or Stalin had. In addition, there is no specific territory or hierarchical organization from which they can operate or recruit their followers. Instead, the movements increase their following and mobilize believers into action by virtue of the highly decentralized dissemination of information amongst the worldwide community of believers, through the internet and countless Da'wa institutions, funded by enormous amounts of money from Saudi and Gulf state benefactors. In the end, the success of the movement is highly dependent on its ability to persuade the Ummah of the correctness of its viewpoints. The main focal point of this ideological struggle for religious leadership therefore appears to be Muhammed and Allah themselves. If these movements succeed in winning the hearts and minds of the Muslim masses, then their authority will derive from Muhammed and Allah themselves. The greatest threat that is emanating from this totalitarian danger is, therefore, in the first place directed towards the Ummah itself. The Muslim world, even if it were unified under the banner of radical Islam is in no position to engage in open warfare with the world of the unbelievers. Instead, I would argue that they would follow the path that has been taken by previous totalitarian movements in the same predicament: the subjugation of their own population to ever increasing ideological terror, in order to shape 'the new man' on the one hand, and ever increasing agitation in the domain of the unbelievers on the other hand. Even if the world would submit to Islam, utopia will not be fabricated and the permanence of war would lead to ever-increasing fanaticism in order to demonstrate one's loyalty and in order to prove that the ideology is not at fault. Wahhab's *ikhwan* in Saudi Arabia, the Taliban in Afghanistan and the Islamic revolution in Iran have provided glimpses of such a possible future for the Islamic world. Furthermore, it is of great importance for these movements to agitate

and destabilize the societies of the unbelievers. The greater the level of animosity, the greater the truth value of the doctrine of loyalty and enmity and thus the greater the need for offensive jihad. The increase of intolerance against un-Islamic values, the rise of hatred against Jews and Christians, and the spread of extremist thought amongst western Muslims attest to the consequences for the non-Muslim world.[132] It is an inescapable and intentional consequence of the described ideology that an ever-increasing level of tension between the Islamic and non-Islamic world will be created. Any hope of co-existence or meaningful dialogue with these movements should, therefore, be abandoned as soon as possible. The totalitarian movements of the past should tell us that their mission of peace is nothing short of an all-out, permanent war against human nature itself. The declaration of war against the unbeliever is not due to any act of the unbeliever, it is intrinsic to the message of Islam as it is seen by these movements. No act of cooperation or appeasement can prevent such a war.

> It is the enemy who defines us as his enemy, and in making this definition, he changes us, and changes us whether we like it or not.[133]

---

[132] With a reported 10 to 12 anti-Semitic attacks per day in Paris alone, and with multiple carefully orchestrated attacks on police forces, described by the spokesperson of a major French police trade union as "We are in a state of civil war, orchestrated by radical Islamists", (Arnaud de Borchgrave, 'Gallic Intifada', *Washington Times*, 13 October 2006) there is every cause for alarm. It is my belief that such terror is not merely a reaction against poverty or discrimination but far more likely a deliberate attempt at mobilizing young people who find themselves despairing in an alien environment, looking for an identity and a common bond under the heading of (radical) Islam. With 12 per cent of the French population, 5 million people, living in so-called *Zones urbaines sensibles*, no-go-areas, there is ample opportunity for radical alternatives to get a foothold. Similarly in the UK, one of the most lenient countries when it comes to religious tolerance, makeshift Shari' a courts seize the opportunity in those parts of its cities where the power of the state appears to be dwindling (Joshua Rozenberg, 'Sharia Law Is Spreading as Authority Wanes', *Daily Telegraph*, 30 November 2006). A recent study in the Netherlands found that 40 per cent of Dutch youth of Moroccan descent denounces western values and democracy, 7 per cent admit to being willing to 'defend Islam' by violent means (Michiel Kruijt and Janny Groen, 'Bijna Helft Jonge Marokkanen Antiwesters', *De Volkskrant*, 14 June 2006). This alienation from or even resentment towards the society in which they live can take on even more frightening proportions, as was revealed in a recent study done in Britain with regards to the bombings in London: about one in 20 British Muslims voiced overt sympathy for the bombings a year before. Separate polls find that between 2 per cent and 6 per cent endorse the attacks, 4 per cent refuse to condemn them, 5 per cent believe the Koran justifies them, and 6 per cent say the suicide bombers were acting in accord with the principles of Islam (Dr Daniel Pipes, 'What British Muslims think', *New York Sun*, 11 July 2006).

[133] Lee Harris, *Civilization and Its Enemies: The Next Stage of History*, New York: Free Press 2004, p. xiv.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company 1948.

Arnaud de Borchgrave. 'Gallic Intifada', *Washington Times* (2006).

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cambridge: Polity 1989.

Berlin, Isaiah. *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1969.

Berlin, Isaiah, and Henry Hardy. *The Roots of Romanticism*, The A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, 1965: The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC: Pimlico 2000.

Bostom, Andrew G., (ed.) *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims*, Amherst: Prometheus Books 2005.

Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *Ideology and Power in Soviet Politics*, New York: Praeger 1967.

Centre for Religious Freedom of Freedom House and Institute for Gulf Affairs. *Saudi Arabia's Curriculum of Intolerance*, 2006.

Darwin, Charles. *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*, London: J. Murray 1859.

David E. Kaplan; Monica Ekman; Aamir Latif, 'The Saudi Connection: How Billions in Oil Money Spawned a Global Terror Network', *U.S. News & World Report*, December 15, 2003.

'Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–1945'. In *Series D, Vol XIII*. London, 1964.

Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service, *From Dawa to Jihad*, 2004.

Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service, *Saudi Influences in the Netherlands - Links between the Salafist Mission, Radicalisation Processes and Islamic Terrorism*, 2004.

Friedrich, Carl J., and Zbigniew Brzezinski. *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, New York: Praeger 1966.

Gobineau, A. de. *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*, n.p. 1855.

Gold, Dore. *Hatred's Kingdom : How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism*. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishers 2003.

Janssen, Hans. *Van Jodenhaat Naar Zelfmoordterrorisme*, Heerenveen: Groen 2006.

Harris, Lee. *Civilization and Its Enemies: The Next Stage of History*, New York: Free Press 2004.

Hayek, Friedrich A. von. *The Road to Serfdom*, Routledge Classics, London: Routledge 2001.

Horst, Pieter van der. *De Mythe Van Het Joodse Kannibalisme (Ongecensureerd)*, Soesterberg: Aspekt 2006.

Groen, Janny & Michiel Kruijt. 'Bijna Helft Jonge Marokkanen Antiwesters'. *De Volkskrant*, 06-14-2006.

Jansen, Johannes J. G. *The Dual Nature of Islamic Fundamentalism*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1997.

Khatab, Sayed. *The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb: The Theory of Jahiliyyah*, Routledge Studies in Political Islam. London: Routledge 2006.

Khrushchev, N. 'On the Personality Cult and Its Consequences'. Paper presented at the twentieth party congress 1956.

Lapidus, Ira M. *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Linz, Juan J. *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers 2000.

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *Das Kapital. Kritik Der Politischen Oekonomie*, Hamburg, New York,: Otto Meissner; L.W. Schmidt, 1867.

MEMRI. 'Palestinian Friday Sermon by Sheik Ibrahim Mudeiris: Muslims Will Rule America and Britain, Jews Are a Virus Resembling Aids'. In *TV monitor project*, Jerusalem: MEMRI, 2005.

Muhammad bin 'Abd Al-Latif Aal Al-Sheikh, 'Jihadist Salafist Ideology Is Like Nazism', MEMRI, 2005.

Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. *Kitab at-Tauhid*, Translated by compilation and research department dar-us-salam. Riyadh: Darussalam 1996.

Napoleoni, Loretta. *Modern Jihad: Tracing the Dollars Behind the Terror Networks*, London: Pluto 2003.

Nilus, Sergëïìeæi, and Victor E. Marsden. *Protocols of the Meetings of the Learned Elders of Zion*, London: Britons Publishing Society 1925.

Pew Global Attitudes Project, 'Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics', Washington: Pew research Center 2005.

Popper, Karl Raimund. *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Routledge Classics, London: Routledge 2003.

Populus limited, 'Muslim Poll - December 2005', London: Populus Limited, 2005.

Qutb, Sayyid, *Milestones*, n.p. 1964.

RAND Corporation, 'The Muslim World after 9/11', Santa Monica: 2004.

Robespierre, Maximilien, and Slavoj Zizek. *Virtue and Terror*. London: Verso 2007.

Rohling, August, *Der Talmudjude*, Münster: n.p. 1877.

Rozenberg, Joshua, 'Sharia Law Is Spreading as Authority Wanes', *The Telegraph*, 30 November 2006.

Schacht, Joseph, *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.

Schechtman, Joseph B., *The Mufti and the Fuehrer: The Rise and Fall of Haj Amin El-Husseini*, New York: T. Yoseloff 1965.

Schoenfeld, Gabriel, *The Return of Anti-Semitism*, London: Politico's 2005.

United Nations, 'Freedom and Good Governance', in: *Arab Human Development Report*, New York: United Nations 2004.

United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Wahhabism: State-Sponsored Extremism Worldwide*, Washington DC: 2003.

Voegelin, Eric, *Modernity without Restraint*, Manfred Henningsen (ed.), Columbia: University of Missouri Press 2000.

Wolin, Sheldon, 'Inverted Totalitarianism', Review of Reviewed Item, *The Nation*, May 19, 2003 http://www.thenation.com/doc/20030519/wolin