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Cosmopolitan Islamic Culture

and the Politics of Sufism

by R. James Ferguson

1. Introduction - Islam and Threat Perceptions

Islam is often presented in Western International Relations analysis as a major obstacle the development of liberal democratic thought, and as a traditional pattern of belief incompatible with the modern world, unable to be modernised, and an inhibitor to science and humanitarian traditions. As such, it is regularly confounded with regional security issues where it is perceived as a problem for international order as conceived by Washington, London, Paris or Moscow. This can be seen in a range of analysis concerning the Middle East, instability in the Persian Gulf, fears of a power vacuum in Central Asia (1), negative perceptions of human rights in Pakistan, and a sense by many Western commentators that states such as Malaysia and Indonesia are often 'out of step' with global agendas. (2) There is also the fear that many states in the Middle East and South-East Asia might at any moment succumb to 'fundamentalist' Islam. In fact, both Malaysia and Indonesia, though having Islam as their main religion and representing forms of limited democracy or 'soft' authoritarianism, have been successful secular states whose governments have generally made a very strong stand against the importation of Islam into political life. More hysterical analyses even posit an Islam-Confucian axis of interests which could threaten Western hegemony in the future (3), an analysis likely to puzzle East Asians and Muslims alike. Others suggest that there is a serious, historically based, clash of civilizations underway between Islam and the Judeo-Christian west, even if such a clash is unfortunate.(4)

These themes continue to loom large in Western perceptions in spite of a range of more balanced accounts which look at these issues in a more investigative way. (5) With the decline of the virulence of Soviet power and ideology from 1987 to 1992, Islam has in fact largely provided the function of a perceived threat which can be countered by robust Western policies (6), whether these are arguments in favour of U.S. strategic dominance in the Middle East, or an argument for France's development of small scale tactical ('pre-strategic') nuclear weapons. (7) Furthermore, for those that hope for a triumph of liberal-democracies and capitalism (8), entrenched Islam seems one of the few obstacles to a globalisation of these modern values. These threat perceptions, which verge on paranoia, are accompanied by 'a pervasive ignorance about Islam's central tenets and the diversity of Islamic doctrine and praxis'. (9)

There are of course, real problems and instabilities in many regions with majority Islamic populations. The nature of these problems, however, largely emerge out of the current political,

economic and strategic situation of these societies. These problems have been compounded by recent colonial and neocolonial heritages, generally exacerbated by Cold War tensions (10), rather than being pretexted on the general influence of a 'backward' Islam. Most of these negative images are based on a poor analysis of both the regions concerned and a misweighted interpretation of the nature of Islam. Furthermore, such limited academic accounts are allied with an extremely jaundiced presentation of Islam in the Western media, especially in the selected images of violence and extremism focused on by newspapers and television. (11) It is true that regional leaders and elites have sometimes used Islam to bolster shaky leaderships, support autocratic rule and foster national juntas. Likewise, there are some groups whose interpretation of Islam directly conflicts with cherished liberal values, e.g. the recent reduction, in October 1996, of the status of women in Kabul with the occupation of that city by Taliban forces. (12) These repressive trends, however, are not universal in Islam, and have been condemned by Islamic scholars, both reformist and traditional, including some Iranian clerics who regard the Taliban as addicted to a 'fossilized' form of Islam showing little genuine knowledge of the Quran. (13) Nor is such a rigid view of Islam very acceptable to the populations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and of Central Asia. (14) The Taliban movement itself, based largely on Pashtun refugees trained in the conservative Deoband form of Islam in Pakistan, has come under influence from certain Sufi trends from the Chishti order, and possibly from the Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya orders. (15) Yet unlike most of Central Asia, Sufism charted a different course in Afghanistan and Pakistan, coming to a certain rapprochement with strict orthodox trends. (16) Although the Chishtiyya, Qadiriyya and Naqshbandiyya orders had a strong historical presence in Afghanistan, the intelligentsia and Islamists there in any case became highly politicized and ideologised (17), and moved away from the inward directed paths favoured in contemplative Islam. The Taliban, in fact, represent the antithesis of the main trends of Sufism generally, and in particular as found in West and Central Asia. (18)

These problems need to be placed in a wider global context. Political abuses have plagued a wide range of third world nations in Africa, Asia and South America, often correlating with severe poverty or recent emergence from colonial rule. These countries have diverse religious backgrounds. This conflation of religion, culture and political explanation can broaden rather than limit genuine tensions and conflicts. A related problem emerges from the dominance in the West of this negative construction of the political face of Islam. The universalist, humane and cosmopolitan aspects of Islam are ignored or trivialized by opinion-makers and power-brokers in countries whose policies impact not just on Islamic societies, but affect the world as a whole. The dynamic and potentially positive strands in Islam are largely neglected both in Western analysis and in much foreign policy formulation. This is achieved in large measure by conflating regional problems, based on real physical, economic and strategic instabilities, with assumed cultural bases at variance with Western conceptions of world order. Ironically, such value-based assumption often colour the work of so-called political realists. It highlights radical, so-called fundamentalist trends. The term 'fundamentalist' is unfortunate in that it draws an awkward parallel with the history of Western Biblical interpretation. In fact 'there is no such word as fundamentalism in any of the Islamic languages - Arabic, Persian, Turki or Urdu'. (19) Furthermore, in so far as all practising Muslims accept the Quran and Sunnah as exact normative models 'for living' (20), the term fundamentalist does not really discriminate between different groups within Islam. Nor do so-called fundamentalist leaders fit in with the stereotype of an anti-modernist, backward looking traditionalism: as noted by John Esposito 'many fundamentalist leaders have had the best education, enjoy responsible positions in society, and are adept at harnessing the latest technology to propagate their views and create viable modern institutions such as schools, hospitals, and social service agencies'. (21) Indeed, most Islamic reform groups are not fundamentalist in any literal sense, but 'resemble Catholic Liberation theologians who urge active use of original religious doctrine to better the temporal and political lives in a modern world'. (22) Rafic Zakaria suggests a more fruitful dichotomy, distinguishing between conservative and liberal trends in Islam, where the 'battle between the fundamentalists and the secularists can perhaps be more accurately described as a struggle between forces who resist change in Islam and those who wish to accelerate it.' (23) The terms 'radical' and 'militant' Islam also indicate a certain revival in Islamic self-definition, though these movements are not all conservative and do not always correlate with groups supporting authoritarian religious systems. Indeed, Islam has an

indigenous tradition of 'revival' (*tajdid*) and 'reform' (*islah*), which suggests that any judgement of Islamic revivalism (24) needs to place the particular reforms and ideas of a movement in their historical and ideological context. Islamic revivalism incorporates a much wider movement than anti-Western militant groups. As summarised by John Esposito: -

> In the nineties Islamic revivalism has ceased to be restricted to small, marginal organization on the periphery of society and instead has become part of mainstream Muslim society, producing a new class of modern-educated but Islamically oriented elites who work alongside, and at times in coalitions with, their secular counterparts. Revivalism continues to grow as a broad-based socioreligious movement, functioning today in virtually every Muslim country and transnationality. It is a vibrant, multifaceted movement that will embody the major impact of Islamic revivalism for the foreseeable future. Its goal is the transformation of society through the Islamic formation of individuals at the grass-roots level. *Dawa* (call) societies work in social services (hospitals, clinics, legal-aid societies), in economic projects (Islamic banks, investment houses, insurance companies), in education (schools, child-care centres, youth camps), and in religious publishing and broadcasting. (25)

Here Western assumptions about progress can be misleading. Conservative and authoritarian forces within Islamic societies are real though not totally dominant in Islamic history, but are often stimulated as a reaction to perceived threats to the survival of Islam. In this context Muslims often perceive a Crusader mentality in the West, which still remains strong in the late twentieth century. (26) Trends towards an anti-Western, militant Islam are therefore exacerbated, indeed aided, by Western threat reactions. In particular, crass power politics, emphasizing 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend', do not apply effectively when dealing with large cultural and religious systems such as Islam. (27) To what dangerous lengths the politics of global containment can lead will be seen in the following recommendations: -

> Governments in combat with the fundamentalists deserve U.S. help. We should stand by the non-fundamentalists, even when that means accepting, within limits, strong-arm tactics (Egypt, the PLO), the aborting of elections (in Algeria), and deportations (Israel). It also means supporting Turkey in its conflict with Iran, and India in its conflict with Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. (28)

This stereotyping of any growth or revival of Islam as a 'fundamentalist threat' involves the failure to recognize the genuine intellectual and moral claims made by Islam. This labelling also helps justify the retention of power and global dominance by major Western powers. This trivialisation also inhibits a genuine dialogue between Islamic societies and Western ideologies focusing on 'human rights'. Since Islam comprises some 1 billion persons, with 45 to 50 countries predominantly Muslim (29), with sizeable Muslim minorities even in countries such as France (30), Britain, Germany, the U.S. and India, this is a serious failure. Furthermore, the 1990s may represent a particular turning point in global affairs where a sensible engagement by Western nations with progressive forms of Islam can represent an opportunity to create positive outcomes (31) in otherwise troubled areas such as Middle Eastern affairs, energy resource access, migration and refugees, and human rights.

Islam has its own formulation of universal human rights which are not entirely divergent from Western liberal conceptions, emphasizing human dignity, right to life and welfare, right to resist tyranny, as well as basic equality between races and peoples. (32) Major divergences with the Western tradition emerge in the role of women (33), and Islamic rights agendas are often limited by how Islamic law is interpreted, i.e. the phrase 'according to law' may limit human rights depending on the particular formulation of *Sharia* that is accepted. (34) However, major cultural trends which have developed within Islam can be compatible with the economically driven, globalised culture of the late 20th and 21st century. Reformist developments in Islamic thought also lean towards human rights balanced by economic rights, social justice, and cultural legitimacy. (35) To demonstrate this it will be necessary to turn back and reappraise several key aspects of Islam from a fresh viewpoint.

Most great religions or ethical systems make claims which they argue are universal for all men, not just for the particular society in which they are formulated. Confucius argued that 'Men are close to

one another by nature. They diverge as a result of repeated practise' (*Analects* XVII.2) and that if a scholar went to live among the barbarians, they would show no uncouthness, implying that they would obviously take up his superior culture (implicit in *Analects* IX.14). Likewise, the basic doctrines of desire, suffering, impermanence and karma in Buddhism, and the main themes of Taoism all draw up cosmological schemas which are held to provide the context in which all people live. In Islamic oral tradition we find the following saying: 'Everyone who is born is born with a sound nature'. (36) This implies that environment provides the diverse cultures of a Christian or Jewish or Magian community, but can also be interpreted to indicate that the original nature of man is compatible with Islam. A Western interpreter might at first find such a statement threatening and arrogant. It seems to imply that all people inherently understand the truth of Islam, but are enculturated away to lesser truths. Those filled with threat perceptions will see this as a pretext for universal conversion, for the aggressive spread of Islam, even for *jihad*, a term which is often misunderstood. *Jihad* can be 'of the heart', 'of the tongue', 'of the hands' and only under certain conditions, e.g. when the survival of Islam is under threat, 'of the sword'. (37) Furthermore, in Sufism a collateral term of jihad, *mujahada*, is taken to mean 'earnest striving after the mystical life', following a Tradition of the Prophet that the greater warfare of 'earnest striving with the carnal soul' is morally higher than the lesser warfare of war against the infidel. (38) In the thought of the 14th century Persian Gnostic, Sayyid Haydar Amuli, *jihad* at the higher levels becomes a struggle against the self and against the doubts and misgivings of the speculative intellect. (39)

The irony here, of course, is that though both Judaism (40) and Islam have had their missionary phases, Christianity from the time of Constantine the Great has had a much more vigorous history of missionary activity, enforced conversion, religious discrimination and political conquest. The Quran makes it clear that compulsion should not be used in matters of religion (2.256), while counter-statements implying unending war on the unbeliever apply more appropriately to one early period of the Muslim community when it was in danger of extinction. Likewise, the early contact with Christians and Jews during the lifetime of Muhammad makes it clear that religious toleration was an essential component of the practise and political life of earliest Islam. (41) As noted by Bernard Lewis 'the Christian attitude towards Islam was far more bigoted and intolerant than that of the Muslims towards Christianity'. (42) Today, one of the few areas where there is very intense competition between Christian and Muslim activists for converts is in parts of Africa. (43) Furthermore, in the 19th and 20th centuries modern Western secular states have themselves initiated wars and violence on a scale much greater than that conceived of even by revolutionary Islam. (44)

Equally important, modern critics who support the conception of pluralism and democracy often ignore the universalist claims within their own tradition. Liberalism from the Enlightenment onwards forms a tradition which insists that the rights of individual *men* (and at first only those recognized as citizens) must be respected, and that any infringement is a breach of the assertion that 'all men are born equal'. It is exactly on this basis that the sentiments found in Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man*, and in the French and American revolutions, can be largely reformulated and then declared universal in the UN charters of human rights. These types of arguments are based on universal claims concerning the nature of persons and their rights, regardless of place, culture or religion (clauses supporting the vote for women and against sexual discrimination were not common in early revolutionary Europe, and were to find widespread support only in the second half of the 20th century). The pluralist will tolerate all other views, except those which deny such universal human rights and the doctrine of pluralism itself. Here we arrive at one of the fundamental problems for 'open' democratic societies: are there real limits to what can be tolerated?. In particular, should parties and groups which overtly claim that they will overthrow democracy be themselves tolerated?. Various democratic societies have dealt with this in different ways. In the case of the United States, groups seen as posing a fundamental threat to democracy, such as the Communist Party, were restricted or banned. In other societies, rule of law and the overwhelming support needed to force through major constitutional changes were seen as a sufficient defence. The irony of this situation has re-emerged in the secular state of Algeria: in 1990-1991 a supposedly democratic government refused to accept the results of municipal and national elections because it threatened to give power to an Islamic party (the umbrella group FIS, Front Islamique de Salut, i.e. the Islamic Salvation Front),

whose policies included a return to elements of Sharia law which conflicted with liberalism. (45) Although there were fears that the Islamic Parties would effectively end democratic practises once they were in government, the Algerian government took the novel approach of solving this problem by rejecting the outcome of a valid democratic election.

The fundamental conflict, then, is not between a humane democracy and a repressive Islam. The conflict remains one about values, human nature, and different views of civil order, with both sides asserting universalist claims of truth with limited decrees of tolerance for divergent positions. Most major cultures make universal claims concerning truth, but this should not be confused with the will to coerce others into these beliefs. Rather than react to such claims of universal validity as threats, it may be better to explore and understand their role in international society. This suggests that we should re-assess Islamic universal claims in their modern context in order to understand their real implications. Rather than focus on a conflict of civilisations, it may be useful to engage in a cultural dialogue. To do this it will be necessary to reconceptualise several negative formulations which have stereotyped much discussion of Islamic culture. Although certain strands of thought and certain authorities within the Islamic world have sought to limit some areas of dialogue and debate, the historical record also demonstrates that this is not *necessarily* the case. The role of women, of course, remains problematic within Islam and the Arabic world, but even here reformist and Sufi trends are not opposed to a more modern, authoritative and positive role for women. (46) Women were accepted by Sufi shaykhs in most Sufi orders, and though in some they had separate sessions from the men, in others they were allowed to attend *zikr* (remembrance) ceremonies. (47) Some women such as Fatima could become leading Sufis in their own right. (48)

Historical accounts of Islamic societies, as well as theoretical formulations of the tradition and intent of Islamic thought (49) suggest certain facets of Islamic culture are regularly underplayed in Western liberal accounts: -

1) Islam as a tradition is compatible with a trading culture

2) Islam is a cosmopolitan tradition with syncretic, inclusive elements at the level of culture (as distinct from also having a small core of religious beliefs which are held to be universally true and immutable)

3) Islam as a tradition can be compatible with the development of science and scholarship. (It must be remembered that the acquisition of knowledge is a fundamental obligation for Muslims. They are to seek knowledge, 'even in China'. (50)

4) Islam is a tradition which tries to balance individual responsibility with social justice

5) Islam limits the authority one person may rightly wield over another, especially in the area of ideas and belief, i.e. is not necessarily hierarchical. True authority in many interpretations of Islam remains with God, and Muhammad remains the only infallible Imam. (51) Outside of areas where there is a clear Qurannic or Sunnah text, there is considerable scope for independent interpretation (*ijtihad*), which must be based on the person's own opinion. (52) Under some interpretations, *ijtihad* is obligatory for Muslim scholars who must adapt the application of divine truths to each new age. (53)

6) Islam generally supports free enterprise but provides alternative forms of social, communal support. (54)

7) Islam provides a rich internal world of belief and culture which cannot be destroyed by external political adversity.

8) Islam has certain proto-democratic elements which can support democratic and parliamentary procedures. When more authoritarian forms of government exist, these elements

place limits and positive moral demands on leaders and elite groups in society. This debate revolves around the role of the *Umma*, the international community of believers, and the Islamic conception of consultation, *shura*, in influencing political life, and in creating a kind of consensus based solidarity. (55)

9) Islam is not necessarily opposed to the creation of a multi-ethnic, multi-religious state in which there is a certain practical division between state and religion, though not between morality and religion.

It is not possible in the scope of this brief paper to discuss each point in detail. Instead, some of these themes will be put into context by studying the role of Islam and Sufism in Central Asia.

2. Sufism and its Role in Central Asia

Sufism is basically an individualised, socially critical form of Islam which has spread through major sectors of the Islamic world, and has a very strong role to play in the politics of Central Asia. Sufism is essentially a mystical form of Islam emphasizing the relationship between the individual and God. (56) Al Ghazali, writing in the 11th century, provides one of the clearest descriptions of this tradition: -

> I knew that the complete mystic 'way' includes both intellectual belief and practical activity; the latter consists in getting rid of the obstacles in the self and in stripping off its base characteristics and vicious morals, so that the heart may attain to freedom from what is not God and to constant recollection of Him. (57)

The origin of the term Sufi has long been debated. One derivation is that of the *suffe*, or platform of the Mosque at Medina where the Companions of the Prophet met to explore the revealed knowledge of Muhammad. (58) Others derive the word from the Greek word for knowledge (*sophos*), but a more probable source is the Arabic word *suf* for wool, referring to the rough ordinary clothes often worn by prophets, saints, and many sufis. (59) Other connotations include notions of 'purity', 'method', or 'inner beliefs'. (60) The 11th century mystic Al-Hujwiri argues that there is no satisfactory mundane derivation for this dignified term. (61) Regardless of these linguistic mysteries, 'the reality of Sufism is clear, for its paramount aim is felicity (*sa'ada*) which is determined by the knowledge of proximity to God'. (62) Hence, Sufism is the mystical path of Islam which complements its legal and normative tradition.

Sufism is a central aspect of Islamic International Relations and Eurasian politics. Sufism is particularly important because it is among the most cosmopolitan, eclectic and synthetic aspects of Islam, thereby allowing ready discourse with other cultures. This trend developed particularly strongly in Central Asia, as Islam spread along the Silk road. Central Asia at a very early date was incorporated into the Islamic domain of influence. The Caliph Mu'awiya annexed Herat, Kabul and Bokhara by the mid-7th century. (63) During the 12th century, Islam and the Sufi Qadiriya order were spread along the Volga and into Turkestan by Arab merchants. (64) But especially after the end of the thirteenth century the Il-Khans, successors of the Halagu tribes, took up Islam, to be followed not long after by the Ottoman Turks. (65) Islam reached eastwards from Merv after 750 A.D., and reached much of the Crimea, the Steppes, and Kazakhstan during the Ottoman period between the 14th and 18th centuries. In fact Central Asian cities, such as Bukhara and Samarkand, would become major centres of Islamic scholarship, housing hundred of *madrasahs*, Islamic colleges which educate teachers and religious leaders. For many Muslims Bukhara became the most important city for pilgrimage after Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. (66)

Sufism in part grew out of the scholastic and metaphysical researches of great scholars such as Razi (885-925), Ibn Sina (Avicenna, 980-1037), and Ibn Rushd (Averroes, died 1198), but soon developed

its poetic stamp, practical philosophies, and forms of social critique. These developed in part out of earlier trends found in Greek and Christian gnosticism, but was also influenced the complex social milieu of Central Asia, where Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Chinese influences (67) mixed with Persian and Islamic ones. Such eclectic trends were most noticeable among the more recently converted Khirghiz, though they reached their limit in India where Sufism and Orthodoxy closed ranks against the challenge of a synthetic universalist creed proposed by the Emperor Akbar. (68) In large part, Sufism in this context became a popularist and grass-roots movement, which meant that in spite of the collapse of the political control of Abbasid Caliphate, Sufism continued to successfully spread Islam. As noted by Rafic Zakaria: -

> The collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate led to the mushrooming of small states, but surprisingly the process did not impede Islam's onward march. The chief reason was the widespread popularity of Sufism, which is the name given to mysticism in Islam. With the decline of central power, the people turned in greater numbers to the sufis, men of God, who taught love and compassion as the way to spiritual salvation. The sufis fulfilled the need of the times by their stress on purity and piety and a relaxed attitude to form and ritual. They freed the faithful from the shackles of orthodoxy and inculcated in them love of God and His creatures with an abandon unknown to them before. (69)

Sufism, which did not rely on the strict letter of the law, also 'respected native traditions and customs and assured the people that Islam's liberalism could encompass their individualism'. (70) This was particularly so in the Kirghiz tribes, who found in Sufism a type of psychological and collective self-defense of their identity during periods of disorientation in the late 19th and early 20th century. (71) There are a number of parallel concepts in Sufism which are intelligible in other traditions, including Vedic concepts of non-dualism, paralleling the oneness of being, and the Buddhist nirvana, paralleling notions of annihilation and subsistence. (72)

The relationship among Sufism, Islam, and universal philosophical trends has been well explained by Dr. Nahid Angha: -

> Since all the principles that underlie the instructions of Sufis are based on the Koran, it is impossible to relate Sufism to any religion outside of Islam. Yet the search for true understanding and abstract knowledge of reality is a universal quest. As long as humanity endures, so too will the search for such understanding continue. History shows us that every nation and religion has its own way of expressing the universal spiritual quest. (73)

Sufism emphasizes raising awareness of the Real, as distinct from a distorted understanding of what is taken to be real everyday life, through genuine knowledge of the self and the 'veils' which divide it from any experience of the truth. (74) This is also the search for genuine Existence. (75) It can therefore suggest an emphasis on individualism which approaches that found in Western humanism. It also emphasized compassion from one human being to another, regardless of all other distinctions. This trend greatly widened Islam and aided its attraction throughout Eurasia, India, Southeast Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. This trend has been summarised: -

> Though unconcerned with affairs of state, the sufis had a profound influence on the Muslim polity. They humanized its rigours and reduced the area of conflict between religion and politics. They gave Islam a broader base. Non-Muslims flocked to sufi hospices in large numbers and in due course hundreds of thousands came into the fold of Islam. . . . By the beginning of the fourteenth century, large numbers of people, particularly in Central Asia and South and South-East Asia, had accepted Islam through the preaching of the sufis. Under their impact, the Mongols, who had been the scourge of Islam, became patrons of Islam. (76)

This humanitarian form of Islam was also spread by the Mongols, the Ottoman Turks, and Sufism had a special role in bringing Islam into India, first by traders, then under the Mughal conquerors. (77) We see this tolerant trend in the fact that the Mulla Abu'l Hakim 'issued a fatwa that it was wrong to build a mosque by demolishing a temple', while the Sufi poet Sarmad argued that Hindus and Muslims were both seeking the same truth, though using different verbal formulations. (78) It is unfortunate that such injunctions have not always been remembered in modern Indian religious

politics, as in the infamous Ayodhya mosque incident which inflamed Hindu-Muslim conflicts between 1989 and 1992.

The pragmatic and humanitarian elements of Sufism can be found in the ten principles of proper human conduct as outlined by Abd al-Qadir Jilani (1077-1166): -

> 1. Never swear by God.
>
> 2. Never speak an untruth even in jest.
>
> 3. Never break a promise.
>
> 4. Never curse anyone.
>
> 5. Never harm anyone.
>
> 6. Never accuse anyone of religious infidelity.
>
> 7. Never become a party to anything sinful
>
> 8. Never impose a burden on others.
>
> 9. Never accept anything from human beings - God alone is the giver.
>
> 10. Look for in others the good points and not the bad. (79)

These conceptions, of course, link back to the central idea in Sufism, that of love (*mahabba*), in which 'the trinity of Lover, Loved and Love' are based ultimately on a compassionate and merciful Allah. (80)

Likewise, there may be a greater scope for an independent role by women within the Sufi tradition than in some strict interpretations of Islamic jurisprudence. Rabi'a al-'Adawiya (717- 801 A.D.), for example was a prominent woman saint who never married, while Fatima Nishapuri (d. 838 A.D.) was respected as a great Sufi teacher. (81) Furthermore, in Central Asian areas strongly influenced by Sufism, there tends to be a less strict interpretation on public codes for women - in Central Asia (excluding parts of Afghanistan), for example, women work and travel publicly, and are not expected to conform to a total covering of the body. Sufism also allows a considerable range of social criticism, whether expressed through humorous stories, satire, or the special education actions of the 'Malamatiyya . . . those who "draw blame" or deliberately draw the contempt of others while preserving purity of heart, those who do not care if other Muslims accept their faith or actions as legitimate'. (82) Likewise, 'the inspired ejaculations (*shatahat*)' of Sufis will not necessarily be conformist, and from the Sufi tradition should not be judged in the same way as everyday sentiments. (83) These trends allow Sufi-influenced groups a greater ability to resist the authoritarian misuse of Islam to establish a legalistic domination of society. We can sense this tension between inward reform and outward ritual and obedience in a saying attributed to Abu Muhammad Abdallah Muhammad B. Al-Fadl Al-Balkhi: -

> I wonder at those who cross deserts and wildernesses to reach His House and Sanctuary because the traces of His prophets are to be found there: why do not they cross their own passions and lusts to reach their hearts, where they will find the traces of their Lord?" That is to say, the heart is the seat of knowledge of God and is more venerable than the Ka'ba, to which men turn in devotion. Men are ever looking towards the Ka'ba, but God is ever looking towards the heart. (84)

Sufism, though found in Egypt, Africa and elsewhere, was a major progressive force in Central Asia, and Sufism also helped spread Islam in the Indian and Malay world. (85) In many ways, it underpins the more everyday form of Islam lived in villages and communities in these societies. This trend

continues today in the privacy of small communities, as well as in a revival of Sufi literature and academic societies. Through its love of music, dance, poetry, story-telling and humour, Sufism helped create a vigorous culture which penetrated much of Central Asia, the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia. In this guise Sufis are often known to the West as 'dervishes', or spinning dervishes, whose practises like the special chants and breathing exercises lead to a trance state (*wajd*) designed to bring the participant closer to God. (86) Likewise their humorous, insightful stories have been spread to the West by Idries Shah. (87) One short example can give some idea of the didactic thrust of such stories: -

> A certain wise man was widely reputed to have become irrational in his presentation of facts and arguments.
>
> It was decided to test him, so that the authorities of his country could pronounce as to whether he was a danger to public order or not.
>
> On the day of the test he paraded past the court-room mounted on a donkey, facing the donkey's rear.
>
> When the time came for him to speak for himself, he said to the judges:
>
> 'When you saw me just now, which way was I facing?'
>
> The judges said: 'Facing the wrong way.'
>
> 'You illustrate my point,' he answered, 'for *I* was facing the right way, from one point of view. It was the donkey that was facing the wrong way.' (88)

The Sufi artistic tradition greatly enriched both Arabic and Persian culture: -

> Sufi liberalism had other important effects. While music and dance were anathema to the ulama, these were encouraged in sufi hospices. Their songs were full of passionate devotion to God, the unity of the soul and the body and the oneness of mankind. They indulged in sama, or the chanting of song and music, which led to hal, or a state of mystic exaltation. The theme is as common in the poems of Ibn al-Arabi and some of the Arabic poets as in the Persian compositions of such literary giants as Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207-73), Farid al-Din Attar (d. 1190) and Muslihuddin Saadi (1193-1292). One of the greatest sufi saints of all time was Abd al-Qadir Jilani (1077-1166), better known as Gauth al-Azam or 'the Sultan of Saints' who preached in Baghdad. He was a disciple of Ghazali and his eloquence was as soul-stirring as the radiance of his personality. He founded the Ghauth al order which spread to most parts of the Muslim world and may be regarded as the mother of all sufi orders. According to H.A.R. Gibb, 'The Qadir order is, on the whole, amongst the most tolerant and progressive orders, not far removed from orthodoxy, distinguished by philanthropy, piety and humility and averse to fanaticism, whether religious or political.' (89)

All these aspects, however, were all directed towards achieving *wilayah*, or 'identification of man with God'. (90) Though devout, most of these Schools of Sufism are much more able to accommodate modern and secular trends compared to certain radical forms of Islam found in other parts of the world, e.g. the Wahhabism exported from Saudi Arabia. Previously, the Sufi orders in Arabia were fiercely suppressed by the Wahhabi movement, which helps explain the fact that Central Asia has not proved the most fertile of grounds for Wahhabism, in spite of financial resources pumped into the region from Saudi Arabia. Wahhabis, in particular, are opposed to the notion of ecstatic mysteries, as well as the visiting of the tombs of saints which is viewed as potentially leading to idolatry. (91)

Sufi orders have had a major influence on 20th century Central Asia, and today form one of the main currents of Islam in contemporary political life. Estimates of the number involved in Sufi circles are difficult to make, but Russian surveys of the 1970s suggested that of a population of 27 million, there would have been some 500,000 involved in Sufi brotherhoods, which Bennigsten and Wimbush suggest is a 'reasonably understated figure'. (92) Earlier Sufi orders included the Qadiris, the Chishtis

(both of which avoided direct political involvement), and the Suhrawardis and Naqshbandis, who helped give advice to Muslim rulers. In the case of the Naqshbandis, this political activity can be seen in the wide range of contemporary publishing they engage in, including English texts. Likewise, modern Sufi societies also engage in the maintenance of professional on-line Web-sites (Internet resources) promoting their order, and explaining the Sufi role in resisting Russian penetration of the Caucasus. (93) There are contemporary political implications in some of this Internet material, e.g. carrying either direct or indirect criticism of attacks on Muslims in Bosnia and Chechnya. (94) Part of the aim here is to bring Sufism to the 'West', where ironically it may prosper more easily when not faced by a militant Islam opposed to its eclectic and anti-conformist elements. As noted in one saying of the Naqshbandi order, 'We do not live in the East or West; we do not study in the North, nor do we teach in the South. We are not bound in this way, but we may be compelled to talk in this way.' (95)

With these background factors in mind we can understand why Sufism remained robust even during periods of adversity. The main Sufi Brotherhoods (*tariqa*) were active in the former U.S.S.R. and remain so in Central Asia today. Writing in 1988, Rafic Zakaria noted: -

> The other wellspring of Islam in the USSR is the clandestinely organized network of sufi brotherhoods which has been popular in Central Asia since medieval times. These continue to exercise considerable influence on the Muslims. Of these, the Naqshbandiya is the most popular, followed by the Qadiriyya (mostly in the Caucasus) the Khalwatiya (in Turkmenistan . . .), and the Yasawiya (in Uzbekistan, Kirghizia and Kazakhstan). The Soviet authorities are aware of the potential of these institutions for religious revival but have so far left them alone, since suppressing them in the past had only inflamed fundamentalism. Nevertheless, Communist party workers have been actively decrying what they call 'parallel or unofficial Islam', as opposed to official or state-controlled Islam. (96)

There are numbers of smaller groups in Central Asia, including the secret society of the 'Hairy Ishans', previously an anti-Soviet group functioning among the Kirghiz in the Fergana Valley. (97) There are approximately 70 orders active in the world, with perhaps several hundreds of thousands of people directly involved and millions more influenced by their traditions. (98) From 1986, Central Asian leaders were aware of a religious revival throughout the region, including a noted influence on members of the Communist Party and on the young communist association, the Komsomol: the Uzbek Communist Party Central Committee secretary of the time, M. Khalmukhamedov tried to focus his attack not on the believers, but on a 'coercive clergy'. (99) By 1988 other regional leaders, such as Turkmen Party First Secretary Niiaszov were quietly dropping their standard attacks on Islam. (100) At a lower level, other officials were sometimes re-directing state funds to transform 'guest houses' and 'tea shops' into prayer houses. (101) By December 1989 the Uzbek Communist Party's election platform stated that it 'favors the freedom of religion and the legal rights of the believers, [as well as] cooperation with religious organisations'. (102)

This revival was quite easy to trace by simple patterns of behaviour during the 1989-1991 period: -

> Observance of the month of *Ramadan* is also increasing among Central Asians; during the last few years, children and youths, as well as adult members of the Party and intelligentsia, have engaged in the complete or partial fulfilment of this Muslim ceremonial obligation. Observance of *Ramadan* by school children and students led to a drop in cafeteria attendance, and negatively affected the sales of food-catering establishments. (103_

These trends show that in spite of Soviet attempts at eradication and then re-education, Islam remained a resilient social and religious force throughout the region. Sufism has indeed thrived 'on adversity'. (104) Furthermore, mass deportation of Muslim populations, e.g. from the North Caucasus to other parts of the Soviet Union including Central Asia, would only result in the exportation of Sufi brotherhoods into these new areas. (105)

We can see how some Sufi orders, especially the Naqshbandis, could become involved in political life in the turmoil of the latter half of the 19th century. This included strong resistance to imperial domination, e.g. the Sudanese resistance to British colonial power (e.g. the destruction of General

Gordon in the Battle of Khartoum, 1885), resistance to British penetration into Afghanistan, and the leadership in Central Asia of Shamil Waifi (1797-1871) against Russian control of the region. (106) Under the leadership of Khalid Baghdadi (1776-1827), the Naqshbandi order in particular became involved in the struggle against the liberalism of Moghul leader Akbar in India, and then against Czarist forces in the Caucasus. Imam Shamil, himself a Sufi, with the aid of Naqshbandis fighters expelled Czarist forces from the Caucasus and set up a strong resistance down to his surrender in 1859. (107) Naqshbandi adepts and other *murids* (disciples) continued strong resistance to Soviet control of the north Caucasus from 1917 down to 1925, with a subsequent revolt lasting from 1929 till 1936, and another bout of resistance in 1942-43. (108) Likewise, Bahal Din Vaishi (1804-93), had led a revolt against Russian influence in Kazan. (109)

Similarly, in Western China and Turkestan there were five revolts led by the Naqshbandi order (1820-28, 1830, 1847, 1857, 1861), which led to a decade of independent rule from 1867 under Ya'qub Beg. There were also Muslim revolts elsewhere in China, including for 15 years an independent Islamic state in Yunnan. (110) Communist China was more flexible in its attitude to its Muslim minorities, with freedom of religion guaranteed in its Constitutions of 1954 and 1987. With the exception of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), the practise of the Chinese Communist Party was more adaptable than that of the Soviet Union, though Chinese authorities have sometimes reacted against traditional religious practises, especially if they had political overtones, e.g. *en masse* demonstration by Muslins in Honan province in 1953. (111) Generally, Muslims in China have survived quite well so long as they did not engage in public conversion or other political disturbances. There also was some greater tolerance of the positive role of religion in the late 1980s, but in the last several years the Communist Party has become sensitive towards the effect of religion in reducing state authority, and once again has repressed Islam movements in Xinjiang province. (112) Through 1996 there was a strong crackdown by the Chinese government on religious and nationalist sentiments which are regarded as 'splittist' in orientation. (113) Likewise, recent agreements in late April 1996 among China, Kyrgystan, Kazakhstan and Russia over their Central Asian borders have decreased tensions over their frontiers, but has been paralleled by increased pressure against Uighur organizations which demand more autonomy for this nationality. (114)

In general, the organisation of the Sufi brotherhoods was highly effective in the spreading of religious concepts, as well as for revolution and armed resistance. (115) These trends were part of the broader picture of resistance by national groups in the Caucasus and Central Asia against the expansion of Tsarist Russia and then the Soviet Union. Imperial Russia had presented a pattern of almost continuous expansion, first against Kazan, the Crimean and Volga Tartars, against the Khanate in the Urals, and then against Persian and Turkish domains. (116) In the late 19th century this penetration continued through Turkestan and into parts of Iran, Afghanistan and up to the borders of Tibet. Russia thereby was a main player in the great imperial 'game', positioning herself against British interests in India and the Far East. Some contemporary writers have suggested a return to this 'great game' in Central Asia with a somewhat different group of players in the 1980s and 1990s. (117) This model is part of a set of threat perceptions which can be misused to justify external interventions in the region, as well justifying covert agendas for the containment of either Russian or Islamic influences.

3. The Relationship between Islam and Russia

This profile of tension between Russian and Islamic interests did not seriously change after the communist revolution of 1917. There was a brief period when the Marxists sought support from nationalist causes in the Caucuses and Central Asia, promising an end to Tsarist oppression. However, Marxist and nationalist trends soon came in conflict in Central Asia. Bolshevik policies of accommodation with nationalist aspirations were soon reversed by the Second Congress of the Third International in 1920, in favour of a policy of controlling these nationalities and destroying such 'reactionary and medieval elements'. (118) Stalin moved to segment Turkestan in ways which divided ethnic groups, brought different nationalities together in the same administrative framework, and

generally tried to subordinate these interests to the needs of the Communist Party and the Soviet Union. The short-lived Turkestan SSR was broken up in January 1924 into five smaller republics: the Uzbek, Turkoman, Kazakh, Kyrgz and Tajik 'Soviet Socialist Republics' (119), which are the basis of the contemporary states of the region. Stalin's probable logic for this has been accurately summarized by Ahmed Rashid: -

> The new borders divided the people into separate ethnic groups which they themselves were reluctant to recognize as such. How were the Kazakh and Kyrgz nomads, who had lived together for centuries, to be differentiated now? There was confusion in cities like Tashkent where people had to choose, for the benefit of their identity cards, whether they were Tajik or Uzbek, when they themselves were frequently a mixture of both. The integral cultural and social unity of Central Asia and hopes of Pan-Islamic or Pan-Turkic movements were shattered, which is exactly what Stalin wanted. The loss of Turkestan deprived the people of a common homeland, a common language and a common destiny. Stalin's policies were to pit one republic and one ethnic group against the other. (120)

After this time, Soviet policy tended to move among several approaches, sometimes simultaneously. Firstly, regarding religion as the opiate of the masses, and Islam as no more than a relic of a reactionary feudal order, it strongly supported an anti-religion campaign throughout the region, run by the 'Union of the Godless'. (121) It sought to purge education of religious tendencies and closed even Reformist Islamic Schools promoted by the Jadid movement, which from 1883 had sought to formulate a modernised Islamic culture able cope with the demands of modern technology. (122) It closed down as many mosques, tombs of saints and other religious figures, and teaching centres as possible. In spite of relaxation of this programme during World War II, the Communist Party from the 1950's renewed a vigorous campaign against all forms of Islamic culture, including wearing of the veil and headdress for women, traditional robes and beards for men, all Islamic festivals, and even traditional marriage and funeral ceremonies. This campaign caused considerable resentment, and was largely ineffective since many of these ceremonies simply went underground, with marriage festivals often being held at dawn to hide them from officials. (123) Indeed, the crass and blatant nature of these attacks may have inadvertently made Sufism more popular.

Second, the Soviet leadership aimed to crush all overt revolts, while ensuring centralised control of affairs from Moscow through a mainly Russified Party apparatus. In fact many Muslims strongly resisted Soviet dominance, forming the 'Basmachestov' (Basmachis) revolt, which forced a moderation of the repression of Islam down till at least 1927. (124) In fact determined guerrilla groups led by mullahs and tribal chiefs continued their activities down till the 1930s. (125) The total level of violence and oppression of Central Asian nationalities should not be underestimated: in the 1916 revolt against Tsarist forces, the Civil War period of 1918-20, the Basmachi revolts in the 1920s, and during the forced collectivization of peasants in 'communes', the total deaths would have been more than 7 million. (126) Political repression and purges also resulted in many Central Asians being sent to Siberia, while thousands of other nomads, especially Kazakhs and Kyrgyz moved with their entire herds into China. (127) The result by the end of the 1940s was impoverishment, the destruction of most of the local intelligentsia and much of the educated strata of society. (128) Combined with the mass movements of Crimean Tartars, the deportation of Muslims in Georgia, and the suppression of religious freedoms until the late 1980s, the Soviet policy could justly be called 'systematic persecution'. (129)

In spite of such pressures, the hoped for level of control through Russification was never achieved, especially outside the major cities. Even with more constructive policies which were developed after the death of Stalin, the massive ecological, social and cultural damage done to the entire region is such that it is fair to speak of the Soviet impact on Central Asia as a 'failed transformation'. (130) The attempt to establish the region as a mass producer of primary resources, including cotton, oil, gas, and hydro-electric power was only achieved at a massive investment and ecological cost, and the hope that the surplus population of the region would be absorbed into the labour starved trans-Ural and Siberian regions was never achieved. Furthermore, the sense of Muslims in Russia and Central Asia that they were part of a wider international community of Muslims (131) was never fully eradicated

by Soviet efforts.

Something which cannot be totally destroyed might be controlled and modified by co-opting elements to work within the constraints of state power. From World War II onwards, the U.S.S.R. sought to control Islam within its borders through the creation of an 'Official Islam' whereby a small number of teachers, mosques and publications would be allowed. This trend was especially prominent during World War II, when the Soviets needed to assure themselves of Islamic support, especially against potential Japanese penetration from the East. In fact these officially appointed muftis were controlled through the Council for Religious Affairs whose main task 'was to make use of religion to communize society and to cover up communist indoctrination in State-run schools and colleges'. (132)

This trend may have pacified some, but the total number of mosques in the Soviet Union was far too small to cater for the needs of its Muslims. Exact figures vary: one estimate suggests that in the 1980s there were some 400 active mosques (133), still far too few for the population, while another suggests that there were '230 functioning mosques' in Central Asia by the mid-1980s. (134) The one functioning *madrasah* in Bukhara would have to try to effectively serve all of Central Asia from 1958 down into the 1980s. (135) Likewise, only limited numbers of people were permitted to undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca, an act incumbent on all Muslims who can afford to do it. It must also be remembered that there were sizeable minorities of Muslims in Russia itself, especially in the Volga, Crimea and Central Siberian regions. Nor were these groups easily able to migrate, as were Russian Jews in the 1980s. Amir Taheri noted that in 1989 Muslims represented at least 53 million out of a total Soviet population of 290 million, thereby forming the second largest group after the Russians themselves. (136)

One of the conflicts which has continued down till today is that certain members of this official religious bureaucracy have continued in positions of power, but have been charged with corruption, or are regarded as corrupted, by other religious leaders. Such charges, including womanizing, drinking and 'playing snooker', have been made against Mufti Shamsuddin Khan Babakhan, chairman of the Muslim Board for Central Asia (headquarters in Tashkent), who was forced to resign in January 1989. (137) In February 1990 'the ambitious Qazi of Alma Ata, Radbek Nisanbai, had himself elected Grand Mufti of Kazakhstan, thus creating a separate Kazakh Muslim Board without consulting Moscow'. (138) Likewise, local communities in many regions ousted the imams appointed by Babakhan and elected their own leaders. (139) In fact, the very limitations of this 'official Islam' helped create the success of 'unofficial' Islam. The latter is 'a thriving network of religious communities which have no official recognition, numerous Sufi brotherhoods, and a growing number of unregistered, "self-appointed" or "itinerant" *mullahs*'". (140)

In the long run Russian leaders, and the texture of Russian historiography, often assumes a suspicion of Islam which has bordered on paranoia. At the least, there has been a consistent overestimate of 'the temporal power of Islam as a unifying political force among the countries professing it'. (141) Sufi brotherhoods had been consistently represented by Soviet authorities as either bandit criminals or at least radical breeding grounds of anti-Russian feeling, which must be eliminated. (142) In the international context, this has developed into serious concern by even recent Soviet leaders such as Gorbachev that Islam could be a destabilizing influence along Russia's southern border, as well as posing an internal threat. In the 1960s and 70s this was sometimes compounded by the possibility of Western aid and covert operations supporting national movements to tear apart the Soviet Union. This view was partly realised by Western support for the Muslim rebels in Afghanistan via Pakistan, with strong CIA involvement, as well as a distinct Islamic texture to the conflict. (143) These concerns over 'Islamization' have continued under the Yeltsin administration, in particular with Russian desires to assure a secure extended border along the outer frontiers of the Commonwealth of Independent States, e.g. concern over the stability of Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, and the border with Afghanistan. This has impacted directly on Russian strategy in the 'near-abroad'. The military in Russia, particularly under the guidance of former Defence Minister Marshal Pavel Grachev, had developed a strong fear of possible destabilization in the Islamic southern region of the Commonwealth of Independent States. It is against this perception that 'power' strategies have been

used, including 'a direct military role sanctioned by the host state (Tajikistan), a 'tripwire' role (Armenia) and covert military intervention and destabilisation (Georgia)'. (144) Concern of a different sort peaked in November 1996 with Taliban successes in Afghanistan prompting a joint response from CIS leaders that any attempt made by the Taliban to push northwards towards CIS borders would be strongly resisted. Considering the fact that several of these Central Asian states have strong Islamic populations, the trend indicates a divide between secular verses religious state ideologies, not between Islamic and non-Islamic cultures.

All the measures made by the Soviets prior to 1992 were of limited effect, both at the religious level as well as the level of national culture. As noted by Ahmed Rashid: -

> Throughout the 1960s, however, nationalism amongst the constituent republics was a growing phenomenon that could not be ignored, even by the leadership of individual communist parties, who frequently issued warning shots across Moscow's bows. On 5 November 1969, to commemorate Lenin's address to the people of Turkestan the five main daily newspapers in each of the Central Asia republics published a joint editorial call for the elimination of Great Russian chauvinism. At the universities a local cultural revival was under way and in the media local-language newspapers took a far more nationalist stance on issues *vis-a-vis* Moscow than the local Russian-language press. There was a rediscovery of Central Asia's Islamic heritage by a new generation of intellectuals which became quite evident in literature and language teaching, and the re-emergence of Sufi movements. Local communist leaders played a delicate balancing act, being ardent nationalists and good Muslims at home, whilst becoming internationalists and good communists when they visited Moscow. (145)

From 1989 a number of regional literary newspapers began publishing religious materials and commentaries, as well as printing lessons on the previously 'banned' Arabic script. (146) This political and cultural tension continued down even into the early part of Gorbachev's leadership of the U.S.S.R. Even as late as Gorbachev's 1986 visit to Tashkent, he stated publicly that Islam was 'an instrument for the spiritual oppression of the workers', and ordered Party members not to visit mosques. (147) At the same time, Gorbachev made the mistake of replacing a local Khazakh leader, Dinmukhamed Kunayev, (who had lead Kazakhstan since 1964) with an ethnic Chuvash from Russia, Gennady Kolbin. The result was serious rioting in Alma Ata and 11 other cities in Republic. Likewise, through 1987, even though the official policy of the Communist Party had been moderated from 'anti-religious' to 'atheistic', there were still numerous complaints of arbitrary obstructions to Islam, including keeping mosques locked up in some areas. (148) Furthermore, after 1987 there was a stark contrast between the way Islam seemed to be treated, and the recent rapprochement between Russian nationalism and the Orthodox Church: the celebration of the 1000 years of Christianity in Russia was to be officially promoted in the grand style. (149)

Problems continued in Central Asia, partly as a result of lack of Russian awareness of the complexity of regional concerns. In May 1988 riots broke out in Ashkhabad because of youth unemployment. In June 1989 riots continued with dozens killed and a thousand injured in the Ferghana valley (Uzbekistan), with tensions over land and housing (150) occurring between Uzbeks and Meskhetian Turks, who had been forced to settle in the region due to earlier Soviet policies. Similar causes sparked riots in February and June 1990 in Dushanbe, Osh and other cities. (151) In this environment, neither communism nor the new policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* were seen to be very accommodating to Central Asian needs - it is not surprising that local leaders turned more to nationalist concerns, and many individuals to Islam, as more fundamental to their needs and identity. The central role of Islam was crucial: -

> Thus while an educated Uzbek or Kazakh might fail to observe many of the formal rituals such as prayer, Islam was still his religion and the defining circle of his cultural world. He knew that Islam gave him a distinct identity and made him what he was. A Christian or Jewish Uzbek, although they existed, remained unthinkable to most Uzbeks, and so children from mixed marriages were automatically presumed to be Muslim. Thus Islam became one of the defining factors of ethnicity. It helped to consolidate both the clan and the tribe as well as to create the much broader nationality. Islam reinforced ethnic solidarity and drove a wedge between Russians and non-Russian Muslims. The more the religion of Islam was driven underground by the communist

regime, the more it prospered as a cultural phenomenon that linked people together in ethnic solidarity and togetherness against the non-Muslim races, particularly Russians. Moreover, the ethnic solidarity that Islam fostered cut across the class division, since it united the family, the clan and the tribe rather than the class. (152)

It was precisely in such an environment that the Sufi brotherhoods were extremely effective. Indeed, scholars such as Alexandre Bennigsten and Enders Wimbush have suggested that Islam was largely kept alive during the Soviet order by the influence of Sufism in Central Asia. (153) This is likely given the covert networking abilities of Sufi brotherhoods, and the way that low-conflict strategies of resistance could be used by these groups which otherwise seemed compliant with the regime. Soviet authorities had real fears that Sufi communities were essentially closed societies which largely lived outside of Russian and communists systems, while seeming to be part of them. (154) As noted by Bennigsten & Wimbush, speaking of three Sufi orders: -

> For instance, several Soviet experts have observed that the Batal Haji and Vis Haji in the Caucasus and the Yasawis in Central Asia have their own clandestine courts of justice, their own financial system based on the compulsory *zakat* among the adepts, and their own network of clandestine schools. Sufi adepts are accused of avoiding any participation in collective life, economic or social and even less so political. At the same time, the Soviets observe that the highly disciplined and hard-working Sufi communities are socially more solid and economically more prosperous, probably more so than an average Soviet kolkhoz. (155)

In general terms, Sufism provided a form of organisation that offered 'solidarity, hope, secrecy, personal and collective dignity and even the illusion of some magic power to sustain their determination'. (156) It is not surprising that Sufism prospered under Russian and Soviet control.

More recently, these general problems have translated across to Russian concerns over possible civil wars in Central Asia, as well as the need to maintain her borders through special arrangements in the CIS. Such fears have also been exacerbated by a certain Islamic dimension to the fierce resistance in Chechnya. (157) In spite of the disastrous war in Tajikistan, and various ethnic clashes in Central Asia, these fears have abated somewhat, with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan emerging as comparatively stable states. At the same time, regional tensions, largely founded on economic difficulties, remain, and to date neither the prospect of a regional economic union, nor a wider Eurasian Union have been successful. The development of a peace-keeping agenda and the prospects of international peacing-keeping forces have also had very limited success. Interestingly enough, however, these problems do not mainly hinge of Islam, nor on Iranian or Saudi support for regional religious reform. There is some evidence of a slight trend to radicalization of Islam due to Iranian influence in the late 1980s, e.g. in Turkmenistan religious songs have been learnt from Iranian 'Radio Gurgen', while ethnic links between populations in Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan have increased the tendency for cross-border flows which have led to border 'incidents'. (158) Yet overall, with the exception of direct efforts in Lebanon and Bahrain, Iran has not been very successful in exporting its brand of Islamic revolution (159), and has been careful not to become too entangled in either Tajikistan or in Azerbaijan. During the 1990s, Iran's foreign policy in any case has veered towards a more pragmatic rather than an evangelist approach. (160) Rather, these problems in Tajikistan are based on economic and nationalities' tensions, and an unwillingness of the Tajik leadership to engage in genuine political dialogue with opposition parties. (161) Tajikistan, not surprisingly, remains host to sizeable Russian military forces. Furthermore, the Rakhmanov government was able to mobilise the threat of Islamic 'fundamentalism' to help legitimate its authoritarian rule. (162) It will be necessary, then, to appraise the types of Islam flourishing in Central Asia to assess the supposed reality of this threat.

4. The 'Threat' of Islam in Central Asia

Sufi Orders continued to exist in Central Asia throughout the period of the Soviet Union, including

the period of Stalin, and the age of sophisticated espionage surveillance of the 1970s and 1980s. In spite of Soviet attempts to limit and control religion in the region, and their sensitivity to potential Islamic threats or CIA involvement, at least for the closed orders like the Hairy Ishans, there is no recorded case of the inner workings of a Sufi group having been deeply penetrated or exposed by the KGB. (163) Nonetheless, the early revolts of the 19th and early 20th centuries could not be sustained: popular support was strong but variable, while the industrial and military strength of the West and of the Russian empire in the long run were too dominant. It was for this very reason that the more invisible, indirect form of resistance offered by many of the Sufi brotherhoods was more effective.

We can sense the resiliences of Islamic social life through some apparent paradoxes. Several Sufi strategies have been consciously used to help Islamic culture survive under conditions of oppression. Two of these are 'invisibility-in-the-crowd', sometimes formulated as *khalwat dar anjuman*, 'solitude within society', and *safar dar watan*, 'journey within the homeland', which reminds the Muslim that the journey into the inner world is more important than any external condition. (164) These trends are particularly important in the Naqshbandiya order, where the adepts remain 'in the world' living apparently everyday roles, adapting to everyday modern society. (165) Taken together, these strategies structure a psychological and social 'endurance'. As noted by Ahmed Rashid: -

> Sufism had always been a reaction against authority, intellectualism and the mullah - thus making it ideally suited for ordinary people. Sufism had sustained Muslims before under just as trying circumstances, such as during the Mongol invasions when all the vestiges of Islam were wiped out, and later during the tsarist days. For the people to fall back on Sufism during the communist era was nothing new. The Sufis practised the art of isolating themselves from their oppressors without necessarily trying to overthrow them, and their refusal to involve themselves in political parties or movements ensured that the KGB barely knew that they existed. (166)

A parallel concept which developed in some Sufi groups was the idea of indifference to the positive or negative views of people in the local society. This involved concealing virtues as well as vices, and indifference to the opinions of others, a trend most notable in Bishr b. al-Harith al-Hafi of Merv (died 841 A.D.) and later on in the Malamatiya movement. (167) Expressed in medieval literary terms, 'The Sufi is he that has nothing in his possession nor is himself possessed by anything'. (168) This policy avoided entanglement in local political debate, and also allowed the Sufi to operate 'invisibly' in society without a strong focus on his teaching activities. These views can be tied back to a traditional mystical viewpoint based on 'inner resources': -

> Each principle directs the individual towards the path of recognition of the essence within, the essence hidden behind the veils of change and the curtains of uncertainty. The aim of any intelligent human being should be found in the foundation of the truth of stable tranquillity and undisturbed survival, the goal of the final quest. To achieve such a goal one must free oneself from the imprisonment of the boundary of change and find a way to return to one's essential being and find the source of the infinite knowledge within. (169)

This reliance on inner resources is also paralleled by two other traditions. The first of these is the notion of 'remembrance' (*dhikr*), which for the Sufi can lead to the passing away (*fana'*) of all earthly and human characteristics. (170) This aims at complete absorption in God and the person experiences nearness to the divine, though al-Ghazali would reject the usage of such terms as 'inherence', 'union', or 'connection' for this experience. (171) From this perspective, all forms of human suffering and political domination are transient and will pass away before the only truly victorious things: God and his love. Indeed, *fana'* involves the concept of discarding the self and the world to allow the mystic to pass away into God. (172) On this basis, remembrance is also the remembrance of God, which is reiterated in all forms of Sufi dance, music and meditation.

The second tradition is that of being willing to disguise or hide belief in order to avoid persecution or extinction. In general, Sufis are ordered not to seek martyrdom, and to practise *taqiya*, that is, caution. Under extreme conditions, they may even deny membership in Islam, without this being regarded as sinful. (173) A Sufi leader's constant engagement in prayer and meditation means that 'he is permanently "mobilised" and engages in unending intensive spiritual and mental concentration'. (174)

For the Sufi all earthly empires are ultimately impotent before universal prophecy and before God's will - sincere trust (*tawakkul*) is sufficient to convert fear (175) into hope. In fact inner corruption and sin is more to be feared than any external oppression. Within the expectation of future judgement, time is always on the side of Islam and its professors. This has meant that in most contexts, Sufi groups and the communities they influence have been willing to use non-violent forms of accommodation with secular state authorities. This was the case with the Tijaniya order of Algeria down to the 1950s, and in general coloured the way Sufi groups reacted to Soviet rule in Central Asia. Exceptions to this trend can be found when Sufi groups try to resist external imperial powers which disrupt regional cultures (176), e.g. against the Russians in the Caucasus, the Turkmen steppes, and the Ferghana valley (177) and in the Sudan against the British in the 19th century.

Yet the Sufi brotherhoods are to be distinguished from the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), the latter of which has had a more open political platform in all Central Asian Republics. (178) Different again is Wahhabism, a puritan sect with circles set up in Tashkent and the Ferghana valley, where, with financial aid from Saudi Arabia, they preach 'Islamic revolution and the overthrow of the government of President Islam Karimov'. (179) In fact all these different groups have benefited from the recent nationalist movements in Central Asian states, as well as the boom in religion, in the publishing of sacred books and the teaching of religious practises.

Since the breakup of the U.S.S.R., Islam has played a complex role in the life of the new Republics of Central Asia. Islamic groups have not been able to stage direct political control in any of these states: the most direct challenge to an authoritarian government occurred in Tajikistan in 1992. The civil war in Tajikistan in 1992 resulted in more than 50,000 deaths, and regional concern has led to radical parties such as the Islamic Renaissance Party being banned in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. (180) Yet many political parties in Central Asia now take Islamic considerations into account, at the religious and cultural level, while grass-roots Sufi movements form part of the identity and awareness of many people in the region, e.g. on the formation of Kirghiz ethnicity especially. (181) Furthermore, attempts to repress these movements have brought the application of democratic principles into jeopardy, a problem also faced in Algeria on a greater scale. Ironically, the banning of political activity and electoral restrictions on Islamic groups has helped maintain the stability of soft-authoritarian styles of government throughout the region, with Kyrgyzstan alone demonstrating high levels of genuine democratisation.

As noted at the outset, much Western commentary gives a biased view of the range of political views associated with Islam, linking much Muslim political activity together under the stereotypical term 'fundamentalism'. The same has occurred in Western perceptions of the new Central Asian states. Speaking of the early 1990s: -

> The West has not helped matters by constantly pointing out the fear it has of an Islamic revival. During his tour of Central Asia in 1991, the US Secretary of State James Baker warned every Central Asian leader of the dangers of Islamic fundamentalism and urged them to emulate Turkey's secular model rather than Iran's fundamentalism. Baker met not a single religious leader in Central Asia and made it clear that he thought fundamentalism was inimical to democracy and Western aid packages. This has allowed a leader like Uzbek president Islam Karimov, to continue denying democratic rights to the Uzbek opposition under cover of halting the spread of fundamentalism. Western countries have thus been guilty of turning a blind eye to authoritarian governments and even rewarding them if they confronted Islamic fundamentalism". (182)

These fears have 'led the Western powers to compromise on their own democratic principles and concern for human rights and support governments which totally disregard them'. (183) The use of such tactics undermines genuine democracy, and, ironically, justifies the arguments and tactics of extremist groups. It also ignores the real limits to democratic processes and inherent economic fragilities in the proposed Turkish 'model'. (184) An alternative approach is to allow a genuine Islamic opposition to develop and engage in elections and parliamentary procedures - in such an environment more moderate forms of Islam are likely to dominate. These factors made Sufism suspect to those who wished to insist on a narrow and orthodox form of Islam, as well as those who

wished to reinforce the authoritarian power of the state through the use of religion. (185) Sufism also seemed dangerously close to bringing in non-Islamic beliefs into the heart of religious experience, and it was for this reason that most orthodox Shi'ite mullahs usually dislike the wild 'religious intoxication' of Sufism, a trend which has continued down today in post-Khomeini Iran. (186) Indeed, some Shi'ites and the Wahhabis sect would directly attack Sufism. (187) At the same time, there are Shi'ite Sufi sects, and Sufis usually acknowledge Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet, as the first Muslim and call him 'Valli', the Guide. (188)

The complexity of the role of Sufism can be seen in numerous examples. In Turkey, related orders such as the dervish order created by Hajji Bektash had a strong influence on the elite janissary regiments (189), but this order became involved in political intrigue and was banned by Mahmud II (1808-39). Sufism more generally, however, remained a common cultural component of religious life for many ordinary Turks. After the Turkish revolution, Attaturk regarded these groups as promoting a particularly popular superstition, and the orders were banned, though some Sufi groups survived through to the present era. Only after 1971 would Sulayman Demirel, as part of the Democratic Party platform of mild Islamization, lift restrictions on these orders, 'including visits to the tombs of saints'. (190) Contemporary interest in Islam and Sufism are indicated by the large circulation of the newspaper *Islam*, 'an organ of the Naqshbandi sufis'. (191) The recent success of the Islamically oriented Turkish Welfare Party in forming a coalition government suggests that grass root support for a political agenda based on Islam has never really died out in Turkey.

5. *Conclusions*

We can see that Islam provides a multi-layered religious, cultural and political complex with its own formulation of human rights and norms of international conduct. Certain elements within Islam, especially Sufism, provide a basis for a humanitarian, individualistic approach to life which is at once resilient and open to a range of cultural synergies. As such, a true Renaissance of Islam could provide a reinvigorating and stabilizing influence for 'Greater Central Asia' and the Middle East. It can also contribute to a cosmopolitan but pluralist world culture. This contribution will not be without challenge and competition for other civilisational-groups, including East Asia and the West, but this implies neither the necessity of violence nor warfare.

Islam can provide a useful dialogue partner for modern liberal thought by providing a constellation of values with a strong intellectual and moral tradition. This counter-tradition can remind the 'West' of the dangers of being overly successful in certain areas. We can see this clearly in the critical comments of Altaf Gauhar: -

> The fundamental assumption of secularism is that material well-being in the present world is an essential means to human happiness. That material well-being does not remain a means and becomes an end in itself is a major dilemma of secular culture. As secular society progresses from lower levels of material well-being to higher levels efficiency becomes its sole preoccupation. . . .
>
> It is through this process that growth becomes the God of secularism, in place of the God of mercy. Inflation, its mortal enemy as the devil. Hell comes to mean high prices, recession and unemployment, and paradise nothing more than affluence, full employment, and leisure. Since there is no limit to man's desire there is no point of rest in his pursuit for pleasure. As he gains more he seeks more. Whatever time he saves is vigorously reinvested to save more time, until he is left with nothing. His whole being goads him to achieve ever-rising levels of efficiency and material well-being, and what started as a legitimate idea turns into a senseless chase. (192)

In Central Asia the politics of the region is unlikely to follow a straight path to modernism, complete secularisation and Westernisation. On the other hand, leaders in the region have all aimed at maintaining modern secular states, though without complete democratisation - only Kyrgyzstan has approached a partially open political system. Individuals and communities, though keen to enjoy their

own culture and religion, have also expressed a strong desire for improved economic and environmental conditions. In such a situation, it is not surprising that many Central Asians reach out for much more than Islamic, Persian or Turkic influences. They have also eagerly sought Western diplomatic involvement, investment, education, and technical aid. To date, neither the U.S. nor the European Union has responded very vigorously to this invitation. This has been due to perceptions of instability arising from radical Islamic influences, fears of upsetting a new Russian sphere of influence, and concerns over sparking off a new 'great game' in the region. Interestingly enough, Chinese, Korean and Japanese trade levels and financial investment have increased rapidly in the last four years, as well as an increase in aid programmes from Japan. Furthermore, the outcomes of Russian-Chinese summits in early 1996, and continued Chinese foreign policy agendas in Central Asia suggest that this 'eastward integration' cannot be ignored. In many ways, however, the need for stabilisation in this region is just as great as in Russia itself. This 'stabilisation', of course, must not rest on a rigid reinforcement of the status quo, and should meet the expectations of the people of Central Asia, not just fulfil a role allocated to the region by external great powers. The trends at present have not solidified: it seems likely that the events of the next decade will place a strong stamp on the future of 'Greater Central Asia' and its prospects. Sufism, as an indigenous, eclectic and tolerant form of Islam (193) is likely to aid this stability. Furthermore, in a 21st century of 'trading cultures', Sufism provides a new and positive face of Islam to the West. Sufism has indeed *not* 'run its course', to invert the words of a sympathetic commentator, A.J. Arberry. (194) Bearing in mind the dire social repression in Afghanistan and set backs to peace in the Middle East during late 1996, such a form of Islam is badly needed by the entire international community.

6. References

1. In this paper the term 'Central Asia' will be used to include five of the Newly Independent States of the former USSR, i.e. Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. Afghanistan, though part of 'Greater Central Asia', has a quite different historical experience, and will be not included in the general term Central Asia.

2. For the strongest statement of threat, see PIPES, Daniel "There Are No Moderates: Dealing with Fundamentalist Islam", The *National Interest*, Fall 1995, pp48-57. For a small sample of articles discussing such perspectives, see MILLER, Judith "The Challenge of Radical Islam", *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1993, pp42-56; WRIGHT, Robin "Islam, Democracy and the West", *Foreign Affairs*, *71*, Summer 1992, pp131-145; PIPES, Daniel "The Muslims Are Coming! The Muslims Are Coming!", *National Review*, 19 November 1990, pp28-31. A critical outline of negative Western views will be found in Esposito, John *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992, pp168-212. Even LEWIS, Bernard "The Roots of Muslim Rage", *Atlantic Monthly*, *266 no. 3*, September 1990, pp47-60, which tries to develop a moderate viewpoint, assumes a strong 'us-verses-them' analysis.

3. See HUNTINGTON, Samuel P. "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, pp22-49.

4. LEWIS, Bernard "The Roots of Muslim Rage", *Atlantic Monthly*, *266 no. 3*, September 1990, p60. Yet it should be noted that the most common conflicts in the Muslim world are regional and intra-civilizational, i.e. between Islamic societies, FULLER, Graham E. & LESSER, Ian O. *A Sense of Siege: The Geopolitics of Islam and the West*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1995, p159.

5. FULLER, Graham E. & LESSER, Ian O. *A Sense of Siege: The Geopolitics of Islam and the West*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1995; HUSAIN, Mir Zohair *Global Islamic Politics*, N.Y., HarperCollins, 1995; Esposito, John *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992; ZAKARIA, Rafic *The Struggle Within Islam: The Conflict Between Religion and Politics*, N.Y., Penguin, 1988;

MayEr, Ann Elizabeth *Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1995.

6. See AGUIRRE, Mariano "Guerres de civilisations?", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, (Internet Source), Décembre 1994; Esposito, John *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992, p5.

7. See for example KHALILZAD, Zalmay "The United States and the Persian Gulf: Preventing Regional Hegemony", S*urvival, 37 no. 2*, Summer 1995, pp95-120; YOST, David S. "Nuclear Debates in France", *Survival, 36 no. 4*, Winter 1994-95, pp114-115; PALMER Diego A. Ruiz *French Strategic Options in the 1990s*, Adelphi Papers no. 260, London, IISS, Summer 1991, p3. For Islamic fundamentalism as a central concern of French foreign policy, see KIPP, Jacob "Key Issues Confronting France, French Foreign Policy, Franco-US Relations, and French Defense Policy", US Army, Foreign Military Studies Office Website, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, (Internet Source), April 1995.

8. FUKUYAMA, Francis *The End of History and the Last Man*, London, Penguin, 1992; FUKUYAMA, Francis "The End of History?", *The National Interest, No. 16*, Summer 1989, pp3-18; FUKUYAMA, Francis "Democractization and International Security", *Adelphi Papers 266, New Dimensions in International Security, Part II*, Winter 1991/92, pp14-24.

9. GERNER, Deborah J. "Islamic Revivalism and International Politics", *Mershon International Studies Review*, 40 Supplement 1, April 1996, p104.

10. On these themes and how they are perceived, see Esposito, John *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992, p17, p34, p75. For the seriousness of underlying economic difficulties, see RICHARDS, Alan "Economic Roots of Instability in the Middle East", *Middle East Policy, IV no. 3*, (Internet Source), March 1996. The notion of a neocolonial economic agenda is totally ignored in the naive political analysis proved by LEWIS, Bernard "The Roots of Muslim Rage", *Atlantic Monthly*, *266 no. 3*, September 1990, pp53-55. As noted by Asta Olesen: 'During the last couple of centuries, Muslim political thought has basically been shaped through the encounter with Western political domination and Western thought in general, these having constituted the main external challenge and threat to the existing systems of thought and political rule in the Muslim societies.' OLESEN, Asta *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, Richmond, Curzon Press, 1995, p250.

11. For a brief analysis of these images which have largely excluded positive Islamic elements, see KIBBLE, David G. "Understanding Islamic Fundamentalism", Al-Saud House Website, (Internet Source), 1996. See also WRIGHT, Robin "Islam, Democracy and the West", *Foreign Affairs*, *71*, Summer 1992, pp133-134. For the misuse of this term and its rise in the literature after the Iranian revolution of 1978-79, see VEITCH, James A. "A Case of Mistaken Identity: Muslims and Fundamentalism", *Journal of Arabic, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, no. 1*, 1993, pp1-6.

12. "UN Warns Taleban not to Violate Women's Rights", *Straits Times Interactive*, (Internet Source), 9 October 1996; LAVINE, Marc "Kabul Braces for Life Under Islamic Law", *The Australian*, 2 October 1996, p12.

13. PANNIER, Bruce "Sharia, the Great Schism, Sufism and the Taliban: Part Four: Taliban", *OMRI Analytical Brief, I no. 464*, (Internet Source), 14 November 1996.

14. PANNIER, Bruce "Tajikistan's New Concerns over Afghanistan", *OMRI Analytical Brief, I no. 357*, (Internet Source), 2 October 1996.

15. PANNIER, Bruce "Sharia, the Great Schism, Sufism and the Taliban: Part Four: Taliban", *OMRI Analytical Brief, I no. 464*, (Internet Source), 14 November 1996; OLESEN, Asta *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, Richmond, Curzon Press, 1995,

p50.

16. OLESEN, Asta *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, Richmond, Curzon Press, 1995, p48, p50.

17. Ibid., p46, p234, pp249-250.

18. Ibid., p51. See further below.

19. ZAKARIA, Rafic *The Struggle Within Islam: The Conflict Between Religion and Politics*, N.Y., Penguin, 1988, p7.

20. Esposito, John *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992, p7.

21. Esposito, John *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992, p7; see also ESPOSITO, John "Beyond the Green Menace", *MSANEWS*, (16-5-1996), reposted from *Current History*, (Internet Source), January 1994, contra the type of image found in LEWIS, Bernard "The Roots of Muslim Rage", *Atlantic Monthly*, *266 no. 3*, September 1990, p59. Even when Bernard Lewis admits that some radical Muslims use elements of the Western tradition, he can't help but add that they do so 'usually without acknowledgement of the source', LEWIS, Bernard "The Roots of Muslim Rage", *Atlantic Monthly*, *266 no. 3*, September 1990, p60. This misunderstanding, which assumes that radical Islamists are antimodern, has lead Daniel Pipes to offer the following 'advice': 'Should they fail to modernise, their stubborn record of illiteracy, poverty, intolerance, and autocracy will continue, and perhaps worsen. Military and cultural tensions with the West might well become more acute. But if Moslems do modernise, things will turn out very differently. Then they will have a good chance to become literate, affluent, and politically stable. They will no longer need to train terrorists or build missiles for use against the West; to emigrate to Europe and America; or, once having moved, to resist integration in Western societies', PIPES, Daniel "The Muslims Are Coming! The Muslims Are Coming!", *National Review*, 19 November 1990, p31.

22. WRIGHT, Robin "Islam, Democracy and the West", *Foreign Affairs*, *71*, Summer 1992, p131, footnote 1.

23. ZAKARIA, Rafic *The Struggle Within Islam: The Conflict Between Religion and Politics*, N.Y., Penguin, 1988, p14. One aspect to which fundamentalism can be applied is the political ideology of some extremists groups who use revolutionary doctrine, coloured by Islamic trappings, to justify terrorism. But this is actually an ideological and political fundamentalism, not a religious fundamentalism. This can be seen in fringe extremist political groups around the world, whether fascist, nationalist or neo-Maoist. This point has been understood by Daniel Pipes, PIPES, Daniel "There Are No Moderates: Dealing with Fundamentalist Islam", The *National Interest*, Fall 1995, pp48-49, but applied much too widely to all radical Islamic groups. A close reading of Daniel Pipes' position, regardless of the author's nationality, leaves one with the suspicion that any Islamic group opposing U.S. foreign policy or Western culture must therefore be by definition 'fundamentalist'. Daniel Pipes rounds this off by a logical *tour de force* which suggests that such forms of Islam, whether called extremist, fundamentalist, militant, political, radical, or Islamic revival, are really ideological movements and therefore 'not Islam as such', PIPES, Daniel "There Are No Moderates: Dealing with Fundamentalist Islam", The *National Interest*, Fall 1995, p55. A more balanced account of the essentially political face of 'fundamentalist' Islam will be found in OLESEN, Asta *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, Richmond, Curzon Press, 1995, p236, p252. Fortunately, such extremist totalitarian positions only apply to a small number of Islamic groups, most of whom in any case claim to represent a wider constituency deeply concerned with issues of social justice and oppression, e.g. the ILO, Islamic Liberation Organisation and Hizbullah. Such totalitarian revolutionary ideologies are accepted only by a minority of Muslim activists. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

for example, though willing to condone violence on some occasions, also has a strong evolutionary, grass roots, and social-aid aspect. See Esposito, John *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992, pp132-3, p136. In general, many radical Islamic groups today prefer activism within the political system, see WRIGHT, Robin "Islam, Democracy and the West", *Foreign Affairs, 71*, Summer 1992, p132.

24. Esposito, John *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992, p8.

25. Ibid., p23.

26. FULLER, Graham E. & LESSER, Ian O. *A Sense of Siege: The Geopolitics of Islam and the West*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1995, pp166-167; p174; Esposito, John *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992, p40, p51, p171; ALAWI, Ridha "The Political and Cultural Dialogue Between Islam and the West", *Echo of Islam* (Tehran)*, No. 119*, May 1994, pp28-30.

27. For one attempt to apply this approach with a dizzying abundance of policy alignments, see PIPES, Daniel "There Are No Moderates: Dealing with Fundamentalist Islam", The *National Interest*, Fall 1995, pp55-57.

28. PIPES, Daniel "There Are No Moderates: Dealing with Fundamentalist Islam", The *National Interest*, Fall 1995, p57.

29. GERNER, Deborah J. "Islamic Revivalism and International Politics", *Mershon International Studies Review*, 40 Supplement 1, April 1996, p104; Esposito, John *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992, p4; ESPOSITO, John "Beyond the Green Menace", *MSANEWS*, (16-5-1996), reposted from *Current History*, (Internet Source), January 1994.

30. For misunderstanding of Islam in France and social conflicts, see PIERRE, Andrew & QUANDT, William B. "Algeria's War on Itself", *Foreign Policy, 99*, Summer 1995, p140; WIEVIORKA, Michel "French Intellectuals: End of an Era", *Dissent*, Spring 1994, p250; MOISO, Dominique "Chirac of France: A New Leader of the West?", *Foreign Affairs, 74 no. 6*, November/December 1995, p11.

31. WRIGHT, Robin "Islam, Democracy and the West", *Foreign Affairs*, *71*, Summer 1992, pp144-145.

32. See for example the Institute of Islamic Information Education's "Human Rights in Islam", Chicago, 1995 [Internet Source], and ISMAEL, Jacqueline S. & ISMAEL, Tareq Y. "Cultural Perspectives on Social Welfare in the Emergence of Modern Arab Social Thought", *The Muslim World, 85 no. 1-2*, January-April 1995, pp82-106.

33. Though Islam had not been without its own reformers since the 19th century, e.g. Qasim Amin, 1863-1908 in his works *The Emancipation of Women* and *The New Woman* 'denounced the subjugation of Muslim women as un-Islamic', Esposito, John *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992, p58.

34. See MayEr, Ann Elizabeth *Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1995, pp64-66.

35. See MONSHIPOURI, Mahmood "Islamic Thinking and The Internationalization of Human Rights", *The Muslim World, 84 no. 2-3*, July-October 1994, pp217-239.

36. AL-GHAZALI *Deliverance from Error*, p19.

37. RORLICH, Azade-Ayse "Islam and Atheism: Dynamic Tension in Soviet Central

Asia", in FIERMAN, William (ed.) *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1991, p199; Esposito, John *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992, pp32-3; OLESEN, Asta *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, Richmond, Curzon Press, 1995, pp11-12. It is only when Islam is stripped of its inner directness, the experience of *tasawwuf*, that *jihad* can be reduced simply to an aggressive, external war, OLESEN, Asta *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, Richmond, Curzon Press, 1995, p246, p250. Thus it is not valid to make a straightforward connection between *jihad* and the House of Unbelief, or House of War, as implied in LEWIS, Bernard "The Roots of Muslim Rage", *Atlantic Monthly*, *266 no. 3*, September 1990, p49. It was only because of a perceived widespread Western attack on Islam, and the role of regional authoritarian governments in crushing popular expectations, that a few militants such as Sayyid Qutb of Egypt can invoke the notion of *jihad* to support a widespread Islamic revolution, Esposito, John *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992, pp126-131. Historically, it should be noted that despite 'the general perception of Islam as a religion of conquest and holy war, study of the practice of warfare within the Muslim tradition reveals a strong preference for restraint in warfare, including reliance on symbolism and the indirect approach', FULLER, Graham E. & LESSER, Ian O. *A Sense of Siege: The Geopolitics of Islam and the West*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1995, pp151-152. There are distinct parallels between the notion of *jihad* and Western formulations of just war.

38. ARBERRY, A.J. *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1950, p75. See also BENNIGSTEN, A. & WIMBUSH, S. *Mystics and Commissars: Sufism in the Soviet Union*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985, p78.

39. AMULI, Sayyid Haydar *Inner Secrets of the Path*, trans. Assadullah ad-Dhaakir Yate, Longmead, Elements Books, 1989, pp290-293.

40. See ancient documents such as *1 Enoch* 10 which envisage the eventual conversion of all of humanity to Judaism, in BARRETT, C.K. (ed.) *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents*, London, SPCK, 1987. Efforts at proselytization were active during the 3rd-1st centuries B.C., especially in Alexandria and Rome, see KOESTER, Helmut *Introduction to the New Testament: Vol I*, N.Y., Walter de Gruyter, 1987, pp249-280.

41. See LEWIS, Bernard "The Roots of Muslim Rage", *Atlantic Monthly*, *266 no. 3*, September 1990, p48, p56.

42. LEWIS, Bernard *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, London, Phoenix, 1982, p297.

43. Esposito, John *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992, p4. Though some tensions between Christian and Islamic communities over proselytization also break out on occasion in Indonesia, these frictions may be motivated by political rather than religious agendas.

44. ESPOSITO, John "Beyond the Green Menace", *MSANEWS*, (16-5-1996), reposted from *Current History*, (Internet Source), January 1994.

45. PIERRE, Andrew & QUANDT, William B. "Algeria's War on Itself", *Foreign Policy, 99*, Summer 1995, pp131-148; WRIGHT, Robin "Islam, Democracy and the West", *Foreign Affairs*, *71*, Summer 1992, pp134-137; ESPOSITO, John "Beyond the Green Menace", *MSANEWS*, (16-5-1996), reposted from *Current History*, (Internet Source), January 1994.

46. See for example MayEr, Ann Elizabeth *Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1995, pp93-122; HELMINSKI, Camille Adams "Women & Sufism", (Internet Source), 1996.

47. BENNIGSTEN, A. & WIMBUSH, S. *Mystics and Commissars: Sufism in the Soviet Union*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985, p68; LINGS, Martin

"Sufism", in ARBERRY, A.J. (ed.) *Religion in the Middle East: Three Religions in Concord and Conflict*, Cambridge, CUP, 1969, Vol. 2,, p260.

48. See AL-HUJWIRI, Ali B. Uthman Al-Jullabi *The Hashf Al-Mahjub: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism*, trans. Reynold Nicholson, London, Luzac and Company, 1976, Chapter XI, pp119-120.

49. In general see MayEr, Ann Elizabeth *Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1995; ZAKARIA, Rafic *The Struggle Within Islam: The Conflict Between Religion and Politics*, N.Y., Penguin, 1988; Esposito, John *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992.

50. See AL-HUJWIRI, Ali B. Uthman Al-Jullabi *The Hashf Al-Mahjub: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism*, trans. Reynold Nicholson, London, Luzac and Company, 1976, Chapter I "On the Affirmation of Knowledge", especially p11.

51. Al-Ghazali *Deliverance from Error*, p17; WATT, William Montgomery (trans.) *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali*, Oxford, Oneworld, 1994, p12; see also AL-HUJWIRI, Ali B. Uthman Al-Jullabi *The Hashf Al-Mahjub: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism*, trans. Reynold Nicholson, London, Luzac and Company, 1976, Chapter XI, p102.

52. Al-Ghazali *Deliverance from Error*, pp48-9.

53. OLESEN, Asta *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, Richmond, Curzon Press, 1995, p237.

54. ISMAEL, Jacqueline S. & ISMAEL, Tareq Y. "Cultural Perspectives on Social Welfare in the Emergence of Modern Arab Social Thought", *The Muslim World, 85 no. 1-2*, January-April 1995, pp82-106.

55. Esposito, John *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992, p62, p126, pp185-189. For a narrower interpretation, see GELLNER, Ernest *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1994, pp26-29. For a reformulation of democracy 'not as a human invention, but divine intention', see KHORASANI, Rajaei "Democracy in an Islamic System", *Echo of Islam* (Tehran), *No. 118*, April 1994, pp24-26. On the 'Pious Sultan theory', see OLESEN, Asta *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, Richmond, Curzon Press, 1995, p9.

56. ARBERRY, A.J. *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1950, p58.

57. Al-Ghazali *Deliverance from Error*, p56.

58. ANGHA, Nahid "About Sufism", from *Principles of Sufism*, (Internet Source), February 1991; IMOS, Zos "Sufi Traditions", (Internet Source), 1994.

59. ARBERRY, A.J. *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1950, p35; AL-HUJWIRI, Ali B. Uthman Al-Jullabi *The Hashf Al-Mahjub: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism*, trans. Reynold Nicholson, London, Luzac and Company, 1976, Chapter III "On Sufism", p30; DANNER, Victor "The Necessity for the Rise of the Term Sufi", *Studies in Comparative Religion, 6 no. 2*, 1973, p70; LINGS, Martin "Sufism", in ARBERRY, A.J. (ed.) *Religion in the Middle East: Three Religions in Concord and Conflict*, Cambridge, CUP, 1969, Vol. 2, p253, though Nahid Angha denies that this is the main derivation ANGHA, Nahid "About Sufism", from *Principles of Sufism*, (Internet Source), February 1991.

60. ANGHA, Nahid "About Sufism", from *Principles of Sufism*, (Internet Source), February 1991; IMOS, Zos "Sufi Traditions", (Internet Source), 1994.

61. AL-HUJWIRI, Ali B. Uthman Al-Jullabi *The Hashf Al-Mahjub: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism*, trans. Reynold Nicholson, London, Luzac and Company, 1976, Chapter III "On Sufism", p34. See also DANNER, Victor "The Necessity for the Rise of the Term Sufi", *Studies in Comparative Religion, 6 no. 2*, 1973, p76.

62. RIDGEON, Lloyd "The Felicitous Life in Sufism", *Sufi, No. 28*, Winter 1995-96, p30.

63. ZAKARIA, Rafic *The Struggle Within Islam: The Conflict Between Religion and Politics*, N.Y., Penguin, 1988, p63.

64. BENNIGSTEN, A. & WIMBUSH, S. *Mystics and Commissars: Sufism in the Soviet Union*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985, p9.

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