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*When Victims Become Killers:
Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*

*Citizen and Subject:
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The Myth of Population Control

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GOOD MUSLIM, BAD MUSLIM

*America, the Cold War,
and the Roots of Terror*

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*Introduction*MODERNITY
AND VIOLENCE

We have just ended a century of violence, one possibly more violent than any other in recorded history: world wars and colonial conquests; civil wars, revolutions, and counterrevolutions. Although the magnitude of this violence is staggering, it does not astound us.

The modern political sensibility sees most political violence as necessary to historical progress. Since the French Revolution, violence has come to be seen as the midwife of history. The French Revolution gave us terror, and it gave us a citizens' army. The real secret behind Napoleon's spectacular battlefield successes was that his army was not made up of mercenaries but patriots, who killed for a cause, inspired by national sentiment—what we have come to recognize as the civic religion of nationalism. Reflecting on the French Revolution, Hegel wrote that man was willing to die for a cause of greater value to him than life itself. Maybe Hegel

should have added: man is also willing to *kill* for such a cause. This, I think, is truer of our times than it was in the past.

The modern sensibility is not horrified by pervasive violence. The world wars are proof enough of this. What horrifies our modern sensibility is violence that appears senseless, that cannot be justified by progress.

Such violence gets discussed in two basic ways: in cultural terms for a premodern society and theological terms for a modern society. The cultural explanation always attributes political violence to the absence of modernity. On a world scale, it has been called a clash of civilizations. Locally—that is, when it does not cross the boundary between “the West” and the rest—it is called “communal conflict,” as in South Asia, or “ethnic conflict,” as in Africa.

Political violence in modern society that does not fit the story of progress tends to get discussed in theological terms. The violence of the Holocaust, for example, is explained as simply the result of evil. Like premodern culture, evil too is understood outside of historical time. There is huge resistance, both moral and political, to exploring the historical causes of the Nazi genocide. By seeing the perpetrators of violence as either cultural renegades or moral perverts, we are unable to think through the link between modernity and political violence.

The Modern State and Political Violence

The year 1492 was the onset of the European Renaissance and the birth of political modernity. It is also the year Christopher Columbus set sail for the New World and the year the armies of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella conquered the city-state of Granada, then seen as the last Muslim stronghold in western Christendom.

Thus, 1492 stands as a gateway to two related endeavors: one the unification of the nation, the other the conquest of the world.

The unification of the nation led to the birth of the nation-state. Today, political modernity is equated with the beginning of democracy, but nineteenth-century political theorists—notably Max Weber—recognized that political modernity depended upon the centralized state monopolizing violence. The nation-state centralized the formerly dispersed means of violence into a single fist, capable of delivering an awesome blow to all enemies of the nation, internal and external. It was also the political prerequisite for a civil society.

Europe on the threshold of political modernity thought of the nation in terms of culture and race. In the Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, the nation was first and foremost Christian. The unification of Spain began with an act of ethnic cleansing: 1492 was also the year Ferdinand and Isabella signed the Edict of Expulsion, designed to rid Spain of its Jews. The unified Spanish state gave its Jews a stark choice: baptism or deportation. It is estimated that about seventy thousand Spanish Jews converted to Christianity and remained in Spain, only to be plagued by the Inquisition, which accused them of insincerity. Of the remaining 130,000, an estimated 50,000 fled to the North African and Balkan provinces of the Ottoman empire—where they were warmly welcomed—and about 80,000 crossed the border into Portugal. The expulsion from Spain came at the close of a century that had witnessed the expulsion of Jews from one part of Europe after another. In 1499, seven years after the Edict of Expulsion, the Spanish state gave its Muslims the same choice: convert or leave.

So the history of the modern state can also be read as the history of race, bringing together the stories of two kinds of victims of European political modernity: the internal victims of state

building and the external victims of imperial expansion. Hannah Arendt noted this in her monumental study on the Holocaust, which stands apart for one reason: rather than talk about the uniqueness of the Holocaust, Arendt sited it in the imperial history of genocide. The history she sketched was that of European settlers killing off native populations. Arendt understood the history of imperialism through the workings of racism and bureaucracy, institutions forged in the course of European expansion into the non-European world: "Of the two main political devices of imperialist rule, race was discovered in South Africa, and bureaucracy in Algeria, Egypt and India." Hannah Arendt's blind spot was the New World. Both racism and genocide had occurred in the American colonies earlier than in South Africa. The near decimation of Native Americans through a combination of slaughter, disease, and dislocation was, after all, the first recorded genocide in modern history.

The idea that "imperialism had served civilization by clearing inferior races off the earth" found widespread expression in nineteenth-century European thought, from natural sciences and philosophy to anthropology and politics. When Lord Salisbury, the British prime minister, claimed in his famous Albert Hall speech on May 4, 1898, that "one can roughly divide the nations of the world into the living and the dying," Hitler was but nine years old, and the European air was "soaked in the conviction that imperialism is a biologically necessary process which, according to the laws of nature, leads to the inevitable destruction of lower races." Its paradigmatic example was in Tasmania, an island the size of Ireland where European colonists arrived in 1803, the first massacre of natives occurred in 1804, and the last original inhabitant died in 1869. Similar fates awaited, among others, the Maoris of New Zealand and the Herero of German South West Africa.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, it was a European habit to distinguish between civilized wars and colonial wars. The laws of war applied to wars among the civilized nation-states, but laws of nature were said to apply to colonial wars, and the extermination of the lower races was seen as a biological necessity. In *A History of Bombing*, Sven Lindqvist writes that bombing originated as a method of war considered fit for use only against uncivilized adversaries. The first bomb ever dropped from an airplane was Italian, and it exploded on November 1, 1911, in an oasis outside Tripoli in North Africa. The first systematic aerial bombing was carried out by the British Royal Air Force against the Somalis in 1920. In the Second World War, Germany observed the laws of war against the western powers but not against Russia. As opposed to 3.5 percent of English and American prisoners of war who died in German captivity, 57 percent of Soviet prisoners—3.3 million in all—lost their lives. The gassings of Russians by Germans preceded the gassings at Auschwitz—the first mass gassings were of Russian prisoners of war in the southern Ukraine. Russian intellectuals and Communists were the first to be gassed in Auschwitz. The Nazi plan, writes Sven Lindqvist, was to weed out some 10 million Russians, with the remainder kept alive as a slave-labor force under German occupation. When the mass murder of European Jews began, the great Jewish populations were not in Germany but in Poland and Russia, where they made up 10 percent of the total population and up to 40 percent of the urban population "in just those areas Hitler was after." The Holocaust was born at the meeting point of two traditions that marked modern Western civilization: "the anti-Semitic tradition and the tradition of genocide of colonized peoples." The difference in the fate of the Jewish people was that they were to be exterminated as a whole. In that, they were unique—*but only in Europe*.

This historical fact was not lost on intellectuals from the colonies. In his *Discourse on Colonialism* (1951), Aimé Césaire wrote that a Hitler slumbers within “the very distinguished, very humanistic and very Christian bourgeois of the Twentieth century,” and yet the European bourgeois cannot forgive Hitler for “the fact that he applied to Europe the colonial practices that had previously been applied only to the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India and the Negroes of Africa.” “Not so long ago,” recalled Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), “Nazism turned the whole of Europe into a veritable colony.”

The first genocide of the twentieth century was the German annihilation of the Herero people in South West Africa in 1904. The German geneticist Eugen Fischer’s first medical experiments focused on a “science” of race mixing in concentration camps for the Herero. His subjects were both Herero and the offspring of Herero women and German men. Fischer argued that “mulattoes,” Herero-Germans born of mixed parentage, were physically and mentally inferior to their German parents. Hitler read Fischer’s book *The Principle of Human Heredity and Race Hygiene* (1921) while he was in prison and later made him rector of the University of Berlin, where Fischer taught medicine. One of Fischer’s prominent students was Josef Mengele, who conducted notorious medical experiments at Auschwitz.

The Native’s Violence

The link between the genocide of the Herero and the Holocaust was race branding, which was used not only to set a group apart as an enemy but also to annihilate it with an easy conscience. Historians of genocide traditionally have sketched only half a history: the annihilation of the native by the settler. The revolutionary the-

orist Frantz Fanon has written how such attempts could then trigger the native annihilating the settler. Fanon has come to be regarded as a prophet of violence, following Hannah Arendt’s claim that his influence was mainly responsible for growing violence on American campuses in the 1960s. And yet those who came to pay homage to Fanon at his burial hailed him as a humanist. Fanon’s critics know him by a single sentence from *The Wretched of the Earth*: “The colonized man liberates himself in and through violence.” This was a *description* of the violence of the colonial system, of the fact that violence was central to producing and sustaining the relationship between the settler and the native. It was a *claim* that anticolonial violence is not an irrational manifestation but belongs to the script of modernity and progress, that it is indeed a midwife of history. And last and most important, it was a *warning* that, more than celebrate this turning of the tables, we need to think through the full implications of victims becoming killers.

We find in Fanon the premonition of the native turned perpetrator, of the native who kills not just to extinguish the humanity of the other but to defend his or her own, and of the moral ambivalence this must provoke in other human beings like us. No one understood the genocidal impulse better than this Martinique-born psychiatrist and Algerian freedom fighter. Native violence, Fanon insisted, was the violence of yesterday’s victims, the violence of those who had cast aside their victimhood to become masters of their own lives. He wrote:

He of whom they have never stopped saying that the only language he understands is that of force, decides to give utterance by force. . . . The argument the native chooses has been furnished by the settler, and by an ironic turning

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of the tables it is the native who now affirms that the colonialist understands nothing but force.

For Fanon, the proof of the native's humanity consisted not in the willingness to kill settlers but in the willingness to risk his or her own life.

To read Fanon is to understand not only the injury that fuels the violence of the native but also the fear that fuels the violence of the settler. Anyone familiar with the history of apartheid in South Africa would surely recognize that it could not have been simply greed—the wish to hold on to the fruits of conquest—but also fear, the specter of genocide, that stiffened white South African resolve against the winds of change blowing across the African continent. That same specter seemingly also haunts the survivors of the Holocaust in Israel, yesterday's victims turned today's perpetrators.

Before 9/11, I thought that tragedy had the potential to connect us with humanity in ways that prosperity does not. I thought that if prosperity tends to isolate, tragedy must connect. Now I realize that this is not always the case. One unfortunate response to tragedy is a self-righteousness about one's own condition, a seeking proof of one's special place in the world, even in victimhood. One afternoon, I shared these thoughts with a new colleague, the Israeli vice chancellor of the Budapest-based Central European University. When he told me that he was a survivor of Auschwitz, I asked him what lesson he had drawn from this great crime. He explained that, like all victims of Auschwitz, he, too, had said, "Never again." In time, though, he had come to realize that this phrase lent itself to two markedly different conclusions: one was that never again should this happen to *my* people; the other that it should

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never again happen to *any* people. Between these two interpretations, I suggest nothing less than our common survival is at stake.

9/11

The lesson of Auschwitz remains at the center of post-9/11 discussions in American society. An outside observer is struck by how much American discourse on terrorism is filtered more through the memory of the Holocaust than through any other event. Post-9/11 America seems determined: "Never again." Despite important differences, genocide and terrorism share one important feature: both target civilian populations. To what extent is the mind-set of the perpetrators revealed by the way they frame their victims culturally? Not surprisingly, the debate on this question turns around the relationship between cultural and political identity and, in the context of 9/11, between religious fundamentalism and political terrorism. I have written this book as a modest contribution to this debate. Rather than offer the results of original research, this interpretive essay seeks to explain political events, above all 9/11, in light of *political* encounters—historically shaped—rather than as the outcome of stubborn cultural legacies.

The book is really divided into two parts. The first part consists of a single chapter: chapter 1 offers a critique of the cultural interpretations of politics—what I call Culture Talk—and suggests a different way of thinking about political Islam. It traces the development of different tendencies, including the recent rise of a terrorist movement. The chapters that follow explain how Islamist terror, a phenomenon hitherto marginal, came to occupy center stage in Islamist politics. As such, it provides an alternative interpretation of 9/11. I argue that rather than illustrating a deep-seated clash of civilizations, 9/11 came out of recent history, that of the late Cold War.

I define the late Cold War as lasting from the end of the American war in Vietnam to the fall of the Soviet Union in 1990, with the era of proxy war stretching to the recent war in Iraq. If the war in Vietnam was the last Cold War engagement in which American ground troops directly participated in large numbers, the war in Iraq marks the first post-Cold War American engagement in which that prohibition was fully lifted. Between the two lies an era of proxy wars.

The late Cold War was an era of proxy wars marked by two developments. Both were distinctive initiatives of the Reagan administration's foreign policy. They also point up important similarities between the Reagan and the current Bush administrations, illuminating the mind-set of the "war on terror" after 9/11.

The changes in foreign policy during the Reagan era were responses to the revolutionary overthrow of pro-American dictatorships. The Reagan administration saw these revolutions, particularly the 1979 Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua and the Islamist Revolution in Iran, as setting a trend of reversals after Vietnam. It was against this backdrop that the Reagan administration concluded that America had been preparing to fight the wrong war, that against the massing of Soviet troops on the plains of Europe, which was likely never to take place. Reagan called on America to wage the war that was already on: the war against yesterday's guerrillas who had come to power as today's nationalists, from southern Africa to Central America. The Reagan administration portrayed militant nationalists as Soviet proxies. The shift in focus made for a shift in strategy and a new name: low-intensity conflict. This initiative was the first distinctive characteristic that marked the foreign policy of the Reagan administration.

The second initiative was the shift from "containment" to "rollback," which called for the subordination of all means to a

single end: the total war against the "evil empire." Even though couched in hypermoral language, this venture began as an amoral "constructive engagement" with the apartheid regime in South Africa. As official America held hands with Pretoria, the latter moved to harness political terror as the most effective way to undermine militant nationalist governments in the newly independent Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola. As the battleground of the Cold War shifted from southern Africa to Central America and central Asia in the late seventies, America's benign attitude toward political terror turned into a brazen embrace: both the contras in Nicaragua and later al-Qaeda (and the Taliban) in Afghanistan were American allies during the Cold War. Supporting them showed a determination to win the Cold War "by all means necessary," a phrase that could refer only to unjust means. The result of an alliance gone sour, 9/11 needs to be understood first and foremost as the unfinished business of the Cold War.

To the extent my point of view is shaped by a place, that place is Africa. I was a young lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam from 1973 to 1979. As the U.S. defeat in Vietnam in 1975 coincided with the collapse of the Portuguese empire, the last European colonial power in Africa, the center of gravity of the Cold War shifted from Southeast Asia to southern Africa. From 1980 when I returned to Makerere University in my hometown of Kampala, Uganda, right up to the end of a three-year stay at the University of Cape Town in South Africa in the late nineties, I participated in ongoing debates about the political violence raging in independent Africa: what were we to make of movements, like Renamo in Mozambique and, increasingly, the Inkatha Freedom Party in

South Africa, that targeted civilian populations rather than military concentrations and became my generation's first experience of political terror? Wary of press and politicians co-opted by the establishment who characterized this form of violence as an unfortunate cultural manifestation—"tribal" "black-on-black" violence—we looked for explanations in the rapidly changing political landscape. On 9/11 I was in New York City where I had moved from Cape Town in 1999. The more I participated in teach-ins and discussions around 9/11, and encountered those who thought it signaled the onslaught of "Islamic terrorism" on the American heartland, the more I was reminded of those cultural explanations I had heard the decade before in southern Africa.

I have no intention of explaining away either political ethnicity or political Islam as the result of a Cold War American conspiracy. Political Islam, like the thinking that champions "tribalism," is more a domestic product than a foreign import. But neither was bred in isolation; both were produced in the encounter with Western power. Political Islam was born in the colonial period. But it did not give rise to a terrorist movement until the Cold War. What particular circumstances made it possible for terrorism to be transformed from an ideological tendency into a political force? There was a common ground that nurtured both "black-on-black" violence in Africa from the mid-seventies and "Islamic terrorism" globally from the early eighties. That common ground was the late Cold War after Vietnam. Even if crafted from local raw material, both political tendencies crystallized as strategies to win the Cold War.

For those worried that I see 9/11 through lenses crafted in an earlier era—the late Cold War in Africa—I can only hope that this perspective will bring fresh illumination to a subject of common concern, without obscuring the ways in which 9/11 has indeed come to mark a turning point for America and the world.

Good Muslim, Bad Muslim

Listening to the public discussion in America after 9/11, I had the impression of a great power struck by amnesia. Acknowledging the epochal significance of the event should not necessarily mean taking it out of a historical and political context. Unfortunately, official America has encouraged precisely this. After an unguarded reference to pursuing a "crusade," President Bush moved to distinguish between "good Muslims" and "bad Muslims." From this point of view, "bad Muslims" were clearly responsible for terrorism. At the same time, the president seemed to assure Americans that "good Muslims" were anxious to clear their names and consciences of this horrible crime and would undoubtedly support "us" in a war against "them." But this could not hide the central message of such discourse: unless proved to be "good," every Muslim was presumed to be "bad." All Muslims were now under obligation to prove their credentials by joining in a war against "bad Muslims."

Judgments of "good" and "bad" refer to Muslim political identities, not to cultural or religious ones. For those who have difficulty thinking of cultural (and now religious) identity as distinct from political identity, don't forget the predicament faced by earlier conscripts of Western power. Was not the secular Jew, first in Europe and America and then in Nazi Germany, compelled to recognize that Western modernity had turned "the Jew" from just a cultural or religious identity to a political one? Was not historical Zionism the response of secular Jews who were convinced that their political choices were limited by this political identity imposed upon them?

There are no readily available "good" Muslims split off from "bad" Muslims, which would allow for the embrace of the former and the casting off of the latter, just as there are no "good" Chris-

tians or Jews split off from “bad” ones. The presumption that there are such categories masks a refusal to address our own failure to make a political analysis of our times. My hope is that this book will contribute to such an analysis as a prelude to framing real choices.

Chapter One

CULTURE TALK;
OR, HOW NOT TO TALK
ABOUT ISLAM AND
POLITICS

This moment in history after the Cold War is referred to as the era of globalization and is marked by the ascendancy and rapid politicizing of a single term: culture. During the Cold War, we discussed socioeconomic or political developments, such as poverty and wealth, democracy and dictatorship, as mainly local events. This new understanding of culture is less social than political, tied less to the realities of particular countries than to global political events like the tearing down of the Berlin Wall or 9/11. Unlike the culture studied by anthropologists—face-to-face, intimate, local, and *lived*—the talk of culture is highly politicized and comes in large geo-packages.

Culture Talk assumes that every culture has a tangible essence that defines it, and it then explains politics as a consequence of that essence. Culture Talk after 9/11, for example, qualified and explained the practice of “terrorism” as “Islamic.” “Islamic terror-

ism” is thus offered as both description and explanation of the events of 9/11. It is no longer the market (capitalism), nor the state (democracy), but culture (modernity) that is said to be the dividing line between those in favor of a peaceful, civic existence and those inclined to terror. It is said that our world is divided between those who are modern and those who are premodern. The moderns make culture and are its masters; the premoderns are said to be but conduits. But if it is true that premodern culture is no more than a rudimentary twitch, then surely premodern peoples may not be held responsible for their actions. This point of view demands that they be restrained, collectively if not individually—if necessary, held captive, even unconditionally—for the good of civilization.

In post-9/11 America, Culture Talk focuses on Islam and Muslims who presumably made culture only at the beginning of creation, as some extraordinary, prophetic act. After that, it seems Muslims just conformed to culture. According to some, our culture seems to have no history, no politics, and no debates, so that *all* Muslims are just plain bad. According to others, there is a history, a politics, even debates, and there *are* good Muslims and bad Muslims. In both versions, history seems to have petrified into a lifeless custom of an antique people who inhabit antique lands. Or could it be that culture here stands for habit, for some kind of instinctive activity with rules that are inscribed in early founding texts, usually religious, and mummified in early artifacts?

We need to distinguish between two contrasting narratives of Culture Talk. One thinks of premodern peoples as those who are not yet modern, who are either lagging behind or have yet to embark on the road to modernity. The other depicts the premodern as also the antimodern. Whereas the former conception encourages relations based on philanthropy, the latter notion is productive of fear and preemptive police or military action.

The difference is clear if we contrast earlier depictions of

Africans with contemporary talk about Muslims. During the Cold War, Africans were stigmatized as the prime example of peoples not capable of modernity. With the end of the Cold War, Islam and the Middle East have displaced Africa as the hard premodern core in a rapidly globalizing world. The difference in the contemporary perception of black Africa and Middle Eastern Islam is this: whereas Africa is seen as *incapable* of modernity, hard-core Islam is seen as not only incapable of but also *resistant* to modernity. Whereas Africans are said to victimize themselves, hard-core Muslims are said to be prone to taking others along to the world beyond. There is an interesting parallel between the pre-9/11 debate on terrorism in Africa and the post-9/11 debate on global terrorism. As in the current global debate, African discussions, too, looked mainly or exclusively for internal explanations for the spread of terror. In a rare but significant example that lumped African “tribalists” and Muslim “fundamentalists” together as the enemy, Aryeh Neier, former president of Human Rights Watch and now president of the George Soros-funded Open Society Institute, argued in an op-ed piece in the *Washington Post* that the problem is larger than Islam: it lies with tribalists and fundamentalists, contemporary counterparts of Nazis, who have identified modernism as their enemy.

Premodern peoples are said to have no creative ability and anti-modern fundamentalists are said to have a profound ability to be destructive. The destruction is taken as proof that they have no appreciation for human life, including their own. This is surely why Culture Talk has become the stuff of front-page news stories. Culture is now said to be a matter of life and death. This kind of thinking is deeply reminiscent of tracts from the history of modern colonization. This history stigmatizes those shut out of modernity as antimodern because they resist being shut out. It assumes that people’s public behavior, particularly their political

behavior, can be read from their habits and customs, whether religious or traditional. But could it be that a person who takes his or her religion literally is a potential terrorist? And that someone who thinks of a religious text as metaphorical or figurative is better suited to civic life and the tolerance it calls for? How, one may ask, does the literal reading of sacred texts translate into hijacking, murder, and terrorism?

Two Versions of Culture Talk

Contemporary Culture Talk dates from the end of the Cold War and comes in two versions. It claims to interpret politics from culture, in the present and throughout history, but neither version of Culture Talk is substantially the work of a historian. If there is a founding father of contemporary Culture Talk, it is Bernard Lewis, the well-known Orientalist at Princeton who has been an adviser to the U.S. policy establishment. The celebrated phrase of contemporary Culture Talk—"a clash of civilizations"—is taken from the title of the closing section of Lewis's 1990 article "The Roots of Muslim Rage." Lewis's text provided the inspiration for a second and cruder version, written by Samuel Huntington, a political scientist at Harvard, whose involvement with the U.S. policy establishment dates from the era of the Vietnam War. Whereas Lewis confined his thesis to historical relations between two civilizations he called "Islamic" and "Judeo-Christian," Huntington's reach was far more ambitious: he broadened Lewis's thesis to cover the entire world.

"It is my hypothesis," Huntington proclaimed in an article titled "The Clash of Civilizations?" (1993) in *Foreign Affairs*,

that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic.

The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation-states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.

Huntington's argument was built around two ideas: that since the end of the Cold War "the iron curtain of ideology" had been replaced by a "velvet curtain of culture," and that the velvet curtain had been drawn across "the bloody borders of Islam." Huntington cast Islam in the role of an enemy civilization. From this point of view, Muslims could be only bad.

Huntington was not alone. Several others joined in translating his point of view into a vision broadly shared in hawkish circles of the policy and intellectual establishment. The thrust of the new vision was that the ideological war we have come to know as the Cold War was but a parochial curtain-raiser for a truly global conflict for which "the West" will need to marshal the entire range of its cultural resources. For William Lind, the Cold War was the last in a series of "Western civil wars" that started in seventeenth-century Europe; with the end of the Cold War, he argued, the lines of global conflict become cast in cultural terms. Régis Debray, himself an active participant in the ideological struggles of the Cold War, saw the new era as sharply defined by a "Green Peril"—the color green presumably standing for Islam—far more dangerous than the red scares of yesteryears because it lacks rational self-restraint: "Broadly speaking, green has replaced red as the rising force. . . . The nuclear and rational North deters the nuclear and rational North, not the conventional and mystical South."

The idea of a clash of civilizations, with civilizations marching through history like armed battalions—with neither significant internal debates nor significant exchanges—has been widely discredited. Edward W. Said, the late Palestinian literary scholar who was University Professor at Columbia, forcefully argued for a more historical and less parochial reading of culture, one informed by the idea that the clash is more *inside* civilizations than *between* them: “To Huntington, what he calls ‘civilizational identity’ is a stable and undisturbed thing, like a room full of furniture in the back of your house.”

It is Bernard Lewis who has provided the more durable version of Culture Talk. Lewis both gestures toward history and acknowledges a clash within civilizations. Rather than claim an ahistorical global vision of a coming Armageddon, Lewis thinks of history as the movement of large cultural blocs called civilizations. But Lewis writes of Islamic civilization as if it were a veneer with its essence an unchanging doctrine in which Muslims are said to take refuge in times of crisis. “There is something in the religious culture of Islam,” Lewis noted in “The Roots of Muslim Rage,”

which inspired, in even the humblest peasant or peddler, a dignity and a courtesy toward others never exceeded and rarely equaled in other civilizations. And yet, in moments of upheaval and disruption, when the deeper passions are stirred, this dignity and courtesy toward others can give way to an explosive mixture of rage and hatred which impels even the government of an ancient and civilized country—even the spokesman of a great and ethical religion—to espouse kidnapping and assassination, and try to find, in the life of their Prophet, approval and indeed precedent for such actions.

Lewis elaborated his notion of the doctrinal core of Islam in a book that “was already in page proofs” by 9/11 but was published soon after, provocatively titled *What Went Wrong?* Paraphrasing Hegel’s old claim that freedom is the distinctive attribute of Western civilization, Lewis wrote: “To a Western observer, schooled in the theory and practice of Western freedom, it is precisely the lack of freedom . . . that underlies so many of the troubles of the Muslim world.” To this, he added the absence of secularism as the second explanation for the yawning gap between contemporary Islam and modernity: until the influence of French revolutionary ideas began percolating into the Middle East in the nineteenth century, Lewis argued, “the notion of a non-religious society as something desirable or even permissible was totally alien to Islam.”

It is Bernard Lewis, not Samuel Huntington, who provides the intellectual support for the notion that there are “good” as opposed to “bad” Muslims, an idea that has become the driving force of American foreign policy. Keen to draw an unambiguous conclusion for the policy establishment, Lewis begins by recognizing that “fundamentalism is not the only Islamic tradition” and that “there are others” and that “before this issue is decided there will be a hard struggle.” Warning the policy establishment that in this struggle “we of the West can do little or nothing . . . for these are issues that Muslims must decide among themselves,” he counsels that “in the meantime”—that is, while Muslims settle their internal accounts—the West needs “to avoid the danger of a new era of religious wars.” Whereas Huntington had issued a clarion call for the West to get ready for a clash of civilizations, Lewis has a different point: the West must remain a bystander while Muslims fight their internal war, pitting good against bad Muslims. In spite of this difference, one cannot help but note that both stand as representatives of the official “West.”

If Bernard Lewis provides intellectual support for the Bush administration's post-9/11 policy, the return to a roughshod, Cold War-style focus on "rolling back" history is politically more in line with Huntington. Rather than wait for "good" Muslims to triumph over "bad" Muslims, as Lewis counsels, the Bush administration is determined to hasten such a civil war. If necessary, as in Iraq, it is prepared to invade and bring about a regime change intended to liberate "good" Muslims from the political yoke of "bad" ones.

Culture Talk has also turned religion into a political category. Democracy lags in the *Muslim* world, concludes a Freedom House study of political systems in the non-Western world. As if taking a cue from Bernard Lewis, Stephen Schwartz, director of the Islam and Democracy Project for the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, claims that the roots of terrorism really lie in a sectarian branch of Islam, the Wahhabi. Even the pages of the *New York Times* now include regular accounts distinguishing good from bad Muslims: good Muslims are modern, secular, and Westernized, but bad Muslims are doctrinal, antimodern, and virulent. The self-appointed leaders of "the West," George W. Bush and British prime minister Tony Blair, have visibly stepped back from a Huntington-style embrace of a war between civilizations to a Lewis-style caution against taking on an entire civilization. After Bush's early public flirtation with the idea of an anti-Muslim crusade, both he and Blair have taken to warning audiences about the need to distinguish "good" Muslims from "bad" Muslims. The implication is unmistakable and undisguised: whether in Afghanistan, Palestine, or Pakistan, Islam must be quarantined and the devil exorcized from it by a Muslim civil war.

Lewis opens *What Went Wrong?* with a reductive discussion of the thirteen hundred years since the birth of Islam in the seventh

century: "the first thousand years or so after the advent of Islam" were followed by "the long struggle for the reconquest," which "opened the way to a Christian invasion of Africa and Asia." In the beginning, there was "conquest" and then followed "reconquest." The conquest was Islamic, the reconquest Christian. No period in history fits this model of "Christians" confronting "Muslims" better than the time of the Crusades.

One of the best studies of the Crusades is by the Slovenian historian Tomaž Mastnak, who points out that it was at that moment in history that the Muslim became the enemy. When "Christian society became conscious of itself through mobilization for holy war . . . an essential moment in the articulation of self-awareness of the Christian commonwealth was the construction of the Muslim enemy." Mastnak is careful to point out that this was not true of earlier centuries: "When, with the Arab expansion in the seventh and eighth centuries, the Muslims reached the European peninsula, they became in the Latin Christians' eyes one among those pagan, or infidel, barbarians. Among the host of Christian enemies, they were assigned no privileged place."

Militant Christian animosity was initially aimed at all non-Christians; only later did it become focused on Muslims: "It was with the crusade that Palestine ceased to be the Promised Land (*terra repromissionis*) of the Old Testament and became the Holy Land, *terra sancta*." Only with the Crusades did Christendom define a universal enemy and declare a "state of permanent war against the heathen." No longer just another earthly enemy, the Crusades demonized the Muslim as evil incarnate, "the personification of the very religion of the Antichrist." This is why the point of the Crusades was not to convert Muslims but to exterminate them: "The Muslims, the infidels, did not have freedom of choice; they could not choose between conversion and death because they

were seen as inconvertible.” Their extermination “was preached by the Popes” and also by St. Bernard, who “declared that to kill an infidel was not homicide but ‘malicide,’ annihilation of evil, and that a pagan’s death was a Christian’s glory because, in it, Christ was glorified.”

Bernard Lewis treats what is actually a series of different historical encounters—the Crusades, 1492, European colonization—as if they were hallmarks of a single clash of civilizations over fourteen hundred years. Rather than recognize that each encounter was fueled by a specific political project—the making of a political entity called “Christendom,” the Castilian monarchy’s desire to build a nation-state called Spain following its conquest of neighboring territories, modern European imperial expansion, and so on—Lewis claims that these “clashes” were driven by incompatible civilizations. And he assumes that the clashes take place between fixed territorial units that represent discrete civilizations over the fourteen-hundred-year history. To understand the political agenda that drives such civilizational histories, we should question the presumed identity between cultural and political history.

To avoid Lewis’s distortions, one needs more details at key historical turning points. Can one, for example, speak of Judeo-Christian civilization over two millennia as does Bernard Lewis? The Israeli cultural historian Gil Anidjar reminds us that Jewish culture in Spain is better thought of as “Arab Jewish”—rather than Judeo-Christian—and that the separation of “Jews from Arabs” did not occur until 1492. Moses Maimonides (1135–1204) wrote *The Guide of the Perplexed*, “the most important work of Jewish philosophy ever written,” a text “possibly written in Hebrew script, but ‘speaking’ to us in Arabic and/or Judeo-Arabic” in al-Andalus. And it was the loss of al-Andalus in 1492 that pro-

duced the major text of Jewish mysticism, the *Zohar* and also marked the beginning of the second Jewish diaspora.

It does not make sense to think of culture in political—and therefore territorial—terms. States are territorial; culture is not. Does it make sense to write political histories of Islam that read like histories of places like the Middle East? Or to write political histories of states in the Middle East as if these were no more than political histories of Islam there? We need to think of culture in terms that are both historical and nonterritorial. Otherwise, one is harnessing cultural resources for very specific national and imperial political projects.

Modernity and the Politicization of Culture

Culture Talk does not spring from the tradition of history writing but rather from that of the policy sciences that regularly service political establishments: Bernard Lewis is an Orientalist, and Samuel Huntington a political scientist. Orientalist histories of Islam and the Middle East have been consistently challenged since the 1960s by a diverse group of such intellectuals as Marshall Hodgson and Edward Said, Cheikh Anta Diop and Martin Bernal, Samir Amin and Abdallah Laroui. These thinkers came out of the ranks of the antiwar and anti-imperialist movements of the 1960s, and they were followed by a whole generation of historians. But even if discredited as an intellectual anachronism by two generations of scholarship, the Orientalist histories have managed to rebound.

The key reason lies in the relation between history writing and forms of power, and there are two broad forms of history writing: nationalist and metanationalist. If nationalist history writing has been mainly about giving the nation—a very modern and contemporary political subject—an identifiable and often glorious past,

metanationalist writings have given us equally glorified civilizational histories, locating the nation in a global context.

When the sixteenth-century Italian missionary Matteo Ricci brought a European map of the world—showing the new discoveries in America—to China, he was surprised to find that the Chinese were offended by it. The map put Europe in the center of the world and split the Pacific, which meant that China appeared at the right-hand edge of the map. But the Chinese had always thought of China as literally the “Middle Kingdom,” which obviously should have been in the center of the map. To please his hosts, Ricci produced another map, one that split the Atlantic, making China seem more central. In China, maps are still drawn that way, but Europe has clung to the first type of map. The most commonly used map in North America shows the United States at the center of the world, sometimes even splitting the Asian continent in two. Today, the most widely used world map has western Europe at its center. Based on the Mercator projection, it systematically distorts our image of the world: even though Europe has approximately the same area as each of the other two peninsulas of Asia—prepartition India and Southeast Asia—Europe is called a continent, whereas India is but a subcontinent, and Southeast Asia is not even accorded that status; at the same time, the area most drastically reduced in the Mercator projection is Africa.

The civilizational history of “the West” came to a triumphant climax in the nineteenth century, along with European imperialism. Written from the vantage point of a modern power that had exploded into global dominance in the centuries following the Renaissance, civilizational history gave “the West” an identity that marched through time unscathed. From this point of view, “the West” occupied the center of the global stage, and “the Orient” was its periphery. Not surprisingly, initial criticism of Eurocentric history came from scholars whose main focus was the “non-West.”

In the traditional story, as recounted by the University of Chicago historian Marshall Hodgson, “history began in the ‘East,’ ” and “the torch was then passed successively to Greece and Rome and finally to Christians of northwestern Europe, where medieval and modern life developed.”

Hodgson should have added that the division of the world into “the West” and “the East,” “Europe and Asia” left out a third part—in the words of the Yale historian Christopher Miller, “a blank darkness”—that was said to lack history or civilization because it lacked either great texts or great monuments. This blank darkness comprised Africa, the pre-Columbian Americas, and the lands of the Pacific, excepting, of course, Egypt and Ethiopia—which for this purpose were classified as belonging to Asia. In other words, the notion of “the West” went alongside two peripheries: whereas “the Orient” was visible, Africa and the others were simply blanked out into a historical darkness.

Marshall Hodgson made it a lifelong project to counter the West-centered studies of Islam. He began his classic three-volume study, *The Venture of Islam*, by showing how, throughout history, the notion of “the West” had changed at least three times. “The West” referred “originally and properly to the western or Latin-using half of the Roman empire; that is, to the *west Mediterranean lands*.” After the first change, the term came to refer to “the west European lands generally.” But this was not a simple extension, for it excluded “those west Mediterranean lands which turned Muslim.” The second shift was from West European lands to peoples, thus incorporating their overseas settlements. Then, there was the third shift as the definition of “the West” was further stretched to include “*all European Christendom*.” Whereas the second shift referred to a global western Europe, the third extension referred to a global Europe, western *and* eastern. Thus did the notion of “the West” develop from a geographical location to a racialized notion

referring to all peoples of European origin, no matter where they lived and for how long.

Can there be a self-contained history of Western civilization? Historians have been chipping away at this claim in a number of fields, ranging from the development of science to that of society. Hodgson had earlier remarked that the equation of "the West" with "science" had given rise to an absurdity whereby it was presumed that Arabic-writing scientists in the classical age of Islam were simply marking time. Rather than making any original contribution to science, they were presumed simply to be holding up the torch for centuries—until it could be passed on to "the West." The notion that the main role of Arabic-writing scientists was to preserve classical Greek science and pass it on to Renaissance Europe was fortified by Thomas Kuhn's claim that Renaissance science represented a paradigmatic break with medieval science and a reconnection with the science of antiquity. Whereas Kuhn associated the paradigmatic break with the work of Copernicus, recent works in the history of science challenge this presumption. With the advantage of accumulated findings, Otto Neugebauer and Noel Swerdlow, two distinguished historians of science, explored the influence of "astronomers associated with the observatory of Marāgha in northwestern Iran," whose works, written in Arabic, "reached Europe, Italy in particular, in the fifteenth century through Byzantine Greek intermediaries." They concluded in their now-classic 1984 work on the mathematical astronomy of Copernicus: "In a very real sense, Copernicus can be looked upon as, if not the last, surely the most noted follower of the 'Marāgha School.'" The contemporary history of science shows similar re-thinkings in other fields, such as anatomy (the pulmonary circulation of blood) and mathematics (decimal fractions). The lacuna in the history of science points to a larger historical gap: the place of

Andalusia—Arabic-writing Spain—in the historical study of the Renaissance.

We have seen that Eurocentric history constructed two peripheries: one visible, the other invisible. Part of the invisible periphery was Africa. The same political project that produced a self-standing history of the West also produced a self-standing history of Africa. Like the notion of "the West," that of Africa was also turned into a racialized object. The difference was that Africa was debased rather than exalted, redefined as the land south of the Sahara, coterminous with that part of the continent ravaged during the slave trade. The scholars who questioned the racialized degradation of Africa at the same time further eroded the production of Eurocentric history.

The reconsideration of African history began with the Senegalese savant, Cheikh Anta Diop, who wrote his major work, *The African Origin of Civilization*, in the 1960s. Diop questioned the racist tendency to dislocate the history of pharaonic Egypt—in which roughly one quarter of the African population of the time lived—from its surroundings, particularly Nubia to the south, thereby denying the African historical identity of ancient Egypt. Diop targeted the cherished heart of the Eurocentric tradition, the classics, which not only cast Greece and Rome as eternal components of "the West" but also stripped Egypt of its historical identity. In the study of classics, Egypt faced a double loss: its connection with Greece in ancient times was reduced to being external and incidental, and its location in Africa was denied historical significance.

Diop's work provided the foundation on which the British scholar Martin Bernal based his monumental two-volume work, *Black Athena: Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*. Bernal showed the ways in which the main tradition of Egyptology

had been shaped by a metanationalist Western way of thinking rooted in the nineteenth-century imperial, particularly, German, imagination. Bernal contrasted this imperial imagination with what Greeks had to say about themselves, particularly about their great historical and civilizational debt to pharaonic Egypt. In particular, he showed how the Greeks' image of themselves as the product of an invasion from Egypt in the south was reversed in the European imperial imagination to portray classical Greece as the product of an Aryan invasion from the north. Bernal also made it clear that Greece, originally a colony of Egypt, was an amalgam of diverse influences, initially African, Phoenician, and Jewish, later northern European. If early classical Egypt is better thought of as an African civilization, classical Greece is better thought of as a Mediterranean—rather than European—civilization.

Edward Said summed up “the principal dogmas of Orientalism” in his majestic study of the same name. The first dogma is that the same Orientalist histories that portray “the West” as “rational, developed, humane [and] superior,” caricature “the Orient” as “aberrant, undeveloped [and] inferior.” Another dogma is that “the Orient” lives according to set rules inscribed in sacred texts, not in response to the changing demands of life. The third dogma prescribes “that the Orient is eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself; therefore it is assumed that a highly generalized and systematic vocabulary for describing the Orient from a Western standpoint is inevitable and scientifically ‘objective.’” And the final dogma is “that the Orient is at the bottom something either to be feared (the Yellow Peril, the Mongol hordes, the brown dominions) or to be controlled (by pacification, research and development, outright occupation whenever possible).”

There is reason to be hugely skeptical of claims that describe

civilizations discretely and identify civilizational histories with particular geographies and polities. One has to distinguish between civilization and power. The very notion of an uninterrupted “Western civilization” across linear time is an idea that only arises from the vantage point of the power we know as the West. This power has both a geography and a history: that history stretches from 1492 through the centuries of the slave trade and colonization to the Cold War and after.

Like the history of Western civilization, the history of Arabs is linked to particular political agendas. At times, such a history doubles as a history of “Islam,” just as the history of “the West” often doubles as the history of “Christianity.” Here, too, the tendency is for cultural identities to get politicized and to take on identities defined by the law.

In its North African colonies, France drew a legal distinction between “Berber” and “Arab.” By governing “Berbers” with a “customary law” (*dahir*) and “Arabs” with a religious law, they turned “Berber” and “Arab” into mutually exclusive identities, first legal, then political. The nationalist response was in reality a backlash that reified the identity “Arab,” so much so that simply “to acknowledge any distinction between Arabs and Berbers was to risk associating oneself with the French colonial attempt to divide the nation into ethnic enclaves.” This response turned the politically charged world of Orientalist culture upside down but failed to change it.

Not surprisingly, who is a Berber and who is not—and what percent of Morocco’s population is Berber today—is now a profoundly political question. How else are we to understand wildly differing estimates of Berbers in the Moroccan population, from the BBC’s claim of “more than 60%” to estimates of “less than 45%” by Berber scholar Fatima Sadiqi and “about 40%” by

activist-scholar Salem Chaker? One problem with equating political identities and cultural ones is that everything becomes too one-dimensional. Cultural developments that are amalgams are given one identity, Arab, as if springing from a single fountainhead. Arabic-speaking North African Berbers thus become "Arabs" and so the conquest of Spain by mainly Berber dynasties from Senegambia, becomes an "Arab" conquest.

Conventional Arab civilizational history has been most effectively questioned by Africans themselves. In 1972, the Sudanese civil war—already the longest civil war in the history of postcolonial Africa—was the subject of a negotiated settlement in Addis Ababa. All those involved in the civil war—the power in the north, the rebels in the south, and the range of foreign states and interests that lined up behind either side—agreed that the civil war had pitted "Arabs" in the north against "Africans" in the south. The presumption that the political adversaries represented two distinct cultural identities, "Arab" and "African," was challenged by a group of northern and southern Sudanese intellectuals who came to control the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when a coalition government came to power. In a book written in 1973 and presented to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at its tenth anniversary, they put forth a radically different perspective on the history of Sudan, one that distinguished its cultural from its political history. The fact that the power that came to rule Sudan after the fifteenth century defined itself as "Arab" was no reason to identify the culture of the period as "Arab." Those who did so assumed that the Sudanese culture was a result of a one-sided assimilation and deracination of native Sudanese to foreign Arab. Instead, the authors argued that the complexity of this culture could best be understood as the outcome of a many-sided "integration" of its multiple and different ingredients:

Afro-Arab integration in the North tended to be referred to as Arabization. To the extent that Arab symbols of identification, especially their language and religion, have been highlighted over and above their African equivalents, this characterization may be justified, but the process involved more give-and-take than the term "Arabization" would adequately reflect. A significant degree of Africanization of the Arab element also took place.

The point is that even if political identities are singular, cultural identities tend to be cumulative.

Identities shift and histories get rewritten as a result of changing political agendas. The aftermath of civil conflicts often presents us with conflicting histories, each representing the point of view of a contending power in an unstable political context. Wherever adversaries resolve to live together in a single political community—as did Arab and African in 1972 Sudan, Hutu and Tutsi in postgenocide Rwanda, or black and white in postapartheid South Africa—an acute need for a new history is felt. Not surprisingly, none of these places has such a readily available history.

The history of "the West" also underwent a fundamental revision in the aftermath of the Holocaust. In post-Holocaust history Judaism has been recast and the Jewish people have gone from being a prominent other who lived inside Europe to being an integral part of Europe. Contrast the post-Holocaust notion of "Judeo-Christian" civilization with pre-Holocaust notions, equally entrenched, about a Christian civilization that had excluded European Jews. This, for example, is how the nineteenth-century French philologist Ernest Renan distinguished Semites from Caucasians:

One sees that in all things the Semitic race appears to us to be an incomplete race, by virtue of its simplicity. This

race—if I dare use the analogy—is to the Indo-European family what a pencil sketch is to painting; it lacks that variety, that amplitude, that abundance of life which is the condition of perfectibility. Like those individuals who possess so little fecundity that, after a gracious childhood, they attain only the most mediocre virility, the Semitic nations experienced their fullest flowering in their first age and have never been able to achieve true maturity.

The shift of perspective after the Second World War that relocated Judaism and Jews to the heart of Western history and Western civilization signifies no less than a sea change in consciousness. The notion of a Judeo-Christian civilization crystallized as a post-Holocaust antidote to anti-Semitism. In the same way, I propose to distinguish between fundamentalism as a religious identity and political identities that use a religious idiom, such as political Christianity and political Islam, which are political identities formed through direct engagement with modern forms of power.

Modernity, Fundamentalism, and Political Islam

“Fundamentalism” is, in fact, a term invented in 1920s Protestant circles in the United States. Like conservatism, fundamentalism is a latecomer on the scene. Just as conservatism was a political response to the French Revolution and not a throwback to premodern times, fundamentalism, too, was a reaction within religion to its changing political circumstances. There is a difference between Christian fundamentalism, which emerged in the 1920s in America, and political Christianity, a phenomenon that arose in America after the Second World War.

To speak of fundamentalist Islam, at least in the case of main-

stream Sunni Islam, is misleading. Since mainstream Islam did not develop a religious hierarchy parallel to a secular state hierarchy, as historical Christianity did, it lacks the problem of secularism. “Fundamentalism” can be applied to those forms of Shi’a Islam that have indeed developed a religious hierarchy. When this book focuses on political movements that speak the language of religion, they will be referred to as political Islam and not Islamic fundamentalism.

This book will also question those writers who speak of “religious fundamentalism” as a political category and associate it with “political terrorism.” “Fundamentalism” as a religious phenomenon has to be distinguished from those political developments that are best described as political Christianity and political Islam. Religious “fundamentalism” is akin to a countercultural, not a political, movement. The problem with using the term “fundamentalism” to describe all such movements is that it tends to equate movements forged in radically different historical and political contexts, and obscures their doctrinal differences, including the place of violence in religious doctrine. This is why after explaining the historical context in which Christian “fundamentalism” emerged, and distinguishing it from political Christianity, I won’t use the term “fundamentalism” to describe countercultural movements inside Islam or other religions. And I question the widespread assumption that every political movement which speaks the language of religion is potentially terrorist.

The clue to the nature of a political movement lies not in its language but in its agenda. Just as the onset of political Christianity after the Second World War in America produced movements as diverse as the civil-rights and the Christian-right movements, so did the onset of political Islam during the Cold War give rise to movements with diverse, even contradictory, political agendas.

Moderate movements organize and agitate for social reform within the existing political context. Radical movements organize to win state power, having concluded that the existing political situation is the main obstacle to social reform. There are two kinds of radical movements, society-centered and state-centered: whereas society-centered radicals link the problem of democracy in society with the state, state-centered radicals pose the problem of the state at the expense of democracy in society. It is state-centered political Islam that has been the harbinger of Islamist political terror.

Christian Fundamentalism and Political Christianity

The term "fundamentalism" was invented in 1920 by the Rev. Curtis Lee Laws and was immediately taken up as an honorific by his Baptist and Presbyterian colleagues who swore to do "battle royal for the fundamentals of the faith." Karen Armstrong has located this phenomenon in a rapidly growing set of American debates over the validity of biblical literalism then being taken up by the increasingly powerful and entrenched conservative Republicans who supported it. In 1910, the Presbyterians of Princeton defined a set of five dogmas standing for the infallibility of Scripture: (1) the inerrancy of Scripture, (2) the virgin birth of Christ, (3) Christ's atonement for our sins on the cross, (4) his bodily resurrection, and (5) the objective reality of his miracles. Between 1910 and 1915, they issued a series of twelve paperback pamphlets called *The Fundamentals*, dispatching some three million copies to every pastor, professor, and theology student in America. Their next step was to try to expel liberals; the fiercest institutional battles were fought where fundamentalists were the strongest, among Baptists and Presbyterians.

Karen Armstrong concludes her historical discussion of fundamentalism with the observation that fundamentalism is not a throwback to a premodern culture but a response to an *enforced* secular modernity. In other words, there would be no fundamentalism without modernity. Furthermore, fundamentalism emerged as a struggle inside religion, not between religions, as a critique of liberal forms of religion that religious conservatives saw as accommodating an aggressive secular power.

Begun in the late nineteenth century, these debates rapidly turned into contests for power and influence across the institutional landscape of America, in universities and public schools, seminaries and churches, elections and the press, courts and legislatures. The outcome was mixed and unstable: fundamentalists won partial legislative victories in several states. Then they won a full victory in 1925 when the Tennessee legislature passed a law that made it a crime to teach evolution in state-funded schools. A few months later, the law was challenged in court when a young biology teacher, John T. Scopes—having decided to strike a blow for free speech against religious convention—confessed that he had broken the law when substituting for his school principal in a biology class.

Brought to trial in July 1925, Scopes was defended by the great rationalist lawyer Clarence Darrow, sent by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). On the side of the law was the well-known Democratic politician and Presbyterian leader William Jennings Bryan, who had already launched a crusade against the teaching of evolution in schools. The Scopes trial not only invoked important principles of liberal democracy against one another, it also made for a public debate on the dichotomy in modern Western thinking. If Darrow claimed to stand for free speech, Bryan championed "common sense" as understood by ordinary people. If Darrow stood for progress, Bryan contended that there was a link between

Darwinist theories of progress and the German militarism that had surfaced in the carnage of the First World War. Known for the lecture with which he had toured the United States, "The Menace of Darwinism," Bryan argued that the notion that the strong could or should survive had "laid the foundation for the bloodiest war in history." He warned that "the same science that manufactured poisonous gases to suffocate soldiers is preaching that man has a brutal ancestry" and is "eliminating the miraculous and the supernatural from the Bible." In the final analysis, though, the trial provided a public spectacle of a historic "contest between God and Science."

Put on the stand by Darrow, Bryan was forced to concede that a literal interpretation of the Bible—holding, for example, that the world was six thousand years old and created in six days—was not possible. Bryan was ridiculed publicly and died a few days after the trial, and Darrow emerged "the hero of clear rational thought." Even though the fundamentalists won the legal battle, they lost the cultural one. Susan Harding, writing in *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics*, comments on how the triumph of modernism at the same time involved a caricature of "fundamentalism":

The modern point of view in America emerged in part from its caricature of conservative Protestants as Fundamentalists. They were the "them" who enabled the modern "us". You cannot reason with them. They actually believe the Bible is literally true. They are clinging to traditions. They are reacting against rapid social change. They cannot survive in a modern world. . . . Before the Scopes trial, it was unclear which of the opposed terms, Fundamentalist or Modern, would be the winner and

which the loser, which was superior and which was inferior, which term represented the universal and the future and which the residual, that which was passing away.

Derided as fundamentalists, conservative Protestants were humiliated by the outcome of the Scopes trial, which marked the beginning of their exile from American public life. Leaving their denominations, they founded new organizations. They disavowed social reform, as they did all modern forms of sociability. The fundamentalist counterculture was typified by Bob Jones University, founded in 1927. The founder, Bob Jones, was no intellectual, but an evangelist who wanted a "safe" school, that taught liberal arts alongside "commonsense Christianity"—at least one Bible course a semester, compulsory chapel attendance, strict social rules that banned interracial dating on campus, and a code of conduct that defined disobedience and disloyalty as "unpardonable sins." Bob Jones University decided not to seek academic accreditation, thereby retaining tighter control over admissions, curriculum, and library resources. By their actions, if not by admission, they seemed to accept the secular caricature of religious conservatives as fundamentalists stuck in time, as premodern people unfit for modern cultural and political life in a secular America.

It took three decades for religious conservatives to return to public life, and that return happened in two separate but connected waves. The first wave followed the Second World War and was spearheaded by "evangelicals" who renounced the separatism championed by fundamentalists, arguing that "the duty of saving souls in this rotten civilization demanded some degree of cooperation with other Christians, whatever their beliefs." The founding act of the evangelical movement was the formation in 1942 of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), a public lobby on a

par with the National Council of Churches, which was affiliated with the Liberal World Council of Churches. With the arrival of television in the 1950s, young “televangelists” such as Billy Graham, Rex Humbard, and Oral Roberts replaced old traveling revivalist preachers and formed their own broadcasting empires and publishing houses. Televangelists started the national “prayer breakfast movement” that “rapidly gathered members of Congress and preachers, and evangelist Billy Graham became the spiritual counselor of choice for the post-war generation of U.S. presidents.”

The second wave came on the heels of *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that affirmed abortion as a woman’s right, which religious conservatives saw as a historic defeat. Taking a cue from southern black churches, which had dramatically and successfully entered public life at the helm of the civil-rights movement, fundamentalists resolved to shed the mainstream moderation of evangelicals for an equally bold leadership. Speaking on the “Nebraska tragedy” at a 1982 conference, Jerry Falwell challenged the new Christian right to breach the line of separation between religion and politics and to muster the “kind of backbone to stand up for their freedom that Civil Rights people had.”

Their quarantine had lasted nearly half a century. The return of “fundamentalism” to American public life was unabashedly political and was at first associated with mass mobilization of white Protestant Christians. The movement’s most visible leaders were national televangelists—Jerry Falwell, Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker—who were also key in forming organizations with an explicitly political agenda: the Moral Majority, the Religious Roundtable, and Christian Voice. When Falwell founded the Moral Majority in 1979, he “rode piggyback on networks of fundamentalist Baptist churches.” He called on Christians to change history.

The idea that “religion and politics don’t mix,” he said, “was invented by the devil to keep Christians from running their own country.” As conservative Protestants rushed into the Moral Majority, they “tore up a tacit contract with modern America” not to mix Bible-believing Protestant rhetoric with day-to-day politics. Falwell’s Moral Majority sermons were known as jeremiads. Named after Jeremiah, the Old Testament prophet, a jeremiad “laments the moral condition of a people, foresees cataclysmic consequences, and calls for dramatic moral reform and revival.” In his jeremiads, Jerry Falwell defined abortion as “the biological holocaust,” AIDS as “a judgment of God against America for endorsing immorality,” and “God’s absolute opposition to abortion and homosexuality” as part of the “litmus tests of Bible truth.”

Protestant fundamentalists had several victories in the last decades of the twentieth century. They were able to make sure that Arkansas and Louisiana passed bills to ensure that equal time was given in the school curriculum to the literal teaching of Genesis alongside Darwinian evolution. Their most notable achievement, though, was the blocking of the Equal Rights Amendment. Phyllis Schlafly, a Roman Catholic leader whose “Eagle Forum” often held joint events with the Moral Majority, chastised feminism as a “disease,” the cause of the world’s illness. Ever since Eve disobeyed God and sought her own liberation, she said, feminism had brought sin into the world and with it “fear, sickness, pain, anger, hatred, danger, violence, and all varieties of ugliness.” Though thirty of thirty-two required states had voted for the Equal Rights Amendment by 1973, Christian right activists were able to halt its momentum: Nebraska, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, and South Dakota all reversed their previous votes for the amendment.

As early as the mid-1970s, George Gallup, Jr., had polled Americans about their religious views and found that more than

one third—that is, more than fifty million adult Americans—described themselves as “born again,” defined as having experienced “a turning point in your life when you committed yourself to Jesus Christ.” Jimmy Carter was America’s first “born-again” president. Ronald Reagan was the second, and George W. Bush is the third. Presidential candidate Reagan embraced the Christian right publicly when he spoke at the National Religious Broadcasters Convention in 1980, hosted that year by Jerry Falwell’s Thomas Road Baptist Church. Later that year, the Christian right organized a march of several hundred thousand born-again Christians on the Washington Mall for a “Washington for Jesus” rally. Three years later, Reagan boldly introduced the language of self-righteousness, of “good” and “evil,” to American postwar politics when he told the NAE that the Soviet Union was an “evil empire.” By the time of the 1992 Republican national convention in Houston, the religious right showed strong evidence of having consolidated its electoral strength. The party platform included two new planks: one unequivocally opposed abortion under any circumstance, the other denounced the Democrats’ support for gay-rights legislation. In his speech on the opening night of the convention, Patrick Buchanan warned of a coming “religious war” that would plague the United States from within: “It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we shall be as the Cold War itself, for this war is for the soul of America.”

Jerry Falwell had been right about the civil-rights movement: it did represent a dramatic and successful reentry of religion into politics. The civil-rights and the Christian-right movements illustrate two different forms of political Christianity in the modern world. The contrast between them also shows that the involvement of religious movements in politics is not *necessarily* reactionary.

Islamic Reformism and Political Islam

Long before political Islam appeared in the twentieth century, Islamic reformers had felt that colonialism was the key challenge facing contemporary Muslims. The question was posed squarely by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839–1897), famous as Ernest Renan’s protagonist in mid-nineteenth-century Paris. When Renan published a piece on “Islam and Science” in *Journal des Débats* (March 29, 1883), al-Afghani responded in the same journal (May 18, 1883). Renan published a rejoinder the very next day after al-Afghani’s response, acknowledging what a great impression al-Afghani had made on him and praising him as a fellow rationalist and infidel. In his lecture, Renan had claimed that “early Islam and the Arabs who professed it were hostile to the scientific and philosophic spirit, and that science and philosophy had only entered the Islamic world from non-Arab sources.” Al-Afghani’s response was to challenge Renan’s racist assumptions—that the Arabs and/or Islam were hostile to science—and in its place argue a surprisingly modern case, that science, as philosophy, develops everywhere over time.

Al-Afghani had traveled widely outside his native Iran, from India in the east to France in the west, before he came to Egypt. His traditional *madrassah* education had included *fiqh* (jurisprudence) alongside *falsafah* (philosophy) and *irfan* (mysticism). His Indian experience both convinced al-Afghani of the future importance of modern science and mathematics and exposed him to Britain’s brutal repression of the 1857–58 anticolonial revolt in India. Whereas early-nineteenth-century Islamic thinkers who embraced progress tended to be enamored with Western modernity and saw Britain and France as benign bearers of progress, al-Afghani highlighted modernity’s *contradictory* impact. His

religious vision came to be informed by a very modern dilemma. On the one hand, Muslims needed modern science, which they would have to learn from Europe. On the other, this very necessity was proof “of our inferiority and decadence,” for “we civilize ourselves by imitating the Europeans.” Al-Afghani had located the center of this historical dilemma in a society that had been subjected to colonialism: if being modern meant, above all, free rein for human creativity and originality, how could a colonial society modernize by imitation?

This was also a debate about colonialism and independence. Not surprisingly, forward-looking Islamic thinkers looked within Islamic tradition for sources of innovation, renewal, and change. Even if both reformers and radicals spoke the language of Islam, they looked to doctrine and history not just for continuity but also for renewal, and so they provided different answers to the question of how to confront Western modernity and global dominance. The main lines of demarcation in the twentieth century were worked out through debates in three different countries: India, Egypt, and Iran.

This process was completely different from the earlier development of Christian fundamentalism and political Christianity. Unlike Christianity, mainstream Islam has no institutionalized religious hierarchy; it has a religious clergy, but not one organized parallel to the hierarchy of the state. There is a major debate on the significance of this historical difference. Reinhard Schulze has argued that the absence of a conflict between secular and religious hierarchies is why the problem of secularism does not appear in Islam and why Islamic religious movements are not necessarily antiseccular. In contrast, Bernard Lewis claims that the absence of a clear line of demarcation between the religious and the secular indicates the absence of secular thought in Islam. However, Schulze

points out that modern Islamic discourse is largely secular, concerned more with contemporary political and social issues than with a spiritual concern with salvation or the hereafter, precisely because Islamic societies were able to secularize within Islam, rather than in opposition to it.

Whereas the development of a political Christianity in the United States was mainly the work of a “fundamentalist” religious clergy—such as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and others—the development of political Islam has been more the work of non-clerical political intellectuals such as Muhammad Iqbal and Mohammed Ali Jinnah in colonial India, and Abul A’la Mawdudi, Sayyid Qutb, and Ali Shariati in postcolonial Pakistan, Egypt, and Iran respectively. The glaring exception was Ayatollah Khomeini. The secular discourse in Iran has tended to resemble that in western Christianity precisely because only in revolutionary Iran has clerical power received constitutional sanction. Whereas fundamentalist clergy were the pioneers of political Christianity, the pioneers of political Islam were not the religious *ulama* (scholars) but political intellectuals with an exclusively worldly concern. This is another reason why it makes more sense to speak of political Islam—the preferred designation in the Arab world for this movement—than of Islamic fundamentalism, the term most often used in post-9/11 America.

The split between religious *ulama* and political intellectuals was evident as early as the anticolonial movement in India in the first half of the twentieth century. There, religious and political conservatism did not necessarily go hand in hand: the intellectuals, not the *ulama*, pioneered the development of Islamist political movements, ultimately championing a call for a separate homeland for Indian Muslims, Pakistan. Contrary to what we might expect, the conservative *ulama* remained inside the secular Indian

National Congress, whereas modernist secular intellectuals called for an Islamic polity, at first autonomous, then independent. Whereas the ulama made clear distinctions between Islam as a cultural and religious identity and various political identities that Muslims may espouse, secular intellectuals came to insist that Islam was not just a religious or cultural identity; it had become a political identity.

The Indian experience reveals that those who called for nationalist politics were not always progressive, and those who championed religious political nationalism were not all reactionary. The two camps were not divided by the line between democracy and authoritarianism. The poet Muhammad Iqbal and the politician Mohammed Ali Jinnah, both spokespersons for the political rights of Muslims, were determinedly secular in orientation. Iqbal, considered the spiritual founder of Pakistan, was among the few Muslim intellectuals who rejoiced in 1922 when Turkey abolished the Ottoman Khilafat, in effect severing any relationship between the state and religion. He called for the institution of *ijtihad* (legal interpretation) to be modernized and democratized: he argued that the law should be interpreted by a body elected by the community of Muslims, the *umma*, and not the ulama. Jinnah, considered the political founder of Pakistan, was similarly determined that independent Pakistan must have a secular constitution, guaranteeing separation between the state and religion and due protection for the rights of minorities.

The shift from a reformist to a radical agenda in political Islam is best understood in the context of the transition from colonialism to postcolonialism, and can be highlighted by the history of a single mass organization, the Society of Muslim Brothers, in Egypt. The society was founded in March 1928 when Hassan al-Banna, a young teacher inspired by the ideas of al-

Afghani, among others, heard a plea for action from workers in the town of Ismailiyyah. Echoing al-Afghani, he argued that Muslims must draw on their own historical and cultural resources instead of imitating other peoples, as if they were "cultural mongrels." The six-point program of action that al-Banna devised focused on creating an extensive welfare organization and disavowed violence.

It was the defeat of Arab armies in 1948 and the subsequent creation of the state of Israel that convinced the society to expend its energies beyond welfare to armed politics: Hassan al-Banna called for the formation of a battalion to fight in Palestine. Said to be a state within a state, with its own "armies, hospitals, schools, factories and enterprises," the society was banned in Egypt on December 6, 1948, and relegalized in 1951. When young army officers led by Gamal Abdel Nasser came to power in 1952, the society gave them full support. But the society soon split with Nasser and sided with those who called on the military to recognize the freedom to form political parties and to hand over power to a civilian government. Nasser moved to arrest those calling for a civilian order; more than one thousand society members were arrested. In Nasser's prisons, some of them abandoned their vision of reform and created a new and potentially violent version of political Islam. If the reform vision was identified with the thought of Hassan al-Banna in the formative period of the society, the extremist turn was inspired by the pen of Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966), writing in prison. The experience of such brutal repression under a secular government was one influence shaping the birth of a radical orientation in Egyptian Islamist thought. The second influence, a more theoretical one, came from Marxism-Leninism, already the most important alternative to political Islam in intellectual debates on how best to confront a

repressive secular state that had closed off all possibilities of democratic change.

Sayyid Qutb is the most well known among the intellectual pioneers of radical political Islam, a movement that now stands for a radically reformulated notion of *jihad*, a doctrine shared by all Muslims, and now hotly contested. The debate around radical political Islam is thus increasingly a debate on the meaning of "jihad." Concern for the umma, the Muslim community, is part of the five pillars (*ruk'n*) of Islam and is binding on every Muslim. The Koran insists that a Muslim's first duty is to create a just and egalitarian society in which poor people are treated with respect. This demands a jihad (literally, effort or struggle) on all fronts: spiritual and social, personal and political. Scholars of Islam distinguish between two broad traditions of jihad: *al-jihad al-akbar* (the greater jihad) and *al-jihad al-asghar* (the lesser jihad). The greater jihad, it is said, is a struggle against weaknesses of self; it is about how to live and attain piety in a contaminated world. Inwardly, it is about the effort of each Muslim to become a better human being. The lesser jihad, in contrast, is about self-preservation and self-defense; directed outwardly, it is the source of Islamic notions of what Christians call "just war," rather than "holy war." Modern Western thought, strongly influenced by Crusades-era ideas of "holy war," has tended to portray jihad as an Islamic war against unbelievers, starting with the conquest of Spain in the eighth century. Tomaž Mastnak has insisted, "Jihad cannot properly be defined as holy war": "Jihad is a doctrine of spiritual effort of which military action is only one possible manifestation; the crusade and jihad are, strictly speaking, not comparable." At the same time, political action is not contradictory to jihad. Islam sanctions rebellion against an unjust ruler, *whether Muslim or not*, and the lesser jihad can involve a mobilization for that social and political struggle.

Historically, the practice of the lesser jihad as central to a "just struggle" has been occasional and isolated, marking points of crisis in Islamic history. After the first centuries of the creation of the Islamic states, there were only four widespread uses of jihad as a mobilizing slogan—until the Afghan jihad of the 1980s. The first was by the Kurdish warrior Saladin in response to the conquest and slaughter of the First Crusade in the eleventh century.

The second widespread use was in the Senegambia region of West Africa in the late seventeenth century. In the second half of the fifteenth century, Senegambia had been the first African region to come into contact with the Atlantic trading system. By the second half of the seventeenth century, the slave trade had become the principal business of European powers on the African coast. One of its main effects was widespread violence in day-to-day life. Among those who sold slaves were Islamic rulers in the region. The crisis was felt most deeply in Berber society, which was caught in a pincer movement between Arab armies closing in from the north and the expanding frontiers of the European slave trade in the south.

Militant Islam began as a movement led by Sufi leaders (*marabout*) intent on unifying the region against the negative effects of the slave trade. The first War of the Marabout began in 1677 in the same area that had given rise to the eleventh-century Al-Moravid movement. The difference was that whereas the Al-Moravids had moved north, ultimately to conquer Spain, the marabout moved south. The second War of the Marabout culminated with the Muslim revolution in the plateau of Futa Jallon in 1690. Among the Berbers of the north and the peoples of the south, militant Islam found popular support for jihad against Muslim aristocracies selling their own subjects to European slave traders. The leaders of the revolution in Futa Jallon set up a federation divided into nine provinces, with the head of each appointed a general in the

jihad. When the last of the revolutionary leaders died in 1751, the leadership passed from the religious marabout to commanders in the army. The new military leaders began an aggressive policy targeting neighbors and raiding for slaves—all under the guise of a jihad. The Muslim revolutions that had begun with the first War of the Marabout had come full circle in the space of eighty years: from leading a popular protest against the generalized violence of the slave trade, they founded a new state whose leaders then joined the next round of slave trading.

The third time jihad was widely waged as a “just war” was in the middle of the eighteenth century in the Arabian peninsula, proclaimed by Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703–1792), who gave his name to a contemporary doctrine identified with the House of Saud, Wahhabism. Ibn Wahhab’s jihad was declared in a colonial setting, on an Arab peninsula that had been under Ottoman control from the sixteenth century. It was not a jihad against unbelievers. Its enemies included Sunni Muslim Ottoman colonizers and Shi’a “heretics,” whereas its beneficiaries were a newly forged alliance between the ambitious House of Saud and the new imperial power on the horizon, Great Britain.

The fourth widespread practice of jihad as an armed struggle was in the Sudan when the anticolonial leader, Muhammad Ahmed (1844–1885), declared himself al-Mahdi (the Messiah) in 1881 and began to rally support against a Turko-Egyptian administration that was rapidly becoming absorbed into an expanding British empire. The battle for a jihad in this context was a battle against a colonial occupation that was both Muslim (Turko-Egyptian) and non-Muslim (British). Al-Mahdi was spectacularly successful as the organizer of the revolt. Armed with no more than spears and swords, the Mahdists (followers of al-Mahdi) won battle after battle, in 1885 reaching the capital, Khartoum, where they killed

Charles Gordon, the British general and hero of the second Opium War with China (1856–1860), who was then governor in the Turko-Egyptian administration. So long as they fought a hated external enemy, the Mahdists won widespread support in all regions. But once the victorious al-Mahdi moved to unite different regions and create a united Sudan under a single rule, the anticolonial coalition disintegrated into warring factions in the north—where Messianic interpretations of Islam fought it out against Sufi (mystical) ones—and a marauding army of northern slavers in the south. As the war of liberation degenerated into slave raids, anarchy, famine, and disease reigned. It is estimated that the population of Sudan fell from around 7 million before the Mahdist revolt to somewhere between 2 and 3 million after the fall of the Mahdist state in 1898. As in Saudi Arabia and West Africa in previous centuries, the experience of Sudan also showed that the same jihad that had begun as the rallying cry of a popular movement could be turned around by those in power—at the expense of its supporters.

Whereas an armed jihad was not known in the nine decades preceding the Afghan jihad of the 1980s, the *call* for one in radical Islamist thought can be traced to two key thinkers at the beginning of the Cold War: the Pakistani journalist and politician Abul A’la Mawdudi, whose work began to be published in Egypt in 1951, and Sayyid Qutb. Mawdudi (1903–1979) appeared at a moment when the ulama, organized as the Jam’iyat-i-Ulama-i-Hind (Society of the Ulama of India), were supporting a multireligious, decentralized yet united India against the demand, led by political intellectuals, for the creation of Pakistan. As we have seen, Muhammad Iqbal had envisioned Muslim political identity not in terms of a nation-state, but as a borderless cultural community, the *umma*. The irony was that though the formation of Pakistan

gave its Muslim inhabitants self-determination, this was as residents of a common territory and not as an umma. Instead of being the profound critique of territorial nationalism and the nation-state that Muhammed Iqbal had intended it to be, Pakistan was a territorial nation as banal as any other nation preoccupied with building its own state. Mawdudi seized upon this contradiction in his appeal to postcolonial Islamist intellectuals. Mawdudi claimed that Pakistan ("the land of the pure") was still Na-Pakistan (either "not yet the land of the pure" or "the land of the impure"). For Mawdudi, the Islamic state could not just be a territorial state of Muslims; it had to be an ideological state, an *Islamic* state. To realize that end, he established Jamaat-i-Islami (the Islamic Community) in Karachi in 1941 and had himself confirmed as its emir.

Key to Mawdudi's thought was centralized power and jihad as the ultimate struggle for the seizure of state power. He defined "the ultimate objective of Islam to abolish the lordship of man over man and bring him under the rule of the one God," with jihad as its relentless pursuit: "To stake everything you have—including your lives—to achieve this purpose is called Jihad. . . . So, I say to you: if you really want to root out corruption now so widespread on God's earth, stand up and fight against corrupt rule; take power and use it on God's behalf. *It is useless to think you can change things by preaching alone.*" (italics mine) With both eyes focused on the struggle for power, Mawdudi redefined the meaning of *Din* (religion) in a purely secular way: "Acknowledging that someone is your ruler to whom you must submit means that you have accepted his Din. . . . Din, therefore, actually means the same thing as state and government." He also secularized Islam, equating it not with other religions but with political ideologies that seek the conquest of the state, such as popular sovereignty or monarchy or, above all, Communism: "A total Din, whatever its nature, wants power for itself; the prospect of sharing

power is unthinkable. Whether it is popular sovereignty or monarchy, Communism or Islam, or any other Din, it must govern to establish itself. A Din without power to govern is just like a building which exists in the mind only." Mawdudi was the first to stress the imperative of jihad for contemporary Muslims, the first to claim that armed struggle was central to jihad and, unlike any major Muslim thinker before him, the first to call for a universal jihad.

Mawdudi's influence on Sayyid Qutb regarding the necessity of jihad as an armed struggle is widely recognized. Less recognized, though, is the difference between the two. Even if Qutb proclaims the absolute sovereignty of God, he does it in a sense entirely different from Mawdudi: "A Muslim does not believe that another besides the one God can be divine, and he does not believe that another creature but himself is fit to worship him; and he does not believe that 'sovereignty' may apply to any of his servants." Indeed, unlike Mawdudi's preoccupation with the state as the true agent of change in history, Qutb's thought is far more society centered; Reinhard Schulze has noted that "the deputy of divine sovereignty" for Qutb is "man as an individual" and "not the state, as Mawdudi saw it."

Sayyid Qutb began his public career in the service of the Egyptian Ministry of Education after graduating from a prestigious teacher-training college in Cairo in 1933. His first book, *The Task of the Poet in Life*, suggested the promise of a literary career. In 1948, Qutb was sent by the ministry on a study mission to the United States. Though the manuscript had been finished prior to his departure, Qutb's first important book, *Social Justice in Islam*, was published during the time he was in America. Qutb explained his objective in the opening chapter of the book:

We have only to look to see that our social situation is as bad as it can be; it is apparent that our social conditions

have no possible relation to justice; and so we turn our eyes to Europe, America or Russia, and we expect to import from there solutions to our problems . . . we continually cast aside all our own spiritual heritage, all our intellectual endowment, and all the solutions which might well be revealed by a glance at these things; we cast aside our fundamental principles and doctrines, and we bring in those of democracy, or socialism, or communism.

The search for an Islamic road to modernity placed Qutb alongside al-Afghani and al-Banna as predecessors.

Qutb returned from America in 1951, the year the Society of Muslim Brothers was legalized. An active member of the anti-monarchical Wafd Party when he left for America, Qutb began cooperating with the society immediately on his return. After the 1952 revolution, Qutb was appointed cultural adviser to the Revolutionary Council and was the only civilian allowed to attend its meetings. Imprisoned by Nasser in 1954, Qutb had his letters smuggled out by his sisters and distributed widely. Published as *Signposts Along the Road*—also translated as *Milestones*—this collection of letters has achieved the status of a manifesto of contemporary radical political Islam. Released from jail in 1964, Qutb was rearrested and executed in 1966, reportedly at the insistence of Nasser.

Qutb elaborated Mawdudi's thought and took it to a more radical conclusion. He made a distinction between modernity and Westernization, calling for an embrace of modernity but a rejection of Westernization. Qutb also made a sharp distinction between science and ideology, arguing that modernity is made up of two types of sciences, physical and philosophical. The pursuit of material progress and the mastery of practical sciences are a di-

vine command and a "collective obligation" on Muslims. Modernization through the natural sciences was fine but not through the westernizing philosophical sciences.

Qutb's reformulation of jihad resonated with contemporary Marxism-Leninism, both Maoist and Leninist. Echoing the Maoist distinction between ways of handling contradictions among the people and with the enemy, Qutb argued that jihad involves both persuasion and coercion, the former appropriate among friends but the latter suited to enemies. In the final analysis, only physical force will remove the political, social, and economic obstacles to the establishment of the Islamic community. The use of force to realize freedom is not a contradiction for Qutb—as, indeed, it is not for America. Islam has not only the right but also the obligation to exercise force to end slavery and realize human freedom.

Islam is a declaration of the freedom of every man or woman from servitude to other humans. It seeks to abolish all those systems and governments that are based on the rule of some men over others, or the servitude of some to others. When Islam liberates people from these external pressures and invites them to its spiritual message, it appeals to their reason, and gives them complete freedom to accept or reject it.

Indeed, "Islam does not force people to accept its belief, but it wants to provide a free environment in which they will have the choice to believe."

Here there is more than just a passing resemblance to the dialectics of Marxism-Leninism. Qutb argued that jihad is a process beginning with the organization of a vanguard, followed by a withdrawal that would make possible both study and organiza-

tion and then a return to struggle. Here, Qutb echoed a key dictum of Leninism: "How to initiate the revival of Islam? A vanguard must set out with this determination and then keep going, marching through the vast ocean of *jahaliyyah* which encompasses the entire world. . . . I have written *Milestones* for this vanguard, which I consider to be a waiting reality about to be materialized."

The Islamist intellectuals did not always win in the struggle against the ulama. In Iran, the ulama won a dramatic victory. The intellectual initiative in Iran is identified with the work of Ali Shariati, who sought to build on and preserve the revolutionary Shi'a identity as the identity of the oppressed, as a project for a humane and just Islamic society. The struggle in revolutionary Iran did not pit just the clergy against non-Islamic intellectuals but also Islamists who were secular against those who were not. Recognizing the threat to the authority of the ulama from an autonomous intellectual reinterpretation of Islam, the nonsecular clergy transformed Shi'ism. In an effort to reorganize the ulama as an institutional hierarchy, Ayatollah Khomeini created an entirely new institution, *vilayat-i-faqih*, government by jurists. Acting as a trustee of the sovereignty of God, this institution was to function in parallel to civil government, accountable only to the ulama, of whom there were almost one hundred thousand in Iran at the time.

In the history of the Society of Muslim Brothers in Egypt, Sayyid Qutb is identified with the ascendancy of radical Islam in contrast to Hassan al-Banna's moderation. The difference between moderate and radical political Islam lay in the following: whereas moderates fought for social reforms within the system, radicals were convinced that no meaningful social reform would be possible without taking over the state. Had fifteen years of hard labor in Nasser's camps convinced Qutb that religious and secular intellectuals could not live at peace in the same society? To what extent

was his renunciation of reform through coexistence—and the conviction of the need for a vanguard to wage a fight to the finish—an echo of other contemporary schools of political thought, such as Marxism-Leninism?

In their preoccupation with political identity and political power, Islamist intellectuals were like other intellectuals, whether religious or not. Islamist intellectuals crafted their ideologies through encounters not only with the ulama but also with these secular intellectuals who ignored the Islamic tradition and drew on other intellectual sources, such as Marxism or Western liberalism. Through this double encounter, they developed political Islam in multiple directions, both emancipatory and authoritarian. Just as it is historically inaccurate to equate political Islam with religious fundamentalism, it also makes little sense to equate every shade of political Islam with political terrorism. Of the four Islamist intellectuals written about here—Mohamed Iqbal, Mohamed Ali Jinnah, Abdul A'la Mawdudi, and Sayyid Qutb—only Mawdudi was an unabashed advocate of creating an ideological Islamic state as the true subject of history. In contrast, Qutb's thought was more society centered. Iqbal sought to constitute the Islamic umma beyond the nation-state as a broad, borderless cultural community. Finally, Jinnah was a secular Muslim, for whom Islam had become a political identity in colonial India; he pursued a secular, not an Islamic, state ideal, one that would safeguard the democratic rights of both the Muslim majority and the non-Muslim minorities.

The single conviction that unites radical Islamist intellectuals is the preoccupation with taking power. They are convinced that the historical moment defined by the collapse of Communism is the moment Muslims must seize to advance Islam as a universal ideology of emancipation. This is how Sayyid Qutb opened his 1963 manifesto of radical political Islam, *Milestones*:

Mankind today is on the brink of a precipice, not because of the danger of complete annihilation which is hanging over its head—this being just a symptom and not the real disease—but because humanity is devoid of those vital values for its healthy development and real progress. . . . Democracy in the West has become sterile to such an extent that its intellectuals borrow from the systems of the Eastern bloc, especially in the economic sphere, under the name of socialism. . . . Marxism stands intellectually defeated and it is not an exaggeration to say that in practice not a single nation in the world is truly Marxist. . . . The era dominated by the resurgence of science has also come to an end. . . . All the nationalistic and chauvinistic ideologies that have appeared in modern times, and all the movements and theories derived from them, have also lost their vitality. In short, all man-made theories, both individualistic and collectivist, have proved to be failures. At this crucial and bewildering juncture, the turn of Islam and the Muslim community has arrived because it has the needed values.

The key division among radical Islamist intellectuals concerns the status of *sharia* (Islamic law) and thus of democracy in the state. Ijtihad refers to the institutionalized practice of interpreting the sharia to take into account changing historical circumstances and, therefore, different points of view. It makes for a substantive body of law constantly changing in response to changing conditions. The attitude toward ijtihad is the single most important issue that divides society-centered from state-centered—and progressive from reactionary—Islamists. Whereas society-centered Islamists insist that the practice of ijtihad be central to modern Islamic so-

ciety, state-centered Islamists are determined that the “gates of ijtihad” remain forever closed. Iqbal called for the modernization and democratization of ijtihad, so the law could be interpreted by a body elected by the community of Muslims, the umma, and not just the religious ulama. The emphasis on ijtihad is also key to the thought of Sayyid Qutb and distinguishes his intellectual legacy from the state-centered thought of Mawdudi. My argument is that the theoretical roots of Islamist political terror lie in the state-centered, not the society-centered, movement.

The question we face today is not just why a radical state-centered train of thought emerged in political Islam but how this thought was able to leap from the word to the deed, thereby moving from the intellectual fringe to the mainstream of politics in large parts of the Islamic world. Culture Talk cannot answer this question, nor can even the best of its cultural critics, such as Karen Armstrong. Culture Talk sees a clash of civilizations as the driving force behind global conflicts; its critics point to the cultural clash inside civilizations as being more important than the clash between them. Culture Talk sees fundamentalism as a resistance to modernity; its critics point out that fundamentalism is as modern as modernity—that it is actually a response to modernity. Both sides, however, seek an explanation of *political* terrorism in culture, whether modern or premodern. Both illustrate different sides of the same culturalist argument, which downplays the *political* encounter that I think is central to understanding political terrorism.

To distinguish cultural from political Islam, I shall place political Islam in the context of the the Cold War. My aim is to question the widely held presumption—even among critics of Culture Talk—that extremist religious tendencies can be equated with political terrorism. Terrorism is not a necessary effect of religious

tendencies, whether fundamentalist or secular. Rather, terrorism is born of a *political* encounter. When it harnesses one or another aspect of tradition and culture, terrorism needs to be understood as a modern political movement at the service of a modern power. As such, the genesis of the form of political terrorism responsible for the tragedy of 9/11 can be traced to the late Cold War.

Chapter Two

THE COLD WAR AFTER INDOCHINA

I was a young lecturer at the University of Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania in 1975. It was a momentous year in the decolonization of the world as we knew it: 1975 was the year of the American defeat in Indochina, and of the collapse of Portuguese rule in the colonies of Mozambique, Angola, and Portuguese Guinea, the last European empire in Africa. In retrospect, it was the year that the focal point of the Cold War shifted from Southeast Asia to southern Africa. The strategic question was this: Who would pick up the pieces of the Portuguese empire in Africa, the United States or the Soviet Union? With a shift in the focal point of the Cold War, there was a corresponding shift in U.S. strategy. Two major influences, each a lesson from the war in Indochina, informed that shift. One was drawn by the president of the United States, the second by Congress. The executive lesson was summed up as the Nixon Doctrine; the legislative lesson was passed as the Clark Amendment.