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ABSTRACT

Behind the Veil: Islamic Activism and Social Change in Modern Egypt

In analyzing social development in the Middle East Western scholars have continued to rely upon Western notions of progress and cultural maturation. In accordance with such an analysis it has been assumed that as Middle Eastern societies adopted Western political and economic structures they would also undergo a process of secularization. As a result, the role of Islam in influencing the direction of Middle Eastern development has either been devalued or completely ignored.

In recent years some scholars have called such notions into question, pointing to what appears to be a growing re-emphasis on the political role of Islam throughout the Middle East. This is particularly true in the case of Egypt where the 1981 assassination of Anwar Sadat focussed increased world attention on the activities of Islamic activist groups. Despite such attention, Islamic activism in Egypt remains a movement that is little understood. Most examinations of this phenomenon have dealt with individual groups in an isolated manner. Consequently, such organizations have been seen as part of a monolithic movement of native reactionism which remains somehow out of touch with the modern world. This thesis seeks to go beyond such analyses by presenting a study of a variety of Egyptian Islamic activist groups based on a comparative
examination of the Muslim Brotherhood from, 1928 to 1954 with the post-1970 organization and its offshoots.

A close examination of these groups reveals that although they are part of a long tradition of Islamic revivalism which extends back to the seventh century Kharijites, they are not a static phenomenon rooted in devotion to the past. Rather, they represent a contemporary response to current social realities, evolving as those realities change. Since these organizations are the product of specific historical and cultural milieux which are never static, any changes in the social, political and economic environments are reflected in concrete changes within the Islamic activist groups themselves. Far from being static phenomena of primitive religious reactionism, Islamic activist movements in Egypt are largely instruments for voicing popular discontent with current social conditions and thus change as those conditions evolve.
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The Middle East has always been viewed with much fascination by Western scholars. Its history is replete with the rise of highly advanced civilizations and the birth of great religions. In recent years this fascination has been augmented by the emergence of Middle Eastern states as strategically important political actors on the international stage. However, such continued interest does not necessarily imply that Western observers have developed a better understanding of the historical processes at work in this area. Too often Western scholars, blinded by a continuing belief in the superiority of Western culture and society, have insisted upon analyzing the development of Middle Eastern societies according to Western norms. As a result Middle Eastern actors and developments are characterized as irrational, backward, anti-modern, and generally incomprehensible.

This is particularly true of the Western reaction to the phenomenon which, in the West, has been labelled Islamic revivalism, or Islamic fundamentalism. Many scholars, regarding the process of Western-style modernization as virtually inevitable, have viewed Islam as a regressive force representative of a dying traditionalism. Accordingly, scholars such as Manfred Halpern and Nadav Safran have consistently portrayed Islamic activist groups as an anti-modern form of native totalitarianism which seeks to stem the tide of progress
by returning to a purely Islamic system of social organization. Such groups, they suggest, have little chance of success in that they reject both the present and the future in favour of the past. Certainly the emergence of an Islam based, cleric dominated regime in Iran, as well as the increased popularity and activity of Islamic activist groups in a number of other Middle Eastern states, has forced scholars to undertake a closer examination of the relationship between Islam and politics. In doing so some analysts have continued to adopt a Western cultural bias, viewing Islamic oriented activist groups as reactionary, obscurantist forces which, powered by an anti-modernist tendency within Islam itself, seek to return to the Islamic polity of the Middle Ages. Thus, such movements are presented as inflexible doctrinaire anachronisms, out of touch with the modern world.

Other scholars have, however, attempted to go beyond such simplistic explanations. Rather than simply prejudging Islamic activist movements as the products of mere reactionism, they have undertaken in-depth analyses of these movements from a more objective perspective in an attempt to place their historical development within the context of the societies and cultures which produced them.

In general these scholars have adopted two distinct approaches to examining Islamic activist movements. The first approach, which originated in the late 1940s and early 1950s, could be termed "ideational". Authors such as H.A.R. Gibb,
Wilfred C. Smith, and Albert Hourani, conscious of the importance of historical context, stressed an ideological analysis of the Islamic activist phenomenon in an attempt to locate groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood in terms of the development of Islamic thought. Rather than presenting such groups in isolation, these scholars saw them as part of an ongoing attempt to deal with the perceived weakness and decline of the Muslim world by stressing the need for a revitalized Islam. Thus the Muslim Brotherhood was regarded as the inheritor of a "revivalist" tradition which could be traced back to the eighteenth century Wahhabis and other earlier movements. These early movements, in their desire to return to a purified and revitalized Islam, served as an inspiration to the leaders of the late nineteenth century Islamic reform movement, particularly Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammed Abduh. However, with Abduh's disciple Rashid Rida, the positive aspects of Abduh's reform programs were seen to have been superseded by a more rigid and puritanical interpretation of Islam, out of which emerged the "fundamentalism" of militant groups such as the Brotherhood.

The ideational approach does have much to recommend it, in that it combats the tendency to see contemporary groups and developments as isolated phenomena and places them within a proper historical framework. Indeed, as our subsequent analysis will indicate, the new militant groups do appear to have strong ideological links to the historical predecessors previously
mentioned. However, the ideational approach also suffers from a number of problems. First, as Eric Davis argues, by focusing on ideology this analysis represents a fundamentally elitist interpretation. That is, it tells us much about the ideological formation of these movements and their leaders, but little about the social and economic realities which influenced the rank and file. Second, the advocates of this approach, by emphasizing historical linkages, tend to present groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood as part of a cyclical pattern of alternating secular and Islamic tendencies, each arising in reaction to the other. Such an analysis, while fundamentally valid in terms of its historicism, fails to satisfactorily account for the differences between these various movements in terms of origin, thought, and composition. While it is true that contemporary militant groups are ideologically tied to previous Islamic reform movements, and that in many instances their overriding concerns are the same, significant differences exist which cannot be adequately explained as a simple function of ideology. Each group, while inextricably tied to the Islamic reform movement as a whole, must also be seen as a product of its unique historical and cultural milieu.

In an effort to solve these problems an increasing number of scholars have adopted a sociological approach to the study of Islamic activist groups. In order to avoid the elitist nature of ideational studies, they have focused on the social composition of the rank and file members of specific groups and then
attempted to relate this composition to the political, social and economic conditions out of which each group emerged. Thus studies such as Saad Eddin Ibrahim's examination of contemporary activist groups in Egypt provide us with a clearer picture of specific militant groups than that offered by purely ideational surveys. Only by examining the social, political, and economic realities out of which contemporary Islamic activist groups emerged can we determine the social bases of these organizations; i.e. which groups within society they represent, as well as the forces which, beyond ideology, pushed these elements into a position of militancy.

Thus, for the purposes of this study I will attempt to combine the positive aspects of both of the above mentioned approaches. Rather than undertaking an analysis of contemporary Islamic activism in general, this study will be restricted to an examination of this phenomenon within Egypt. My emphasis will be on a comparative approach, examining a number of popular Egyptian Islamic movements in terms of ideology, the social and economic background of members, and political activity. The core of the thesis, however, will be a comparison of the Muslim Brotherhood, the most significant of these movements, as it existed from 1928 to 1954, with the post-1970 organization and its offshoots. Such an examination will reveal that rather than being static, groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood have undergone profound changes. Moreover, by means of a parallel examination of the social realities prevalent during these two
periods, it will be demonstrated that these changes were connected with, and indeed reflective of, social, political and economic changes within Egypt as a whole. Thus Islamic activist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, although part of a longstanding trend toward the reassertion of Islamic values, must be examined as products of specific social conditions. Far from being phenomena of primitive religious reactionism, Islamic political movements in Egypt are largely instruments for voicing popular discontent with current social conditions; a discontent which is expressed in religious terms because of Islam's traditional role in Egyptian society and the stigmatization of Western secular ideologies such as liberalism, socialism, or Marxism as anti-Islamic foreign imports.

2. One of the most notable examples of this sort of analysis is Daniel Pipes, "Fundamentalist Muslims Between America and Russia", Foreign Affairs, 64(5) Summer 1986, pp. 939-959.


CHAPTER I


In tracing the emergence of Islamic activist groups in modern Egypt, scholars have placed much emphasis on the changing role of Islam within Egyptian society. In many ways this is an exercise in stating the obvious. Clearly these groups do have a strong religious orientation and are therefore intimately concerned with the place of religion within the modern state. However, such an assertion provides us with little concrete information concerning groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood. It is increasingly evident that these groups, beyond their religious basis, are the product of specific social realities which are far from constant. As a result, only by exploring the changing political, social, and economic conditions which influenced the emergence of Islamic activist groups can we understand their origins, development and continuing strength.

Since the end of the eighteenth century Egypt, and the Arab world in general, had been subjected to increased political and economic incursions from Western Europe. Such interactions seemed to indicate that the West enjoyed a decided superiority, especially in terms of scientific and technological achievement. The Egyptian political leadership, motivated initially by the desire to create a more efficient military force, reacted to this fact by instituting a series of reforms aimed at the modernization of certain Egyptian institutions along Western
lines. Thus, under Muhammed Ali and his successors a more centralized economic infrastructure was created, the legal system was reformed on the basis of European civil codes, a western-style educational system was established, and a rudimentary bureaucracy and civil service was founded.

Such reforms, while important in terms of the development of Egyptian society, were limited in their overall impact. Despite these changes, much of the traditional institutional framework, while altered to some extent, was left in place. Although Western educational and legal systems were introduced, the traditional shari'a courts and religious schools were not abolished, but continued to play important roles, particularly in the rural areas. This practice served to limit opposition to government attempts at modernization along Western lines from groups such as the ulema which maintained a vested interest in the preservation of the status quo. However, it also led to "cultural bifurcation" in that two societies, one traditional and largely rural, one Westernized and increasingly urban were created.

Consequently, the history of twentieth century Egypt was dominated by the widening gulf between urban and rural society and the conflicting values and priorities that each represented. By the inter-war period the impact of this urban/rural gap on Egyptian political and social stability had become significant. As will be demonstrated, by this time the urban-based Egyptian political elite represented a vision of national development and
modernization that increasingly conflicted with the more traditional interests and values of the bulk of the population, particularly in the rural areas. Faced with such a situation many Egyptians began to look to groups outside of the mainstream of national politics which offered alternative models of Egyptian development that more accurately conformed to their values and interests. Although the inter-war period saw the emergence of a number of such groups, it was the Muslim Brotherhood which, by virtue of its ability to posit its social and political vision within an Islamic framework had the greatest impact on Egyptian society.

Recent work in analysing the membership of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic political organizations has demonstrated that they are largely urban phenomena with only limited impact in the rural areas. Regardless of this urban orientation, the roots of organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood lay in rural Egypt and in the economic hardships and opportunities which drew both peasant migrants and ambitious students to the urban centers. Thus the origins of what were essentially urban movements can only be understood through an examination of rural conditions and their impact on and interaction with Egypt's emerging urban society.

Despite the impact of processes such as urbanization and industrialization, by the inter-war period Egypt remained a predominantly rural society. During the latter half of the nineteenth century Egypt underwent a period of rapid economic
expansion which was almost exclusively based on a dramatic increase in the volume and value of agricultural production, particularly of cotton, and represented Egypt's transition from a subsistence to an export oriented economy. This period of economic expansion also gave rise to an increasing concentration of land ownership by urban elements as a result of the migration of the rural elite to the urban centres, such as Cairo and Alexandria, and the investment by many members of Egypt's increasingly wealthy urban merchant class in vast tracts of land. So thorough was the centralization of land ownership in the hands of this limited elite that by 1950, 36% of all Egyptian land holdings by area were in the form of large estates (50 feddans and over) owned by only 12,449 individuals. Conversely, the same statistics indicate that 2,541,751 individuals, a figure representing almost 94% of the total number of Egyptian landowners owned small parcels of land less than 5 feddans in area.

Such figures indicate the highly inequitable distribution of property in Egypt during the period up to 1950. In reality, however, the plight of the Egyptian fellahin was much more desperate than these simple statistics would suggest. Throughout this period a continued fragmentation of fellah landholdings is evident. In 1896 19.6% of all privately owned land in Egypt was held in small tracts of five feddans or less. By 1949, however, that number had increased to 35.1%. The reasons for this process of fragmentation are two-fold. First, since 1881 Muslim
inheritance law had been applied to all fellah land. This was extremely debilitating to the fellah as it meant that an estate had to be divided among a large number of persons, each of varying degrees of kinship. Thus, as the generations progressed, the fellahin found their holdings continually shrinking. This trend was compounded by the rapid rise in the Egyptian population which served only to amplify the effects of the Muslim inheritance law. Charles Issawi indicates that the Egyptian population rose from 11,287,000 in 1907 to 19,022,000 in 1947, an increase of nearly 67%. However, during approximately the same period Egypt's available cropped area rose from 7,717,000 feddans in 1912 to 9,165,000 feddans in 1948, an increase of only 20%. Thus, by 1947 the amount of cropped area had declined in proportion to the increasing population to a per capital level of .48 feddans, one of the lowest ratios in the world.

Since it is generally estimated that 3 feddans are required to maintain subsistence for a family of four, it is evident that as the process of fragmentation continued a large proportion of the fellahin would be forced to augment their holdings by purchasing or renting additional property, or to join the growing number of landless peasants, either as tenant farmers or urban migrants. For the bulk of the small landholding class, however, the acquisition of additional property was impossible due to a lack of either capital or access to credit facilities. As a result, the members of this group were
invariably forced to join the newly emerging rural class of landless labourers which numbered nearly one million by the early 1950s, a figure which does not include those who had migrated to the urban areas."

The plight of the rural peasantry in and of itself had a limited influence on the development of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic activist groups. Throughout the inter-war period the fellahin remained under the political control of the landlord-dominated Wafd party. However, these economic processes which were so destructive of the position of the small landowning fellah had an even more pronounced effect on the fortunes of the medium landholders (those with holdings of 5-50 feddans). Most of the smaller landholders were already in such dire economic straits that the impact of any further deterioration in their position was negligible. Unlike their smaller counterparts, some medium landowners were able to take advantage of periodic booms in the Egyptian economy in order to accumulate the capital necessary to purchase additional land. Thus, some in this class were, to a certain extent, able to offset the fragmentation of their holdings and begin to seek out avenues of social and economic advancement. Nevertheless, these medium landholders found themselves particularly vulnerable in times of slow economic growth, such as during the early 1930s when the price of cotton collapsed. This was especially true of those medium landholders who had relied on mortgage credit to augment their holdings during the boom periods."
Faced with such economic uncertainty as a result of their reliance on a single cash crop, the medium landowning class began to look toward expanding educational opportunities as an avenue for maintaining, or even increasing their families' social and economic status. Those who had the financial ability tended to join the elite in sending their sons to Europe for their education. Most of the medium landowning class lacked the capital necessary to provide their children with a foreign education and thus relied on universities and teacher training centres within Egypt. This is evident in the gradual increase in the number of university students in Egypt during the 1930s and 40s. As Ahmed Abdalla indicates, this rise was primarily due to an increasing influx of students from urban lower middle class areas, and from middle landowning rural families. The bulk of these students enrolled in professional faculties such as education, engineering, medicine, law, and journalism, and as a result the number of people employed in these professions jumped during the period from 1937 to 1947 by 66.5%.

Employment in these professions did not, however, keep pace with the number of graduates being produced. Increasingly, those graduates from poorer families who lacked connections in either the private or public sectors were forced to settle for lower paying positions of marginal social status, or were faced with the prospect of unemployment. Such was the extent of this problem that by 1942 there were 10,000 unemployed baccalaureat holders and graduates from the university or higher schools. As will be demonstrated later, this group of increasingly disaffected intellectuals
provided organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood with extremely fertile ground for recruitment.

It is clear from the preceding discussion that the agricultural sector of the Egyptian economy was plagued by enormous imbalances during the inter-war period. Due to the continued dependence on cotton as a single cash crop, the appalling inequity in landholdings, and the rapid growth rate of the rural population, the agricultural sector, despite modest growth, was increasingly unable to provide economic stability for the bulk of the rural population. This fact, combined with the growing attractiveness of the urban centres as places of political, social, and economic opportunity, produced a massive migration of people from all rural classes into the urban areas.16

In the urban centres political, social, and economic life was largely dominated by the Western presence. Politically, Egypt continued to be governed by the descendants of Muhammed Ali. However, since the occupation by the British in 1882, real power had rested in the hands of British officials such as Lord Cromer. Economically, Egypt had been dependent upon Western European capital since the middle of the nineteenth century, and by the beginning of the twentieth century virtually all aspects of Egyptian economic life were dominated by foreign interests.17 In the 1920s, foreigners enjoyed a preeminent position in most non-agricultural sectors of the Egyptian economy including industry, trade, finance, services, and utilities. This
predominance is readily apparent from an examination of financial institutions in Egypt. Prior to the establishment of the Bank Misr in 1920, all major banks and mortgage companies in Egypt were controlled by European capital, and most were simply branches of large European banking houses. Control of most major credit facilities, plus the benefits contained in the "capitulations", such as an exemption from Egyptian tax laws, gave foreign entrepreneurs a decided advantage over their native Egyptian competitors. Consequently, by the outbreak of World War I foreign capital invested in Egypt totalled close to 200 million Egyptian pounds.

For those native Egyptians who did have some surplus capital, the continued foreign domination of much of Egypt's urban economy presented a formidable obstacle. As previously noted, the agricultural booms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had helped to produce an increasingly wealthy class of urban native Egyptians. In most analyses of industrial development, this class is usually cited as the dynamic element which provides the capital necessary for the industrial transformation of the economy. However, in Egypt these economic sectors were dominated by foreigners and therefore the Egyptian urban middle class and elite invested their surplus capital in land, which continued to be viewed, not only as a safer form of investment, but as a sign of social status. Out of eighty-seven major joint-stock companies operating in Egypt by 1923, there were only twelve native
Egyptians serving as corporate directors, and of these twelve only three had any business experience, while the rest owed their positions to the fact that they held political office.\(^2\)

This foreign domination of the Egyptian political and economic establishment naturally led to increasing frustration on the part of the native Egyptian urban bourgeoisie. They correctly perceived that the entrenched position of the foreign element prevented them from rising within the urban hierarchy. Gradually, this dissatisfaction found its outlet in a growing nationalist movement that in the years immediately following World War I was dominated by the populist Wafd party and its charismatic leader Sa'ad Zaghlul.

The primary goal of these urban nationalists was the establishment of Egyptian independence under a constitutional form of government in which they, as the social, economic, and intellectual elite, would play a dominant role. In early 1922 their efforts appeared to have produced some measure of success as the British, prompted by the disturbances of the "Revolution of 1919", granted Egypt a limited form of sovereignty, followed a year later by the establishment of constitutional government.\(^2\) This period from 1924 to 1936 has been termed Egypt's "liberal experiment" and represents the only real attempt to establish liberal parliamentary institutions along Western lines in Egypt. It was an experiment that was short-lived, with most scholars pointing to 1936 as the year which marked the end of Egypt's flirtation with democratic
institutions and the emergence of a more authoritarian style of government. Nevertheless, the promises and failures of the liberal experiment dominated the social and political landscape of this period. The flaws which produced the collapse of the constitutional system played a vital role in the emergence and popularity of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic oriented activist groups during the 1930s and 1940s.

As previously noted, much of the liberal experiment was dominated by a continuous struggle for power between the Wafd, the monarchy, and the British. Some scholars have viewed most of the failures of the liberal experiment as products of this conflict. Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid-Marsot suggests that the collapse of constitutionalism in Egypt was the result of interference by both the Egyptian monarchy and the British colonial administrators. She argues that had Egypt's parliamentary leaders been free to implement their programs they would have been able to successfully implant Western democratic traditions in Egypt. However, given the reality of their situation they could only hope to achieve partial success. This interpretation is also advocated by Jacques Berque who writes:

The collapse of the Wafd may be attributed to to the structure which it inherited.... The King, the people's representatives and the British agency,...were respectively either too strong or too weak for anything decisive to emerge from their conflicts, which took the form of shifting two to one alliances.  

An analysis of the period would seem to suggest that the argument put forward by Marsot and Berque does contain some
degree of validity. The fact that between 1925 and 1930 the Egyptian monarch, King Fuad, was able to subvert the constitution and dissolve parliament three times clearly indicates that he had no great love for either constitutionalism or parliamentary democracy. The first elections held in January 1924 demonstrated that any free electoral contest would return an overwhelming Wafd majority. This posed considerable problems for both Fuad and the British who despised the Wafdist leader Sa'ad Zaghlul, viewing him as nothing more than a demagogue and a rabble-rouser. Thus, Fuad consistently attempted to provoke government crises hoping to push the Egyptian parliament into a confrontation with the British authorities, thereby providing him with an excuse to destroy both parliament and the constitution. Faced with this kind of opposition it is perhaps no wonder that Egypt's liberal experiment degenerated into a series of ineffectual, short-lived coalition governments, interrupted by periods of rule by decree.

Marsot and Berque's indictment of the monarchy and the British administration for continually subverting the parliamentary process in Egypt is indeed valid. However, Marsot's further claim that the parliamentary leaders, if left unhindered, could have solved Egypt's problems remains open to question. A closer examination of the problems facing Egyptian society at this time, as well as the backgrounds of the Egyptian parliamentary leaders indicates that the failure of Egypt's liberal experiment was the result of factors more crucial than
the machinations of the monarchy and the British.

The extent of the social and economic inequities which plagued Egypt during the first half of the twentieth century has already been demonstrated. It is therefore clear that Egypt's social and economic systems were in dire need of fundamental structural reform. However, it is questionable whether the leaders of Egypt's liberal experiment would have been willing or able to initiate such restructuring. In one of his speeches, Zaghlul described the revolution of 1919 and the subsequent rise of the Wafd as "the seizure of power by the fellahin." However, an examination of the Wafd leadership indicates that its ties to the fellahin were very tentative indeed. As has previously been noted, during the early twentieth century, the landowning elite and urban bourgeoisie had found their interests merging as a result of a shared desire for economic advancement, especially through land ownership, and a common opposition to the colonial presence. As a result, it is members of this group who came to dominate the established political parties of the constitutional period. It is true that the Wafd enjoyed great popular support which cut across virtually all class lines. Yet even the Wafd at its most important levels was dominated by members of the elite. Of the five early Wafd leaders, three, including Sa'ad Zaghlul, were sons of affluent village umdas; the remaining two were among the richest landowners in Egypt, and all were Western-educated. Thus, although the Wafd leadership did enjoy a somewhat rural background, their claims
to represent the interests of the fellahin were tenuous at best.

Given the background of the leading figures during the constitutional period, it is understandable that, far from being concerned with the plight of the fellahin, virtually all parties represented the interests of the urban and rural elites. Thus, their primary efforts were aimed at winning political and economic independence from the British. In political terms this meant negotiating a new treaty with Britain which would remove the four reserved points. In economic terms, this meant initiating legislation designed not only to protect the interests of the native entrepreneurial and landowning elites, but to combat the foreign domination of the non-agricultural sectors of the economy.

With the onset of the depression in 1930, many of the large Egyptian landholders found themselves in a precarious economic position. During the 1920s many had borrowed heavily from financial institutions in order to purchase additional land. However, with the collapse of cotton prices these landowners were increasingly unable to pay their debts. Consequently, the Egyptian government, dominated by elite interests, was forced to take immediate measures aimed at protecting the positions of Egypt's large entrepreneurs and landowners.

In 1930 Egypt gained tariff autonomy, and the government took immediate steps to institute a new set of customs duties aimed at protecting the fledgling industries of the small native
bourgeoisie, and at the creation of privileged markets for the agricultural products of the large landholders.\textsuperscript{28} However, such policies, while affording the native economic elite some measure of protection from the economic uncertainties of the time, and from foreign competition, placed increased burdens on the already hard-pressed lower classes. Among the most immediate effects of the implementation of protective tariffs was a rise in the price of essentials such as clothing, sugar, bread, and kerosene. Furthermore, statistics indicate that even those commodities which actually declined in price during the early 1930s were stabilized by 1934 and from that point began to show renewed growth.\textsuperscript{29}

Such increases served to further reduce the standard of living enjoyed by the middle and lower classes. Although wage rates during the period prior to World War II are difficult to determine due to a lack of concrete statistical information, Charles Issawi indicates that by 1938 wages for rural laborers had declined to a level equal to that of 1914.\textsuperscript{30} Perhaps a better indication of the failure of wages to keep pace with price increases is the decline in consumption levels. During the period from 1929 to 1938 there was a sharp decline in the consumption of staple articles such as tobacco, coffee, meat, textiles, and cereals, despite a significant population increase. The only staples to show a growth in consumption were luxury items such as tea and sugar.\textsuperscript{31} Such statistics indicate the decline in popular consumption and the increase in elite
spending on luxury items.

The onset of World War II only served to accelerate this trend. It is true that during the war average weekly wages in manufacturing and industry more than doubled, while those in agriculture showed an even greater rise. However, at the same time prices of all commodities increased to such an extent that when the rate of inflation is factored in, real wages in the industrial and manufacturing sectors showed a decline from an average of 440 milliemes per week in 1938, to 380 milliemes per week in 1945.32 Thus, the inflationary cycle brought on by the war actually served to lower the standard of living enjoyed by most Egyptians, despite the increases in wage rates.

The implementation of these measures, along with the economic stimulus provided by the advent of World War II, did serve to protect and in a number of instances, even further the interests of the native Egyptian landed and entrepreneurial elites. The large Egyptian landowners were able to maintain their estates, although the economic pressures of the depression forced them to rely on a series of government measures aimed at reducing the mortgage indebtedness of the landowning elite.33 Furthermore, as a result of government protection and the 1936 removal of the "capitulations", Egyptian entrepreneurs were able to take advantage of the economic stimulus produced by the war. By 1946 there were sixty joint-stock companies, with a capitalization of over 25 million Egyptian pounds, in which the nationality of the board of directors was predominantly native
Egyptian. However, such programs did little to ameliorate the problems faced by the bulk of Egypt's middle and lower classes. In reality, by propping up the interests of the urban and rural elites the policies initiated by successive Egyptian governments during the constitutional period served to increase the deep social and economic inequalities prevalent in Egyptian society.

Given this predilection on the part of virtually all parties during Egypt's constitutional period to support the interests of the status quo, it is hardly surprising that members of the non-elite classes began to grow increasingly disenchanted with the parliamentary system as it operated in Egypt. Although certain members of the Egyptian establishment had seen their fortunes advance dramatically during this period, most Egyptians, as previously noted, saw their standard of living decline as the rise in prices quickly outstripped the growth of wages. While significant strides had been made in the field of education, with the illiteracy rate falling from 91.2% in 1917 to 77.2% in 1947, in real terms the number of people unable to read or write continued to increase. Government expenditures on education, while improved over the British period, still represented only 11.5% of the budget in 1950. Likewise, little real progress was made in raising public health standards as government spending in this area constituted only 3.8% of the total budget in 1951.

Such a lack of concern with the deep-rooted social problems which dominated the lives of the bulk of the Egyptian population
clearly demonstrates the gap which existed between the political establishment and the urban and rural masses. The political leadership of the inter-war period sought to create a political system which reflected their interests and their perception of the most viable path to Egyptian development. Given their educational and social backgrounds it is perhaps understandable that they viewed development in Western terms and consequently sought to model Egypt's institutional framework on those liberal-democratic structures which had proven so successful in the West. However, such notions of development were not part of the traditional culture which continued to dominate the Egyptian rural community. Thus, the masses had little real attachment to the institutions of the liberal experiment. Those who supported the Wafd during the revolution of 1919 and after, did so not out of a love for liberal democracy or a desire for parliamentary institution, but out of opposition to the British and frustration with current social inequities. Rather than emerging naturally with the evolution of society as they had in the West, the institutions of the liberal experiment were imposed fully developed on a society which had only a limited understanding of the ideals on which these institutions were based. Despite their love of Western liberal-democratic political forms, the Westernized elite who dominated the liberal experiment continued to view politics in "traditional" terms. As a result the political leadership of the liberal experiment, rather than concerning themselves with the serious issues facing Egyptian society, degenerated under the weight of personal power
struggles, petty rivalries, and corruption.

During the inter-war period it became increasingly apparent that Egypt's political leaders had neither the will nor the ability to effect the drastic reforms Egypt so desperately needed. Thus, with the seeming failure of the liberal-nationalist politicians to provide an effective solution to the problem of Egyptian development the masses began to look outside the structured political parties of the liberal-democratic establishment for political solutions. When the challenge to the system did occur it came from the military; the only group within Egyptian society with the organization, power, and access to arms necessary to mount an effective challenge to the government. However, the July 23, 1952 military coup led by a disgruntled group of officers known as the "Free Officers", while popularly supported, was not a popular-based movement. Most of the popular discontent was focused through a number of new political movements which operated outside of the traditional political structures. Accordingly, during this period radical groups such as the communists, who advocated far-reaching programs of reform grew in popularity. However, such movements were largely unable to build a mass basis of support. Like the liberal-democrats they offered a political vision which lacked a base within traditional Egyptian culture. Instead, increasing numbers of Egyptians, especially those flocking to the urban areas from the countryside, were attracted to new political groups which provided a more acceptable vision
of Egyptian development by positing their critique of contemporary Egyptian political, social and economic systems within a religious framework. It is out of this new group of religiously-motivated political activists that the Muslim Brotherhood emerged.
NOTES


2. It is estimated that as late as 1947 the agricultural sector of the Egyptian economy continued to provide 60% of Egypt's total employment and 38% of the gross national product. Samir Radwan, Capital Formation in Egyptian Industry and Agriculture, 1882-1967, (London: Ithaca Press, 1974), pp. 281-283.


6. Baer, p. 77

7. Ibid., pp. 25-25.


11. Charles Issawi, Egypt at Mid-Century, p. 127.


16. Census statistics show that the proportion of Egypt's population living in urban centres rose from 19% in 1907 to 33% in 1947. Robert Tignor, State, Private Enterprise, and
Under the terms of this agreement Egyptian independence continued to be severely limited by what have become known as the "four reserved points". These articles stipulated that the British were to retain the responsibility for:
1) The security of imperial communications in Egypt, i.e. the Suez canal; 2) The defence of Egypt against all foreign aggression; 3) The protection of foreign interests and minorities in Egypt; 4) The Sudan.


25. Marsot, p. 70.


27. Marsot, p. 45.


29. Ibid., pp. 141-143.


31. Ibid., p. 55.


33. During the 1930s and 1940s the government, in response to pressure from large landholders initiated the "taswiya", or settlement laws, which, among other things served to: 1) Reduce the amount of annual payment and extend the payment period for mortgages; 2) lower interest rates; 3) provide a mechanism to return lands confiscated for reasons of debt to their former owners. See Baer, pp. 107-108.
34. Tignor, p. 193.
CHAPTER II
THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD, 1928-1954

There is little doubt that the Muslim Brotherhood was the most influential Islamic movement to emerge in response to the turbulent conditions of inter-war Egypt. It was not, however, an isolated phenomenon. A number of other Islamic-oriented organizations, most notably the Young Men's Muslim Association and Young Egypt, were formed during this period. These, however, lacked the appeal and subsequent impact of the Brotherhood. The Young Men's Muslim Association, established in 1927, was, like the Brotherhood, concerned with the defence of the Islamic nature of Egyptian society. However, the Young Men's Muslim Association remained isolated from the dominant political questions of the day and thus lacked the Brotherhood's eventual social and political impact. Young Egypt, while maintaining a high degree of political involvement, were ideological chameleons whose leaders changed their views to correspond to shifts in public opinion. Although they embraced Islamic politics during this period, their attachment was short-lived and superficial with the result that by the end of World War II the leaders of Young Egypt had dropped most of their Islamic emphasis in favour of a more secular socialism. Thus, in examining Islamic political activism during this period one is justified in focusing primarily on the Muslim Brotherhood.
The Brotherhood was founded in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna, a teacher in the Suez Canal zone city of Isma'iliyya. During its early years in Isma'iliyya, the Brotherhood remained primarily a local organization with a limited but loyal following. By 1932 the Society had established some 15 branches in various centres around Isma'iliyya. In that year, however, al-Banna transferred the locus of the Society to Cairo, thus setting the stage for the Brotherhood's eventual emergence as a movement of national significance.

The decade after 1932 was a period of great significance for the Brotherhood, both in terms of membership increase and the establishment of organizational structure. By 1938 the Brotherhood boasted 300 branches throughout Egypt, and by 1940 that figure had increased to 500. Nadav Safran suggests that much of this increase in the Brotherhood's popular appeal was related to the Society's active support of the Arab Revolt in Palestine from 1936 to 1939. While it is true that the Brotherhood's involvement in the Palestinian crisis did increase its public profile and undoubtedly its level of public support, such activities alone do not adequately explain the Brotherhood's success during this period. The third general conference of the Society, held in March 1935, was called specifically to deal with the problems presented by a rapidly increasing membership and resulted in the establishment of both membership criteria, and a new hierarchical structure. Such evidence indicates that the increase in popular support for the
Brotherhood began well before the Society's involvement in the Palestine revolt and resulted from forces at work within Egyptian society itself.

The Brotherhood's support of the Palestine revolt did nevertheless represent a turning point in the development of the organization. With this action the Society moved beyond mere preaching and teaching to active political involvement in Arab and Islamic issues, both on a national and international scale. Furthermore, the proven ability of the Brotherhood leadership to elicit and manipulate public support led an increasing number of Egyptian political leaders to view the Society as a movement of potentially vital political significance. As a result, tenuous ties were formed between the Brotherhood and a variety of established political forces, especially those of Prime Minister Ali Mahir.7

In the years after 1936 the Muslim Brotherhood continued to involve itself in the Egyptian political scene, joining in the national opposition to the continued British presence. However, this activism took on increasingly violent overtones. Repeatedly during the late 1930s and 1940s members of the Brotherhood were implicated in violent clashes not only with the British, but with domestic political opponents such as the Wafd. Furthermore, the period immediately following the Second World War is usually regarded as the Society's peak in membership, as well as political activities. While exact figures are difficult to verify, Richard Mitchell suggests that the Brotherhood's 1948
claim to represent a million Egyptians may not be exaggerated. This combination of popular strength, plus an increasing tendency toward violent political activity, led the Egyptian government to view the Brotherhood as a potential threat. On December 6, 1948 the government of Prime Minister al-Nuqrashi declared the Society dissolved, arrested most of its leadership, and seized its assets. This event marked the final split between the Brotherhood and the government. Shortly after the dissolution of the Society, Prime Minister al-Nuqrashi was assassinated by a young member of the Society. Finally, on February 12, 1949, Hasan al-Banna, the founder and leader of the Brotherhood was murdered by members of the Egyptian State Police acting under the orders of, or at least with the support of the new Prime Minister Ibrahim 'Abd al-Hadi.

The death of al-Banna was a loss of inestimable proportions for the Brotherhood. There had long been a certain degree of factionalism prevalent within the upper ranks of the Brotherhood. For the most part such tendencies had been held in check by the charismatic character of al-Banna's leadership. However, following al-Banna's death three different factions emerged in a contest for control of the Society. Eventually a compromise candidate, Husayn al-Hudaybi, a respected Egyptian judge, was selected as al-Banna's successor. However, he was never able to command the loyalty which al-Banna enjoyed and hence his ability to exercise control over many of the elements within the Society was always questionable.
Eventually such a lack of control was to prove extremely costly to the Brotherhood. In the immediate aftermath of the July 23, 1952 military coup led by the "Free Officers", relations between the military leadership and the Brotherhood were very good. This is most clearly evident in the exemption of the Brotherhood from the September 1952 decree dissolving all parties, and in the continued veneration of Hasan al-Banna by leading government figures. However, this honeymoon was short-lived and by late 1953 serious conflicts had emerged between the Free Officer leadership and Brotherhood leader Hasan al-Hudaybi. The end result of these conflicts was the attempted assassination of Nasser on October 26, 1954 by Mahmud 'Abd al-Latif, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. The government reaction was swift. By the end of the year those directly implicated in the plot had been executed, while the leadership of the Society and much of its membership had been imprisoned. It appeared that the Muslim Brotherhood had been dealt a blow from which it would never recover.

Such a brief historical overview, while providing us with a framework upon which to base our examination of the Brotherhood, actually tells us little about the nature of the organization and its relationship to Egyptian society as a whole. Thus, for the purposes of this study it is necessary to take a closer look at the Brotherhood in terms of its ideology, organization, activity, and membership.
Scholars have characterized the Muslim Brotherhood in a variety of ways. Some analysts have viewed the Brotherhood as primarily a religious phenomenon of either reactionary or progressive tendencies. Other scholars, noting the social and political message and activities of the Society, have suggested that beyond its religious rhetoric, the Brotherhood was basically a class-based movement against privilege and oppression. Certainly both elements are evident within the Brotherhood. However, to label the Society as either a purely religious or social movement is to underestimate the scope of the organization. This is clear from Hasan al-Banna's own description of the Brotherhood as "a Salafiyya message, a Sunni way, a Sufi truth, a political organization, an athletic group, a cultural educational union, an economic company and a social idea.""15

At its very root the Muslim Brotherhood was indeed primarily a religious movement. Like their predecessors within the Islamic reform tradition, the Brothers saw the Muslim world as being in a state of decay and pointed to a revitalized Islam as a necessary first step toward a regenerated Islamic society. They rejected the notion that the weakness of the Muslim world was the result of some inherent flaw within Islam itself. Following the thought laid down by al-Afghani, Abduh and Rida, Hasan al-Banna argued "The noble Qu'ran is an all-inclusive book in which God has gathered together the fundamentals of religious doctrine and the bases of social welfare, as well as the broad
generalities of secular legislation containing both commands and prohibitions.\textsuperscript{16} If Islamic society had become weak it was because Muslims had deviated from the path of true Islam as it was taught by the Prophet.\textsuperscript{17} Thus the members of the Brotherhood saw it as their task to work actively for the regeneration of Egyptian society through a return to the true tenets of Islam. In describing the mission of the Society, al-Banna insisted,

"Brethren, you are not a benevolent organization, nor a political party, nor a local association with strictly limited aims. Rather you are a new spirit making its way into the heart of this nation and reviving it through the Qu'ran; a new light dawning and scattering the darkness of materialism through the knowledge of God; a resounding voice rising and echoing the message of the Apostle.\textsuperscript{18}"

It is this call for a return to a true, purified Islam that has led scholars such as Nadia Safran to label the Brotherhood as a reactionary movement. It is argued that they sought the recreation of an Islamic state, along the lines of that governed by the early Caliphs, which would represent a rejection of the modern world and a return to the past.\textsuperscript{19} Such an assertion, however, is a distortion of the true goal of the Brotherhood. It is true that in calling for a return to a purified Islam members of the Society looked to the era of the "rightly guided" Caliphs as an example of Muslim society as it was intended to function prior to the deviation from pure Islam engendered by the establishment of the Umayyad Dynasty.\textsuperscript{20} However, they did not advocate the simple recreation of this early seventh century Islamic state. Rather, the Brotherhood were concerned with the creation of an "Islamic order", that is, a system of government
based on what they regarded as fundamental Islamic principles.\textsuperscript{21} This does not imply a desire for theocracy, but it does indicate the Brotherhood's concern with more profound questions pertaining to the nature of Egyptian society itself and the continuing validity of Islam in the modern world.

At the heart of this desire for the creation of an Islamic order was the insistence by the Brotherhood and other Islamic activist groups on the reimplementation of the \textit{Shari'a} as the basis of Egyptian society. The members of the Brotherhood perceived that the \textit{Shari'a} was of central importance to any Muslim society. Consequently, its rejection in favour of Western legal codes not only violated Muslim history, but destroyed the very essence of Muslim society.\textsuperscript{22} Thus, the demand for the reimplementation of the \textit{Shari'a} became the cornerstone of the Brotherhood's ideology. Once this was achieved, the Brethren argued, the all-inclusive nature of the \textit{Shari'a} would ensure that all the requirements for regulating political, social and economic life in a modern state would be met. In this way, the implementation or non-implementation of the \textit{Shari'a} came to be viewed as the determining factor in the definition of a true "Islamic order".

Beyond this emphasis on the importance of the \textit{Shari'a}, however, the Brotherhood's conception of an Islamic order remained disturbingly vague. Most of the substantive statements put forward by the Brotherhood in this regard related to largely symbolic issues such as the institution of Qur'anic penalties
for specified moral and criminal offences, the abolition of usury, and the segregation of the sexes. Such generalities tell us little about the nature of the proposed "Islamic order". Indeed it could be argued that it is impossible to arrive at a concrete definition of an Islamic political or economic system. Traditional Islamic society was based on a system of minimal government. Consequently, the Shari'a has little to say about specific forms of government, and only by induction can one construct a Muslim political philosophy.

This lack of ideological specificity has led scholars such as Safran to argue that the real danger of the Brotherhood came not from its tendency toward violence, but from its inherent intellectual naivety. While the Muslim Brothers rejected the Westernized foundations of the contemporary political system in favour of the creation of a state based on the Qur'an and the "traditions", they had little idea of how such a state was to be created, or how it was to function. Such a criticism is indeed valid. Following the thought of Islamic reformers such as Abduh, the Brothers suggested that one of the reasons for the decline of the Muslim world was the rigidification of Islam in the hands of a conservative ulema which ignored the intellectual and technological advances of the Western world. In response to this problem, the Brothers argued that as the Shari'a was formulated in response to the requirements of a specific historical setting, it must be reopened to interpretation in order to provide it with the flexibility necessary for its adaptation to
the modern world. Whether such a reform would have provided the Shari'a with the flexibility to deal with modern political, social and economic concerns is, however, certainly open to question. The continuing debate throughout the Muslim world concerning the applicability of specific Qur'anic injunctions relating to economics, the legal system, and the role of women, casts much doubt on the ability of such a rapprochement to be completely successful. Thus Safran's analysis of the Brotherhood's programs as dangerously utopian remains largely valid.

Such a criticism, regardless of its validity, seems to represent an incomplete understanding of the message and purpose of the Brotherhood. The Society was not concerned with defining in a detailed manner the political, social and economic structures of the "Islamic order". In calling for a return to an "Islamic order", Hasan al-Banna and the Brothers were responding to the confusion and injustice which had ravaged Egyptian society. They looked to the establishment of a new society which, because it was based on Islam, would reproduce the moral commitment and homogeneity of the early Islamic community and thereby provide the pre-conditions for material progress, political power, and economic justice. Thus, rather than producing detailed social and economic programs, the Brotherhood focused on precisely those visible symbols of immorality and secularism which they perceived as representing the difference between the Islamic and Western ways of life. In doing so they
presented a vision, albeit utopian and impractical, of a future Egyptian society based on morality, justice and security. It was a vision which held immense appeal for those Egyptians marginalized by society and disaffected from the present system since, onto this Islamic core with its emphasis on morality and justice, all other concerns such as national independence, Arabism, economic progress, social justice and political equality were easily grafted.  

Thus, although the Brotherhood failed to provide a detailed description of how the Islamic order would function, it was able to present to the masses a vision of a new society, grounded on Islamic morality, which addressed contemporary concerns in familiar Islamic terms. The Brotherhood's condemnation of the current political establishment and the party system, while couched in Islamic terms, was a response to the corruption and political infighting which had come to characterize Egypt's liberal experiment. Such failures were, in the Brothers' view, the result of the rejection by Egypt's political leadership of Islam as a basis for political action in favour of the secular political constructs of the West. Consequently, the Brotherhood argued for a return to an Islamic political system in which the Qur'an would serve as the constitution and guiding force for all state actions. In doing so, however, the Brotherhood was not looking to the emergence of a theocracy, nor advocating a retreat to the past. Such a scheme would have held little attraction for the bulk of Egypt's disgruntled masses.
Under the political system envisioned by the Brothers the executive ruler would be bound, not only by the teachings of Islam, but by the popular will of the people as reflected in the *ahl al-shura*, a body composed of elected representatives to which all legislation must be submitted for final deliberation and approval. Thus, final political power derives from the people whose loyalty to the ruler is dependent upon his adherence to the teachings of Islam and to the general will of the people.  

Whether a political order based on these principles would be completely compatible with modern liberal-democratic ideals and procedures remains unclear. However, it is evident that the Brothers were attempting to frame a positive political response, within an Islamic context, to popular discontent with the bankrupt nature of Egyptian liberal democracy and the corruption and injustice it represented.

Such a political vision did, however, present the Brotherhood with some significant problems. The rejection of the current political system and its party structure effectively isolated the Brotherhood from participation, in a positive way, in any concrete reform of Egyptian society. Although the Brotherhood did develop a fairly comprehensive reform program, the Society's refusal to participate in the parliamentary system meant that its ability to implement such reforms was severely limited. Furthermore, the Brotherhood's political views made alliance with other political groups virtually impossible. Thus,
although the Brotherhood took an active role in Egypt, the Society's aversion to cooperation with the nationalist groups mitigated against any attempt at a coordinated effort.

Like its political constructs, the economic program advocated by the Brotherhood was in many ways a conditioned response to the obvious inequities prevalent in the Egyptian economic system. In al-Banna's unitary conception of Islam, politics and economics were inexorably linked by the pervasive emphasis on justice and morality. As was the case in the realm of politics, the Qur'an confines itself to the establishment of general principles of economic thought and is concerned primarily with providing a moral imperative which is to guide all Islamic economic activity. Thus, the basic principles of Islamic economic theory can be briefly summarized as follows:

1) All wealth belongs to society and ultimately to God. Labour is the only genuine foundation for possession;

2) The right to private ownership is ensured. However, such ownership must be viewed in terms of the general welfare of the community;

3) Inheritance procedures are designed to control the growth of large properties and the monopolization of wealth;

4) Usury is absolutely condemned as leading to the accumulation of capital which is not related to labour;

5) Payment of the zakat, or poor tax, is seen as a duty.

Using these general principles as a basis, the Brotherhood presented the following package of economic reforms which were
designed to bring Egypt into harmony with Islamic economic principles, and thus foster economic independence and economic justice.

1) Usury in all its forms should be abolished.
2) The natural resources of the country should be nationalized; foreign control of public utilities and mineral resources should be broken; and foreign capital should be replaced by local.
3) The nation should be industrialized immediately, with emphasis on industries dependent on local raw materials.
4) The National Bank of Egypt should be nationalized.
5) Taxes should be reformed so that a levy of zakat was applied progressively on capital as well as profit. Among the goals of taxation should be the control of conspicuous spending and luxury.
6) Land reform should be pursued vigorously: a) a ceiling should be placed on the amount of property owned, with the remainder sold at reasonable prices over a long term to the landless; b) national lands should be distributed to small owners and the landless.
7) Farm legislation is needed to protect the renter.
8) Labour legislation should be reformed in order to guarantee workers' rights.
9) Workers must be guaranteed social security. If a man can not find work, or if his work is insufficient, or if he is unable to work, his needs must be met through the state by the zakat. If the zakat is not sufficient to meet the needs of the poor, then the state has the right to compel the wealthy who do not do so
willingly to give more to the poor. 32

Certainly much of the economic program advocated by the Brotherhood was beyond the Society's capacity for implementation, again bringing into focus the tension between the Brother's refusal to involve themselves in a political system that they regarded as corrupt and un-Islamic, and their desire for the structural reform of Egyptian society. However, in an attempt to demonstrate the feasibility of an Islamic approach to economic affairs, the Brotherhood initiated a number of concrete programs in the fields of industry and labour. Between the years 1938 and 1952 the Brotherhood founded seven companies whose areas of involvement included investment, mining, printing, weaving, construction, transport and manufacturing. 33 The purpose of the enterprises was certainly to promote national entrepreneurial independence and to produce profit for the Society. However, the Brotherhood also was concerned with proving the efficacy of its reform program. Thus most of these companies operated on a cooperative basis with the workers as the shareholders. 34 In addition, 2.5 per cent of the annual capital and profit was collected as zakat and redistributed among the needy. 35

The Brotherhood's involvement in labour issues can be traced back to its early years in Isma'iliyya and the Suez Canal Zone. During this period the Brothers' proximity to the centre of foreign economic intervention prompted them to become involved in protesting the exploitation of native Egyptian workers by
foreign companies. However, the economic unrest of the war years provided the Brotherhood with the opportunity to increase its activities in this area. A number of the Brotherhood-owned companies, particularly the Company for Spinning and Weaving founded in 1947, were part of a conscious effort by the Society to deal with the problem of rising unemployment. Within these companies the Brotherhood was not only concerned with providing workers with a share of the profits, but also was active in setting up mosques, clubs, and schools. Outside of their own corporations, the Brotherhood's "labour section" coordinated the Society's activities in this area. Workers' meetings were held to discuss labour issues and to protest government activity or inactivity. A "Committee of the Unemployed" was established to organize pressure on the government. Economic research was conducted to formulate solutions to various labour problems. A panel of labour lawyers was provided to deal with individual problems. A labour school was established to familiarize workers with their rights and to explain labour legislation. The section also served as a clearinghouse for jobs for the unemployed. Perhaps most importantly, the "labour section" was also involved throughout the 1940s in the formation of labour unions. This activity centred in the textile and transport industries, and amongst public utility and refinery workers. Consequently, the Brotherhood was able to play a crucial role in the strikes which plagued Egypt between 1946 and 1948.
This reform ethos is also evident in the Brotherhood's social programs. In calling for the emergence of a new, revived Islamic society, the Brotherhood sought what Mitchell has termed the reconstruction of the "Islamic personality", the reaffirmation of the "total" Muslim in the multiple areas of life - religious, ethical, social, economic and political.

Thus a great emphasis was placed by the Society on the importance of education. Sayyid Qutb, one of the leading Brotherhood theorists wrote:

No renaissance of Islamic life can be effected purely by the law or statute, or by the establishment of a social system on the basis of Islamic philosophy. Such a step is only one of the two pillars on which Islam must always stand in its construction of life. The other is the production of a state of mind imbued with the Islamic theory of life, to give permanence to external forces leading to this form of life and to give coherence to all the social, religious and civil legislation....And the natural method of establishing that philosophy is by education.

The Brotherhood was most concerned about the increasing secularization of the Egyptian school system, the low standard of education, and the lack of educational opportunities. However, contrary to what Heyworth-Dunne suggests, the Brotherhood did not advocate the complete desecularization of the educational system. Rather, the Brothers emphasized the need for an educational system which would blend religious and moral training with the secular scientific training of the West. Thus, rather than rejecting the secular educational system, the Brothers were attacking the parallel structure of Egyptian education in which two systems - one religious and one secular - existed side by side with little interrelation. Such a
system, they argued, led to a fragmentation and cultural
disunity which could only be offset by a return to a more
balanced and integrated structure.

As was the case in its industrial and labour spheres, the
Brotherhood attempted to back up its educational theories with
practical programs designed not only to give substance to its
reform program, but to combat the problem of illiteracy. From
the early period of its existence, the Brotherhood had
demonstrated an interest in founding schools. In the rural and
urban areas primary schools for both boys and girls were
established. In addition, night schools were set up to combat
illiteracy by providing basic education for adults. After 1946
these efforts took on an even wider scope as the Brotherhood
schools were integrated into the government-sponsored
anti-illiteracy program. Thus, by 1948 al-Banna was able to
claim that each of the 2,000 Brotherhood branches had one or
more schools attached to it.

The emphasis on education also extended into the field of
public health. Beginning in 1943, the Brotherhood initiated a
program in which Society groups were sent into the villages to
organize a sanitation program, distribute public health
information, and provide limited first aid. A year later this
educational program was augmented by the founding of a "medical
section" charged with the establishment of dispensaries,
clinics, and hospitals. By 1953 the Society claimed that each
province in Egypt had at least one dispensary and that the
sixteen clinics in Cairo had treated over 100,000 patients in that year alone.\footnote{5}

Beyond strictly medical problems, the Brotherhood was concerned with raising the standard of living enjoyed by the urban and rural poor. A social and welfare section was established to provide financial and material aid to poor families, especially the aged, the homeless, and the orphans. In the rural areas, the Brotherhood also became involved in providing electricity for villages, the construction of cemeteries and mosques, and the establishment of more efficient and just systems of village organization and administration.\footnote{6} As part of this effort the Brotherhood established a model farm in one village, while in other villages as many as 600 people per month were fed on a soup-kitchen basis.\footnote{7}

It is clear from this examination of the Brotherhood's political, economic and social programs that the Society was deeply concerned with addressing the multitude of problems facing Egyptian society. Some scholars have taken a cynical view of the Society's efforts in this area, suggesting that the social and economic reform programs espoused by the Brotherhood were simply an attempt to cash in on the popular pro-socialist sentiment which had propelled new left-leaning student and workers' groups to prominence during the 1940s.\footnote{8} However, as an examination of the Brotherhood's programs and ideology demonstrates, this concern for social reform was evident from the birth of the organization. While it does represent a
pragmatic response to a particular social and historical environment, it was a response that sprang not from political considerations, but from the Brothers' concern for Islamic justice and morality. In stressing this fact al-Banna wrote:

Other people say that the Muslim Brotherhood are a political group and that their message is a political one, beyond which they have still other aims, who knows how far our nation will go in spreading accusations, bandying suspicions, and name calling....Our people, we are calling out to you with the Qur'an in our right had and the Sunna in our left, and with the deeds of the pious ancestors of the sons of the umma as our example. We summon you to Islam, the teachings of Islam, the law of Islam and the guidance of Islam, and if this smacks of politics in your eyes then it is our policy. And if the one summoning you to these principles is a politician then we are the most respectable of men. 49

Thus, it is evident that the Brothers were more than pragmatic political opportunists, in that they sought to revive the pure Muslim character of Egyptian society. Only through such a revival could the just society they envisioned be ushered in. As a result, the Society's reform programs were infused with a moral as well as a political imperative. Justice, the Brothers believed, could not be simply legislated; it could only emerge when society had been returned to its pure Islamic roots. Hasan al-Banna wrote:

The renascent nation, above all else, needs a code of morality ... a strong, unbending, and superior morality. ...For it will have to face some demands of the new age which can not be answered except through the possession of a strong and sincere morality founded on deep faith, unwavering constancy, great self-sacrifice, and considerable tolerance. Islam alone can create such a perfect soul, for it has made rectitude of the soul and its purification the foundation of success....And it has made change in the affairs of nations contingent on change within their moral character and the rectitude of their souls.
Thus, the Brotherhood's critique of Egyptian society, while a response to the specific social realities it saw around it, and therefore an exercise in political pragmatism, can not be divorced from its Islamic roots. For the Brothers, the cultivation of justice and equality was not simply a political necessity, it was an Islamic responsibility.

In the past most of the studies of the Muslim Brotherhood have focused on the Society's ideology and activities. This is largely due to the fact that concrete statistical information on the Brotherhood's membership during the period prior to 1954 is extremely scarce. As a result, scholars have relied on overt generalizations in trying to construct a social profile of Society members. As more statistical evidence emerges it is evident that many of these generalizations are inaccurate.

Previous scholars have tended to suggest that most of the Brotherhood's membership was drawn from the poorer classes, especially the rural peasantry and urban lumpen proletariat. Thus, the Brothers are regarded by observers such as Christina Harris, as a devout and uneducated rabble attracted to the message preached by Hasan al-Banna as a result of their contact with Westernized urban culture of which they had little experience, and even less understanding. Such statistical evidence as does exist brings the validity of such a typology into question. Most of the statistical information that is available is derived from police information concerning those Brotherhood members arrested in 1948 and 1954, and from the
composition of important Brotherhood organizational structures, including the Guidance Council and the Consultative Assembly. Such sources do present problems in that their information, especially that provided by the police, is often of questionable reliability, and the picture they present of the Brotherhood's membership structure suffers from a certain degree of distortion. However, they do provide us with a reasonably accurate description of the active element within the Society's membership.

An examination of the profiles of those Brothers arrested between 1948 and 1954 indicates that the bulk came not from either the rural peasantry or the urban proletariat. By far the largest percentage of those arrested came from the urban professional class. Of the 32 Brothers arrested during the 1948 "Jeep Trials" (Table 2.1), 8 were civil servants, 5 were teachers, 7 were white collar workers in private business or industry, and 7 were small business owners. Likewise, the lists of those Brothers wanted by the government in 1954 (Table 2.2), and those eventually arrested by the government in 1954 (Tables 2.3 and 2.4) show a predominance of figures from professional, white collar, student, or small business backgrounds. In almost all cases the poorest rural and urban classes are either under-represented or conspicuously absent. Furthermore, Mitchell notes that lists of the leaders of the third Brotherhood general conference in 1935, and of the Consultative Assembly in 1953 show only scant representation by rural or lower class figures,
a fact which is also evident from the membership of the Brotherhood Guidance Council in both 1934 and 1953 (Table 2.5)^{52}

On the basis of the above data previous scholarly assertions that the Brotherhood primarily appealed to lowest rural and urban classes must be seriously questioned. While membership from these classes may have been large in a statistical sense, the active element within the society appears to have been dominated by urban middle class or petite bourgeoisie members.\(^5^3\) Recent evidence even casts doubt on the degree to which the rural population was represented in the Brotherhood's membership as a whole. Uri Kupferschmidt argues that despite the Brotherhood's rural programs, the Society never succeeded in establishing a solid base of rural support. He suggests that although some of the Brotherhood's social and economic proposals may have gathered a favourable response from the rural masses, the Brothers' scripturalist interpretation of Islam held little appeal in the face of a popular Islam which was dominated, not by the Qur'an, but by the veneration of holy men and holy sites, elaborate burial and mourning ceremonies, exorcisms and spirit worship, as well as other forms of magic or superstition.\(^5^4\)

Such assertions are difficult to confirm in light of the absence of concrete statistical information concerning Brotherhood membership. It is clear that despite attempts at cultivating rural support, the Brotherhood remained a primarily urban phenomenon. This perception of a Brotherhood dominated at its most crucial levels by members of the urban middle class has
led Mitchell to categorize the Society as a movement of the *effendiyya*.\(^5\) Mitchell's analysis, while accurate in terms of much of the Brotherhood's leadership must, however, be qualified. Although Brotherhood members did come from what most observers would traditionally classify as middle-class professions, the majority seem to have been fairly recent urban arrivals. Thus, the active membership of the Society was composed of figures caught in the transition from traditional to Western cultural patterns. Their educational and professional backgrounds indicate that they were already products of some degree of Westernization, yet they still retained much of their traditional rural socialization.\(^6\)

In such figures the inherent contradictions of twentieth century Egyptian society were fully played out. They could not completely ignore or reject the forces of Westernization, yet they saw the traditional social values and norms on which much of their lives were based being constantly eroded as Egyptian society became increasingly Westernized. Although a part of the urban environment, they increasingly found themselves marginalized in a political system which offered them no voice or hope, and an economic system which, despite its promises, offered them no future. Furthermore, they found themselves in an environment in which the traditional forces of social support to which they would have turned in the face of such pressures no longer operated. If Egypt was a dual society in which traditional and modern structures operated side by side, these
marginalized members of the middle class found themselves unable to function in either world. It was the concerns of this portion of Egyptian society which were reflected in the Brotherhood's vision of a revived Islamic order in which the values and norms of traditional Muslim society would be reemphasized within a modern social setting. Such a vision represented not a rejection of either change or the "modern world", but simply an attempt to make the process of change less threatening by recasting it within an Islamic framework.

One final observation concerning the membership of the Brotherhood is that while the active elements of the Society were recruited from the urban petite bourgeoisie and middle classes, membership patterns do not appear to have remained static. As the Brotherhood grew in popularity during the 1930s and 1940s, it experienced an influx of younger, more politically active members. The extent of this influx is evident from the fact that, of those Brotherhood members arrested in 1954, by far the largest single group were students (Table 2.3). A number of scholars have emphasized that with this influx the Brotherhood became an amalgamation of diverse and competing interests tied together by the personality of al-Banna.57

This increasing diversity of membership had profound implications at all levels of Brotherhood activity. Although the Brotherhood had always demonstrated a concern for social and economic reform, most of the concrete programs initiated by the Brotherhood were products of the period from 1940 to 1948. This
does not mean that Brotherhood ideology changed. However, it does seem to have undergone a significant shift of emphasis corresponding to the changing interests of the membership.

Perhaps the most profound impact of the changes in the Brotherhood's membership can be seen in the Society's political activity. Much has been written about the Brotherhood's tendency towards violence. Indeed the Brothers stressed the importance of force in implementing their vision of the Islamic order. In emphasizing the notion of jihad, or holy war, al-Banna wrote:

How wise was the man who said: 'force is the surest way of implementing the right, and how beautiful it is that force and rights should march side by side.' This striving to broadcast the Islamic mission, quite apart from preserving the hallowed precepts of Islam, is another religious duty for which God has delegated all Muslims, so that they might be as one phalanx, a solid army of salvation which would rescue humanity and guide them all together to the path.58

Yet it is clear that despite such injunctions, the Brothers saw their mission, not in terms of violent confrontation, but as one of education and reform. At the fifth general conference of the Brotherhood in 1939, al-Banna laid out a detailed statement concerning the importance of political power as a requisite for the implementation of reforms. Al-Banna stressed that the Brotherhood was not interested in seeking power for itself but was prepared to provide the troops for those who would implement the Islamic order. However, the principle role of the society was to be the education and Islamization of the people. Only when this was achieved, he argued, could the Islamic order naturally evolve.59
In order to come to terms with this obvious contradiction it is necessary to examine al-Banna's concept of \textit{jihad} more closely. Although the injunction to \textit{jihad} was seen as a Muslim duty, it was conceived of in a defensive sense. In the tract \textit{On Jihad} al-Banna wrote:

Now you see from all this how the men of learning ... agree unanimously that jihad is a communal obligation imposed upon the Islamic umma in order to broadcast the summons (to embrace Islam), and that it is an individual obligation to repulse the attack of unbelievers upon it. Today the Muslims, as you know, are compelled to humble themselves before non-Muslims, and are ruled by unbelievers. Their adversaries are in charge of their affairs, and the rites of their domains.... Hence, it has become an individual obligation, which there is no evading, on every Muslim to prepare his equipment, to make up his mind to engage in jihad, and to get ready for it until the opportunity is ripe and God decrees a matter which is sure to be accomplished. \textsuperscript{60}

Thus \textit{jihad} was primarily seen as an obligation to defend Islam and the Muslim world from attack. In nationalist terms this was transferred into an obligation to struggle against the forces of Western imperialism and their local proxies the Zionists. Beyond such defensive concerns, the imperative to \textit{jihad} takes the form of a "summons", and thus would indeed appear to involve exhortation and education rather than violent confrontation.

Within the Brotherhood this imperative to \textit{jihad} resulted in the formation in late 1942, or early 1943, of a special section which became known as "the secret apparatus". Al-Banna initially conceived of this group as an instrument for the defense of both Islam and the Society itself.\textsuperscript{61} Consequently, the "secret apparatus" was drawn from the ranks of the new younger and more
radical members who were flocking to the Brotherhood at this time. However, it is apparent that even while al-Banna was alive, executive control over this branch of the Society was never strong. Thus, as conflict between the government and the Brotherhood increased, the members of the "secret apparatus", fuelled by al-Banna's emphasis on *jihad* as a duty, began to resort to extra-legal action which was to culminate in the assassination of Prime Minister al-Nuqrashi.

Many authors have tried to rationalize this violent tendency within the Brotherhood, suggesting that such occurrences were either isolated incidents, or fabrications by a government bent on destroying the Brotherhood. However, it seems clear that regardless of whether or not the extra-legal activities of the "secret apparatus" were led or approved by the leadership of the Society, violence and confrontation were an integral part of the Society's activities. Certainly the resort to violence was the product of distinct ideological trends within the Brotherhood. The emphasis on *jihad* militancy and martyrdom as virtues sanctioned and fuelled the activities of the "secret apparatus". However, in more concrete terms, the violence associated with the Brotherhood and particularly the "secret apparatus" was a product of the Egyptian political climate and changes within the Brotherhood's membership. As was previously emphasized, the "secret apparatus" was dominated by the younger, more politically active members of the Brotherhood. For the most part, they tended to be new recruits who were attracted to the
Society out of political as well as religious concerns. Within this group the sense of frustration with the current political system was greater, and hence the tendency to resort to extra-legal means of voicing this frustration was also stronger.63 Furthermore, in resorting to violence, the "secret apparatus" was also echoing a trend all too readily apparent within Egyptian politics. The tendency of all Egyptian political groups towards the formation and use of paramilitary forces served to sanction and encourage the violent activities of the "secret apparatus". Thus, although the violence of the "secret apparatus" found its justification in certain elements of the Brotherhood's ideology, it was rooted, not in religion, but in the frustration which arose out of the social, political, and economic inequities of Egyptian society.

In general terms, therefore, the Muslim Brotherhood may be characterized as a broad-based movement of religious reform which offered, and in some cases attempted to implement, a vision of a new Islamic society based on justice and morality. Our examination of Brotherhood ideology clearly indicates that the desire to reform Egyptian society along Islamic lines remained the driving force behind all Brotherhood activities. In describing al-Banna, Ishak Husaini states: It is not correct to say that al-Banna was socialist in the Western meaning of the word. He was a Moslem first and last. As a Moslem he found that these principles could enter into the general Islamic framework.64 However, beneath this Islamic emphasis, the program
of the Brotherhood represented a concrete response to the political, social, and economic inequities of Egyptian society. Thus, far from being a reactionary, obscurantist group which sought to return Egypt to an archaic political system, the Brotherhood offered a pragmatic critique of contemporary Egyptian society which, because it was grounded in Islamic realities, represented the only acceptable political alternative for a significant portion of Egyptian society.

In the final analysis, however, the Brotherhood's vision of an Islamic order remained utopian and impractical. This was due not only to the questionable adaptability of its Islamic basis, but also to problems surrounding its proposed implementation. If the "Islamic order" was to be implemented gradually through a process of reform and education, questions of practicability could be raised. Likewise, if the "Islamic order" was to be implemented by means of force, any long-term change of Egyptian society would be questionable. Such was the conflict which plagued the Brotherhood from al-Banna's death until the Society's dissolution in 1954.
TABLE 2.1
Distribution by occupation of Muslim Brothers arrested in "Jeep Trials", 1948

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil Servant</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White collar worker</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small business owner</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man of religion</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


TABLE 2.2
Distribution by occupation of Muslim Brothers appearing on 1954 "wanted list"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University students</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Azhar students</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil servants</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White collar workers</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Personnel</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled labourers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>72</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Mitchell, pp. 328-329
### TABLE 2.3

_Distribution by occupation of Moslem Brothers arrested in 1954_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>% of sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>6.7 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businessmen</td>
<td>5.0 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government employees</td>
<td>13.1 (76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicians</td>
<td>0.4 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military men</td>
<td>6.8 (41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>12.3 (74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men of religion</td>
<td>0.5 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>24.1 (145)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisans/Small business</td>
<td>9.8 (59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>15.8 (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>3.0 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.5 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>100.0 (601)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eric Davis, "Ideology, Social Class and Islamic Radicalism in Modern Egypt", p. 142.

### TABLE 2.4

_Distribution by occupational group of Moslem Brothers arrested in 1954_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational group</th>
<th>% of sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>11.0 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White collar</td>
<td>55.3 (331)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisan/Small business</td>
<td>13.8 (83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled worker</td>
<td>9.3 (56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled worker</td>
<td>10.7 (65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>100.0 (601)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Davis, p. 143.
TABLE 2.5

Occupations of members of the Guidance Council of the Moslem Brotherhood, 1934 and 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1934</th>
<th>1953</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Civil Servants</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men of religion</td>
<td>5*</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University professors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban notables</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White collar employees</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schoolteachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacists</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Three members of this category, including Hasan al-Banna, were teachers in religious institutes.

Source: Davis, p. 142.

2. The standard work on this group is James Jankowski, Egypt's Young Rebels: "Young Egypt", 1933-1952, (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1975).

3. The Muslim Brotherhood has been the subject of a number of valuable studies. Most of those available in English have focused on the period up to 1954. These include: J. Heyworth Dunne, Religious and Political Trends in Modern Egypt, (Published by the author, 1950); Ishak M. Husaini, The Moslem Bretheren, (Beirut: Khayat's College Book Cooperative, 1956); Christina Harris, Nationalism and Revoluation in Egypt, (London: Mouton & Co., 1964); and Richard Mitchell, The Society of the Muslim Brothers, (London: Oxford University Press, 1969). However, Oliver Carré and Gerard Michaud have recently published an excellent study in French, Les Frères Musulmans: Égypte et Syrie (1928-82), (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1983) which carries the discussion up to the early 1980s.


8. Mitchell estimates that during the period from 1946 to 1948 the Brotherhood operated some 2,000 branches, with an active membership of between 300,000 to 600,000 and possibly as many as 500,000 'sympathizers'. Mitchell, p. 328.

9. An investigation into the murder of al-Banna was launched by the RCC government shortly after the revolution of 1952. As a result of this investigation four police officers were sentenced to prison terms in 1954. Mitchell, p. 71.


11. Many questions have been raised concerning the pre-revolution relationship between the Free Officers and the Brotherhood. It would appear that some of the Free Officers, especially Anwar Sadat, were in contact with the Brotherhood and may even have been members. Despite such contacts, however, there is no indication that Brotherhood
members played a significant role in the actual coup. Mitchell, p. 96-104. For more information on Sadat's relationship with the Brotherhood see Anwar Sadat, Revolt on the Nile, (London: Allan Wingate, 1957).


13. For a more thorough discussion of these events, particularly the trial of those Brothers implicated in the plot see Mitchell, pp. 151-162.


17. Among those factors which al-Banna cited as representing a deviation from the "true" Islam, and thus leading to the breakdown of the Islamic state were: Political partisanship; sectarianism and secularism; self-indulgence in luxuries and comforts; transfer of authority to non-Arabs; indifference to the applied and natural sciences; stagnation and complacency; and the imitation of other cultures, especially the West. Hasan al-Banna, "Between Yesterday and Today" in Five Tracts of Hasan al-Banna, pp. 18-20.

18. Ibid., p. 36.

19. Safran, pp. 231-244.

20. The era of the Rashidun, or "rightly guided" Caliphs refers to the rule of the four Caliphs immediately following the death of the Prophet. These include 'Abu Bakr (632-634), Umar (634-644), Uthman (644-656), and Ali (656-661).


22. Ibid.


30. Ibid., pp. 246-250.

31. Ibid., pp. 251-53.

32. Ibid., pp. 272-274.

33. For more detailed information on Brotherhood-owned corporations, see Mitchell, pp. 274-277.

34. Husaini, p. 56.


36. Ibid., pp. 278-279.

37. Husaini, p. 56.


39. Ibid., pp. 280-281.

40. Ibid., p. 199.


42. Heyworth-Dunne, p. 61.


44. For a more detailed discussion of the Brotherhood's educational programs, see Mitchell, pp. 286-289.

45. Ibid., pp. 289-290; see also Husaini, pp. 55-56.

46. Mitchell, pp. 290-91; Harris, p. 155.

47. Husaini, pp. 52-53.

49. Hasan al-Banna, "To What Do We Summon Mankind?", pp. 74-75.


51. Harris, pp. 157-158.


53. Ibid., p. 329.


56. Davis, pp. 140-141.


58. al-Banna, "To What Do We Summon Mankind?", pp. 80-81.


60. al-Banna, "On Jihad", p. 150.

61. Mitchell, p. 32.

62. Ibid., p. 207.

63. Ibid., pp. 311-312.

64. Husaini, p. 93
CHAPTER III
POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REALITIES, 1970-1985

If the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic activist groups during the inter-war period was conditioned by the prevalent social realities of that era, the same analysis must be applied to the more recent manifestations of the Islamic activist phenomenon in Egypt. Despite the repression of the Brotherhood during the Nasser regime, the relaxation of such controls following the assumption of power by Anwar al-Sadat in October 1970 gave birth to a gradual re-emergence of Islamic groups including the Muslim Brotherhood. However, an examination of the post-1970 activist movement indicates that although most of the new Islamic groups possess the same basic ideological orientation as the inter-war Brotherhood, significant differences are apparent among not only the new groups and the pre-1954 Brotherhood, but among the various new activist groups themselves.

Such differences are clearly rooted in the changing political, social and economic realities of Egyptian society. It was demonstrated in the preceding chapters that the activist groups of the inter-war period arose in response to specific social conditions. It is therefore to be expected that changes in these conditions will be reflected in parallel changes within the Islamic activist movement. Consequently, in order to understand the development of contemporary Islamic groups in
Egypt, it is necessary to examine the political, social and economic changes which have occurred over the same period.

It must first be emphasized that many of the social, political and economic problems that characterized the Sadat regime were not the creation of its Nasserist predecessor, but represented the acceleration of basic processes already observed in our discussion of the inter-war period. Egypt's debilitating population increase reached staggering proportions by the 1970s. In 1976 Egypt's population stood at 36.6 million, an increase of over 90% in under 30 years. Such an increase was an important factor in the continuing impoverishment of the rural peasantry. Despite Nasser's attempts at social equalization, 1.5 million rural families (45% of all families engaged in agriculture) remained landless in 1971. In addition, it is estimated that by 1975 44% of rural families continued to live below the poverty line which was established at an income of 270 Egyptian pounds per household per year.

In the face of such pressures the pace of migration to the urban areas also continued to increase. By 1976 the population of Cairo stood at over 5 million, an increase of over 140% since 1947. In recent years, however, the pressure of this migration has shifted from Cairo itself to surrounding districts such as Giza and Shubra al-Khayma which recorded average annual growth rates during the period from 1966 to 1976 of 8.0 and 8.6% respectively. Yet the economic picture in the urban areas was, for much of the population, even darker than that of the rural
areas. Estimates of urban household incomes indicate that by 1976 up to 48% of urban families lived below the urban poverty line of 351 Egyptian pounds per household per year. Such was their plight that in 1973 the governor of Cairo admitted that at least one million people were squatting in the cemeteries which constituted Cairo's "City of the Dead", and that thousands more lived in illegal rooftop shacks. Yet, despite the continued presence of such problems, it is evident that many of the changes initiated by Sadat represented a direct response to the realities of the Nasserist legacy.

It was earlier suggested that the revolution of July 1952 which eventually swept Gamal Abdel Nasser to power in Egypt was not a mass-based movement. That is, although the revolution did receive widespread mass support, it took the form of a military coup initiated by a limited group within the Egyptian officer corp rather than a popular uprising with direct mass participation. As a result the "Nasserist Revolution", like the experiment in liberal-democracy of the previous two decades, represented an attempt to impose a social transformation on Egypt from above. It is clear that Nasser sought to radically alter much of Egypt's political, social and economic infrastructure. However, the future direction of Egyptian society was not to be determined at the popular level by the masses or their unpredictable representatives. Such a social transformation was to be managed and directed from above by government controlled and appointed experts. As a result, the
Nasserist regime was dominated by the rise of a powerful new managerial class drawn from the bureaucratic and technocratic elite of the rapidly expanding public sector.

It is clear from the preceding analysis that the Nasserist regime was no better equipped than its liberal-democratic predecessor to deal with questions concerning the direction of Egyptian development. Under the Nasserist regime the bulk of the Egyptian population continued to be isolated from the decision making processes. Consequently the pattern of development which emerged during this period reflected the values and perceptions of the new bureaucratic elite. Ties between the masses and the government therefore continued to be tenuous throughout the Nasserist period. Nasser continued to enjoy widespread popular support as long as he was able to successfully pursue a vision of Egyptian development which in some manner corresponded to popular ideals. Thus, the early years of Nasser's socialist experiment were filled with the promise of social equalization, economic expansion, and a restoration of national pride. Yet despite early steps toward the realization of these goals it was increasingly clear by 1965 that Nasserist policies had not produced the sustained level of social and economic development that had been expected.

Despite the failure of his domestic policies to produce sustained growth, Nasser was able to retain his popularity among the masses largely by virtue of his charismatic personality and his past record of foreign policy success. As a result, Nasser
continued to be popularly regarded as a national hero who was leading Egypt and the Arab world into a period of restored power. However, the crushing defeat of Arab military forces at the hands of the Israelis during the June 1967 war not only destroyed the popular mythology surrounding Nasser, but ushered in a period of national trauma during which the very nature of the Nasserist regime and its model of Egyptian development were called into question.

After 1967 Nasser's experiment in "Islamic Socialism", like the flirtation with liberal democracy which preceded it, was increasingly perceived to be a failure. Many members of the elite, including Nasser, began to push for a gradual reorientation of certain economic and political policies in order to facilitate some measure of accommodation with the United States. However, as part of the process of Egyptian self-criticism there was also a growing popular perception that somehow the calamity that had befallen Egypt was a punishment from God designed to purify the nation and restore it to the true Islamic path. Such a perception carried with it an implicit condemnation of the al-Azhar dominated religious establishment. If Egypt had strayed from the true path of Islam it was believed that much of the blame had to be placed at the feet of the leading members of the ulema who had been co-opted by the Nasserist regime and transformed into mere state functionaries. This popular discrediting of the religious establishment was to become a crucial factor in the continuing
strength of independent Islamic activist groups during the Sadat era.

Thus, despite the early promise and accomplishments of the Nasserist period, at Nasser's death in 1970, Anwar Sadat inherited an Egypt which had suffered decisive military defeat at the hands of the Israelis, continued to possess a population mired in poverty, illiteracy and disease, was reeling under a stagnant economy dominated by a system of state capitalism in which an inflated and corrupt public sector failed to generate the capital necessary for continued social and economic development, and found itself increasingly dependent upon the Soviet Union for economic and military aid. Given the realities of this Nasserist legacy, Sadat's policies were therefore influenced by two interrelated concerns - a desire to secure his political position, and a perceived need for social development and economic growth.

In succeeding Nasser, Sadat was immediately faced with the problem of creating a power base through which he could solidify his political position. The greatest immediate threat to Sadat's position came from the left wing of the Free Officer's movement led by Ali Sabri. Consequently, in launching the "Corrective Revolution", as Sadat termed his successful May 1971 strike against Ali Sabri and the left wing, Sadat sought to counter his opponents' established base within the political elite by turning for support to an alliance of those elements within the political establishment and Egyptian society as a whole which
had become increasingly dissatisfied with the more radical aspects of Nasser's socialist experiment.¹⁴

The extent to which this event marks the beginning of a process of de-Nasserization is still open to question.¹⁵ However, it does represent an extension of the process of reassessment undertaken following the 1967 war. First, it marks the assumption of political power by a section of the political establishment drawn from the public and private economic sectors which, while profiting under Nasser's socialist experiment, now found its interests linked to a more open political and economic system.¹⁶ Furthermore, as part of his process of constructing a base of political support, Sadat began to actively cultivate the forces of traditional Islamic sentiment as a counter-balance to the strength of the more secular Egyptian left wing. Thus, the "Corrective Revolution" signified the beginning of an increased reliance by the Sadat regime on Islam and Islamic symbols as sources of political legitimation.¹⁷

This was not necessarily a new phenomenon. The use of Islam as a source of political legitimation was a well-established principle among all Middle Eastern regimes, even those such as Nasser's which sought to emphasize their secular nature.¹⁸ However, by cultivating a reputation as the "Believer President", by allowing religious groups greater freedom of action and expression, and by emphasizing Islamic symbols in the planning, execution, and defense of major political initiatives such as the 1973 war with Israel (referred to as the "Ramadan
War" and code-named "Badr" after the place of Mohammed's victory over the the Meccans), Sadat encouraged the post-1970 religiously charged social climate which gave impetus to the activities of the Islamic activists. The changing political realities initiated in the "Corrective Revolution" therefore not only provided the background to the subsequent policy shifts of the Sadat era, but also gave added strength to the re-emergence of the Islamic groups which eventually were to take the lead in opposing those policies.

Such domestic political realignments had a profound effect upon the changes which were subsequently to occur in other areas of Egyptian society. One area in which drastic changes occurred during the Sadat era was Egypt's foreign political relations. During the 1970s Sadat severed relations with the Soviet Union, initiated a political rapprochement with the United States, and broke with the rest of the Arab world by signing a separate peace treaty with Israel. The adoption of such a course represents a clear break with the direction of Egypt's foreign policy under Nasser. However, Sadat's foreign policy shifts were indicative of the changing social realities he faced. Sadat realized that the majority of the bureaucratic and entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, who constituted his primary political constituency, were convinced that Nasser's socialist economic policies had outlived their usefulness, and that the continued support of this class, and the future of Egypt in general was contingent upon a revitalization of the Egyptian
Such a revitalization, he perceived, depended upon two interrelated considerations. First, any solution to the economically crippling military impasse with Israel was dependent upon the agencies of Israel's prime supporter the United States. Only the Americans had the leverage to force the Israelis into a peace which would allow Egypt to retain its national honour and transfer the capital currently absorbed by the military into areas crucial for economic development. Second, only the United States and its conservative Arab allies, such as Saudi Arabia, possessed the potential investment capital necessary to make the revitalization of Egypt's economy a reality. However, such investment would only be forthcoming if Egypt brought her economic system more into line with traditional capitalist economic practices, and if Egypt realigned her political affiliations away from the Soviet Union and toward the West.

Such drastic changes in Egypt's foreign political orientation produced much social confusion. The adoption of a pro-American political stance, and eventually of peace with Israel, represented an almost complete reversal of the anti-capitalist, radical Arab nationalist ideals of the Nasser period. As a result, mass acceptance of such a profound reorientation was dependent upon the realization of the promised economic renewal. When the economic recovery by-passed the majority of Egyptians, support for Sadat's foreign policy initiatives also faded.
In restructuring Egypt's economic system, Sadat was prompted by the same concerns which led him to reshape Egypt's foreign relations—a need to placate his supporters among the Egyptian political and economic elites, and the necessity of reviving the Egyptian economy. Following the Ramadan War, Sadat was faced with a specific set of economic realities. As has been previously emphasized, the Egyptian economy was in need of a rapid infusion of capital investment. In addition, Sadat's supporters within the Egyptian public and private economic sectors were demanding that Egypt's economic system be made more flexible through the relaxation of socialist restrictions on private ownership and capital accumulation. Finally, the war and the accompanying oil embargo had led to a vast influx of wealth into the conservative oil-producing gulf states, and a United States eager to purchase Egypt's political loyalty through an infusion of investment of capital and foreign aid.

In response to these changing realities Sadat, riding a wave of popularity following the 1973 war, issued the "October Paper" in which the final framework for the opening of the Egyptian economy, a process which has become known as the infitah, was laid out. Briefly, the proposals which came to constitute the basis of the infitah provided for a relaxation of government restrictions on the activities of private sector entrepreneurs; a removal of restrictions on foreign investment; and an end to the public sector monopoly of the banking system; and finally, the creation of extraterritorial trading zones along the South
Korean model in areas such as Cairo, Alexandria, and Port Said which would be exempt from Egyptian taxes but would pay a 1% levy on the value of all goods moving through them. It was hoped that such a relaxation of government economic controls would lead to a successful juxtaposition of Western technology, Arab capital, and Egyptian manpower which would fuel the engine of the stalled Egyptian economy. Unfortunately, the infitah not only failed to provide the promised economic transformation, but its accompanying side effects, some unforeseen, served to deepen Egypt's social and economic problems.

Contrary to the expectations of the authors and supporters of the infitah, the liberalization of investment controls produced little in the way of significant economic development. Most Western investors remained reluctant to put their money into long-term projects due to fears concerning Egypt's political stability and poor economic infrastructure. Instead, most Western private interests demonstrated a marked reluctance to invest capital in Egypt and a preference to sell management, expertise and equipment. By the same token, investment from the Arab Gulf states, while more significant, had little positive economic impact as most of the capital was directed into safe, but largely unproductive areas such as housing, tourism, and luxury car distributors.

This is not to say that economic growth did not occur. The liberalization of the economic system was designed to stimulate private sector growth in the hope that the increasing supply of
private capital would be reinvested in industry and other areas crucial to the long-term growth of the Egyptian economy. It is evident that many of the leading entrepreneurs in both the private and public sectors were able to accumulate vast fortunes during the *infitah*. Consequently, economic middlemen such as importers, government consultants and officials, and private and public sector contractors such as Osman Ahmad Osman, were able to dominate the process of *infitah* and manipulate its direction to suit their own economic interests. However, rather than reinvest this capital in areas conducive to long-term economic growth, these businessmen sought the quick financial returns to be gained by catering to the increasingly insatiable upper-middle class demands for Western consumer durable and luxury goods, and by indulging in real estate speculation and high income housing construction.

Although the *infitah* produced little in the way of long-term economic development, it did have a tremendous impact on Egyptian society. As indicated, the *infitah* did enable a limited group of middle and upper class entrepreneurs and merchants to dramatically improve their economic positions. Such was not the case for the bulk of Egyptians, however, and as a result the *infitah* simply served to widen the economic gulf between the rich and the poor. It has previously been demonstrated that the *infitah*, at least in its early stages had little impact on alleviating the level of urban poverty. Statistics indicate that since the *infitah* and the oil price boom, wages in certain
sectors of the Egyptian economy have increased substantially (see Table 3.1). However, it should be noted that the most significant gains occurred in the fields of construction and agriculture - areas in which workers were traditionally underpaid. In addition, despite the rise in wage levels the average annual income in almost all areas remained below the poverty level which, although fixed at 351 Egyptian pounds per household per year in 1976, was climbing at an alarming rate due to a rapid rate of inflation which since 1973 had been running at over 35% per year despite massive government efforts at price subsidization.

Consequently, it is clear that the standard of living enjoyed by the bulk of Egyptians did not substantially improve over the course of the intifah, in spite of wage increases. The Egyptian government claimed that the increase in the available amount of capital and the relaxation of import restrictions had led to an increase in consumer consumption of 30%. However, it is evident that the bulk of this increase represented increased wealth and spending practices of the elite who in 1975 already accounted for over 50% of all private consumption in Egypt.

For most of the urban population the economic outlook was far from bright. In our discussion of operative forces within Egyptian society prior to 1954, attention was paid to the problem of unemployment amongst the educated classes. Following the Revolution of 1952, the government, needing to expand its corps of bureaucratic managers, took steps to remedy this
problem by assuring university graduates a job in the rapidly expanding public service. However, by the end of the 1960s it had become clear that government education policies had locked the economy into a vicious circle in which promises of economic success had raised university enrollment to such a level that the production of graduates had far outgrown the capacity of the private or public sectors of the economy to provide the sort of jobs that were expected.\textsuperscript{33} As evidence of this problem university enrollment increased 180% during the period from 1969 to 1977.\textsuperscript{34} However, the private sector was able to accommodate only a small fraction of the estimated 100,000 graduates that were being produced annually.\textsuperscript{35}

The bulk of this surplus of graduates could only be absorbed in two ways. Most important was the traditional avenue of employment in the civil service and public sector. Statistics indicate that by 1980 civil service employment had reached 2.1 million, while by 1981 the total number of state employees (civil service and public sector) had climbed to 3.6 million.\textsuperscript{36} However, government employment was unable to fulfill the economic or social status expectations of the bulk of these graduates. By the 1970s government offices, companies and factories were so over-staffed with unneeded clerks and paper pushers that the civil service had become nothing more than a parking lot for the educated.\textsuperscript{37} Such a surplus of labour is reflected in civil service wage levels. In 1975 the bulk of Egyptian civil servants lived at or below the poverty line (see
Table 3.2). Thus, survival for the bulk of middle or low ranking bureaucrats depended largely on moonlighting or the marketing of administrative services. The latter practice is extremely widespread among university professors who, faced with low pay and expanding class sizes, have established a parallel system of private tutorials charging in some instances as much as 1000 Egyptian pounds per student. The necessity of economic survival also led many lower level Egyptian civil servants to imitate the proclivity toward corruption so readily apparent in their supervisors. Sadat's brother-in-law, Mahmud Abu Wafid pointed out in parliament that a civil servant earning 50 Egyptian pounds per month could embezzle 30,000 pounds, serve a maximum of seven years in jail, and wind up with more money than he could earn in a lifetime at his job. Such practices made an already cumbersome bureaucracy even more inefficient.

Given the poor economic prospects inherent in government service many Egyptian graduates began to view emigration, particularly to the oil-rich states of the gulf as an increasingly attractive avenue of employment. Prior to the 1973 rise in oil prices, there were 95,000 Egyptians working in other areas of the Middle East. By 1975, that number had increased dramatically to almost 400,000. For those who were able to take advantage of such opportunities, the economic rewards were staggering. Due to the ready supply of Arab capital and the demand for skilled labour, it was estimated that an Egyptian professor on secondment to Kuwait was able to earn in only four
years twice as much as would be earned in a career of thirty years in Egypt.\textsuperscript{31} Much of this capital was transferred back to Egypt. By 1980 workers' remittances back into Egypt reached almost 2.8 billion Egyptian pounds per year. However, over half of these remittances took the form of duty free imports of consumer goods under the "own exchange" system which allowed importers to acquire foreign exchange without converting it through Egyptian banks.\textsuperscript{42}

Based on this evidence it seems clear that such an increase in capital has drastically altered consumption patterns among Egyptians working abroad. For those Egyptians who already owned standard consumer durables such as refrigerators, washing machines or televisions, the first purchases abroad usually involved luxury items such as cars, colour televisions or air conditioners. Eventually the consumption pattern reached an even higher order involving either a second purchase of those items previously mentioned or more sophisticated items such as video players, stereo systems, expensive rugs, or imported clothes.\textsuperscript{43}

Such conspicuous consumption had dramatic effects on Egyptian society. It is estimated that Egyptian imports of consumer goods, mostly from the West, grew from 36 million Egyptian pounds in 1970 to 1.3 billion pounds in 1980 - a staggering increase of 3,600\% in just one decade.\textsuperscript{44} The evidence of such elite consumption, plus the soaring rate of inflation produced the potential for mass unrest. However, much of this potential discontent was relieved through the government's use
of the subsidy program. The notion of subsidizing the price of certain foodstuffs and staple goods dates back to World War II. The program saw some increases during the Nasser years. However, during the 1970s the level of subsidies reached alarming proportions. By 1980 subsidies accounted for 58.6% of all government expenditures (see Table 3.3). Much of the subsidy bill relates to the supply of wheat and wheat flour. Egypt has not been a significant producer of wheat since the late 18th century. Consequently, by the 1970s, Egypt was dependent upon expensive imports for 70% of its wheat supply, with the result that by 1979 wheat and wheat flour subsidies cost the government 586 million Egyptian pounds.45

Regardless of such statistics, questions still remain concerning the impact of the subsidy program. Statistics provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development indicate that the wealthy have been able to bypass whatever controls are built into the system to such an extent that in 1979 the wealthy elite accounted for 33.6% of the total subsidies distributed, while the lower and lower middle classes received only 18.4% (see Table 3.4). Thus, it is clear that it is the Egyptian middle and upper classes that are reaping the most benefits from the subsidy program. Given that Egypt's burgeoning external debt had by 1980 reached over 11 billion Egyptian pounds, a figure which represented 85% of Egypt's annual GNP, experts called into question the state's continued reliance on a subsidy program which it could not afford and
which seemingly had proved unable to fulfill its intended purpose. In January 1977, under pressure from the IMF to reduce the deficit and bring economic practices into line with Western capitalist models, the Egyptian government undertook measures aimed at reducing the subsidy bill. The products affected by the proposed price increases were largely “luxury” items such as beer, fine flour, unbroken rice, granulated sugar, French bread, and macaroni. Moreover, the government sought to cushion the impact of the increases by raising public sector wages. Nevertheless, the proposed measures prompted mass rioting throughout Cairo which was quelled only by bringing in the army.

It would seem clear, however, that the January 1977 riots had little to do with the proposed price increases themselves. The increases would indeed have added an estimated 2 Egyptian pounds to a family’s monthly budget. However, those goods affected were largely luxury items which the poor seldom purchased. Thus, those most affected by price increases were not the desperately poor, but the marginal members of the lower middle class living on or just above the poverty line who could, on occasion, afford certain “luxury” goods. Furthermore, the riots reflected a general dissatisfaction with the economic realities of infitaḥ and the increasing disparity between the rich and the poor. The most popular slogans used during these riots were those decrying the lifestyle of the elite and Sadat in particular. Most prominent among these slogans was “Sadat, oh
Sadat, you dress in the latest fashion while we're sleeping twelve to a room". In addition, the focus of violence during the rioting was the casinos, night clubs and hotels which represented the increasing Westernization and consumerism of the new rich. Such evidence suggests that the focus of the unrest was not the subsidy increases themselves, but growing inequities which accompanied the infitah.

Such unrest as surfaced in 1977 eventually forced Sadat to take a harder line with critics of his regime. As part of his liberalization of the political and economic systems Sadat had promised an end to Nasser style control of the opposition. However, although early in his presidency Sadat emptied the jails of those who had opposed Nasser, he remained in control of the powerful state security apparatus which Nasser had created. Consequently, Sadat's promised political liberalization never materialized. The President remained the source of all state policies, and by 1980 the prisons were again full with opponents of the regime.

It is clear from the preceeding discussion that changes introduced during the Sadat regime did have a significant impact on Egyptian social, political and economic realities. Scholars such as Hamied Ansari have suggested that what occurred under Sadat was the retraditionalization of Egyptian society. They argue that the Sadat era has simply marked a return to the pre-revolutionary status quo. Such an analysis, as tempting as it might be, is too simplistic. Exact historical conditions can
not be reproduced, and thus a return to previous historical realities is impossible. Certainly, under Sadat there was a movement away from some of the Nasserist socialist experiments of the 1960s. However, the fact that the Sadat government could not completely reject its Nasserist legacy is clear in that the education and subsidy programs were retained intact and the public sector, despite a certain amount of de-emphasis, was not dismantled. Undoubtedly, the economic liberalization of the Sadat era did allow some of the pre-revolutionary elite to re-emerge, but the real beneficiaries of the infitah were the same middle class bureaucrats and entrepreneurs who had been the architects of the Nasser revolution. Thus, the Sadat regime can be said to have represented not the return of the pre-revolutionary elite, but the continued consolidation of the power of those elements which had dominated Nasser's socialist transformation.

Like his predecessor, Sadat sought to respond to changing historical conditions in a pragmatic manner which reflected his own personal political concerns, as well as his perception of Egypt's national interest. Had the radical policy shifts introduced by Sadat provided effective relief from some of the political, social, and economic problems affecting Egyptian society they may have served to help reintegrate some of the marginalized members of Egypt's middle classes into the mainstream of Egyptian society. However, the implementation of these policies simply helped to accelerate the process of social
change by engendering political isolation from the rest of the Arab world, rampant consumerism, widespread corruption and increased Westernization. Such changes may have been more easily accepted if in the process they led to an increased political and economic stability and opportunity. However, for a growing section of the Egyptian middle class this was not the case.

In the final analysis the Sadat regime, like its Nasserist and liberal-democratic predecessors, failed to develop an acceptable method of reconciling traditional Egyptian society with its Islamic values and outlooks with Western influenced conceptions of development. The ideology of development adopted by all three regimes necessarily reflected the values of the Westernized elite which dominated the political system. Consequently, the bulk of the population, isolated from the decision making processes, remained caught between a traditional Islamic orientation that seemed to be increasingly called into question, and a Western conception of development which promised economic and social justice. As it became evident that Western-oriented programs of development, whether capitalist or socialist in nature, were unable to produce the kind of social transformation that they promised, the masses increasingly turned to the alternative social vision offered by the Islamic activist groups.

Such a process of changing social, political and economic realities also had a profound effect on the re-emergent Islamic activist groups. Like the government, the members of such groups
found themselves forced to respond to new historical conditions. Thus, although like their pre-revolutionary predecessors in the Muslim Brotherhood they found themselves increasingly marginalized in the face of changing government policies, the post-1970 Islamic activists constituted a significantly different phenomenon which reflected the changing social, political, and economic realities in which they lived.
TABLE 3.1
Average wages per worker, 1974-1978 (in Egyptian pounds)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Mining/Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>233.2</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>295.0</td>
<td>297.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>376.2</td>
<td>106.5</td>
<td>314.8</td>
<td>292.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>378.7</td>
<td>107.0</td>
<td>327.1</td>
<td>305.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>328.3</td>
<td>107.6</td>
<td>340.0</td>
<td>320.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>354.7</td>
<td>108.0</td>
<td>353.4</td>
<td>334.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increase
74-78 52.1%  52.5%  19.8%  12.7%

Source: Saad Eddin Ibrahim, The New Arab Social Order, p. 75.

TABLE 3.2
Civil Service wage levels, May 1975 (in Egyptian pounds)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civil-Service Level</th>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Monthly Salary</th>
<th>Yearly Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>840,000</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>650,000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>350,000</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>210,000</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 3.3

*Subsidies as a Proportion of Total Public Current Expenditures, 1960-1980 (Million Egyptian Pounds, Current)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Current Expenditure (1)</th>
<th>Subsidies (2)</th>
<th>(2)/(1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>340.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964-65</td>
<td>611.6</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968-69</td>
<td>561.9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>661.4</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>839.7</td>
<td>355.5</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>1,289.6</td>
<td>433.5</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>1,664.0</td>
<td>710.0</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2,182.0</td>
<td>1,279.0</td>
<td>58.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Expenditure Class (E./year)</th>
<th>Urban Population Distribution</th>
<th>Subsidies as a percent of expenditures</th>
<th>Distribution as a percent of subsidy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-778</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>28.5 23.4 51.9</td>
<td>21.7 15.5 18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>779-1113</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>25.5 24.0 49.5</td>
<td>22.1 18.1 19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1114-1783</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>20.1 21.6 41.7</td>
<td>29.2 27.1 28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1783+</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>12.5 20.8 33.3</td>
<td>27.1 39.3 33.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES


5. Ibid., p. 309.

6. Ibid., pp. 329-331.


9. Ibid., p. 72.

10. Ibid., pp. 119-121.


15. While it is clear that the "Corrective Revolution" and other subsequent policies initiated by Sadat represent a movement away from the socialist experiments of the Nasser regime, such developments do not represent a break with or rejection of the policies of Nasser but the continuation of a process of political and economic restructuring begun by Nasser.


23. For a more complete discussion of the background to the infitah, see Waterbury, The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat, pp. 123-157.

24. Ibid., pp. 131-133.


28. Ibid.


33. Mahmoud Abdel-Fadil, "Educational Expansion and Income

34. Waterbury, The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat, p. 222.


37. Ibid., pp. 241-242.

38. Ibid., pp. 234-241.

39. Ibid., p. 348.


41. Ibid., p. 69.

42. Waterbury suggests that the actual amounts of goods entering Egypt through the own exchange figures may be even higher than estimated since government figures only include those goods which must be declared. Waterbury, The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat, pp. 176-178.

43. This pattern of consumption is borne out in studies of Egyptian schoolteachers on secondment to Saudi Arabia which indicate that during four years of work, 51% of earnings were spent on consumer goods in Saudi Arabia, with 43% being either saved or remitted. In addition, after the four years, 64% of the accumulated savings were spent on consumer items with only 36% allocated as savings or investment. Ibrahim, The New Arab Social Order, pp. 87-88.

44. Ibid., p. 89.


46. Ibid., p. 30.

47. Ibid., pp. 229-230.


CHAPTER IV

ISLAMIC ACTIVISM IN EGYPT, 1970-1985

In discussing Islamic activism during the pre-revolutionary period we were able to focus almost exclusively on the Muslim Brotherhood as a result of the dominant position enjoyed by that group. The post-1970 period, however, requires a more varied approach. As the historical conditions under which the Islamic militants operated evolved, the process of fragmentation which had begun to affect the Brotherhood following the death of al-Banna was accelerated. Thus, in the course of the 1970s an increasing variety of divergent groups emerged which, although sharing a common Islamic political orientation, differed significantly in terms of ideology, methodology, and structure.

In tracing this process of fragmentation and its relation to social change in general, we must briefly step out of the confines of the parallel time frames which in part form the methodological basis of this study and examine certain aspects of the evolution of Islamic activist groups during the Nasserist repression. The violent suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood by Nasser's security apparatus forced Brotherhood members to reexamine their relationship to the state in light of the latter's increasing reliance on torture and other methods of violence as a means of state control. The leading figure of this reexamination was the Brotherhood ideologist Sayyid Qutb. His prison writings, particularly Ma'alim fi'l-Tariq (Signposts
Along the Road, published in 1964, had a profound influence on the younger generation of Islamic activists and eventually provided the ideological foundation for the activities of most of the radical Islamic splinter groups which were to emerge after 1970.

In reacting against the Nasserist persecution, Qutb argued that Nasser's regime, by its very actions, showed itself to be in opposition to the true tenets of Islam. Borrowing the concept of *al-hakimiyya*, or sovereignty, from the Pakistani scholar al-Mawdudi, Qutb wrote:

The Kingdom of God on earth does not consist of sovereignty on earth by men considered as superiors, men of religion, like at the time of the power of the church, nor men of men who speak in the name of God, as in the theocracy. No, the Kingdom of God is the Sacred Law.... This society did not exist before man decided to serve God and God alone in his faith and his view of the world. This community effectively devotes itself to the sincere service of God. They purify their conscience of the belief in something other than God. They purify their worship of all other laws than that of God.\(^2\)

Qutb, however, took this concept a step further than al-Mawdudi and argued that all those societies which ignored the sovereignty of God either by remaining anti-Islamic or claiming to be Muslim while continuing to confer sovereignty on people or institutions rather than God, are actually in a state of *jahiliyya*, or pre-Islamic ignorance.\(^3\) Such an analysis represents a distinct break with the thought of al-Banna and the pre-1954 Brotherhood. Although certainly critical of the Egyptian government, al-Banna never went so far as to suggest that the society in which he lived was non-Islamic. In presenting such an
argument Qutb shifted the focus of struggle from an external to an internal threat and thereby seemed to sanction the use of violence as part of the *jihad* incumbent on those members of this Islamic vanguard who sought to return society to the pure doctrine of Islam.

Consistent with traditional Brotherhood formulation, Qutb saw this *jihad* in two stages. The first stage was the spiritual maturation of the Islamist vanguard, and the second was the active physical conflict with the *jahiliyya*. Whether, as part of this second stage, Qutb sanctioned the use of violence to overthrow the *jahili* political system remains unclear. Certainly it is evident that Qutb, in a departure from the teachings of al-Banna, and more specifically al-Hudaybi, was convinced of the obligation to *jihad* in offensive rather than defensive terms. That is, for Qutb *jihad* involved not merely the defense of Islam, but the active struggle to replace the *jahili* society with one based on the *hakimiyya* or sovereignty of God. Such a struggle clearly involved more than mere preaching and discourse. However, both Olivier Carré and Gilles Kepel have suggested that in presenting *jihad* as an active struggle against the *jahili*, Qutb did not directly argue in favour of the excommunication of members of the *jahiliyya* as non-Muslims, nor sanction the use of violence or political terrorism. It is true that Qutb's execution in 1965 prevented him from clarifying his views on such questions. However, if Qutb himself did not specifically make such assertions, he did present an analysis of
contemporary Muslim society which, if followed to its logical conclusion, would justify such actions.

This was clearly the manner in which Qutb's writings were interpreted by the established leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood. In reaction to the growing popularity of Qutb's writings among the younger members of the Brotherhood suffering in Nasser's prisons, al-Hudaybi, who still occupied the position of Supreme Guide, in 1969 issued a book entitled *Preachers, Not Judges* in which he criticized the increasingly radical interpretations of Qutb's theories as heretical and reaffirmed traditional Brotherhood views on such issues as *jihad* and the nature of Muslim society. It is the internal dynamic established in this conflict that is crucial to our understanding of the development of Egyptian Islamic activist groups after 1970. In the face of the changing political, social and economic realities of the Sadat era, Qutb's radical analysis of contemporary Muslim society proved all the more attractive to a growing number of young, alienated activists. It is out of this schism between the Qutbists and the more moderate Brotherhood leadership that the radical splinter groups which confronted the Egyptian government throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s emerged.

As previously noted, Sadat began in 1971 to release the imprisoned Muslim Brothers as part of his attempt to cultivate a base of mass support in his battle with the Nasserist left-wing. As part of this process, the government, while refusing to grant
the Brotherhood legal status, did encourage its reformation. Unfortunately, some observers have tended to place all Egyptian Islamic activists under the banner of this reconstituted Brotherhood, which they suggest represented the reemergence of the predominant organization established by al-Banna. Such an analysis is far too simplistic in that it ignores the fragmentation inspired by Qutb's theories during the 1960s. Moreover, an in-depth examination of the post-1970 organization which scholars have termed the neo-Muslim Brotherhood indicates that it differed substantially from its pre-1954 predecessor.

When the magazine al-Dawa, the recognized voice of the reformed Brotherhood, was allowed to resume legal publication in 1976, it emphasized its ties to the Brotherhood of al-Banna, proclaiming itself "the voice of the victims of torture" and "the whip that lashed the proud and the tyrants." Certainly in terms of its leadership the neo-Brotherhood was justified in its claims. Hasan al-Hudaybi continued to occupy the position of Supreme Guide until his death in 1973 at which time he was succeeded as the organization's chief spokesman by Umar al-Talmasani, a confidant of both al-Banna and al-Hudaybi, and an important figure in the pre-1954 movement. Thus, the neo-Brotherhood did retain the "old guard" leadership of the original Muslim Brotherhood.

As the party of the established leadership, the neo-Brotherhood declared that it represented the continuation of the policies of the two Hasans (al-Banna and al-Hudaybi).
Consistent with their perception of the policies established by the two leaders, and in reaction to the years of suffering under Nasser, the neo-Brotherhood rejected policies of confrontation and stressed the need to Islamicize Egyptian society by the use of existing political structures. Consequently, they centered their activism on demands for a more democratic political system and their right to form a legal, Islamic-based political party. The fulfillment of such a desire was, however, clearly dependent on the continuation of good relations between the Brotherhood and the regime. Thus, for most of the 1970s, the neo-Brotherhood was muted in its criticisms of the Sadat regime and remained a useful government ally against both the extreme left and the extreme right. An examination of articles in al-Dawa indicates that most neo-Brotherhood criticisms were directed at four main enemies: Jews (especially Zionists); "the Crusade" - Western and Christian attempts to destroy Islam; Communism; and secularism. Such an outlook demonstrates a concern with primarily external enemies and a reluctance to criticize Egyptian domestic affairs. This does not mean that the neo-Brotherhood refrained from all criticism of Sadat's policies. Indeed there is ample evidence that the neo-Brotherhood did continue to express concern over internal issues such as the continued reliance on Western political and legal forms, the continued lack of opportunity afforded opposition groups and the uneven nature of economic development and distribution. However, it does indicate that such criticisms were couched in terms calculated to avoid government
reaction. Thus, the early years of the Sadat regime could be described as a period of peaceful coexistence between the neo-Brotherhood and the government.

This reticence on the part of the neo-Brotherhood was certainly related to the changes in the Egyptian domestic political alliance initiated by Sadat, particularly his increased use of Islam as an instrument of legitimacy. However, it was also a reflection of the changing nature of both the neo-Brotherhood leadership itself and the constituency to which it appealed. In the face of the Nasserist persecution many Muslim Brothers, particularly those members of the society's leadership who were not arrested, fled to Saudi Arabia. When the Brotherhood was reformed in the early 1970s, a number of those Brothers returned to occupy important positions in the new organization, bringing with them their Saudi ties. Moreover, it appears that a number of these Brothers had been able to amass significant fortunes. A large percentage of the private advertising appearing in al-Dawa was bought by just three advertisers: al-Sharif plastics, the Massara real-estate company, and Modern Motors, importers of Japanese automobiles. All three of these companies were controlled by Brothers who had made their fortunes in Saudi Arabia after fleeing Nasser's Egypt. Such affiliations tended to induce the neo-Brotherhood to adopt a more conservative, pro-Saudi orientation which included strong support for Sadat until his signing of the peace treaty with Israel.
Furthermore, it is evident that the neo-Brotherhood tended to be dominated by and thus sympathetic to those elements of Egyptian society which had profited from the *infitah*. In examining al-Dawa Kepel notes that of 180 pages of colour advertising, 49 were bought by real estate promoters and entrepreneurs, 52 by chemical and plastics companies, 20 by automobile importers, 12 by "Islamic" banks and investment companies, and 45 by food companies. Indeed, it is even suggested that Osman Ahmad Osman, the symbol of the *infitah*, had strong ties to the neo-Brotherhood and provided significant funding.

Such evidence would tend to suggest that the neo-Brotherhood drew its primary support from a different strata of society than its pre-1954 predecessor. Rather than appealing to those classes which had been alienated from Egyptian society, the neo-Brotherhood drew its support from members of the middle and upper-middle professional classes who were not only well established in Egyptian society, but who had profited under Sadat's political and economic restructuring. So effective was this appeal that by 1987 observers were commenting on the vast wealth of the neo-Brotherhood which was used to bankroll various political alliances. Thus, the neo-Brotherhood, while claiming to represent a direct continuation of the ideals of its predecessor, actually moved away from many of the policies which characterized the pre-1954 Brotherhood. As the political, social and economic realities of Egyptian society changed, the leaders
of the neo-Brotherhood found themselves becoming a part of the status quo. No longer wishing to radically transform Egyptian society, they simply advocated the Islamicization of Egyptian social relations. Gone were the experiments in economic redistribution and social equalization which characterized the original Brotherhood. In accordance with their changed economic positions the leadership of the neo-Brotherhood moved almost completely into the capitalist camp defending the rationale behind the *infitah*, while criticizing the corruption and inequity which characterized its implementation. 17 Not until the late 1970s, in the aftermath of the Camp David agreements and the growing isolation of Egypt from the rest of the Arab world did the neo-Brotherhood begin to criticize government policy in any significant manner.

Such an orientation served to move the neo-Brotherhood further away from the alienated urban classes which had flocked to the Brotherhood of al-Banna. Although an increasing number of urban Egyptians saw themselves being marginalized by government policy which promised increased prosperity for all and yet benefitted only the wealthy, the neo-Brotherhood had little positive to offer them. However, into this gap moved a number of groups who responded to the same changing conditions that moved the neo-Brotherhood to seek an accommodation with the political, social and economic status quo in a manner which more accurately reflected the desperation of those elements in Egyptian society marginalized by Sadat's policies. Armed with Sayyid Qutb's
radical critique of contemporary Muslim society these groups rejected the moderation exhibited by the neo-Brotherhood as a policy of compromise borne out of political opportunism. Instead, they maintained a Qutb-inspired rejectionist view of contemporary Egyptian society and continued to call for an aggressive *jihad* against the Sadat government, the perceived representatives of the forces of the *jahiliyya*.

The majority of these groups were small in numbers and limited in their activities and impact. There were, however, three organizations whose involvement in violent confrontations with the Sadat government set them apart in the eyes of most observers from the rest of the Qutb-inspired splinter groups. Since a significant body of information is available concerning these three groups and their activities, the bulk of our attention will be focussed on these organizations.

In April 1974 the members of a militant Islamic group known as the "Islamic Liberation Organization" succeeded in taking over the Technical Military Academy in Cairo as part of a larger and eventually unsuccessful attempt to stage a coup d'etat against the Sadat government. Three years later in July 1977, a second militant organization, "The Society of Muslims", a group more commonly known by the media-derived appellation "al-Takfir w'al-Hijra" ("Repentance and Holy Flight"), was subjected to a violent government crackdown following its kidnapping and execution of former Egyptian Minister of Religious Endowments, Muhammed al-Dhahabi. Finally, on the sixth of October 1981,
members of a third activist group known as "al-Jihad" assassinated President Anwar Sadat during a military parade celebrating the eighth anniversary of the October 1973 war against Israel.

Because these groups demonstrated certain similarities in background and ideology some scholars, following the popular media, have tended to analyze them as part of a single phenomenon. Consequently Carré and Michaud have sought to demonstrate that the links between "Islamic Liberation" and the "Society of Muslims" were so strong that the latter was merely a continuation of the former under a different name. Furthermore, following the assassination of Sadat, press reports continued to mistakenly identify those responsible as members of "al-Takfir w'al-Hijra". Such an analysis only serves to blur important distinctions between the various Islamic groups by presenting them as a part of a more or less monolithic whole.

Clearly, all three groups did demonstrate a strong connection with the Brotherhood of al-Banna. Documentary evidence suggests that many group members were either young members of the Brotherhood who were imprisoned under Nasser, or in some cases sons of older Brotherhood members who had suffered a similar fate. Indeed it is apparent that the leaders of all three groups had at one time enjoyed close connections with the Brotherhood. Therefore, it is not surprising that each group also shared the same basic ideological framework outlined in our examination of the early Brotherhood which stressed contemporary
Egyptian society’s deviation from the true tenets of Islam and the need to recreate an "Islamic order" based on justice, morality, and equality through the reimposition of the Shari‘ah. Like the Brotherhood of al-Banna, these groups offered a political and economic vision of a new society which, although expressed in religious terms, seemed akin to a sort of moderate socialism.2

A certain amount of statistical information concerning the membership of these groups is available. However, any conclusions based on such evidence must inevitably be qualified. This is particularly true in the case of Islamic Liberation and the Society of Muslims where much of the information is based on an extremely limited study undertaken by Saad Eddin Ibrahim. Nevertheless, such evidence does provide us with an insight into the background of at least some of the core members of these groups and does allow us to make a qualified comparison of the membership structures of all three groups.

Again the evidence indicates that in general terms these groups drew their support from the same sectors of Egyptian society as the pre-1954 Brotherhood. It was previously suggested that much of the Brotherhood’s increasing tendency toward violent confrontation in the years immediately prior to the Society’s dissolution in 1954 was the result of the growing strength of the organization’s younger membership drawn primarily from Egypt’s university campuses. It could be argued that the three groups in question represent a continuation of
this process. The median age for arrested members of "Islamic Liberation" and the "Society of Muslims" was 22 and 24 years respectively. Likewise the figures for al-Jihad listed in Table 4.1 indicate a similar pattern. In addition, all three groups appear to have drawn much of their membership from Egypt's universities (see Tables 4.2 and 4.3).

Such a pattern indicates that the members of these groups were not only young, but also strongly upwardly mobile. Only seven of the surveyed Islamic Liberation and Society of Muslim defendants had university educated fathers. Yet Table 4.4 shows that not only were a majority of group members university students, but that they were drawn largely from the most demanding and prestigious faculties including engineering, medicine, and pharmacy. In addition, occupational statistics in Table 4.2 indicate that even non-student defendants from these two groups tended to be university graduates employed as white-collar professionals. Thus, the members of Islamic Liberation and the Society of Muslims were not the disaffected unemployed young rabble of the Egyptian streets, but highly upwardly mobile members of Egypt's intellectual and professional elite.

Statistics concerning the members of al-Jihad require a more complex analysis. Information pertaining to the educational background of arrested members of this group suggests that al-Jihad was not as student-dominated as the previous two groups (see Table 4.3). Yet even in al-Jihad, students comprised almost
44% of arrested members and of this figure 31-35% were drawn from the faculties of engineering or medicine. Consequently, while the incidence of high educational achievement noted among members of Islamic Liberation and the Society of Muslims is not as overwhelming in the case of al-Jihad members, the tendency is still evident. Likewise, the occupational breakdown of al-Jihad defendants listed in Table 4-3 indicates that although the professional classes were still well represented among working members of al-Jihad, they did not register the same predominance which they enjoyed in the previous two groups.

Kepel argues that such figures suggest that al-Jihad represented a new stage in the growth of the Islamic activist movement in that, unlike the earlier groups, al-Jihad was able to break out of the confines of the university campus and extend its appeal to a wider cross-section of the Egyptian populace. However, such an assertion remains open to question. The membership sampling available for al-Jihad is much larger than that available for other activist groups. Therefore, the apparently greater diversity of social background observed in al-Jihad may simply be the result of the larger membership pool being examined. That is, the assumed student domination of groups such as Islamic Liberation and the Society of Muslims may be more a reflection of the limited activist core arrested following confrontation with government forces, than of such groups as a whole. Furthermore, since there does appear to have been considerable transfer of membership between the various
groups as a result of the ongoing dissolution of organizations under government pressure; the increased social diversity attributed to al-Jihad may also have resulted from the movement of former student members of now dissolved groups into the work force. Consequently, whether the increased diversity of background observed in al-Jihad members indicates a broadening of the appeal of Islamic activist groups remains unclear.

In terms of the regional background of group members, some variation is evident between the three groups. Ibrahim notes that within Islamic Liberation and the Society of Muslims the regional background of members was related to the locality in which each group operated. Islamic Liberation was based primarily in Cairo and Alexandria and therefore the majority of group members were from Cairo, Alexandria and the Delta. The Society of Muslims, on the other hand, was originally based in Asyut and consequently derived much of its membership from Upper Egypt. However, Ibrahim also notes that two-thirds of those interviewed from both groups were originally born in small towns or villages and were thus recent arrivals in urban areas such as Cairo, Alexandria or Asyut.

The regional background of al-Jihad members does not present such a neat pattern, largely because al-Jihad possessed a more complex organizational structure than the previous two groups. It is evident that rather than working through a unified structure, al-Jihad was an amalgamation of a number of loosely connected sub-groups; the two most important being based in
Cairo and Asyut. Consequently, the membership of al-Jihad, as demonstrated by Table 4.5 was distributed between Greater Cairo and the Delta, and Upper Egypt. As was the case in our examination of Islamic Liberation and the Society of Muslims, it appears that the majority of al-Jihad members were fairly recent arrivals to the urban areas.

Once in the city, however, these recent urban arrivals, whether they were students or graduated professionals working in the government service for appallingly poor wages, found themselves trapped in marginal economic conditions. As a result of Egyptian landlords' practice of charging outrageous sums as "key-money" for rental apartments, the members of the Society of Muslims were forced to occupy a series of startlingly run-down furnished flats which normally functioned as cheap temporary accommodation for immigrants, prostitutes, and other people living on the margins of Egyptian society. This analysis is confirmed by an examination of al-Jihad members by the area in which they lived. The map included at the end of this chapter indicates that a majority of al-Jihad defendants who lived in Cairo came from marginal outlying areas such as Haram, Bulak al Dakrur, or Ayn Shams in which housing conditions were notoriously poor. In such conditions it is understandable that inhabitants would be drawn to the more radical Qutbist-inspired groups which offered a new vision of a reformed Islamic society in which justice reigned supreme.
What does appear to be evident from the preceding membership profiles is that although all three groups appealed to roughly the same marginalized sectors of Egyptian society as the Brotherhood of al-Banna, they represented a younger, more highly educated, more deeply frustrated, and therefore more politically volatile class. Drawn to higher educational achievement by the promise of increased social and economic status, these individuals tended to demonstrate a pronounced desire for upward mobility. Indeed, in terms of education and profession it would be assumed that it should have been those members of the middle class who stood to benefit from the economic opportunities provided by the *infītah*. However, in the late 1960s and early 1970s economic prospects for much of Egypt's middle class, particularly those employed in the public sector began to shrink. As a result many young members of the middle class found themselves trapped in conditions worse than those endured by their parents. In addition they found themselves trying to cope with such circumstances in an unfamiliar urban environment which failed to provide them with the traditional networks of support which they had previously enjoyed in the rural areas. Consequently, although such individuals, like those drawn to the original Muslim Brotherhood, suffered from political, social and economic marginalization, the increased expectations which accompanied their higher educational achievements served to deepen their frustration with and alienation from contemporary Egyptian social realities. As a result, they were attracted, not to the moderate oppositional stance of the neo-Brotherhood, but
to the increasingly radical rejectionist movements emerging out of the Qutbist schism.

Just as our analysis of membership patterns indicated that Islamic Liberation, the Society of Muslims and Islamic Jihad all drew their membership from the same marginalized sectors of Egyptian society, it is evident that these groups clearly employed a similar basic ideology. All three groups maintained al-Banna's vision of a purified Islamic society based on a reimposed Shari'ah. In addition they all adopted a rejectionist critique of contemporary Egyptian society which was based primarily on the theories of Sayyid Qutb. However, although these groups shared a common ideological heritage and approach, they exhibited such fundamental differences in terms of their strategic implementation of that ideology that rather than being part of a monolithic whole they became ideological rivals locked in a contest over a common membership pool.

The members of Islamic Liberation adopted Qutb's rejectionist critique of Egyptian society and applied it to the Sadat regime which they labelled *jahili* in nature. However, they made a crucial distinction between the government and the Egyptian people as a whole, arguing that the majority of Egyptians remained a basically religious people who had been debased by an ungodly regime. Therefore, the leaders of Islamic Liberation stressed the necessity of immediate direct action against the government itself in the belief that the masses, being true Muslims, would rise in support of a *shari'ah*-based
revolution once freed from the domination of a corrupt and un-Islamic government. 31

In contrast to Islamic Liberation, the Society of Muslims made no distinctions between the government and the people and accordingly applied Qutb's concept of jahiliyya to Egyptian society as a whole. As a result, rather than advocating armed confrontation with the government the Society of Muslims stressed the necessity of an individual regeneration which could only be accomplished through a complete withdrawal from the impure society and the creation of a new pure Islamic community. It was believed that over time the moral virtues of this ideal community would draw to it an increasing number of adherents until finally, representing the majority of Egyptians, the Society of Muslims could overthrow the jahiliyya and implement a social system in accordance with the true tenets of Islam. 32

This emphasis on hijra or "retreat" so dominated the thinking of Shukry Mustapha and the members of the Society of Muslims, that they developed an increasingly insular communal society which sought to sever all connections with the corrupt jahiliyya society even extending to a refusal to participate in the Friday public prayers or frequent the public mosques on the grounds that participation in such activities would have constituted an admission that the society in which they lived was Islamic. 33

Thus, although the Society of Muslims and Islamic Liberation were inspired by the same Qutbist critique of Egyptian society, they differed in terms of their reaction to the social realities
which confronted them. Unlike Islamic Liberation, the members of the Society of Muslims sought to avoid confrontation with the state until such time as they possessed the spiritual, numerical, and material strength to overwhelm the forces of the *jahiliyya*. When in July 1977 a confrontation with the state did occur, evidence suggests that it was forced upon the group by the repressive actions of the state in arresting fourteen members of the movement after an episode of infighting among dissident members of a number of Islamic activist groups.

Whether such a clash with the government was inevitable is difficult to determine. However, given the ideological and strategic tendencies of the Society of Muslims it is logical to assume that the group would have clung to its strategy of withdrawal rather than risking a confrontation with the state by kidnapping the Minister of Waqfs.

This relationship between ideology and changing social realities becomes even more apparent in an examination of the doctrine espoused by the members of al-Jihad. In many ways the ideological formulations of the al-Jihad leadership, and especially the group's chief spokesman Muhammed Abd al-Salam Faraj, represent an attempt to come to terms with the failure of the Egyptian Islamic movement of the 1970s to mount an effective challenge to the Sadat regime. In his pamphlet *Al-Faridah al Gha'ibah* ("The Hidden Imperative"), a work which is commonly viewed as the leading statement of al-Jihad ideology, Faraj presents a critical analysis of the activist movement and calls
for a re-emphasis of the doctrine of *jihad* as a duty incumbent on all Muslims. On the surface, therefore, al-Jihad ideology did resemble that of Islamic Liberation in its insistence upon the necessity of armed struggle against the unjust rulers of the jahiliyya. In the *al-Faridah*, Faraj explicitly rejected the withdrawal-based approach of the Society of Muslims. He argued:

There are, however, those who say that they will emigrate to the desert and then come back, and have a confrontation with the Pharoah, confrontation with the Pharoah as Moses did, and the God will make the ground swallow the Pharoah up, together with his army.... All these strange ideas only result from having forsaken the only true religiously allowed road towards establishing an Islamic state."36

In Faraj's view, therefore, the strategy of withdrawal advocated by the Society of Muslims simply represented a reluctance to confront the forces of the jahiliyya, and rejection of the duty of *jihad*.

At a deeper level, the ideological formulations contained in *al-Faridah* represented an increasing radicalization of Qutbist doctrine. Unlike the leaders of Islamic Liberation, Faraj placed no faith in the Egyptian masses. Instead, he argued that those Muslims who rejected the call to *jihad* must themselves be rejected as unfit to participate in the creation of the Islamic state.37 Although *al-Faridah* contained no explicit statements concerning the relationship to Islam itself of those who reject the call to *jihad*, it is implied that those who neglected this duty were regarded as having forsaken the true path of Islam. Such a notion of exclusivity was also present in the thought of the Society of Muslims. However, the al-Jihad insistence on
confrontation rather than withdrawal raised the prospect of this exclusivity being enforced by violence. In combining the elevation of *jihad* to an individual religious duty with a rejection of all those members of Egyptian society who failed to conform to such a standard, Faraj set the stage for a final transformation of the idea of *jihad* from Qutb's notion of *qital* (fighting or struggle) to a *jihad* better defined as an internal Muslim War. When this definition was taken to an individual level the result was an implied justification of the idea of selective murder which found its greatest expression in the assassination of Anwar Sadat.\(^{38}\)

The preceding examination of ideology demonstrates that the Qutbist splinter groups, while sharing certain basic characteristics, were far from a monolithic entity. Within a roughly similar organizational and ideological framework each group fashioned an individual response which was uniquely tailored to the specific social realities which confronted them. Each of these responses represented a continued attempt to interpret those changing realities within an Islamic framework. It is true that they generally lacked the practical extensions which characterized the activities of the pre-1954 Brotherhood. However, this fact in itself is reflective of the changed political, social and economic situation which the post-1970 Islamic activist groups faced. Certainly the limited size of these groups and the increased repressive power of the state prevented the Qutbist organizations from embarking on the kind
of practical programs initiated by the al-Banna Brotherhood. Beyond such considerations, however, the failures of Nasser's socialist experiment and the continued tendency of both the Nasser and Sadat regimes to resort to tactics of repression when dealing with Islamic activist groups seemed to demonstrate the inefficacy of implementing concrete social programs. By the 1970s it had become increasingly clear to the Qutbist-inspired groups that true reform would only come with the destruction of the unjust system. Thus, although these groups presented a vision of an ideal purified Islamic state in which God's justice would reign, it was a vision dependent upon the destruction rather than the reform of the existing system.

Such a vision increasingly appealed to those members of Egypt's educated youth who found themselves trapped in a nebulous void between a traditional world to which they could never comfortably return, and a Western-style, urbanized society which they found morally confusing and lacking in political, social and economic opportunity. To a young Egyptian caught in such a situation, the Islamic activist groups offered, not only an explanation of and solution to these troubling realities which was couched in familiar Islamic terms, but also a supportive atmosphere in which they could find relief from the alienation and isolation they experienced in real life.

It is clear that other secular and Islamic outlets of protest continued to exist. In recent years Sadat's successor Hosni Mubarak has made some steps toward opening up the Egyptian
political system. Secular opposition parties such as the neo-Wafd have been allowed to reenter the political arena. Even the neo-Brotherhood, although still legally prohibited from participating in the political system, have emerged as an important political force. By manipulating a political alliance with the Socialist Labour and Social Liberal parties the neo-Brotherhood emerged from the most recent Egyptian elections as the leading opposition group with a total of 56 seats.39 However, despite the presence of such channels of political opposition the radical Islamic activist groups continue to flourish. In September 1982, the Mubarak government claimed to have quashed an attempt to revive al-Jihad by arresting approximately 200 militants and seizing weapons and a variety of explosives.40 As recently as April 1988 the government charged 33 militants belonging to an al-Jihad offshoot known as "Salvation from Hellfire" with plotting to overthrow the regime and with the attempted murder of two former interior ministers and a journalist.41 Such evidence suggests that until the Mubarak government finds some method of drawing the marginalized sectors of the Egyptian middle class back into the mainstream of society, groups offering a radical Islamic critique of the present and vision of the future will remain popular.
### TABLE 4.1

**Distribution by Age of al-Jihad Defendants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 20</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>20.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 35</td>
<td>3.94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kepel, p. 221.

### Table 4.2

**Occupational Distribution of Arrested Islamic Liberation and Society of Muslims Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Students</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agronomists</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus Conductor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 34


### TABLE 4.3

**Distribution of al-Jihad Defendants by Occupation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopkeepers</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Officials</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police and Military</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hamied Ansari, "The Egyptian Militants in Islamic Politics", p. 133.
### TABLE 4.4

*Distribution by Faculty of Students Arrested as Members of Islamic Liberation and the Society of Muslims*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Science</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Military Science</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### TABLE 4.5

*Distribution of al-Jihad Defendants by Governate*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gharbiyya</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fayum</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaliubiyya</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Beni Suef</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isma'iliyya</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Minya</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharqiyya</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Asyut</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daqahliyya</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sohag</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buhayra</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Qena</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairo and Giza</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>Aswan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New Valley</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kepel, p. 219.
Source: Kepel, p.222.
NOTES

1. For a graphic examination of the Nasserist repression of Brotherhood members see Olivier Carré Michaud, Les Freres Musulmans: Egypte et Syrie (1928-82), pp. 75-82.

2. Quoted in Carré and Michaud, pp. 94-95.


7. For a more in-depth analysis of al-Hudaybi's criticisms, see Carré and Michaud, pp. 98-100.

8. Ibid., p. 110.


15. Ibid.


22. Ibid., pp. 438-439.

23. Ibid., p. 439.

24. Kepel, p. 220.

25. Ibid., p. 216.


32. Ibid., pp. 442-443.

33. Kepel, pp. 80-83.


35. Following the work of the medieval Islamic scholar Ibn' Taimiyya, Faraj argued that *jihad* was an Islamic duty on a
level with the "five pillars of Islam" and thus incumbent upon all true Muslims. Jansen, pp. 199-200.

36. Jansen, p. 188.
37. Ibid., p. 226.
40. Ismael, p. 120.
CONCLUSION

For the past two centuries Egyptian history has been dominated by the need to develop a positive response to the challenges presented by Western conceptions of development. All Egyptian leaders from Muhammed Ali to Hosni Mubarak have attempted to formulate an ideology of modernization which would provide some sort of accommodation between Egypt's traditional Islamic orientation and Western developmental constructs. The continued strength of Islamic activist groups in Egypt suggests that such efforts on the part of successive Egyptian governments have been unsuccessful.

Most Western observers, like Egypt's political leaders, have approached the problem of Egyptian development with the belief that modernization along Western lines is inevitable. Within such an analysis Islamic activist groups are perceived to represent a native reactionism of either a fascist or socialist nature. Our study has demonstrated that Egyptian Islamic activist groups defy simple categorization by means of Western ideological constructs. Like Egypt's leaders, the members of these groups seek to provide a response to the challenge of development. This response, while based on Islam, is not reactionary in nature. Groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, or even al-Jihad, were not attempting to deny the realities of the modern world by advocating the reimposition of a now anachronistic system of Islamic government based on the
realities of some previous historical era. On the contrary, out of a growing disillusionment with Egyptian attempts to follow a Western model of modernization which had resulted in political oppression, economic disparity, and moral corruption, Islamic activist groups sought to provide a positive social vision which was based, not on foreign ideologies which had proven unsatisfactory, but on familiar Islamic realities. Admittedly, much of the social vision proclaimed by Islamic activist groups is highly idealistic and utopian in nature. However, ideologically-based political visions, whether they be Islamic or Western tend to suffer from such problems as part of the process of accommodating abstract conceptions to the political, social and economic realities of the modern state. In retrospect, such idealism may be an important component in the appeal of Islamic activist ideology in that it provides what its adherents need most—hope and promise.

It is clear from our discussion that while the essential nature of this vision of a just and equitable society based on a purified Islam remains consistent throughout the various activist groups, there remains considerable disagreement as to how this vision is to be implemented. It has been demonstrated that such conflicting interpretations are related to the changing social, political, and economic realities faced by these groups. The pre-1954 Muslim Brotherhood, because it enjoyed legal status and relative freedom from government repression, sought to challenge the existing system from within
by means of education, preaching, and the introduction of practical reforms. It is only when the conditions under which the Society operated were changed in the late 1940s and early 1950s, that younger, increasingly frustrated group members began to violently challenge the government. The post-1970 activist groups lacked the freedom to operate enjoyed by the original Brotherhood. Instead they were forced to respond to a government that was increasingly capable of repression, a social system becoming progressively more confusing as it Westernized, and an economy which promised opportunity but delivered only misery. In the face of such realities, Islamic activist groups either acquiesced by opting into the system like the neo-Brotherhood, or began a process of increasing radicalization which was heightened with each unsuccessful confrontation with the government.

In the end, Islamic activist groups represent a positive attempt to respond to social change within an Islamic framework. Rather than being anti-modern, they present a vision of a purified religious society which in its very nature would ensure justice and equality and be completely compatible with the modern world. If in many cases these groups attempt to implement this vision by force, it is a reflection, not of an inherent tendency toward violence and anti-modernism within Islam, but of a growing perception on the part of activist leaders that violent confrontation is the sole remaining avenue through which the state can be changed.
Given the continuing popularity of Islamic activist groups in Egypt it would appear that they represent the only viable vehicle for the expression of popular discontent for a substantial sector of the Egyptian populace. It is likely that they will remain the main source of political opposition to the Egyptian government until such time as the Mubarak regime either relaxes its controls on other avenues of dissent, or finds some method of reintegrating the increasingly marginalized members of Egypt's middle class into the mainstream of Egyptian society.
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