The Image of Anwar al-Sâdât as the Pious President (al-Ra'îs al-Mu'min): A Study of the Political Use of Islam and Its Symbols in Egypt, 1970-1981.

by

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Abstract

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This study is an inquiry into the political use of Islam in Egypt during the period of the presidency of Anwar al-Sâdât lasting from 1970 to 1981. It examines the relationship between religion and state and the manner in which Islam and its symbols were utilized by the ruling establishment to legitimize its hegemony, and by its opposition to seek a change in the status quo. Sâdât's own image as 'the Pious President' is studied in the light of his 'faith-based' policies and power structure. The state's attempt to employ major Islamic groups for political purposes is a primary motif of the work. And efforts by Islamic traditionalists to

instate Islamic law as the basis for state legislation is shown to be a consistent theme in their demands. With the unfulfillment of the promises of greater Islamicization, which were implicit to them in the Pious President's words and deeds, there was an increasing movement towards the radicalization of religious militancy. The latter phenomenon is studied within the background of the socio-economic conditions of Egypt during the Sâdât era.

Résumé

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Titre de la thèse: L'image de Anwar al-Sâdât comme le président pieux (al-Ra'îs al-Mu'min): Une étude de l'utilisation politique de l'Islam et de ses symboles en Egypte, 1970-1981.

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Cette étude porte sur l'utilisation politique de l'Islam en Egypte au temps de la présidence de Anwar al-Sâdât de 1970 à 1981. Elle analyse le rapport de la religion et de l'État et la façon dont l'Islam et ses symboles ont été utilisés par la force au pouvoir dans le but de légitimer son hégémonie et par l'opposition dans son effort à changer le statu quo. Nous y étudions l'image même du 'président pieux', qu'a donné Sâdât, à la lumière de sa politique et de la structure du pouvoir basées sur la foi. La tentative de l'État à utiliser les groupes islamiques importants à des fins

politiques constitue le motif principal de ce travail. Nous montrons aussi que les efforts des traditionalistes islamiques pour instituer la loi islamique comme base même de la législation de l'État est un thème constant qui se répète sans cesse dans leurs revendications. Devant les promesses nontenues d'une islamisation plus grande, qui sont implicites dans les paroles et les actions du président pieux, un mouvement s'est développé en faveur d'une radicalisation du militantisme religieux. C'est dans le contexte des conditions socio-économiques de l'ère de Sâdât qu'est analysé ce dernier phénomène.

Dedication

TO MY MOTHER AND MY FATHER

Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the assistance that I received from various quarters. Initial thanks are due to the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, where I spent the first year of my Master of Arts program, and which kindly granted me financial support for the duration of the degree course. I would also like to record my appreciation to the Institute of Islamic Studies of McGill University where I spent the second year. Professor Issa J. Boullata was especially helpful with his invaluable suggestions and consistent encouragement. I am particularly grateful for the generosity with which he gave his time despite the pressure of his official duties as the Acting Director of the Institute and being on sabbatical leave during the later stages of the writing.

I am also indebted to the staff of the Islamic Studies Library. Special thanks are due to Emile Azer Wahba, Salwa Ismail, Imtiaz Rhemtulla and Kemal Abdel-Malek who, respectively, gave me the benefit of their informed perspectives of the Egyptian scene. My sincere appreciation also goes to Zain Kassam for her assistance in helping me unlock the mysteries of the McGill University Computer system and to Maleq-Tag Alibay in helping me translate the abstract into French.

Lastly, I would like to make a special mention of the ceaseless support that I received from my wife, Rosemin, especially during the final, critical stages of producing this work.

Note on Transcription

The system of transliteration of Arabic that has been employed in this work is based on that used by the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University. Arabic words like Allah, Islam and Caliph, which have become part of the English vocabulary have not been transliterated. Plurals of Arabic terms are generally anglicized, e.g. imams. When passages are quoted from other works, the transliteration systems of the authors are retained.

The word-processing facilities of the McGill University Computer system was used to transcribe this work. Due to its technical limitations, the dot under the letters d, s, h and z (representing the Arabic radicals ض, ص, ط, ظ and ز) is denoted by a cedila (¸). The letters ء and ع are indicated by the symbols ' and ‘, respectively, and long vowels by capping them with a circumflex (^). All Arabic words are underlined except for proper nouns and the word 'Qur'ân'. The workings of the computer causes the extension of the underlining of Arabic words to their English suffixes and commas, periods and single quotation marks, e.g. 'shaykhs'. On the other hand, the system's printer does not underline the symbol ‘ which may occur in the middle of a word, e.g. Sharî‘ah.

The word-processor is programmed to justify the right margin and thus causes gaps to sometimes occur between the words of

a sentence. This tendency is particularly acute in lines preceeding either long or hyphenated words and long underlinings such as in the titles of books. The attempt has been made wherever possible to solve this problem by splitting the offending word; however, there do remain several noticeable occurrences of gaps between words, especially in the footnotes and the bibliography. The printer also leaves spaces between the two sections of a hyphenated word when one of the sections includes an underlining, e.g. Imam -Caliph.

The abbreviations used in this thesis are as follows:

BSMES	(Bulletin of) British Society of Middle Eastern Studies
EI2	Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd Edition
MEJ	Middle East Journal
MES	Middle Eastern Studies
MW	Muslim World
IJMES	International Journal of Middle East Studies

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Introduction

The Thesis

The involvement of religion in the affairs of state is a phenomenon that recently appears to have become world-wide. It is not limited merely to Muslim or Middle Eastern countries but also seems to have become a feature of the politics of the leading nation of the West, the U.S.A. Publicity surrounding the religious views of Jimmy Carter, and more currently, those of Ronald Reagan, has undermined the cardinal doctrine of the total separation of church and state in the modern age. Opposition to the ruling regime in America is sometimes also expressed in religious terms by national Christian leaders like Jesse Jackson and Jerry Falwell. Pope John-Paul II appears to have raised considerably the volume of the Vatican's moral admonitions to governments, while speaking increasingly of the involvement of religion in every aspect of a Christian's life. Recent years have also seen the rise of 'liberation theology' in Latin America, and of religio-political agitation in Ireland and Poland. Religious political parties in Israel have controlled the balance of power in the Knesset for some years now as the grasp of the secularist forces on the Jewish state's government has loosened. The study of the use of religious symbols in the politics of Muslim countries where dîn wa dawlah (religion and state) have traditionally been held to be inseparable, has thus become of topical interest in the light of current developments.

The general resurgence of Islamic forces in Muslim lands is a much-discussed topic and has been the subject of many a conference or piece of writing. Reference to 'the return of Islam', 'the comeback of Islam', or 'the revival of Islam' reflects the superficial attitude which inevitably attributes any development in the Muslim world to its religion. There is a remarkable absence of similar talk of 'the comeback of Christianity' or 'the return of Judaism' in discussing parallel phenomena. The ultimate blame for such tendencies may lie with Muslims themselves, or at least those amongst them who insist on attributing all their worldly activities to Islam. This attitude, bred by the teaching that Islam is a faith that should determine all aspects of its adherents' lives, is fatuous when there exist several differing versions of 'true Islam'.

The ideal of the faith is the regulation of its followers' entire existences; but everything that happens today in Muslim countries in the name of Islam is not necessarily Islamic. Nevertheless, certain interests would have one think otherwise. There is consequently the Islam of the ruling establishments which seek to legitimize their respective hegemony, and there is the Islam of their oppositions which use the religion as a vehicle for change. Both these parties vie for the loyalty of those masses for whom Islam remains a means by which to harmonize their relations with society and with their Maker. The 'comeback' is therefore not of Islam (which has always remained a

potent force in public life -- contrary to the prevalent belief amongst some scholarly observers) but that of its heightened use by those who seek to attain or to maintain power.

Anwar al-Sâdât, the President of Egypt from 1970 to 1981 and the subject of the present study, was a prime practitioner in the usage of religion for the purposes of state. Speculation about existence or lack of his (or any other party's) sincerity towards Islam is not within the purview of such an inquiry: we are limited to making observations about the manipulation of the faith and its symbols.[3] Sâdât found it politically expedient to utilize the enormous emotional force of religion instead of seeking to foster the development of participatory political activity in the nation. Islam had been used by previous regimes in Egypt to further their respective purposes, but the Pious President's (al-Ra'îs al-Mu'min) use of religion in the political domain was unmatched in the modern era. The frequency of his rabble-rousing Islamic rhetoric seemed to increase in times of crisis. Sâdât failed to recognize the cumulative effect on Egypt's Muslim masses of his continual conjuring of Islamic symbolism until it was too late.

The Pious President's encouragement of and reliance on Islamic movements to counter the opposition to him from the political left indirectly permitted the mushrooming of radical brands of religious militancy. These latter forces

sought the actualization through violent means of Sâdât's unfulfilled promises of creating an Islamic order. When the unforeseen effect of the President's exploitation of Islam and Islamic movements began to dawn upon him, he hastily attempted to undo the damage by proclaiming the separation of religion and pclitics. This sudden reversal of policy came too late and the force which Anwar al-Sâdât had engendered and flirted with ultimately destroyed him.

Scope and Format

The discussion of Anwar al-Sâdât's presidential career focuses on his involvement with Islam and its institutions in Egypt. The use of religion is seen as a major factor in the political events of the nation during his presidency. Various forces operating in the name of Islam in Egypt of the 1970s are studied with particular reference to their respective impacts upon the workings of the state. The scope of this thesis and the time permitted for its completion do not allow a more thorough exploration of all the processes that were affecting the course of the nation at this time. Considerable space is accorded to the movement termed 'Islamic neofundamentalism' because it is considered a unique character and outgrowth of the Sâdât era.

The order of the discussion is not strictly chronological,

but it develops the argument in viewing it through various perspectives. Chapter I sets the scene by delving into Anwar al-Sâdât's experience in the manipulation of Islamic symbols and the Islamic institutions of Egypt before becoming president. It also considers how the Pious President came to rely on Islam in order to legitimize his leadership of the country. The operation of the 'faith-based' political edifice upon which Sâdât's political power rested and the manner in which he used Islam to justify his national actions and policies are studied in Chapter II. Chapter III deals with al-Ra'îs al-Mu'min's entanglements with the 'ulamâ' and the state-approved Islamic groups, namely, al-Ikhwân al-Muslimûn and the Jamâ'ah al-Islâmîyya. It looks at the political opportunism of Sâdât in his dealings with the 'ulamâ' and his attempted usage of the Islamic groups to counter the influence of the leftists. The final chapter studies the rise and growth of Islamic neofundamentalism in Egypt. Reasons are sought for the development of this brand of religious radicalism in the domain of the Pious President who claimed to be the defender of Islam.

Sources

The research conducted for this inquiry was limited by the unavailablity of certain original sources. Arabic transcripts of many of President Sâdât's speeches were inaccessible at the time of writing, but extensive reference was made to the available English translations of his orations and writings. The collection of Sâdât's speeches and interviews (given in the first half of his presidency) in Raphael Israeli's three-volume work, and the various publications of the transcripts of the President's speeches by the Egytpian State Information Service were particularly useful in this respect, as were Sâdât's own writings, especially the autobiographical In Search of Identity.

The numerous quotations of the pronouncements of the man in various secondary works also assisted in filling the gaps. Biographies of the Egyptian President by Muḥammad Haykal and Ghâlî Shukrî, although blatantly biased against him, were invaluable in providing a vast amount of data about the situation under consideration. The works of R.W. Baker, Leonard Binder, R.B. Burrell, A.I. Dâwisha, David Hirst and Irene Beeson, Derek Hopwood, Majîd Khaddûrî, B.K. Narayan, A.Z. Rubenstein, Norma Sâlim-Babikian, P. Sen, Robert Springborg, and John Waterbury also yielded useful information. Unfortunately, the university library system was unable to obtain Sadat's posthumous autobiographical publication, My Testament, and some of the recent spate of

works on the late Egyptian leader like Sadat's Realistic Peace Initiative by William Y. Kosman, Anwar Sadat by Raymond Carroll, Anwar Sadat: The Last Hundred Days by Mark Blaisse, Sadat and His Statecraft by Felipe Fernandez and Sadate, pharaon d'Egypte by T. Desjardins on time.

There remains a serious vacuum in background material on the current condition of Islam in Egypt. Morroe Berger's book is sorely out of date and the phenomenal developments of the 1970s necessitate a sequel to this important work of scholarship. The standard history of al-Azhar by Bayard Dodge also needs updating in the light of events since the complete reorganization of the institution by the Egyptian government in 1961, as does Richard P. Mitchell's seminal work on the Muslim Brethren. The relevant information on the processes affecting the practice of Islam since the 1970s was found in the essays and articles of ʿAbd al-Munʿîm ʿAlî and Manfred W. Werner, Bruce M. Borthwick, Daniel Crecelius, Yvonne Y. Haddâd, R. Stephen Humphries, Joseph O'Kane, John Alden Williams, and Gabriel R. Warburg, besides the pertinent sections of works on recent Egyptian politics. Analyses of current events provided by the Cemam Reports are also useful in reconstructing the picture.

The first-hand study that Saʿd al-Dîn Ibrâhîm's team carried out on Islamic militants in Egyptian prisons is invaluable as an authentic source of information of the new phenomenon convulsing the country. Nazîh Ayûbî and Ḥamîd Anṣârî's

articles exploring the neofundamentalist movement also impart a wealth of data. And the method of critical analysis applied by ʿAlî E. Hilâl Dusûqî to Islamic resurgence in general provided a working model to study the causes of its radical manifestations in Egypt. However, his essay written specifically on Islamic organization in Egypt, published in A.S. Cudsi's Islam and Power, and Israel Altman's "Islamic Movements in Egypt" which appeared in the Jerusalem Quaterly, were inaccessible.

Availability of al-Daʿwah, the newspaper of the Ikhwân al-Muslimûn, and of the major Egyptian dailies like al-Ahrâm and al-Akhbâr would have most certainly enhanced the scholarly search. However, extensive quotations from these publications were found in various secondary works. On the whole, the accessible materials mentioned above, along with the others listed in the bibliography, were judged sufficient in maintaining the level of critical analysis required for the scope of a Master's thesis.

Chapter I

In Search of Charisma

The Islamic Spokesman

The sudden demise of Jamâl ʿAbd al-Nâşir on September 28, 1970 left his last Vice-President, Anwar al-Sâdât, at the helm of power in Egypt. The former had been a giant among men during his period of presidency from 1956, and it was to be a great task for any successor of his to be able to emulate him. Nâşir had overshadowed all his subordinates in the cabinet of which Sâdât was not even the most prominent member (although he did have the distinction of being one of the longest surviving). The latter was initially reluctant to become the second President of the United Arab Republic, but eventually decided to run for the office.<1> Despite winning the elections, Sâdât still had to deal with the problem of having a weak image as a leader. Nâşir had acquired his towering status through the combined effect of the use of executive power and the sheer force of his personality<2> and this had made the Egyptian people come to expect their ra'îs to be a strong leader. His successor therefore found himself searching for the 'formula' for a charismatic image that would fulfill these expectations and legitimize his own rule. We find in this respect that Anwar al-Sâdât made a major effort to appear as a religiously-orientated leader, and began to bear the appelation al-Ra'îs al-Mu'min (the Pious President).<3>

The image of the Pious President initially gave Sâdât the moral authority which he had not gained from any tangible

achievements as President. However, even after accomplishing the well-acclaimed military crossing of the Suez Canal in the October 1973 war he could not dispense with the religious image; in fact, he resorted to it even more heavily as he failed to attain the 'economic crossing' and as Islamic fundamentalism<4> gathered momentum in the country. The acceptance of Anwar al-Sâdât's pious image by Egyptians was not entirely unseemly as he had already had the reputation of being among the more Islamically-inclined men in Nâṣir's government. His rural background and upbringing had probably determined his religiosity to a great extent. The predominance of Islam in the Egyptian village is eloquently described in Ṭâhâ Ḥusayn's An Egyptian Childhood , <5> and Sâdât's own view about the omnipotence of God is apparent as he writes of his village, Mît Abû'l Qawm:

> "That big, shady tree was made by God; He decreed it, and it came into being. These fresh green plants whose seeds we had ourselves sown could never have been there if God had not decreed it. This land on which I walked, the running water in the canal, indeed, everything around me was made by an overseeing God - a vast mighty Being that watches and takes care of all, including me."<6>

This predilection of Sâdât towards religion had most probably been apparent to his colleagues among the Free Officers (al-Ḍubbâṭ al-Aḥrâr) who carried out a coup d'état in 1952.<7> As a member of this group he was often assigned tasks which involved dealing with Islamic organizations and institutions, and eventually appears to have become identified as a spokesman on religious matters for the regime. During the pre-Revolution period Sâdât was the liason man between the fundamentalist al-Ikhwân al-Muslimûn (the Muslim Brethren)<8> and the Free Officers, and in this capacity he was in regular close contact with the enigmatic 'Supreme Guide' of the Muslim Brethren, Shaykh Ḥasan al-Bannâ'.<9> Sâdât's Revolt on the Nile <10> is an important source on the shaykh and the workings of his secret organization.

Although he openly admired Bannâ', Sâdât claims to have had his dealings with the Ikhwân at an arm's length unlike a fellow Officer, ʿAbd al-Munʿim ʿAbd al-Raʾûf, who "gave himself body and soul to the Brotherhood".<11> This was an early indication of Sâdât's disdain for radical or fundamentalist Islamic movements; he appears on the other hand, to have had a progressivist or modernist view toward the traditional form of Islam, seeking to bring it in line with current developments.<12> When the Ikhwân became openly violent against the regime of the Free Officers in 1954, Anwar al-Sâdât was one of the three government-appointed

members of the 'People's Court' which tried and sentenced hundreds of Brothers to prison and six of them to death.<13>

In its endeavour to demonstrate that it was not opposed to the religion of Islam, the new regime founded al-Mu'tamar al-Islâmî (the Islamic Congress) in the same year. It was Sâdât whom the Free Officers found most appropriate to head the new body, which he did for five years.<14> Although the Congress was ostensibly formed to propagate Islamic teachings to the Muslim world and to increase Egypt's contacts with Muslims elsewhere, it proved primarily effective within the country's borders. In this, the Mu'tamar al-Islâmî, having been established at the time when the still unstable government was in the process of disbanding an Islamic organization with a broad appeal, served to assure the religiously sensitive population that the regime was not abandoning Islam itself. "It (also) helped to promote the idea in the minds of the people that the defense of the faith is not the exclusive prerogative of conservative religious leaders; army officers can also perform this role."<15> And Colonel Sâdât, in particular, being in charge of the organization (which was otherwise manned by members of the (ulamâ') came to be identified in the eyes of the people as the man who was well-disposed to Islam in the mainly secularist-minded regime.<16> The Secretary-General of the Islamic Congress was, however, not in favour of retaining a status quo regarding the hold of the conservative men of religion over the Islamic

establishment of Egypt. True to his modernist outlook, Sâdât appears to have visualized the role of the Congress as the organization which would assist Islam in responding to contemporary conditions. According to him, the new body was to replace the traditional religious institutions which were "unable to adjust to the needs of the Islamic community in the modern world."<17>

The charge of not keeping up with the times was precisely the one laid by the government against al-Azhar in 1961 when it sought to completely reorganize the 1,000-year old educational institution and bastion of the Egyptian 'ulamâ'. <18> This move was the culmination of the governing Revolution Command Council's (RCC) efforts to bring Islamic organizations and institutions of the land under its authority. The first indirect blow had come in 1953 when, as part of its land-reform program, the government assumed the administration of the waqf khairî system.<19> These public endowments had been a major source of income for the 'ulamâ' who, with this measure, became financially dependant on the government. After having ensured that the Ikhwân al-Muslimûn were no longer an effective force, in 1955 the RCC turned directly upon the official Islamic establishment and dissolved the Sharî'ah courts system.<20> The government was also in the process of bringing the country-wide network of mosques under its control, thus placing itself in a position to determine the employment of al-Azhar graduates.<21> The ground had been well-prepared by these measures for the

final assault on the stronghold of the Islamic establishment of the country.

The RCC had also been able to make inroads into the ranks of the Azharîs. Through his contacts with the members of the 'ulamâ' in the Islamic Congress, Sâdât had performed the function of marshalling the support of the more progressive shaykhs on the side of the regime. Prominent men of religion like Maḥmûd Shalṭût, Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Zayyât and Muḥammad al-Bahî had been exposed to modern ideas and upheld the RCC's progressivist stand.<22> The members of the regime had hitherto been careful to appear to be on cordial terms with the Azharîs and used to pay regular visits to them. However, all pretences were put aside on June 22, 1961 when the men from the government were determined to extract the assent of the shaykhs for proposals to overhaul the administration of al-Azhar.

Anwar al-Sâdât, who was the Speaker of the Assembly at this time, played a major role in this process. He is reported to have continually admonished the venerable shaykhs who were unfamiliar with parliamentary discourse, and even to have challenged their knowledge on the fine points of Islamic tradition as he guided the 'explanation' of the proposed reforms in his capacity as the Speaker.<23> Therefore, in a repeat performance of the 'double-role' that he had already played with the Muslim Brethren -- of initially being the Officer in contact with them and then

presiding officially at their downfall -- Sâdât was the man who had first befriended the 'ulamâ' and then been instrumental in their ultimate loss of independence. Thus, in his belief that Islam needed to be more progressive and to be guided by the state, Sadat had helped to bring the fundamentalist as well as the conservative elements of Islamic Egypt under greater control of the government.

Anwar al-Sâdât also appears to have been an interpreter of the religious aspects of the RCC's ideology. His approach to promoting the regime's revolutionary policies was to relate them to events in the past of Islam so as to gain legitimacy for them in the eyes of Muslims. He is reported to have once propounded in a khuṭbah ('sermon') at al-Azhar:

> "We Muslims possess a glorious revolution proclaimed 14 centuries ago in order to restore to humanity its human sentiment and dignity, and to give man his proper due. He (Muhammad) proclaimed his revolution to destroy despotism and to realize the high principles of God, namely, security and honour. This most grandiose of revolutions included many dimensions: a scientific revolution, a social revolution with which all men became equal before God, distinguished only by piety, and a spiritual revolution in the direct relationship between God and man .... In the face of a world in

> conflict our answer must be: to return to our Islamic revolution proclaimed by the Prophet in 622, to inspire us by its scientific, moral and spiritual import."<24>

Sâdât also offered an interesting version of the fundamental Islamic principle of tawhîd, the absolute unity of God, on the occasion of an Islamic Congress celebration of the Prophet's birthday. Relating it to the government-adopted policy of Arab nationalism, he suggested that "the Islamic idea arose on the basis of tawhid ... in order to unite the Arabs in one strong nation."<25> Anwar al-Sâdât was here beginning to become rather adept at cloaking political ideas in religious symbolism in order to make them more presentable to his countrymen. These attempts of his were given wide coverage in the media, and this helped to establish the young Colonel as the Islamic spokesman for the RCC.

Religion and Leadership in Egypt

Having established his image as a pious Muslim before becoming the President of the Republic, Anwar al-Sâdât chose to adopt this well-known and well-accepted aspect of his personality as the means to legitimize his leadership. His period of presidency was punctuated by a series of acts with

which he sought to impress upon Egyptians that he was indeed the Ra'îs al-Mu'min. Among the first moves of his as President was to revise the constitution of the state and make the Sharî'ah a principal source of legislation.<26> His speeches and interviews were interspersed with numerous references to Allah and he would often begin his addresses with the basmalah and end with a prayer or a Qur'ânic verse.<27>

Although Jamâl 'Abd al-Nâşir's government had brought Islamic institutions under its control and had used Islam to justify its policies, it was generally recognized that the state under him would remain non-religious. However, his successor seemed to be taking a different path: in place of Nâşir's secular motto of 'science and technology' Sâdât substituted 'science and faith' and even went as far as to call his predecessor's era one of materialism and unbelief.<28> The latter also freed those members of the Muslim Brethren who remained in prison, while downplaying his own part in the previous regime's endeavour to suppress Islamic groups. The Pious President made it a habit to be caught by newspaper and television cameras in the postures of prayer, and proudly displayed the mark of prostration on his forehead. Egyptians were also made aware that his complete name was Muḥammad Anwar al-Sâdât in the apparent effort to further sanctify his image. Sâdât was thus endeavouring to merge the religious and the political in the person of the national leader by projecting himself as being

endowed with piety of an exemplary nature.

Egypt has long been used to having religious powers vested in its rulers. The phenomenon has existed since the pharaonic era with the concept of the 'god-king'.<29> Using Karl Wittfogel's theory of 'oriental despotism'<30> Muḥammad Haykal traces the origin of the conditions which led to Anwar al-Sâdât being able to adopt the title of al-Ra'îs al-Mu'min to pharaonic times.<31> According to Haykal, the river-bound civilization of the Nile valley came to look upon the yearly cycle of the life-giving flood from a mysterious source as a miracle. The continuation of life depended on the 'state bureaucracy which controlled the irrigation system and was headed by the autocratic pharaoh. The god-king was thus viewed as the being who guaranteed the renewal of the annual miracle and who controlled the distribution of its benefits. Therefore, according to this theory, the concept of the ruler having religious authority was innate to the Egyptian weltanshaüung since time immemorial.

Wittfogel seems to believe that Islam did not introduce a radically different concept of rulership with respect to the Caliph's suzerainity over Islamic institutions:

> "Under Islam, political and religious leadership was originally one, and traces of this arrangement survived throughout the history of the creed. The position of the

Islamic sovereign (the caliphs and sultans) underwent many transformations, but it never lost its religious quality. Originally the caliphs directed the great communal prayer. Within their jurisdictions, the provincial governors led the ritual prayer, particularly on Fridays, and they also delivered the sermon, the khutba. The caliphs appointed the official interpreter of the Sacred Law, the mufti. The centers of Muslim worship, the mosques, were often, though not always, administered by the government. Throughout the history of Islam the ruler remained the top-ranking authority for the affairs of the mosque ..."<32>

However, the Sunnî interpretation of Islam did not give the office of khilâfah (caliphate) a divine sanctity, viewing it primarily as a political position. The Shî'ah, on the other hand, held that the khilâfah of Islam rightly belonged to their Imâm who was endowed with divine authority. It is significant in this respect that the most successful manifestation of Shî'ah Ismâ'îlî political philosophy occurred in Egypt under the Fâṭimid dynasty.<33> The Ismâ'îlî Imâm -Caliph stood at the head of the religious and non-religious sections of the state bureaucracy and bore sacerdotal authority.

Egyptians, it seems, have throughout the ages remained sensitive to the religions of their rulers, most of whom have been of foreign origin. Many of the latter have had to either adopt the religious symbols of their subjects or appear to have converted.

> "Egypt turned Alexander and Julius Caesar into pharaohs. Napoleon declared himself a Moslem, and Arabic broadcasts from Berlin talked of 'Haji Mohamed Hitler'. (King) Farouk, though by blood a mixture of Turkish and Circassian, tried to prove his descent from the Prophet, and at the time of (the) Suez (War in 1956), when Moscow threatened nuclear war, enthusiastic crowds chanted 'Bulganin-Seifeddin' (sword of God -- sic). True to this tradition, Sadat chose for himself the title 'the pious President'."<34>

Even Nâşir, who had adopted an essentially secularist ideology, had not escaped this form of religious characterization. Among his more zealous propagandists from the Azharî 'ulamâ' was Shaykh Ḥasan al-Zayyât who presented the President as the current successor of illustrious Muslim rulers of the past.<35> Zayyât also went as far as to cast the revolutionary leader as the long-awaited Mahdî. <36> This was not surprising considering the manner in which the regime had promoted itself as the champion of 'true Islam' and its form of socialism as 'Islamic socialism'. Nâşir had

also found himself having to appeal to Egyptians in religious terms: for example, during the wars of 1956 and 1967.<37> "This policy (of the use of Islam) was strengthened as the regime seemed to recognize more and more that Islam remained the widest and most effective means to promote nationalism, patriotism, secularism, and socialism."<38> However, it was Egypt's second President who fully capitalized on the nation's feelings for religion.

The appeal to religion by Sâdât was to prove particularly effective at this time due to the mood prevailing in the aftermath of the military defeat that Egypt had suffered in 1967. The military debacle under a government which had espoused secularist goals had brought into question the validity of Nâşir's policies.

> "For the conservative Muslims, the war of 1967 proved a vindication of what they had been saying all along. The ways of 'Islamic socialism' are not the ways of God. The defeat came as a punishment from God because Muslims once again had placed faith in alien systems and devoted their energies to the posited purposes of these systems rather than zealously working for the purposes of God. They marshalled their efforts for the pursuit of materialism, not only ignoring God but manipulating His revelation to serve their own purposes. The only way to recapture

> ascendency and victory is by a total renunciation of man-made ideologies and a reorientation toward an unwavering commitment to the realization of Islam in the world."<39>

In this time of self-examination and self-recrimination Israel's victory was viewed as having been attained through the unflinching Jewish commitment to the 'religious formula' on which their state was based (regardless of how the Israelis themselves saw it).<40> It was not that the Jews possessed a more perfect version of God's message but that the Muslims had been remiss in their own duties to Islam.<41>

These attitudes had been given a clear expression in a spontaneous roar of applause when, while announcing the defeat, President Nâşir had suggested that religion should thenceforth play a more important role in society. However, Nâşir did not take any particularly strong measures during the three remaining years of his presidency to make good the promise made at the moment of defeat. It was left to his successor to attempt to fulfill the aspirations of Egyptians for a religiously-orientated state. Anwar al-Sâdât, well-known for his piety, seemed to fit the current requirements for national leadership. Therefore, it was in the posture of religiosity that he found the formula for the requisite charisma, which the first President of Egypt had created and satisfied with his overwhelming personality.

The Pious President, The God-King Pharaoh

Max Weber, in defining the term 'charisma', says that it

> "will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers and qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader ..."<42>

If we are to apply 'charisma' in this sense, then the 'exceptional and exemplary quality' which Anwar al-Sâdât made claim to was piety. He seemed to seek legitimacy for his leadership of some 40 million Egyptians from the charismatic status acquired through the pious observance of the ordinances of Islam. (The charisma inherent in the office of the presidency was not sufficient in this respect.) To many of his countrymen who were undergoing a feeling of increased religiosity, Sâdât may have appeared to be an eminent model of Muslim piety (largely due to the conspicuous and visible nature of his performance of the rites of Islam) and in this he was viewed as possessing exactly the kind of charisma that was currently being sought in the ra'îs of the country.

However, the Pious President ultimately appears to have aimed at being more than just a mere mu'min (believer). As he became more autocratic in his control of the state, he seemed to make pretences which implied that he was 'set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman powers of divine origin.' Sâdât was known on several occasions to have said that he had succeeded to the office of the President through Divine Will, and once, while facing severe parliamentary opposition, was heard to have proclaimed: "I am responsible to God, not to you."<43> It appears from this that al-Ra'îs al-Mu'min had begun to consider himself an intercessor between man and God. He seemed to be implying also that he bore responsibility for the nation before Allah. There were various other indications that he thought of himself as a personification of the nation. In his autobiographical In Search of Identity he sees his own identity as having merged with that of Egypt:

> "This is not the story of the Arab-Israeli conflict, or of the liberation of Egypt from British occupation, or of the achievements and shortcomings of the 1952 Revolution. It may be all of this and more; but it is mainly the story of a search of identity -- my own and that of Egypt. They are one and the same thing because since childhood I have identified myself with my country -- the land and the people."<44>

Anwar al-Sâdât saw himself as playing a major and crucial role in the recent history of his country as many events of his own life had coincided with the political history of Egypt. In this autobiography he raises himself to the status of an archetypal hero who symbolizes an entire people and who personally undergoes the trials of the nation: the conflict with and the expulsion of the British and King Farouk, the pangs of the Revolution, the humiliation of military defeat, the patient preparation for war, the attainment of victory, and the search for peace and economic prosperity. Sâdât also fancied himself as 'the Father of the Egyptian Nation'<45> with the underlying implication that like an ancestral father of a people he embodied the whole nation in himself. He appears to have sought the justification for his authoritarian rule in presenting himself as the personification of the country.

It is toward this end that, in the latter years of his presidency, Sâdât seems to have gone as far as claiming divine inspiration in the form of receiving solutions to the problems of the nation through 'mysterious trancendental aid'.<46> He was thus making himself even more irreproachable by hinting that he had 'exceptional powers and qualities ... such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin.' In order to further stress this point, Sâdât would, before announcing a major decision, spend time in spiritual retreat in a

presidential rest house at Wâdi Rahâ, at the foot of Mount Sinai, where Moses is believed to have rested.<47> Al-Ra'îs al-Mu'min, in his own mind, had therefore appeared to have risen far above the mass of other believers and by utilizing symbolism related to prophethood, was making implicit claims of receiving divine inspiration.

Sâdât's ascent to things divine does not, however, seem to have ended at the prophetic level. He apparently went on to even assume Qur'ânic attributes of God like mercy, omniscience and justice, often being given to making statements like "I will not have mercy on so and so" and "No word can be twisted before me, and I am not unjust toward my slaves."<48> However, claims to divinity (shirk) are looked upon in Islam as the height of blasphemy, and Sâdât never did actually proclaim self-deification apart from making tendentious suggestions about it.

Nevertheless, the Egyptian President appeared to have found another stage in which he could play a god-like role: that of Egypt eternal. In his later years Sâdât developed a penchant for striking the pose of a pharaoh:

> "He was no longer seen with his Field Marshal's baton under his arm but held it upright in his right hand, like a pharaoh holding the key of life, and like a pharoah in bas-relief he preferred, in representations of him which were now to be

seen in all public places, to be shown in profile."<49>

He is reported to have told President Carter of the U.S.A. that his real predecessor was not Nâşir but Rameses II.<50> With a revision of the Constitution in 1980, Sâdât made himself President for life, thus increasing his similarity with the monarchical rulers of ancient Egypt.

Anwar al-Sâdât, in his search for a charismatic religious identity was thus becoming far removed from being a mere mu'min and was making pretensions of being in a much higher spiritual state. However, by the end of his life, most of the Egyptian people had lost faith in him even as a political leader. He had not been able to deliver workable solutions to some of the most pressing problems of the country and the image of the Pious President failed to hide his essential economic, social and political failure. Sâdât's legitimacy as the national leader, which was based on his pious image, appeared to have collapsed with the non-fulfillment of the expectations of the religious. The title al-Ra'îs al-Mu'min sounded especially hollow to the Islamic neofundamentalists who were to end his rule and his life.

Notes: Chapter I

<1> Anwar el-Sadat, In Search of Identity: An Autobiography (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 204.

<2> R. Hrair Dekmejian, Egypt under Nasir: A Study in Political Dynamics (Albany: SUNY Press, 1971). A primary theme of this work is the discussion of the manner in which Nâşir alternated the use of force with charisma to sustain his hold on the country.

<3> This term has been translated in a number a ways: as 'the Devout President', Ghali Shoukri, Egypt: Portrait of a President (London: Zed Press, 1981), p. 71; as 'the Believer President', Nazih Ayubi, "The Political Revival of Islam: The Case of Egypt," IJMES, 12:4 (Dec. 1980), 484; as 'the Pious President', Mohamed Heikal, Autumn of Fury: The Assassination of Sadat (London: Andre Deutsch, 1983), p. 58. The present study will adopt the latter rendition.

<4> Webster's Third New International Dictionary gives an explanation on the origin of this term under its entry of 'Fundamentalism': "a militantly conservative movement in American Protestantism originating around the beginning of the 20th century in opposition to modernist tendencies and emphasizing as fundamental to Christianity the literal interpretation and absolute inerrancy of the Scriptures, the imminent and physical second coming of Jesus Christ, the virgin birth, physical resurrection, and substitutary atonement." Op cit. (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1976). R. Stephen Humphries supplies the following explanation of Islamic fundamentalism: "In an Islamic context, Fundamentalism asserts not only the literal truth of the Qur'ân but also that its commandments, legal as well as ritual, are fully incumbent on modern man. Specifically, it affirms the continuing rightness of the Qur'ân's prohibition of intoxicants and interest on loans, its rules for divorce and inheritance (which generally favour the male), its permission of plural marriage, and its penalties for certain criminal acts (e.g. amputation of the hand for theft). In some circumstances it may be impossible to fulfill the Qur'ân's commands and prohibitions, but they remain valid all the same. For Fundamentalism, the Qur'ân is not the only source of value; the conduct of the Prophet and the first generation of believers is also normative. Given changing circumstances, one cannot always imitate them exactly, but one can at least study their example and try to act as they would have done in the same situation. Finally, Fundamentalism reveres the lawyers and theologians of medieval Islâm, and

especially the vast structure of ritual, moral norms and positive law (collectively called the sharî'a) which they created. The sharî'a is a comprehensive description of behaviour expected from every Muslim. If it cannot be instituted in its totality in a modern state (and in fact never has been) it nevertheless remains the sole valid basis for personal conduct and social life. On the question of whether the sharî'a can be modified to fit modern circumstances, Fundamentalism displays two somewhat contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, some Fundamentalists regard the sharî'a as a fixed corpus of commands and prohibitions; its established injunctions cannot be altered and may be added to only when situations arise for which it contains no clear directives. Other Fundamentalists, however, would prefer to emphasize the sources of the sharî'a (Qur'ân, prophetic teaching and example, the attitudes of the early community) and the juristic processes (fiqh) by which these sources or raw materials can be elaborated into a comprehensive code of conduct. But it should be noted that in specific cases, even the adherents of this latter approach will tend to accept the traditional formulae defined by the medieval jurists." R. Stephen Humphries, "Islâm and Political Values in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria," MEJ, 33:1 (Winter 1979), 3-4. Nikki Keddie in an article on the Iranian manifestation of the phenomenon suggests the term 'integrist' for it; Nikki Keddie, "Iran: Change in Islam; Islam and Change," IJMES, 11:4 (July 1980), 527-542. However, the term 'fundamentalism' and its derivative 'neofundamentalism' will be used in the current study.

<5> Taha Hussein, An Egyptian Childhood: The Autobiography of Taha Hussein, trans. E.H. Paxton (Washington, D.C.: Three Continent's Press, 1981).

<6> Sadat, Search, p. 3.

<7> For details of the coup see P.J. Vatikiotis, The Egyptian Army in Politics (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), pp. 34-73; cf. Anouar Abdel-Malik, Egypt: Military Society, trans. Charles L. Markmann (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 29-51.

<8> See Richard P. Mitchell, The Society of Muslim Brothers (London: OUP, 1969); Ishak M. Husaini, The Moslem Brethren: The Greatest of Modern Islamic Movements (Beirut: Khayat, 1956); and Christina P. Harris, Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt: The Role of the Muslim Brotherhood (London: Mouton, 1964).

<9> Anwar el-Sadat, Revolt on the Nile, trans. Thomas Graham (London: Allan Wingate, 1957), p. 43.

<10> Ibid. "The major source on the relationship of the Muslim Brothers to the ... military government of Egypt is Sadat, Safahat (Eng. trans. Revolt on the Nile (1957)). This first appeared as a series of articles, beginning in December 1953, in the then government daily, Jaridat al-Jumhuriyya, under the title 'Safahat majhula min kitab al-thawra'. Safahat, like other officially inspired accounts of this relationship, appeared after the public had become aware of the conflict between the two groups at the end of 1953, and was intended to convey, perhaps more than was warranted, the idea of long-standing dissociation from the Brothers. What is said by Sadat is worth recording as a first statement on the situation." Mitchell, Society, p. 24.

<11> Sadat, Revolt, p. 55.

<12> For an expostion of Anwar al-Sâdât's progressivist views see his Nahw Ba'th Jadîd (Cairo: Al-Mu'tamar al-Islâmî, 1957). The motto of 'science and faith' that Sâdât adopted as President aptly sums up his modernist attitude toward Islam. Apart from his professed adherence to the orthodox practice of Islam, he also entertained what seem to have been mystical ideas. Search, pp. 75-89.

<13> P.J. Vatikiotis, The Modern History of Egypt (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1969), p. 386.

<14> Vatikiotis, Egyptian Army, p. 191; Kemal Karpat, Political and Social thought in Contemporary Middle East (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 159. Also see Anwar al-Sâdât, Al-Mu'tamar al-Islâmî fî 'âm (Cairo: al-Mu'tamar al-Islâmî, n.d.).

<15> Egyptian Army, p. 191.

<16> There were men in the junta who seem to have been determined to completely replace the bearing that Islam had on the public life of Egypt. Their strength was at a peak in 1962 when the Mîthâq al-'Amal al-Waṭanî (Charter of National Action) was passed, officially affirming the secularist ideology of the government. Nissim Rejwan, Nasserist Ideology: Its Exponents and Critics (New York: John Wiley, 1974), p. 42; Fawzi M. Najjar, "Islam and Socialism in the U.A.R.," Journal of Contemporary History, 3:3 (1968), 183-99; and Daniel Crecelius, "The Course of Secularization in Modern Egypt," in Islam and Development: Religion and Sociopolitical Change, ed. by John L. Esposito (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1980), p. 65.

<17> Morroe Berger, Islam in Egypt Today: Social and Political Aspects of Popular Religion (Cambridge, England:

Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 47. Although Berger does not identify the man whom he interviewed by name, it is clear that it was none other than Anwar al-Sâdât.

<18> Daniel Crecelius, "Al-Azhar in the Revolution," MEJ, 20:1 (Winter 1966), p. 48. For a history of al-Azhar see Bayard Dodge, Al-Azhar: A Millenium of Muslim Learning (Washington, D.C.: Middle East Institute, 1961).

<19> Gabriel Baer, "Waqf Refrom in Egypt," Middle Eastern Affairs, 1 (1958), 62-5.

<20> Nadav Safran, "The Abolition of Shar'î Courts in Egypt. I," MW, 48:1 (1958).

<21> Berger, pp. 9-61.

<22> P.J. Vatikiotis, "Islam and the Foreign Policy of Egypt," in Islam and International Relations, ed. by J. Harris Proctor (London: Pall Mall, 1965), pp. 140-45.

<23> Crecelius, "Al-Azhar," pp.37-8.

<24> Vatikiotis, Egyptian Army, p. 198. It is interesting that "In 1953 Anwar al-Sadat was the first member of the Revolution Command Council to preach." Bruce M. Borthwick, "The Islamic Sermon as a Channel of Political Communication," MEJ, 21:3 (Summer 1967), 305.

<25> Vatikiotis, Egyptian Army, p. 198.

<26> Joseph P. O'Kane, "Islam in the Egyptian Constitution," MEJ, 26:2 (Spring 1972), 137-48.

<27> See Arab Republic of Egypt Speeches and Interviews of President M. Anwar el-Sadat (Cairo: State Information Service, 1979); also see Raphael Israeli, The Public Diary of President Sadat 3 vols (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979).

<28> Derek Hopwood, Egypt: Politics and Society 1945-1981 (London: George & Allen Unwin, 1982), p. 116. Also see Public Diary II, p. 651.

<29> Cyril Aldred, Akhenaten: Pharaoh of Egypt - A New Study (Norwich, England: Thames & Hudson, 1968), p. 164.

<30> Karl A. Wittfogel, Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964); cf. Nazih Ayûbî's discussion on the relevance of Wittfogel's theory to Egypt in his Bureaucracy and Politics in Contemporary Egypt (London: Ithaca Press, 1980), pp. 81-136.

<31> Heikal, Autumn, pp. 81-136.

<32> Wittfogel, Oriental Despotism, p. 97.

<33> See P.J. Vatikiotis, The Fatimid Theory of State (Lahore: Orientalia, 1957). The Fâţimids ruled Egypt from 969 to 1171. Their state had been founded in 909 in present-day Tunisia and developed into an empire which included North Africa, Sicily, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Hijaz, Yemen and Sind. However, they made Egypt their home and Cairo, which they had founded, remained the capital until the downfall of the dynasty.

<34> Autumn, p. 58. Also see Samir Girgis, The Predominance of the Islamic Tradition of Leadership in Egypt during Bonaparte's Expedition (Bern: Herbert Lang, 1975).

<35> Vatikiotis, "Foreign Policy," pp. 140, 153 and 155.

<36> Ibid., p. 156.

<37> Egyptian Army, p. 198; Ayubi, "Political Revival," 489.

<38> Berger, p. 47.

<39> Yvonne Y. Haddad, Contemporary Islam and the Challenge of History (Albany: SUNY Press, 1982), pp. 41-2.

<40> Ayubi, "Political Revival," 489-90; Haddad, p. 215.

<41> Haddad, p. 42.

<42> Max Weber, Theory of Social and Economic Organization, trans. A.M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: Free Press, 1947), pp. 328-29. Also see Leland Bowie, "Nasir's Role and Legacy. I Charisma, Weber and Nasir," MEJ, 30:2 (Spring 1976), 141-57.

<43> Ghali, Portrait, p. 20.

<44> Search, p. 314; Autumn, p. 174. Also see Public Diary, I, pp. 1-3.

<45> Sâdât was in the habit of paternally addressing students and military personnel of the lower ranks as 'sons and daughters'. There even apears to have been an attempt to institutionalize this patrimonial tendency in political bodies like the Majlis al-Shûrâ, which was described as a consultative assembly representing 'the Egyptian Family'. Autumn, p. 202. Also see Robert Springborg, "Patrimonialism and Policy Making in Egypt," MES, 15:1 (Jan. 1979), 49-69.

<46> Autumn, p. 275.

<47> Ibid., p. 229.

<48> Ibid., p. 181. Sâdât assumes the tone of a mystic in his In Search of Identity, where he talks about having 'friendship with the Creator'; however, he does not make any claims to having attained mystical union (fanâ') with the Divine; op cit., p. 79.

<49> Autumn, p. 181.

<50> Ibid., p. 74. It may be of some relevance to note that it was around Rameses II's time that "the tendency was to deify the living king." Siegfried Morenz, Egyptian Religion, trans. Ann E. Keep (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), p. 41.

Chapter II

Dîn wa Dawlah

'Ilm wa Îmân

A number of political theorists had come to assume in the last two decades that the influence of religion on the public affairs of Muslim countries was on the wane. It was commonly held that modernization of polities was to lead to secularization in the public domain and that religion would become a matter of private concern. Hishâm Sharâbî wrote in 1966 that "in the contemporary Arab world Islam has simply been bypassed."<1> Indeed, the success of the secularist leaders in Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Iraq and Syria served to buttress this notion. In the scheme devised by Donald Eugene Smith<2>, the traditional religiopolitical systems under attack from external pressures would split the unity of church and state into two separate realms. Religion would have a part to play in this scenario in so far as politicization would occur through its agency and that it would actually legitimize the change. But upon the complete divorce of the religious and the political spheres of life, the latter would continue without any further need of the former and would function through mass participation and continuing secularization. Smith saw the formulation of 'Islamic Socialism' as a stage in the ultimate attainment of secularist 'Humanism-Pragmatism' in Muslim countries.

> "Both processes, the secularization of polities and the involvement of religion, are taking place simultaneously. However, secularization is by far the more fundamental

process, and it will in time devour the phenomena of religious political parties and ideologies ..."<3>

Modernization and political development necessarily meant the secularization of the state to such theorists. The socialist experiments of Arab governments like those of President Jamâl ʿAbd al-Nâşir in Egypt was the evidence they presented to support their case. It did indeed appear that the secularist-minded Nâşir was only using Islam in order to legitimize his policies and mobilize the masses. However, for most Egyptians religion remained the object of first loyalty, and it began to play an even more active role in the affairs of the state during Anwar al-Sâdât's presidency. The 'modernization' school of social scientists seemed to have assumed that the secularist tendencies of the élite of the Muslim world were representative of whole populations, and failed to see the important shifts taking place at the popular level. They "treated Islam 'ideationally' and insulated it from a changing social structure."<4> It was the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the assassination of President Sâdât in 1981 , more than anything else, which seem to have led to a closer perusal of the place of Islam in the politics of modern Muslim states. Revising his earlier statement in 1979, Hishâm Sharâbî declared that "Islamic conservatism is at present the dominant ideological force in Arab society."<5>

Although, like Turkey, Egypt went far in the course of westernization, it never completely removed the role of religion from public life as happened in the former Muslim nation.<6> Instead of abolishing Islamic institutions the Nâşir regime merely incorporated them into the state. This process would come under 'Polity-Expansion Secularization' in Smith's scheme.<7> The Egyptian state's takeover of the Islamic juridical, educational and endowment systems could be descibed as 'polity-expansion' but the process does not seem to have aimed at secularization in the terms of the separation of dîn wa dawlah (religion and state). On the contrary, the Nâşir government had taken up the cause of disseminating what it called 'true Islam' through newly-founded bodies like the Islamic Congress, the Directorate General for the Propagation of Islam and the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in the Ministry of Awqâf, and the Islamic Research Academy and the Institute of Islamic Missions in the reorganized al-Azhar. The revolutionary regime seemed to show an affinity for the unity of the dîn and the dawlah. In the religious textbooks distributed by the government, political power was described exclusively in Islamic terms. A frequently-used term was 'the Islamic state' which was led by a head of state whose power came from God and who was responsible for social justice and civil order. He was to defend and extend the ummah (the Muslim community) and submit to shûrâ (a council of elders) for every decision.<8>

The Sâdât regime went even further in appropriating the responsibility for the propagation of the 'correct' interpretation of the faith. Besides extending religious education, it took a greater initiative than the previous government in implementing the decisions taken by the latter aimed at extending the state's control of religious institutions. In 1973, the Ministry of Awqâf was directed to take charge of all the mosques in the country under a law promulgated in 1960 under Nâşir. Until this time the government had gradually been taking over the 'private' mosques and already had some 4,000 mosques under its administration. The official rationale for the sudden and immediate takeover order of the Sâdât regime was given as follows:

> "It has been observed that many mosques were not subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Waqfs, and that the affairs of these mosques are left upto chance. Since the continuation of this situation may lessen the value of religious guidance and weaken confidence in the mission of mosques -- especially since what is said in the pulpits of mosques is said in the name of God -- circumstances make it necessary to lay down a statute for the supervision of these mosques, in such a way as to assure the achievements of the lofty goals of general religious instruction, the correct orientation of the

rising generation, and its protection from all alien thought."<9>

The government of the Ra'îs al-Mu'min was in this exhibiting concern for the proper promulgation of Islam and therefore appearing in the eyes of Egyptians to be the defender and guardian of the faith. (It was probably less offensive for the regime of the Pious President to 'nationalize' all the mosques in the country than it would have been for that of the secularist-minded Nâşir.) Thus dîn was being presented as a primary concern of the dawlah by the regime of Anwar al-Sâdât.

These actions on the part of the Egyptian government certainly cannot be termed secularization. "Secularization means separation of church and state and the latter's supremacy; it does not call for the state's control of the intimate details of religious teaching or the harnessing of religion to the purposes of the government of the day."<10> The essential point to consider is whether secularism , as it is normally understood, is possible in the Islamic milieu. It is constantly asserted that Islam is a way of life which incorporates dîn wa dawlah. The deeply-imbedded concepts of the role of religion in the affairs of the ummah ran contrary to the western notion of the separation of faith and politics into public and private domains. Although Egypt had gone a long way in the process of westernization, its traditional Islamic orientation did not allow the abandoment of the fundamental political unity of dîn wa

dawlah. This belief remains very strong among the country's teeming rural population and among the majority of its urban masses. There had been some members in the government of Jamâl ʿAbd al-Nâṣir who had sought to change the predominance of Islam in the public affairs of Egypt, but Anwar al-Sâdât was determined to give pre-eminence to religion in the state.

In announcing the Rectification (al-taṣḥîḥ) of the Revolution in 1971, President Sâdât made it clear that the nation would thenceforth be built on technical knowhow and faith.<11> His slogan of ʿIlm wa Îmân sums up his notion of the place of religion in the process of national modernization. It was perhaps as a result of his new insistence on faith that Anwar al-Sâdât came to be known as al-Raʾîs al-Muʾmin. (Both îmân and muʾmin are from the same Arabic root; a muʾmin is defined as one who has îmân.) In the endeavour of attaining scientific and technological progress the country had to hold fast to its religious ideals. Scientific development was perceived as the means to eradicate the nation's technical inferiority and to enable it to withstand the Zionist challenge. Modern science would also be the vehicle that would enable Muslims to regain the cultural glory of the past and Egyptians to better follow the prescriptions of religion. "We are bound to build the Islamic state on scientific foundations, which will provide room for faith."<12> But science alone was not enough: faith had to necessarily accompany it. "If I were to

rely on science alone, I could have fed the computer before the October War; but then I would have received a negative reply. In some domains we need more faith than science, but we cannot totally do without science."<13> The Arabic term that Sâdât used to denote science, 'ilm, in itself bears connotations of spiritual knowledge.<14>

And the word îmân was used by him to refer to faith in a multitude of national ideals. Besides adherence to religious values it also embraced faith "in our heritage, in everything we have in this country, in our History in our past, present and future ..."<15> Sâdât therefore meant îmân to engender an ethos based on a positive belief in the country's tradition and its future under him. However, when he encountered religious extremism in the form of an attack by a neofundamentalist Islamic group on the Military Technical Academy on April 18, 1974, he found it necessary to further qualify his notion of the kind of faith his compatriots should nurture. In the speech launching the 'October Paper' made on the same day he said, "This people (the Arabs) has always stood up in his (sic) faith and rootedness. That was a faith without fanaticism."<16> (It was the October Paper which officially made 'cultural progress founded on science and faith' part of the policy of the Egyptian state.) The neofundamentalists were not the only group who refused to accept the President's policy of Science and Faith. He also appears to have faced opposition from the conservative 'ulamâ', prompting him to declare: "If

faith ever ran a danger, this emanated from those who used it as a rationalization for their anti-action, anti-research and anti-science attitudes."<17> The îmân which the Ra'îs al-Mu'min wanted his countrymen to have was therefore of a very particular type: one which suited his version of modernism.

Sâdât did, however, receive considerable support for his campaign to base the state on the policy of 'Ilm wa Îmân, including that from those members of the 'ulamâ' who had received western education. In a discussion on the theme of faith and science in the March 1973 issue of al-Kâtib, a literary monthly, five out of seven intellectuals said that religion could play a positive role in modern society. One of the contributers, Dr. Muḥammad Aḥmad Khalafallâh wrote:

> "If we really want to bring the Arab masses out of the state of backwardness into a state of progress then we must tie the future to the heritage and we must build progress on the basis of religion -- especially since we know that there is no opposition between science which makes for progress and the Qur'ân which encourages science."<18>

By making 'ilm and îmân the inextricable twin principles guiding the socio-economic development of the state Sâdât was most certainly removing any vestige of secularism that

might have existed in the Nâşir era. The Ra'îs al-Mu'min was going much further than his predecessor in involving the government in the realm of dîn. Whereas Nâşir had merely brought Islamic institutions under government control and had used Islamic symbolism to legitimize his own actions and policies, Sâdât was making religious values a primary basis for national development.

One of the major reasons why Anwar al-Sâdât came to be popularly known as the Pious President was the heightened use of religious symbolism and rhetoric in his speeches. His many references in deference to God, the Prophet and religious tradition were often used to further political ends. Terminology and symbols from the Islamic tradition bearing strong emotional connotations were applied to current situations. Khawârij, the name given to the soldiers who seceded from the Caliph 'Alî's army, was used in referring to the expelled members of the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), which was the only political organization allowed to exist legally. The three political 'platforms' established within the ASU were described as manâbir (literally, pulpits). Policies of groups which favoured closer ties with the Soviet Union were called madhhabiyya ('sectarian') -- derived from the term for Islamic schools of law. Riddah, originally referring to the Arab tribes who reneged from Islam upon the death of the Prophet, was applied to what Sâdât saw as the current abandonment of traditional values; shûrâ, a term dating from the time of

the Râshiḏûn Caliphs, was applied to a state advisory body; and inter-communal strife between Muslims and Copts in Egypt was called fitnah, a word used to describe the conflict when Muslims first fought each other.<19> Every aspect of the affairs of the dawlah seemed to attain a religious connotation in the speech of the Pious President.

Another feature of the rule of the Anwar al-Sâdât over Egypt was the increasing predominance of religion in the mass media.

> "A separate radio programme, called the Koran station, wholly devoted to readings from the Koran and programmes connected with it, was greatly expanded .... All ordinary programmes, on radio and television, now had to be interrupted for the call of prayer five times a day. Whatever was going on -- a thriller, a love story, a comedy, the news -- the programme would be abruptly interrupted so that the voice of the muezzin could be heard. The regime's new devotion to religion was to be given demonstrative backing at the highest level. Sadat was now not only officially known as 'the pious President,' but was to be seen on television every Friday going to a different mosque to pray -- an occasion which, since journalists were always informed in advance of where he would be

going to pray, provided him with a useful opportunity to give a press conference."<20>

The increasing visibility of religion in the media served a dual purpose: not only was the policy of enhancing the role of faith in the state receiving continuing emphasis but Anwar al-Sâdât's image as a staunch defender of the faith was becoming strenghtened in the public mind.

The President's Men

The membership of Sâdât's government was a reflection of his belief in the unity of dîn wa dawlah and revealed the definite trend towards the political right which his regime was taking (although it continued to call itself socialist). Nâşir's successor "abandoned the middle position in ideological affairs and ... (came) to rely increasingly on a mixture of elements from the liberal, bourgeois, and the Islamic right."<21> These latter groups were able to come to the forefront of power through the removal of leftists like ʿAlî Şabrî, Shaʿrâwî Jumʿa and Şamʿi Sharaf in the power struggle which occurred at the beginning of Sâdât's presidency. Ḥusayn Shâfiʿî, Sayyid Marʿî and ʿUthmân Aḥmad ʿUthmân, who had represented the right in the previous regime, became prominent members of the Sâdât cabinet, while rich landowning interests provided the broad support throughout the country. Among the people who ascended to

power were the 'Sayyid Group' whom the Marxist Ghâlî Shukrî saw as being marked by "blind fanaticism .... These people are still attached to the old tribal traditions of Upper Egypt .... They also belong to the class of rich farmers who stubbornly oppose any possible progress."<22>

There were also the likes of Ḥâfiẓ Badawî who, having presided over the secret trial of ʿAlî Ṣabrî and his 'power centre' and been Speaker of the People's Assembly, was appointed president of the powerful Discliplinary Committee of the ASU to take whatever measures he saw fit in order to protect national unity. He is characterized thus by David Hirst and Irene Beeson:

> "He had memorized the Koran by the age of ten. 'Islam', 'traditional values', and 'the ethics of the Egyptian village' were his trinity. He and other members of the Disciplinary Committee typified the resurgent rural bourgeoisie -- ostentatiously devout, narrowminded men who cloaked their poverty of intellect in florid oratory and sought to lord it over the peasantry."<23>

A host of other members of Sâdât's much changing team appear to have been religiously inclined. And with the dominance of religion being what it was even the generally secular-minded technocrats like Marʿî and ʿUthmân felt it necessary to proclaim their ties to Islam.<24> They both shared the distinction of being the fathers-in-law of Sâdât's daughters

and were also among the chief beneficiaries of his capitalist infitâḥ ('open door') policies.

> "Most of those profiteering from infitah policies were ... ardent in their outward show of religion. New mosques were springing up everywhere, endowed by the government or wealthy individuals. In the new luxurious apartment blocks proliferating in Cairo and Alexandria it was common to find that the basement housed a mosque. As mosques enjoyed exemption from taxation, this device secured the builders protection both against (fundamentalist) demonstrators and against the tax collector."<25>

Besides the urban capitalists and technocrats who formed the power base of the Pious President, he also relied heavily on the goodwill of the traditional and religiously conservative rural landlords. The plebiscites which were carried out on his actions and policies inevitably resulted in assenting votes of over 90%, despite increasing opposition to the government, as the returns were filled out by the village 'umdahs ('headmen') who apparently forewent the formality of counting individual votes.<26> The 'umdah combined religious and land-owning interests in his person and was the primary government official in the village.<27> Therefore, in regularly receiving the rubber-stamp acquiescence from his supporters, supposedly representative of the nation,

al-Ra'îs al-Mu'min could complacently proclaim that 'the will of the people emanated from the Will of Allah' (and coincided exactly with his own).<28>

Anwar al-Sâdât's pyramid of power, whose base lay in rural Egypt and the apex of which was in the upper reaches of urban society, was therefore made up of what were at least outwardly pious people. He thus found it advantageous to identify his opposition with atheism -- an accusation which could not be levelled at his supporters. By making religious faith and morality (as defined by the regime) principal aspects of the state political dogma he was limiting the criteria for leadership of the country to them. Thus, having made adherence to religious values as that which characterized a good citizen, an unreligious person -- an 'atheist' -- was consequently an enemy of the state. And such people could not lead the country. Only those imbued with faith were fit to hold office in the land of îmân.

> "I will not permit any group to ... spread atheism among our faithful people -- our people in whose veins the faith flows. I will not allow atheism to be imposed .... You cannot have confidence in those with no religious faith .... I will not allow any atheist to occupy a post or any kind of position in any area able to influence public opinion .... I, representing the authority, am striving faithfully to accomplish my task

and to answer for it one day when God will ask me to give my account ..."<29>

With this, Sâdât was attempting to nullify opposition to him from the left by identifying the latter with the forces of irreligion. Religious belief or unbelief was being equated with belief or unbelief in the regime. Only he, the defender of the faith who championed 'true Islam', and the people he had chosen could legitimately govern the religious-minded Egyptians. In this way Sâdât sought to justify his leadership of the country and his appointment of the members of his government. With the presence of such an élite the Pious President could claim that he was maintaining the essential unity of the dîn with the dawlah instead of allowing the 'atheist' forces of secularism to rend them apart.

The most overt legal measure of Anwar al-Sâdât which illustrated his identification of dîn with the dawlah was his 'Law of Shame' (ʿayb) which he enacted in 1980. It enabled the state to prosecute critics on the grounds of morality. Anyone could be held criminally responsible for: 'negating divine teachings; advocating contempt for the state's political, social and economic systems; and for the repudiation of popular religious, moral or national values', among other similar offences. "The Socialist Public Prosecutor, a kind of Grand Inquisitor appointed by the President and answerable to the People's Assembly and its Committee of Values, had exclusive jurisdiction over the

investigation and indictment of offenders."<30> In Sâdât's mind, which equated religious faith with faith in the state, opposition to the national government was an act of immorality. The dawlah represented all that was good and decent and could only be protected by the preservation of public morality. Political critics were seen as attacking the very values on which the state was based, which to the Ra'îs al-Mu'min were indistinguishable from religious values.

> "Criticism of govermental acts relating to procedure and technical matters are allowed, but not on matters of high policy .... Criticism, he said, should be exercised with self-restraint. The standard of restraints, according to Sadat, are religion and traditions, and the critics should be men well-known for their honesty, straightforwardness and fairness .... When Sadat was challenged by advocates of democratic freedoms ... (he) called the contest with his opponents 'a moral crisis,' because he felt democracy cannot possibly work in the absence of moral principles."<31>

Therefore, far from endeavouring to separate religion and state in accordance with modernists' theory of development, al-Ra'îs al-Mu'min was set on a course which allowed each to

increase its participation in the realm of the other. This was very much removed from President Nâşir's tendency of merely utilising symbols of Islam for political advantage and attempting to bring Islamic institutions under state control. Sâdât's desire seems to have been to have a modernist balance of science and faith in the state. However, there were strong interests in the country wanting to tip the scales in favour of a greater degree of Islamicization. Having set piety as a national standard of good citizenship, the Pious President eventually found himself increasingly giving in to groups who considered themselves more truly pious.

War

Al-Ra'îs al-Mu'min's conduct of confrontation and negotiation with Israel was inevitably couched in religious symbolism. He sought legitimacy for his handling of these most sensitive of national issues from Islam. In the speeches which promised the liberation of Arab territory President Sâdât's language was saturated with Islamic symbolism. It is not unusual for leaders of countries engaged in war to psychologically prepare their nations for battle by invoking religion. However, (before 1977) Sâdât seemed to have endeavoured to transform Egypt's conflict with Israel into a form of jihâd (holy war) with the

recapture of territories, particularly the city of Jerusalem, being made almost a religious obligation. Allusions from the Qur'ân and Islamic history were used to describe the current hostilities with the Jewish state. In a khuṭbah delivered in 1972 at al-Ḥusayn Mosque in Cairo on the occasion of the Prophet's birthday, Sâdât spoke of the 'deceit and treachery' of the Jewish tribes of Medina towards Muḥammad, and portrayed the contemporary Jewish state of Israel as threatening the 'faith' of Muslims with psychological warfare.<32> The Pious President was thus attempting to turn what had generally been viewed as a confrontation between nations into one between religions in order to prepare his countrymen for the impending confrontation.

The loss by the Arabs of Jerusalem ('al-Quds -- the Holy'), the third most important city of Islam, did more than any other factor to colour the Arab-Israeli conflict with a religious hue. Although Arab leaders had previously invoked religious symbols in the course of the military struggle with Israel, the sacrosanct nature of the city almost elevated the task of the recovery of lost lands to the dimension of a holy war. In 1970, the Supreme Islamic Research Council declared that the Palestine Question was first and foremost an Islamic one.<33> Al-Ra'îs al-Mu'min made the recovery of Jerusalem a major theme of his sabre-rattling speeches, particularly those made to exclusively Muslim audiences. Speaking to the participants

of an International Conference of Islamic Studies held in Cairo in April 1971, he projected Egypt as the guardian protector of Islam and its sanctuaries.<34> In the above-mentioned address at the Ḥusayn Mosque the self-declared defender of the faith thundered,

> "This is our destiny and we have to fight for it in this battle, so that we liberate our country and free (Jerusalem) the first of the 'two directions of prayer', and the third of our Holy Places of worship.
>
> There are some who think that they can bargain, that they can conduct negotiations, but Jerusalem is not in anyone's ownership, it is the property of us all, the property of the Muslim Nation, and nobody can decide the fate of the two direction of prayer ... We shall retake it with the help of Allah ..."<35>

However, it is interesting that while communicating with a national audience Sâdât did not limit Jerusalem solely as the 'the property of the Muslim Nation' but referred to al-Aqṣâ Mosque as well as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the sacred city as "our Holy Shrines, our History and our national dignity"<36>, thus appealing to the religious sensibilities of both the Muslims as well as the Christians of Egypt. This tendency of his to tailor the same argument to convince his various constituencies -- the international

Muslim ummah, the Egyptian Muslim community and the Egyptian nation -- illustrates the President's propensity to be inconsistent, if not opportunist, in the endeavour to attain his aims. He was later to use precedents from the Islamic tradition to justify his peace pact with Israel just as he had used it to rally the people for war.

Another major motif of Anwar al-Sâdât's anti-Israeli religious rhetoric was that of the Crusades. He saw the latter as an 'imperialist' venture which had used religion as a cloak. The depiction of Zionism as a modern-day manifestation of 'Crusader colonialism' had been a feature of Egyptian propaganda since the time of President Nâşir. In this respect, the figure of Şalâḥ al-Dîn (Saladin), a Muslim hero who had defeated the Crusaders, had been made a symbol of the nation's anti-imperialist stance. The Pious President continued to use this popular imagery and seems to have cast himself in the role of the medieval hero who would lead the Arabs in the liberation of their lands.<37>

It is not unusual for a modern-day Muslim leader to declare a war that his nation may be engaged in as a religious struggle (jihâd) in order to gain popular support for it; but Sâdât seemed to go further than most Muslim leaders in this direction. As Egypt was the nation which had protected Islam (according to the Pious President) and would liberate its lands, he referred to its soldiers as mujâhidîn (those who carry out the jihâd) who had the 'sacrosanct duty' to

respond to the call of war. (The fallen were later to described as 'martyrs'.)<38> Jihâd was raised by the Pious President to the status of the 'ideology' which had enabled Egypt to repulse its past invaders: the Crusaders, the 'Tartars', the French and the British, and it was now to be invoked to challenge the Zionist incursion.<39> Nâşir had utilized Islamic symbols and rhetoric to rally the masses behind him in the wars of 1956 and 1967, but Sâdât was raising the volume of religious propaganda far above what it had been in the former's time and appeared to be attempting to institutionalize jihâd as national military policy.

This endeavour of his was to be highlighted in the 1973 war which the Arabs waged against Israel, which began with a surprise attack launched in a two-pronged assault by Egypt and Syria on October 6. The 1973 conflict was marked by a religiously-charged atmosphere and the use of Islamic symbolism by the Egyptian command. It fell during the Muslim holy month of Ramaḍân when most of the country, including the military, was fasting and religious feelings were running high. In fact, during the initial surprise assault most of the Muslim soldiers, not having been previously informed of the impending attack, were in a state of fasting. General Sa'd al-Shâdhilî, the Egyptian Chief of Staff during the Ramaḍân War -- as it came to be known --, describes the initial, most crucial action of his forces thus:

"... our howitzer and mortar barrage kept the enemy infantry pinned in their shelters ... the 4,000 men of Wave One poured over our ramparts and slithered in disciplined lines down to the water's edge. The dinghies were readied, 720 of them, and a few minutes after 1420 hours, as the cannisters began to belch clouds of covering smoke, our first assault was paddling furiously across the canal, their strokes falling into the rhythm of their chant, 'Allahu Akbar ... Allahu Akbar'"<40>

Allahu Akbar (God is Great) was the official battlecry of the Ramaḍân War and underlined its religious orientation in marked contrast with that of the 1967 war: 'Land, Sea, Sky' -- which implied faith in equipment and tactics of military engagement. This time the Pious President's emphasis was on a faith of a decidedly religious nature. He proclaimed:

"A great change has occurred in the moral make-up of our troops .... There is no question that (the Nasserite slogan of) "Freedom, Socialism and Unity' is still valid .... However, (the new slogan) 'Allahu Akbar', has become our war-call, reflecting the change in the moral make-up of the troops."<41>

In order to further emphasize the religious orientation of the 1973 war, its military code name was Badr, alluding to the first major battle of the Prophet of Islam -- which was also fought and won during the month of Ramaḍân (624). In the minds of Muslims there were many similarities between that archetypal battle of Islam against seemingly overwhelming forces and the modern conflict against the Zionist usurpers of their lands. Even before the 1967 war Muslim preachers had compared the twentieth-century situation of the Arabs vis-à-vis the Israelis to that of the early Muslims and the pagan Meccans at the time of Badr, and had exhorted that "God will grant victory to the contemporary Arabs, if they 'believe' just as he granted victory to Muḥammad and the first Muslims."<42> It is interesting to note that as early as 1961 the use of economic warfare was seen as having been legitimized by the Prophet in the Battle of Badr.<43> During the Ramaḍân War the oil-producing Arab states in alliance with Egypt and Syria declared an economic boycott against the western supporters of Israel. This further enhanced the Islamic nature of the 1973 war in the minds of Muslims, since the 'truly Muslim' states like Saudi Arabia were also participating in it. There were also popular reports of 'white beings' fighting on the side of the Egyptians in the Ramaḍân War, in obvious reference to the Qur'ânic tradition of the angelic assistance rendered to the Muslims at Badr.<44>

It appears that even Sâdât was alarmed at the fact that the religious aura around the war seemed to be taking a life of its own and was moving in an uncontrolled direction, and he took the pain of personally pointing out that the commander of the first infantry brigrade to make the crossing had been a Copt.<45> Nevertheless, there was a definite official attempt by the Egyptian government, in contrast with the Syrian, to portray the war in religious terms; even the newspapers had been instructed to quote Qur'ânic verses which would psychologically prepare the public for the impending war.<46>

The victory, although partial, gave a tremendous boost to the sorely-bruised self-confidence of the Egyptians. 'The Crossing (al-ʿUbûr) seemed to have acquired Exodus dimensions' in the recounting of the war. The Dean of Egyptian letters, Tawfîq al-Ḥakîm wrote: "The profound meaning of October 6 is not merely a military crossing as much as it is a spiritual crossing to a new stage in our history ... and that stage is the reconstruction of (our) civilization."<47> The ʿUbûr became a metaphor for the brave venture into the new world that the valiant President was leading the nation into, for he was indeed the Hero of the Crossing (Baṭal al-ʿUbûr). His policy of ʿIlm wa Îmân had raised the country from the shame of defeat and infused new hope and confidence into Egyptians. Ten days into the war (which was to last two more weeks) the exultant Ra'îs al-Mu'min declared in a speech to the People's Assembly,

that was broadcast over the radio to the nation:

> "I have attempted to fulfill what I had pledged to Allah and to you ... exactly three years ago. I had pledged to Allah and to you, that the problem of liberating our lands and all Arab territories was our foremost duty .... I had pledged to Allah and to you that we would prove to the world that the 1967 defeat had been an exception, rather than a rule, in our annals. My belief relied on my faith in our history, that has recorded 7,000 years of culture, and is looking to still (broader) horizons .... I have devotedly attempted to meet my pledge, leaning on Allah's help and on your trust."<48>

At the Islamic Summit Conference convened in the following February at Lahore, Pakistan, Anwar al-Sâdât was hailed as a hero as he proudly related the brave exploits of the Egyptian army. (The Syrian forces had been unsuccessful in making similarly conspicuous gains.) He was able to rally the leaders of the international Muslim community behind the Arab cause and in this elevate his own stature in the Islamic world. The Crossing had legitimized Sâdât's leadership of a most important Arab Muslim country in the national as well as international arenas: he had finally come into his own.

Peace

Within fifteen months of the Ramaḍân War Sâdât's popularity had been shorn away by his failure to solve one of the most pressing problems of modern Egypt: endemic poverty. Riots broke out in January 1975 underlining the fact that the war had not helped feed the stomachs of the poor. If the Cairenes had been generous in their praises of the Ra'îs in October 1973, they were similarly unrestrained in reviling him with the jibe: "Ya Baṭal al-ʿUbûr, fîn al-fuṭûr?" (O Hero of the Crossing, where is our breakfast?)<49> The disturbances of 1975 were followed by more serious social upheavel in 1977 -- widespread rioting in January and the kidnapping and murder of a government minister by a neofundamentalist group in July. Matters were getting out of control and Anwar al-Sâdât was desperately searching for a way to ease the worsening domestic tensions. The drain on the country's economy caused by constantly remaining on a war footing was seen as one of the major problems of Egypt: peace with Israel seemed to be the magic solution to the nation's predicament. It was a combination of these factors that appear to have led Sâdât to go to Jerusalem to seek peace with the Israelis.

> "The January riots reflected the mounting frustration of lower and lower middle classes in Egypt vis-à-vis the negative payoff of President Sadat's socioeconomic policies. The bloody confrontation in July between a

> religious group and the government reflected the growing despair of the most volatile element of the population -- youth of the lower middle and working classes -- who sought salvation in Islamic militancy. Sadat's visit to Jerusalem was motivated as much by these mounting internal problems as by a genuine desire for peace. He thought that with peace would come instant prosperity."<50>

Religion was certainly not far from the Pious President's thoughts when he was planning his famous (and controversial) trip to Jerusalem. In the same speech that he announced his readiness to go to Israel he vigorously condemned those who sought to "spread atheism among our faithful people"<51> and put the blame for the riots squarely on the shoulders of the leftists rather than admit that religious groups had also been involved. In fixing the exact dates of his visit, the public act of performing the prayers (under television cameras) at al-Aqṣâ Mosque was a major consideration. In fact he seems to have agonized between the choice of performing the ʿÎd al-Aḍḥâ or the Friday prayers at the important Islamic shrine, and ultimately decided that "the Greater Bairam prayers would be more impressive than Friday prayers ..."<52> Religious observance in the mind of al-Raʾîs al-Muʾmin always seems to have been connected to its public relations benefits.

The speech that Sâdât made to the Israeli Knesset in Jerusalem was saturated with religious terminology and allusions. He opened with the Muslim greeting: "al-salâm âlaykum (peace be unto you)" rather than the secular "sayyidâtî wa sâdatî (ladies and gentlemen)", and called upon his audience to follow the "straight path (sabîl al-khaṭṭ al-mustaqîm)" in "sincerity and belief (ṣidq wa îmân)", speaking from what he referred to as the "minbar (pulpit)".<53>

The momentous address, which was transmitted live to Egypt, probably impressed the Egyptians that the Ra'îs al-Mu'min was continuing to guard the essential national religious values in the midst of the enemy. Reaction to the Sâdât 'peace initiative' was, however, mixed. The official Islamic establishment showed its support of the President on his return from Jerusalem with al-Azhar displaying a large banner saying 'God is called Peace'. Upon the conclusion of the peace treaty with Israel in September 1978 Minbar al-Islâm, an official government religious journal, carried an article on peace, and the Azharî 'ulamâ' issued a statement which said:

> "Egypt is an Islamic country, and it is the duty of its guardian to ensure its protection. If he considers that the interest of the Muslims lies in being gentle towards their enemies, this is permissible because he is responsible in matters of peace and war

> ... and more knowledgeable about the affairs of his subjects .... The existence of treaties between Muslims and their enemies is governed by clear regulations established by Islam .... The al-Azhar ulama are of the opinion that the Egyptian-Israeli treaty was concluded within the context of Islamic judgement. It springs from a position of strength following the waging of the jihâd battle and the victory.<54>

The institution which had previously used religious arguments to legitimize the war against the Zionists was now using a similar form of rationalization for peace with them. Al-Azhar was thus seen as being little more than the means to apply an official Islamic rubber-stamp on the state's policies and thus lost much of its standing in the eyes of Egyptians. Religious opposition to the accommodation with Israel came from another source: the fundamentalists. On the occasion of the ʿÎd al-Aḍḥâ in 1980, university groups of the Jamâ'ah al-Islâmîyya, a loose umbrella organization of Islamic fundamentalist groups, occupied the Şalâḥ al-Dîn Mosque in Cairo and broadcast speeches and sermons over loudspeakers denouncing corruption, the separate peace treaty with Israel and those who failed to rule in accordance with Islamic law as 'the new Tartars'. Predictably, Sâdât described them as disgruntled 'communists and Nâşirîs'.<55>

Reaction from the international Muslim community was no less vociferous. King Khâlid of Saudi Arabia expressed strong disapproval of President Sâdât's trip to Jerusalem in 1977 as he went to peform the ritual of opening the door of the Ka'ba on the occasion of the 'Îd al-Aḍḥâ:

> "I have always gone to the Ka'aba to pray for somebody, never to pray against anyone. But on this occasion I found myself saying, 'O God, grant that the aeroplane taking Sadat to Jerusalem may crash before it gets there, so that he may not become a scandal for all of us.' I am ashamed that I prayed in the Ka'aba against a Moslem."<56>

The Organization of the Islamic Conference denounced the peace accord between Egypt and Israel and suspended Egypt's membership from its group, as did the Arab League, which moved its headquarters from Cairo to Tunis.<57>

With these reactions from his fellow Muslim heads of state the Pious President found himself an outcast from the Islamic ummah and the Arab world. The way he dealt with his ostracism was to lash out at Muslim leaders and seek a new stage to play out the role of the international statesman with pious inclinations. Sâdât mocked the Saudi ruling family for its unwillingness to condemn what he called the 'bigoted Islam' of Âyatullâh Khumaynî of Iran.

> "None of them can say to Khomeini 'Stop, stay where you are.' Because they are all trembling in the Gulf ... No Moslem raised its (sic) voice except Egypt. Egypt said: 'This is not Islam'. How can they face up (to him) without Egypt?"<58>

Sâdât was now portraying himself as the true defender of the faith not only of Egypt but of the entire Muslim world. It was fine that the leaders of the Muslim states had broken ties with Egypt but they could not deny its traditional position of centrality in the Islamic ummah, especially since it was 'the land of the Azhar'. Its Pious President bravely spoke out in defence of Islam whereas those men who were traditionally considered the moral leaders of the Muslim world remained silent. Denied paricipation in the international Arab and Islamic organizations by the heads of states, Sâdât sought to exert his influence on the ummah by proposing "a league of Arab and Muslim peoples so that Egypt may exercise through the people the leadership of the Arab World and the Islamic world ..."<59> But nothing seems to have come out of this idea.

The Egyptian President had, with his peace initiative, come into the full limelight of western media which marvelled at his 'supreme act of courage' in going to Jerusalem and presented him as 'the desirable Islamic norm' to the West.<60> It did not take much prompting for Sâdât to adopt a new missionary attitude of unveiling his version of 'true

Islam' to the attentive audiences of Western Europe and North America. Ecumenism became his new passion as he endeavoured to demonstrate the essential unity of Islam, Christianity and Judaism. The fact that his major counterparts in the peace process, President Carter of the U.S.A. and Prime Minister Begin of Israel, also publicly identified themselves as religious men served to encourage his ecumenical venture.

It was initially in his speech to the Knesset in 1977 that Anwar al-Sâdât had attempted to frame his message of peace in terms that would appeal to the religious sensibilities of men other than Muslims. Exploiting the fact that his visit coincided with the 'Îd al-Aḍḥâ which commemorated the sacrifice of Abraham -- the eponymous ancestor of both the Arabs and the Jews, and referred to in the Qur'ân as the first Muslim -- he sought to emphasize the common ground between him and his hosts. He quoted from Jewish scripture and from Qur'ânic verses referring to Hebrew prophets and declared his attachment to Sinai, where God had spoken to Moses (and which was then under Israeli occupation), thus illustrating Muslim reverence for the Jewish tradition. Coming from a nation which included Muslims and Christians, he used the symbols of both these faiths in his appeal to the Israeli parliament. After having mentioned that he had come to deliver the address after performing the 'Îd prayer at al-Aqṣâ and visiting the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, he closed his speech thus:

> "I seek inspiration in the verses of God the Almighty, the most Wise when He said: 'Say: We believe in God and that which was revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ismâ'îl, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the Prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we surrender.'"<61>

The fact that the proceedings of that day in the Knesset were being televised live was not lost on the image-conscious Sâdât. This was prime opportunity for an Arab Muslim leader to present the case of his people to the international community in words and symbols which would appeal to believing men everywhere. This approach of using religious language in delivering a political message came easily to a man who had consistently used the words of dîn in the realm of dawlah. According to Norma Sâlim-Babikian, Sâdât used religious symbolism in his Knesset speech in order to convey a humanist message which could be understood by all -- especially the Israelis and the Americans:

> "It is my contention that Sâdât's use of religious themes, over and above their rhetorically persuasive powers, also served in the struggle for legitimacy. Sâdât succeeded in legitimating his peace

> initiative and, to a limited extent, the Arab struggle for self determination in general, in the eyes of the 'West' precisely by using religious themes to build a humanism of equality of all peoples. In effect these legitimizing grounds undermine Zionist premises for special status for the state of Israel."<62>

Sâdât seems to have hoped that promoting the image of an ecumenical Islam willing to join hands with other religious communities would favourably affect public opinion towards the Arab cause, particularly in the United States. He worked vigorously towards this end, meeting with Jewish and Christian men of religion in his trips abroad, and suggesting fanciful schemes like the diversion of the Nile waters to Jerusalem to supply the believers of all three faiths with a new zamzam (the sacred well in the sanctuary of Mecca) and the construction of a combined mosque-church-synagogue on Mount Sinai.<63> Very little came out of these grandiose plans, underlining the ultimate failure of the Pious President in his use of religion to promote political goals.

Notes: Chapter II

<1> Hisham Sharabi, "Islam and Modernization in the Arab World," in Modernization of the Arab World, ed. by J.H. Thompson and R.D. Reischauer (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1966), p. 26.

<2> Donald Eugene Smith, Religion and Political Development (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1970), p. 14.

<3> Ibid., pp. 124-25 and 244.

<4> Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups: Methodological Note and Preliminary Findings," IJMES, 12:4 (Dec. 1980), 423. Nikki Keddie also criticizes the "progress-oriented concentration of most Western and Middle Eastern scholars...," idem, "Iran: Change in Islam; Islam and Change," IJMES, 11:4 (July 1980), 528.

<5> Hisham Sharabi, "Islam, Democracy and Socialism in the Arab World," in The Arab Future: Critical Issues, ed. by Michael C. Hudson (Washington, D.C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 1979), p. 97.

<6> See Niyazi Berkes, The Development of Secularism in Modern Turkey (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964) and Bernard Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey (London: OUP, 1960).

<7> Smith, Religion and Political Development, pp. 96-113.

<8> Bruce M. Borthwick, "Religion and Politics in Israel and Egypt," MEJ, 33:2 (Spring 1979), 160. Also see Olivier Carré, "L'Idéologie politico-religieuse nasserienne à la lumière des manuels scolaires," Politique Etrangère, 37 (1972), 536.

<9> Borthwick, "Religion and Politics," 157. The government was, however, unable to actually take over all the private mosques in the country due to the lack of resources. Hamied N. Ansari, "The Islamic Militants in Egyptian Politics," IJMES, 16 (1984), 129.

<10> Morroe Berger, Islam in Egypt Today: Social and Political Aspects of Popular Religion (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 128.

<11> Yvonne Y. Haddad, Contemporary Islam and the Challenge of History (Albany: SUNY Press, 1980), p. 43.

<12> Raphael Israeli, The Public Diary of President Sadat (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), I, pp. 40, 49.

<13> Ibid., III, p. 1129.

<14> Haddad, Contemporary Islam, p. 43. Also see "'Ilm," EI2, 1971, III, pp. 1133-134.

<15> Israeli, Public Diary, I, p. 49; II, 535.

<16> Ibid., II, p. 491. For a discussion on the growth of the neofundmentalist movement in Egypt see Chapter IV.

<17> Ibid., II, p. 490.

<18> Borthwick, "Religion and Politics," 161.

<19> Derek Hopwood, Egypt: Politics and Society 1945-1981 (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982), pp. 114, 116; Public Diary, I, pp. 264, 285, 286, 322; and David Hirst and Irene Beeson, Sadat (London: Faber & Faber, 1981), p. 332.

<20> Mohamed Heikal, Autumn of Fury: The Assassination of Sadat (London: Andre Deutsch, 1983), p. 129. According to the 1977 radio-television statistics of Egypt, religious programming on various stations and channels of the electronic media amounted to 32 hours a day. A study of the American University of Beirut reported that in that year 120 religious pages appeared in the print media; and figures from the Egyptian National Library showed that 1,035 religious works (besides the re-issues of the Qur'ân) were published in the same year. Ghali Shoukri, Egypt: Portrait of a President (London: Zed Press, 1981), p. 304.

<21> John Waterbury, Egypt: Burdens of the Past, Options for the Future (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 18:4, p. 7. Shoukri, gives a Marxist-oriented explanation of the coalition of these rightist forces. Portrait, p. 304.

<22> Shoukri, Portrait, p. 71.

<23> Hirst, Sadat, pp. 148-49.

<24> Robert Springborg, Family, Power and Politics in Egypt: Sayed Bey Marei -- His Clan, Clients and Cohorts (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1982), p. 221; Heikal Autumn, p. 117; and Mohamed Sid-Ahmed, "Sadat's Alter Ego," MERIP Reports, 12:6 (July-Aug. 1982), 20.

<25> Autumn, p. 134.

<26> Ibid., p. 172.

<27> Leonard Binder, In a Moment of Enthusiasm: Political Power and the Second Stratum in Egypt (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1978), pp. 51-2, 260.

<28> Public Diary, I, 86.

<29> Portrait, p. 301. This was the speech in which Sâdât first announced his readiness to go to Israel. Op cit., p. 21.

<30> Hirst, Sadat, p. 332.

<31> Majid Khadduri, Arab Personalities in Politics (Washington, D.C.: Middle East Institute, 1981), pp. 173-74.

<32> Public Diary, I, pp. 192-95, 285.

<33> Haddad, Contemporary Islam, p. 45. Muslim feelings had also been outraged when, in 1969, an Australian Christian fanatic had set al-Aqṣâ Mosque in Jerusalem on fire (entailing the meeting in Rabat of the first

Islamic Summit Conference). Daniel Crecelius, "The Course of Secularization in Modern Egypt," in Islam and Development: Religion and Sociopolitical Change, ed. by John L. Esposito (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1980), pp. 108-9.

<34> Public Diary, I, p. 40.

<35> Ibid., I, p. 193. Jerusalem was the qiblah (direction of prayer) for early Muslims until it was replaced by the Ka'ba in Mecca after Muḥammad's emigration (hijra) to Medina in 622. Cf. Qur'ân, II:144-50.

<36> Public Diary, II, 452.

<37> R. Hrair Dekmejian, Egypt under Nasir: A Study In Political Dynamics (Albany: SUNY Press, 1971), pp. 78-9. It was significant that Ṣalâḥ al-Dîn had retaken Jerusalem from the Crusaders. However, it should be noted that he was in fact not an Arab but a Kurd. This did not deter Arab nationalists from making him a symbol of resistance against what they saw as an imperialist invasion.

<38> Public Diary, I, pp. 57, 73, 102-3.

<39> Ibid., I, pp. 285, 404; II, pp. 454, 717.

<40> General Saad el-Shazly, The Crossing of Suez: The October War (1973) (London: Third World Centre, 1980), p. 150. The religiously-charged atmosphere was also present amongst officers on the warfront as was apparent in their frequent usage of Islamic verbal formulae. Op cit., pp. 161, 173. Even the senior officers at the central Operations Room in Cairo did not break their fast until Sâdât himself set the precedent in their presence. Fasting was deemed not compulsory during the war "based on the expert opinion of Islamic law." Sâdât described his own mood on the eve of the outbreak of hostilities as imbued with the spiritual serenity of Ramaḍân. Anwar el-Sadat, In Search of Identity: An Autobiography (New York: Harper Row, 1977), p. 248.

<41> Public Diary, II, p. 651.

<42> Bruce M. Borthwick, "The Islamic Sermon as a Channel of Political Communication," MEJ, 21:3 (Summer 1967), 306.

<43> Ibid.

<44> Mohamed Heikal, The Road to Ramadan (New York: Quadrangle, 1975), p. 236.

<45> Ibid. p. 237. Also see Haddad, Contemporary Islam, pp. 43-4.

<46> Public Diary, III, p. 1203 and Bernard Lewis, "The Return of Islam," Commentary, (Jan. 1976), 48.

<47> Waterbury, Burdens, 18:4, p. 2.

<48> Public Diary, I, p. 426.

<49> Hirst, Sadat, p. 231.

<50> Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups," 242.

<51> Shoukri, Portrait, p. 301.

<52> Sadat, Search of Identity, p. 307. Bairâm is a Turkish word for the festival of the 'Id al-Aḍha.

<53> Norma Salem-Babikian, "The Sacred and the Profane: Sâdât's Speech to the Knesset," MEJ, 34:1 (Winter 1980), 17-8. For the full text of Sâdât's address the Knesset in the original Arabic and an English translation see Speech by President Anwar el-Sadat to the Knesset: 20th November 1977 (Cairo: Ministry of Information, State Information Services, n.d.).

<54> Hopwood, Politics and Society, p. 119. Also see Nazih Ayubi, "The Political Revival of Islam: The Case of Egypt," IJMES, 12:4 (Dec. 1980), 497. It is also interesting to note that jihâd, which had been presented as the rationaliztion for the previous militarism against the Jewish state was henceforth reinterpreted by the Azharîs to emphasize the internal,

individual spiritual battle. Hamied N. Ansari, "The Islamic Militants in Egyptian Politics," IJMES, 16 (1984), 142.

<55> Heikal, Autumn, pp. 109, 221.

<56> Ibid., p. 98.

<57> Hopwood, pp. 120, 186. The government of Egypt protested vigorously upon its suspension from the Organization of the Islamic Conference, declaring the move 'illegal' as Egypt was one of the most important 'pillars of Islam'. The government's stance was supported by the official Islamic establishment of the country. Gabriel R. Warburg, "Islam and Politics in Egypt: 1952-80," MES, 18:2 (April 1982), 143-45.

<58> Hirst, pp. 339-40.

<59> Warburg, "Islam and Politics," 153-54.

<60> Edward W. Said, Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), p. 112. The cover of the November 28, 1977 issue of Time magazine carried the banner headline: "The Sacred Mission: Egypt's President Sadat." The American weekly went on to proclaim Anwar al- Sâdât 1977's 'Man of the Year', and in 1979 the Egyptian President shared the Nobel Prize for Peace with Prime Minister Begin of Israel.

<61> Salem-Babikian, "The Sacred and the Profane," 21; cf. Qur'ân, II:136. In a speech made at the Ben Gurion University of Beersheba in May 1979, Sâdât stressed the historical ties between Islam and Judaism, stating that it was the Prophet of Islam who had exhorted the Arabs and Jews of Yathrib (Medina) to co-exist in harmony. He seemed to have conveniently forgotten at this point that before 1977, when he had been rousing fellow Egyptians for war, he had used the same basis (Islamic history) to condemn the Zionist state. We can see in this another example of how the Pious President tended to use the same sources for sometimes quite contrary purposes, in accordance with his current needs. Salem-Babikian, 22.

<62> Ibid., 23.

<63> Heikal, Autumn, pp. 180-81, 228.

Chapter III

The Resurgence of Islamic Forces

Taṭbîq al-Sharî'ah

Chief among the beneficiaries of the Pious President's policy of giving a greater role to Islam in Egyptian society were the members of the official and the unofficial Islamic establishment of the country. The 'ulamâ', the sufis and the members of other Islamic associations all stood to gain in the new order. The period of Anwar al-Sâdât's presidency until 1977 saw a steady increase in the influence of the 'ulamâ' in the public affairs of Egypt. The Azharîs had become mere state functionaries under Jamâl 'Abd al-Nâşir, but they regained their pre-eminence in the time of the Ra'îs al-Mu'min. Considering the religious orientation of Sâdât's policies, it was natural that he should view the 'ulamâ' as his political allies. Besides providing support for his religious stance in the realm of dawlah, they were particularly useful to him as a countervailing force against the Nâşirî and the Marxist opposition. The alliance between the President and the men of religion became especially apparent in the 1976 elections. The Shaykh al-Azhar, 'Abd al-Ḥalîm Maḥmûd went as far as declaring that he was "specializing in combatting Communism."<1>

Sâdât also needed the support of the members of the official Islamic establishment of the country against the growing threat to his government from Islamic fundamentalism.<2> Muslim fundamentalist groups were reacting sharply to the regime's failure in providing social justice. Severe

discontent among the poor led to drastic consequences: rioting erupted in the streets in 1975 and 1977, with evidence of strong participation by fundamentalist and neofundamentalist groups.<3> The Shaykh al-Azhar backed al-Ra'îs al-Mu'min and denounced the riots on Radio Cairo.<4> The loyal shaykh was also the first to send a message of support to Sâdât when he visited Jerusalem in November, 1977, while the fundamentalists condemned the rapprochement with Israel as a betrayal of Islam.<5>

In return for the support that he was receiving from the 'ulamâ' Sâdât was put in the position of having to acceed to their demands, the most insistent of which was to instate the Sharî'ah as the law of the land. This major theme of the President's dealings with the 'ulamâ' first appeared on May 20, 1971, when he announced to his countrymen that it was time to enact a permanent constitution for the nation. It was to be derived from "the traditions built up over thousands of years" and "above and before all else, our mission of faith."<6> With this declaration a public debate was initiated on the nature of the proposed constitution, and a committee was assigned to solicit and classify suggestions from the public. By June 9, some 7,000 written submissions (besides the innumerable verbal ones) had been received, many of which were on the subject of the place of Islam in the new constitution. The 'ulamâ' seemed to be among the most vehement in seeking a primary role for Islam in the new charter. Among the first suggestions to be

received by the committee was that by the current Shaykh al-Azhar, who asked that Islam be proclaimed the state religion of Egypt in the proposed constitution.<7> Shaykh ʿAlî Sayyid Manşûr, of the Religious Institute of Asyûţ, wrote in:

> "The great masses of the Muslim ʿulamâ' insist that there should be a clause in the constitution that Islam is the state religion, that the Islamic shariʿa should be the source of our fundamental laws, that our socialism should be an Islamic socialism, that our economy should be built on sound foundations, far from exploitation and usury (ribâ), and that there should be penalties to deter all propaganda for permissiveness and the disintegration of our religious and ethical values."<8>

This submission succinctly summarised the demands of the ʿulamâ' which were to be ceaselessly repeated over the next nine years.

There was strong opposition to the urgings of the men of religion from people who desired a more liberal interpretation of the Sharîʿah. Dr. Jamâl al-ʿUţayfî, a member of the Preparatory Committee for the Permanent Constitution, published a controversial essay entitled "The Islamic Sharîʿah and the Permanent Constitution". He was opposed to the idea of the Sharîʿah being made 'the

principal' or 'sole' source of legislation and suggested instead that it be made 'a principal source'. He argued that if the former choices were made it would prevent people from "the effort (ijtihâd) of finding solutions to our problems, and lead to an attitude of blind acquiescence (taqlîd)," that it would also discourage interest in applying modern methods of research and criticism to the sources of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence).<9> Dr. ʿUṭayfî held that current scientific advances, new international relationships, modern economic realities, as well as twentieth-century social problems required a renewed use of ijtihâd -- the interpretation of the sources of Islamic law. He also drew a distinction between the body of the Sharîʿah and its principles. The latter were immutable among the varying interpretations of the different madhâhib (Islamic schools of law) and were applicable for all times and places. As for the Sharîʿah itself, he viewed it as consisting mainly of opinions formulated by the fuqahâ' (jurists) for their own age.<10>

ʿUṭayfî, a member of the government, was exhibiting a modernist attitude towards Islamic law in this, initially promoted in Egypt by Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbduh at the beginning of the century.<11> Anwar al-Sâdât, the man with progressive ideas about Islam who had helped Nâṣir in reorganizing a conservative al-Azhar, seemed to hold similar views. In a message to Muʿammar al-Qadhdhâfî, who was urging him to incorporate the Sharîʿah in the Egyptian body of

legislation, he said:

> "No one quarrels with the assumption that we ought to act according to Islamic Law. The problem is that during the past 14 generations of Islamic History, Islamic Law was given to interpretation by each particular generation."<12>

Therefore, when the new constitution was unveiled in September 1971, it was modernist in orientation. Section I, Article 2 stated that

> "Islâm is the religion of the state; Arabic is its official language; and the principles of the Islâmic sharî'a are a principal source of legislation."<13>

Article 3 proclaimed that the people were the sole source of authority, thus leaving ample scope for secular legislation.

The modernist Pious President had introduced some Islamic clauses into his constitution, but in allowing only a minimal application of the Sharî'ah had resisted the most crucial demands of the 'ulamâ'. This was, however, only to be the first battle in the campaign for the taṭbîq al-Sharî'ah (application of the Sharî'ah). The coming years were to be marked by the relentless lobbying of the 'ulamâ' who were becoming increasingly influential as Sâdât relied on them more and more heavily to act as a buffer against his political and religious opposition.

A major bone of contention between those who favoured a modernist application of Islamic law and the traditionalists was the area of personal law. Family law, according to J.N.D. Anderson "has always represented the very heart of the sharî'ah, for it is this part of the law that is regarded by Muslims as entering into the very warp and woof of their religion."<14> For this reason the men of religion were especially wary of governmental efforts to tamper with this aspect of the law, which had remained intact in the legal system of the country.

In so far as personal law regulated the status and rights of women, it was increasingly coming in conflict with the modern society into which Egyptian women were entering. The debate on this sensitive issue had raged for decades and was one of the major points of discussion before the adoption of the 1971 constitution. There were demands for a new law of personal status to be enacted giving a more equal share of civil rights to women in relation to men. Specific proposals included the abolition of bayt al-tâ'ah -- the law requiring a woman to return to her husband's home in cases of unlawful desertion -- and the regulation of polygamy, divorce and child custody in greater favour of women.<15> As expected, the 'ulamâ' showed strong opposition to these demands for the liberalization of personal law. Shaykh Jamâl al-Dîn Badr, Rector of the Religious Institute of Sûhâj, asserted that the Sharî'ah be "the sole source of the laws of personal status ... and that the liberation of women be

accomplished within the framework of religion."<16> The clause on personal law in the new constitution spelt a victory for the conservative forces. According to Part II, Article 11 of the charter, the woman's position vis-à-vis man, family, and society was to be regulated by the state "without detriment (ikhlâl) to the laws of the Islamic shari'a."<17>

The following years were to a see a struggle between the conservative 'ulamâ' and the modernist government concerning personal law (among other aspects of legislation). One of the reforms initiated by the October Paper of Anwar al-Sâdât (announced in 1974) was that account of all four Sunni madhâhib would be made regarding personal status.<18> In July of the following year, the women's commission of the National Congress of the ASU recommended that a commission composed of the 'men of the Sharî'ah' and experts in economic and social affairs be formed to draft a new law outlining the rights of each member of the family. The government had already prepared a new bill governing personal status, whose important points included new guarantees safeguarding the rights of woman in case of divorce. Reaction from the men of religion was not favourable. The Academy of Islamic Research, a branch of al-Azhar, expressed reservations about the draft law finding it contrary to the Sharî'ah, and it was eventually shelved.<19>

This particular period marked the highpoint of the influence of the 'ulamâ'. Due to the attack by a militant Islamic group on the Military Technical Academy in April 1974, and the severe rioting which had occurred in January and March of 1975<20> the regime of Anwar al-Sâdât was, at this point in time, heavily dependant for political support on the official Islamic establishment of the country. This reliance was particularly evident in the government's seemingly favourable attitude towards the Sharî'ah during these years. On April 15, 1975, when Mamdûḥ Sâlim formed a new government, a committee of the People's Assembly asserted that all legislation be in accordance with Islamic law. And in December, the Ministry of Justice decreed the formation of a ministerial committee to amend a broad range of legislation in line with the Sharî'ah. <21> Also, 1975 being the Year of the Woman, several national and international conferences were held on the role of the woman, where delegate Jihân Sâdât echoed the deference to the 'ulamâ' currently being accorded by her husband's regime. Mrs. Sâdât throughout the year emphasized the role of Islam in elevating the place of woman, rather than calling for the liberalization of the Islamic law governing her status.<22>

The extent to which Anwar al-Sâdât's government paid heed to the demands of the Sharî'ah lobby at a particular time seemed to depend entirely on its current political strength. Although the regime was dominated by persons favouring a

greater involvement of the din in the dawlah than had been the case under President Nâşir, the policy of Science and Faith required a modernist application of Islam to solve the problems of the nation. The regime tried as far as possible not to meet the demands of the 'ulamâ' without losing its image of an Islamically-oriented government. The actual enactment of Sharî'ah legislation was thus proportional to how politically vulnerable the state was at a given time. S.J.M. Martin and R.M. Mas'ad wrote about the situation in 1976:

> "In its (the regime's) eyes the return to Islamic legislation cannot resolve the difficulties of economic, social, and educational organization that it faces. However, for the ruling oligarchy that holds the power, there seem to be only two ways to legitimize its authority: either by success in the secular administration of the nation (though this runs the risk of being labelled 'westernizing' by traditionalist opposition), or by appealing to the spontaneous sentiment of the people which is deeply Islamic. In times of depression, as at present, the second alternative imposes itself. The political power uses the occasion to muzzle the opposition of the left, while at the same time hedges and stalls the demands of the traditionalists by holding up the

presentation of draft laws, by voting picayune amendments, and by neglecting to apply the laws voted."<23>

Other Islamic elements of Egypt, particularly the Ikhwân al-Muslimûn, who once again were becoming influential in the country under the Pious President, the Jamâ'ah al-Islâmîyya, an umbrella organization of Islamic fraternities initially encouraged by the state to combat the influence of the left, and the clandestine movement of Islamic militants were also advocating the adoption of Islamic legislation.<24> In addition to this there was considerable pressure on the Egyptian government from 'Sharî'ah -minded' Arab states, like Saudi Arabia and Libya, to Islamicize its legislation. The leaders of these oil-rich countries had poured a significant amount of financial aid into Egypt and President Sâdât was being constrained to reciprocate in terms of making his state's legislation conform to the Sharî'ah. The former had imposed austere Qur'ânic proscriptions in their respective jurisdictions and

"By their example ... (they represented) a critique of Egypt's Westernized lifestyle, her basic orientation, and her westernized legal and parliamentary systems. The night clubs, bars, liquor stores and cinemas around which much of Egypt's night life revolves ... (could) be an obvious source of embarrassment to a regime whose standard of public morality

> ... (was) being increasingly questioned by the morally strict regimes on Egypt's borders ..."<25>

After the 1973 war, when Saudi aid to Egypt was increased manifold, King Faysal of Saudi Arabia made it a condition of economic assistance that Islamic law be applied in such a way that it eliminate 'socialism' from Egypt's economy, politics and education.<26> The Sâdât regime seems to have felt it prudent at this time of great internal and external pressure to institute Sharî'ah legislation to make a few token gestures in this direction. In February 1976, when an accord in principle was signed for the foundation of an Islamic Bank of King Faysal in Egypt, emphasis was put on the statement that all the transactions of this bank would take place in conformity with the Sharî'ah (-- although the pertinent law was not discussed by the Assembly until 17 months later). This was followed in March by the announcement of a draft law patronized by the Minister of Culture and Information forbidding usury in contracts between individuals. And in May, the People's Assembly approved the law forbidding the sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages in public places. This piece of legislation did not, however, penalize the production nor the commerce of the same , apparently in order to protect the flourishing beer industry of the country. Alcohol could also be sold in 'tourist' establishments, which suddenly

mushroomed throughout the country.<27>

The ministerial committee which had been appointed to look into the Islamicization of laws proposed a strict adherence to the Sharî'ah. It suggested the application of the hudûd punishments, such as the cutting off of the hand and the foot, stoning and flogging,<28> which are recommended in the Qur'ân for certain crimes. The social upheavel caused by the riots of 1977 also led to demands for the introduction of the Islamic criminal code.<29> The government, however, showed no great inclination of instituting the latter.

A law proposed by the commission that the government did actually pass was 'The Law of Apostasy' (riddah). It prescribed severe punishment for a Muslim converting to another religion.<30> The enactment of this law of apostasy from Islam alarmed the other major religious community in Egypt, the Copts. An urgent conference was convened by the Coptic Church to discuss the issue, from which came the appeal to the President to repeal the law.<31> This was in turn followed by the congress of the country's Islamic groups and associations. The latter, held under the patronage of the Shaykh al-Azhar, resolved that

> "any law or regulation which runs counter to the teachings of Islam should be treated as null and void and should be rejected by Moslems. The application of Islamic law is mandatory and not the consequence of

> parlimentary legislation. There can be no questioning God's law. The delay in enacting true Islamic legislation is due to appeasement of non-Moslems, and Parliament should without any further delay pass the legislation which has already been tabled.<32>

The Azharîs had been becoming increasingly vocal as the regime had become more dependent on them for political support. While the Shaykh al-Azhar supported the government against the leftists and the Islamic militants, he also became bolder in his public demands for a return to Islamic legislation. The increasing influence of the 'ulamâ' in the Sâdât government was illustrated in the fact that the ruling party's newspaper, al-Jumhûrîyyah, became, for all practical purposes, a mouthpiece for the Azharî viewpoint.<33> Al-Azhar was also asserting itself through the Academy of Islamic Research and the Dâr al-Fatwâ by drawing up and controlling draft legislation. It formulated a detailed list of proposed laws based on the Sharî'ah and tabled them in the Assembly.<34> Thanks to the generosity of Saudi Arabia al-Azhar was, to a large measure, financially independent of the government, and it remained a strong link with the conservative Arab states which favoured the dominance of traditional Islamic values.<35>

The severing of relations with Egypt by other Arab countries

following Anwar al-Sâdât's signing of the peace treaty with Israel in 1978 eliminated the endowments that had enabled al-Azhar to be financially autonomous of the Egyptian government. With the bastion of the Egyptian 'ulamâ' once again becoming almost completely dependent for funding on his regime, the President began to reassert his modernist vision of Islam. As the traditionalist forces no longer represented an unsurmountable obstacle, he moved swiftly to liberalize parts of Islamic law. In 1979 Sâdât issued as a presidential decree a new personal status law which protected the position of the divorced woman in respect to divorce procedure and alimony. When this law had first been proposed in 1974 opposition from the 'ulamâ' had forced the government to withdraw it. In passing the controversial piece of legislation the President had been able to break the long-standing stalemate on the issue, and was even able to get the Shaykh al-Azhar and the Grand Mufti (the chief expounder of Islamic law in the country) to give their public support for it.<36>

Al-Ra'îs al-Mu'min had thus bidden his time while the men of religion had the upper hand. During this period he had apparently feigned the intention of instituting Islamic legislation in the country while continuing to receive the political support of the Islamic establishment against his opponents. However, when the Azharîs lost their financial strength, the President knew that he no longer needed to put on the pretence of wanting to install the Sharî'ah as the

law of the land to have the support of the former.

Sâdât also saw in the new weakness of the men of religion an opportunity to reorganize them so that they could better serve the interests of the state. In November 1979 he founded the Supreme Muslim Council composed of 50 members representing the 'ulamâ', sufi shaykhs, leaders of Islamic associations and government representatives, under the chairmanship of the Shaykh al-Azhar. The body, which was fully funded by the state, was entrusted with the supervision of all Muslim associations and was to promote Islamic teaching throughout the country. In stating the Council's goals, the government made it quite clear that one of its functions was to overcome the growing opposition from "extremist, religious and subversive groups."<37>

It was the latter who were being recognized at this time as the most dangerous threat to the regime. And it was most likely in a desperate effort to appease them rather than the tamed official Islamic establishment that on May 16, 1980 the Ra'îs al-Mu'min proposed a constitutional amendment making the Sharî'ah the principal source of legislation. The very uncharacteristic and paradoxical statement made on the same day insisting on the separation of religion and state betrayed Sâdât's desperation.<38> It appears that the Pious President had begun to doubt the wisdom of his policy of furthering the unity of dîn wa dawlah, which seemed to have had the unforeseen consequence of the radicalization of his

religious opposition. The proposed amendment seems to have aimed mainly at placating the militant Islamic movement and stemming its proliferation. Therefore, when the major demand of the 'ulamâ' was finally met it was not as a direct result of their ten-year struggle but was given by the President as a sop to the rising threat of radical fundamentalism which lay beyond his control.

The Return of the Brethren

The origins of the upsurge of religiosity in Egypt during the period of the presidency of Anwar al-Sâdât are generally traced back to the military defeat of 1967. As discussed in Chapter I, the humiliating debacle caused intense guilt feelings of having 'betrayed God' during the years of Nâşir's secularist experiment. There appeared a general mood of increased piety among the various sectors of society in both the major religious communities of the nation: Muslim and Christian. An example of the heightened religiosity immediately following the defeat was that of the hundreds of thousands of people (of both faiths) who streamed to a Cairo suburb where "the Virgin Mary appeared in pure light."<39> Attendance for prayers in mosques rose in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, and the new 'tidal wave of religiosity' also took 'retreatist or mystical' forms.<40> The phenomenon was further evidenced in the growth of Islamic literature

and the manifestation of piety even among technocrats, socialists and other previously secular-minded people at dhikr sessions of sufi groups, which also increased dramatically in number.<41>

Sensing the new upsurge in religious sentiment in the nation, the government of Jamâl ʿAbd al-Nâşir set free a large number of the members of the banned Islamic fundamentalist organization, al-Ikhwân al-MuslimÛn (the Muslim Brethren) from prison as "a gesture of Islamic goodwill".<42> The military defeat had, however, been so utter and complete that it had shattered the credibility of the regime, many of whose members happened to be ex-army men who were expected to be able to at least defend the nation's territorial borders. Socialism and Pan-Arabism, the pillars of Nâşir's policy, came into disrepute as a consequence and Egyptians sought a political orientation in which secularism would not be predominant. Before June 1967, Nâşir's revolutionary ideology had seemed to be the answer to the problems of the Arabs, but it failed the ultimate test of maintaining the integrity of the nation in the face of military invasion.

> "Up until 1967, I accepted the way our country was going. I thought Gamal Abd al-Nasir would lead us all to progress. Then the war showed we had been lied to; nothing was the way we were told. I wanted to do something and to find my own way. I prayed

more, and I tried to see what was expected of me as a Muslim woman. Then I put on shari (shar'î) dress.

1967 was the rude awakening. Then in the 1973 War, it seemed that God was answering our prayers. We had become too careless before. Now we want to respond to God with faith."<43>

The partial victory of the Ramaḍân War in 1973 seemed to confirm that the religious path that the nation had adopted since the Pious President's accession in 1970 was the correct one. Thus encouraged, there was nothing to stop the more radical among the religious in attempting to effect a state that was religious in all its aspects. The strongest encouragement had initially come from the new regime itself. Upon coming to power Anwar al-Sâdât had set free the members of the Muslim Brethren still remaining in prison and had proclaimed that the state was to be based on 'Ilm wa Îmân. The government nurtured the growing resurgence of Islamic movements by giving them official and semi-official recognition. In addition to the 'ulamâ' being given a more influential standing in the state, the sufi movement, which had been curbed by the previous regime, was also granted greater freedoms.<44> In 1971, Anwar al-Sâdât and Libya's Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhâfî jointly created a new religious association called the Jamâ'ah al-Islâmîyya on university campuses and factories in Egypt.<45>

The government's encouragement to Islamic groups was aimed at creating a rival force to the leftist groups which had been influential in Nâşir's time. The new regime was weak and remained unknown to most Egyptians in its early years, especially before 1973. Sâdât had hit upon Islam as a rallying cry in his search for legitimacy for his leadership. He sought to create a new power base dependent on the traditional Islamic establishment consisting of the 'ulamâ' and the rural elite and on new organizations like al-Jamâ'ah al-Islâmîyya which he hoped would counter the strength of the Nâşirîs and the Marxists in the urban areas. The Ra'îs al-Mu'min presented himself as the leader of the Islamic forces and appeared to champion their causes.

A major step taken by the government in establishing its 'Islamic base' was the reconciliation with the fundamentalist Ikhwân al-Muslimûn. There had been considerable agitation within the Sâdât cabinet to effect a rapprochement with the body outlawed by President Nâşir.<46> King Fayşal of Saudi Arabia, where many of the Egyptian Brethren were in exile, had arranged the initial contacts between the Sâdât government and members of the Ikhwân in 1971; and in June 1975, the news of the reconstitution of the organization of the Muslim Brethren in Egypt was announced by a Mecca-based journal.<47> The Saudis, who were also supporting the Azharî 'ulamâ', thus seemed to have relentlessly pursued the policy of furthering the cause of Islamic groups in the most populous Arab country.

The Brethren were initially suspicious of Sâdât's intentions, for the general trend of Egyptian politics since the Revolution of 1952 had gone against their favour. They were finally persuaded by ʿUthman Aḥmad ʿUthman, the confidant of Sâdât whose contracting business in other Arab countries had employed exiled members of the group, to return to Egypt.<48> The new President's actions, particularly the release of their imprisoned comrades in May 1971, had also served to appease them. Sâdât had, however, only released the Ikhwân members after first suppressing the leftist 'power centres'. Having presided at the trials of the Brethren in 1954, he appeared to want to avoid having to deal with a powerful left on one side and the Brethren on the other. Even when he did allow the Muslim Brethren to reform in Egypt he limited their status to that of a non-political organization. Nevertheless, Sâdât saw in them a valuable ally in his endeavour to suppress the common foes, for 1975 also witnessed the revival of the Egyptian Communist Party.<49>

The major concession granted by the government to the reconstituted Ikhwân in July 1976 was the permission to resume the publication of their newspaper, al-Daʿwah, after a 20-year ban.<50> (Members of the group also produced a paper called al-Iʿtiṣâm. <51>) As was to be expected, al-Daʿwah attacked the Nâṣir regime's policies. What may have proved surprising to the current government, however, was that the paper did not restrain itself either when it

disagreed with the former. With this stance it acquired the status of an opposition journal as well as a religious one, and claimed a wide readership with circulation reaching 150,000 by 1980.<52> The paper was also read and appreciated by the Islamic militants who were more radical in their fundamentalism than the Muslim Brethren, in addition to their own internal literature.<53>

Al-Da'wah declared its objectives as being three-fold: to explain the teachings of Islam, to refute the accusations against the Ikhwân al-Muslimûn, and to advocate the return to Islam's ethics and politics.<54> A major theme of the paper was the call to the government to apply the Sharî'ah and the nullification of all existing legislation in conflict with it. The first issue of the revived newspaper carried the editorial, "In the Name of the Constitution We Call for an Islamic Law."<55> It severely criticized the laxity of the government in applying Islamic laws like fasting during the month of Ramaḍân and the prohibition of alcohol. The fundamentalist journal also wrote against the proliferation of pornography in the cinema and television and 'atheist' ideas in newspapers and books, railing against what it saw as the social and moral degradation of Egyptian society due to the invasion of the latter by the Western-Christian forces.

The infitâḥ ('open-door') policy of President Sâdât was blamed by the Da'wah for creating an economic order which

only benefited the foreigners and the upper classes while creating false expectations and consumerist attitudes among the poor masses. The entire education system of Egypt was assailed for not properly teaching classical Arabic to the youth and the state broadcast media for giving excessive air time to popular music and not enough to religious topics. The August 1977 issue carried a tirade against the birth control policies of the state written by the Shaykh al-Azhar.<56> It seemed that the official Islamic establishment and the Ikhwân were uniting to exert severe pressure for Islamicization on the regime which had come to rely on them for support. The Pious President was therefore put in the impossible position of not being able to denounce those groups whose ideals he was supposed to have espoused. He appeared to have miscalculated the Brethren's commitment to their own beliefs and principles and found himself paying dearly for their support against the leftists.

The ferocity of the Brethren's newspaper's criticism of the government only grew with the Camp David accord which President Sâdât signed with Israel and the U.S.A. The Ikhwân had been at the forefront of the battle against the Zionists since 1948, when their secret army, al-Jawwâlah, had distinguished itself with the courage that its members had displayed.<57> Ever since its re-appearance, al-Da'wah had continually assailed Israel and urged jihâd against it. In a special editorial dealing with the Camp David treaty 'Umar al-Tilmisânî, the current head of the Brethren, severely

criticized the agreement as it failed to explicitly compel Israel to withdraw from Muslim Jerusalem; a month later the paper announced that the accord with Israel was forbidden according to the Qur'ân.<58> Sâdât had been able to extract the blessings of the Azharî 'ulamâ' for his accord, but had failed in muzzling the criticism of the more independent-minded Brethren, whom he was now forced to publicly denounce. He accused the Ikhwân al-Muslimûn of seeking to create a state within a state, and issued a warning against attempts at 'mixing religion and politics'.<59> This marked a changing attitude on the part of al-Ra'îs al-Mu'min toward his Islamic supporters, as it appeared that his policy of seeking to unite the dîn and the dawlah had backfired upon him.

However, al-Da'wah's criticism of Sâdât went on to become even more direct. The paper had consistently supported the Islamic revolution of 1979 in Iran, of which the Egyptian President had made known his extreme disapproval, and when the latter invited the homeless Shâh to Egypt it lashed out at his decision.<60> In the July and August 1979 issues there were essays criticizing the parliamentary deliberations to change the personal status law.<61> This particular bill, as discussed above, was of great concern to Sâdât, who eventually issued it as a presidential decree. Al-Da'wah also made accusations of a conspiracy between the CIA, Israel and the Sâdât regime against Islamic movements, including the Muslim Brethren, in Egypt. In denying this

charge the Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister said that, "anti-Muslim evil scheming hands are behind this .... (Their) aim is to foment sedition, which we hope God Almighty will spare the Islamic nations ..."<62> This tactic of reversing the charge onto 'anti-Muslim' quarters seems to have been the Pious President's government's way of refuting the accusation from an Islamic organization while affirming its own religiosity.

Despite their barrage of vituperation against the state the Ikhwân al-Muslimûn under al-Tilmisânî were never openly rebellious against the regime. The reconstituted organization had made its peace with the Sâdât regime and it functioned like an unofficial opposition party which did not seek to overthrow the government by violent means, as it had attempted to do in Nâşir's time. Although their views about Islam remained fundamentalist in orientation and they continued to disagree strongly with the Egyptian government, they no longer saw themselves as political revolutionaries. They did not, on the other hand, entirely abandon their goal of making Egypt an Islamic state; this was, however, to be attained apparently through influencing public opinion rather than violence. Therefore, in accordance with this policy, the moderate Brethren generally stayed aloof from the religious strife that was convulsing the country in the latter part of Anwar al-Sâdât's rule.

State-Sponsored Fundamentalism

The Jamâ'ah al-Islâmîyya, whom Anwar al-Sâdât had helped found, also became increasingly vociferous in their condemnation of the government despite receiving support in cash and kind from prominent members of the regime. This movement can be best described as a loose umbrella organization linking its various branches.

> "Collectively known as the gama'at al-islamiya, the Islamic society, this was like a large river in full flow in which separate islands could from time to time be seen raising their heads above the surface."<63>

The Jamâ'ah were organized in smaller units called usar, each of which had a different role: the study of fiqh, arranging lectures, diffusion of the faith, making outside contacts etc. The individual groups were each under an amîr and generally met once a week.<64>

The Jamâ'ah can be described as fundamentalist in their understanding and interpretation of Islam, and looked with disdain at any ideology that smacked of secularism or 'atheism'. They became particularly prominent in universities, where they formed a rival force to the Nâşirîs and the Marxists who had long dominated student politics. Whereas the latter were supported by professors and worker groups, the new Islamic fraternities received assistance

from the militant Islamic organizations in the country, from certain Arab regimes seeking to promote the conservative view of Islam in Egypt, and from the Egyptian government.<65> The anti-leftist regime was eager to sustain the Jamâ'ah with material support: Sâdât's right hand man (and patron of the Ikhwân) 'Uthmân Aḥmad 'Uthmân, and Muḥammad 'Uthmân Ismâ'îl, the Governor of Asyût and Secretary-General of the Socialist Union, were the most prominent benefactors of the new Muslim groups. They are reported to have supplied armaments as well as money to the militants among the Jamâ'ah, and Ismâ'îl even made available police facilities for them to train in.<66>

In time, the strength of the Jamâ'ah al-Islâmîyya became increasingly visible in mosques, public buses and on street corners. These Islamic groups established societies for studying the Qur'ân and social centres which attracted the migrants in cities. They also distributed food and clothes to the needy, thus making a positive impression on the impoverished sections of urban society.<67>

The female members of the Jamâ'ah expressed their orthodox religious orientation through their dressing. They wore a form of a veil which exceeded the traditional Islamic requirements of modest female attire and which appeared to be cumbersome and uncomfortable in the hot climate of Egypt.<68> But this al-ziyy al-shar'i ('lawful dress'), as it was termed, became prevalent among the women of the

Jamâ'ah. John Alden Williams sees this phenomenon as an expression of fundamentalist behaviour:

> "the woman who appears in ziyy shari is evincing an aspiration to dress counter to recent norms of clothing, and claiming to be more observant of the Law than other women. To this extent, then, we may perhaps label this fundamentalist behaviour. A fundamentalist in Islam, as in Christianity and perhaps in other religious traditions as well, sees him/herself as trying to right a wrong turn in history; as sitting in judgment of his/her society, and critical of the way it appears to be going."<69>

Although the activities of the Jamâ'ah were apparent in various parts of urban society, the university campuses, however, remained the areas of greatest influence for the movement. More and more places were being set aside for prayer, and frequent exhibitions of Islamic literature were held by student usar on university grounds.<70> The Jamâ'ah had attained a majority in student union elections by 1977 on most campuses. Their overwhelming strength was illustrated in the 1978 election results in Alexandria University where the "candidates from the Islamic Association won all sixty places in the Faculties of Medicine and Engineering, forty-seven out of forty-eight in the Faculty of Law, and forty-three out of sixty in the

Faculty of Pharmacy:"<71> These new student bodies quickly began to assert their conservative view of Islam on campuses. They made demands on the type of curriculum they wanted their institutions to adopt and, in order to illustrate their growing power, even used violence to discourage the consorting of the sexes and the holding of musical or any other entertainment events on university grounds.<72>

As early as 1972 a student had stabbed another after a demonstration in favour of religious and national values. An official report stated that "this followed an argument in which a woman student blasphemed and denied the existence of God."<73> Another Jamâ'ah student involved in a similar incident said to the police that he was instructed by the Socialist Union to defend religion and fight atheism, communism and Nâşirism. He was reportedly released through the intervention of Muḥammad 'Uthmân Ismâ'îl, the head of the Socialist Union.<74>

In time, government control over the Jamâ'ah loosened as they became increasingly radical in their attitudes. Members of the movement took part in the 1977 food riots, concentrating their attacks on nightclubs and casinos; and in 1979 they protested against the Camp David treaty by organizing massive demonstrations that turned into riots in which government officials, secularist professors and Christian students were assaulted.<75> In March the

following year, the Jamâ'ah al-Islâmîyya held a major conference at Asyûṭ to condemn President Sâdât's offer of refuge to the deposed Shah of Iran, which was followed in April by protest meetings in Cairo and Alexandria. These demonstrations also broke out into violent skirmishes.<76>

As the Jamâ'ah were independent of the official Islamic establishment, they were under little constraint to express their views as they saw fit. In an exhibition of their increasing power, the Jamâ'ah took over some important mosques in Cairo and invited people to join them in prayers during the principal Muslim festivals. In a particular show of strength, a crowd of some 400,000 mostly young men assembled for prayers in the public square facing the presidential palace, on the occasion of the 'Îd al-Aḍḥâ in 1980.<77> Therefore, even more than with the Ikhwân al-Muslimûn, the Pious President was put in the position of not being able to suppress the very force which his own government had fostered.

The indecisive actions of Anwar al-Sâdât towards the increasingly audacious and defiant attitude of the Jamâ'ah may have been due to the strong influence of their patrons like Aḥmad 'Uthmân and 'Uthmân Ismâ'îl. The former consistently refused to condemn the militants publicly, instead choosing to put the blame for the disturbances that they created on 'communists and Nâṣirîs'<78>, who, ironically, were supposed to represent the forces which he

had hoped to neutralize with the presence of the Islamic groups. Despite increasing evidence to the contrary, the President seems to have believed that the Jamâ'ah members were of value to him and had to be protected. Even though Sâdât did dissolve the student religious associations in May 1980, when in the following year the Socialist Prosecutor complained to him about the continuing power of the militant students he responded by ordering the release of some of them who were then under arrest.<80>

However, insofar as the Jamâ'ah al-Islâmîyya, like the Muslim Brethren, were making known by word and deed their disapproval of the existing situation without subversive intentions against the government, they can be looked upon as an opposition movement -- albeit a militant one. Individual members of the Jamâ'ah may have also been involved with the covert, clandestine groups which advocated the forcible establishment of an Islamic state, but the movement as a whole remained within the fringes of the national political spectrum. The Jamâ'ah stood in the grey area between the semi-official, respectable fundamentalists like al-Ikhwân al-Muslimûn, who had exchanged the gun for the pen, and the illegal, seditious 'neofundamentalists', who were characterized by their violent militancy. The state had envisioned the role of the al-Jamâ'ah al-Islâmîyya to be the dissemination and support of its anti-leftist and anti-secularist message at the mass urban level. However, the movement, which was fundamentalist in orientation,

seemed to attain a life of its own and fed upon the momentum of its own criticism of the regime which to it appeared unsufficiently committed to the cause of Islam.

Notes: Chapter III

<1> Nazih Ayubi, "The Political Revival of Islam: The Case of Egypt, IJMES, 12:4 (Dec. 1980), 488. Also see Cemam Report, 4 (1976): Islamic Law and Change in Arab Society (Beirut: Dar el-Mashreq, 1978), p. 52 and Gabriel R. Warburg, "Islam and Politics in Egypt: 1952-1980," MES, 18:2 (April, 1982), 138.

<2> Warburg, 139. Also see Fazlur Rahman, Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 104.

<3> Cemam 4, p. 210.

<4> Warburg, 139.

<5> Ibid., 152 and Mohamed Heikal, Autumn of Fury: The Assassination of Sadat (London: Andre Deutsch, 1983), p. 221.

<6> Joseph P. O'Kane, "Islam in the Egyptian Constitution," MEJ, 26:2 (Spring 1972), 137.

<7> Ibid., 138.

<8> Ibid., 139.

<9> O'Kane, 141.

<10> Ibid., 142-44.

<11> See Albert Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1983) and Charles C. Adams, Islam and Modernism in Egypt (London: OUP, 1933). For a brief discussion attempting to define Islamic modernism see R. Stephen Humphries, "Islâm and Political Values in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria," MEJ, 33:1 (Winter 1979), 4-5.

<12> Raphael Israeli, The Public Diary of President Sadat (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), II, p. 542.

<13> O'Kane, 148. Also see Warburg, 138. For an English translation of the full text of the 1971 Constitution see "The New Egyptian Constitution," MEJ, 26:1 (Winter 1972), 55-68.

<14> J.N.D. Anderson, Islamic Law in the Modern World (New York: NYU Press, 1959), p. 39.

<15> O'Kane, 139-140.

<16> Ibid., 140.

<17> Ibid., 148.

<18> Cemam 4, pp. 49, 68-69.

<19> Ibid., 50-51.

<20> Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups: Methodological Note and Preliminary Findings," IJMES, 12:4 (Dec. 1980), 425; and Cemam 4, pp. 49 and 57.

<21> Cemam 4, pp. 49-51.

<22> Ibid., pp. 128-31.

<23> Ibid., p. 59.

<24> For a discussion on the activities of the Ikhwân al-Muslimûn and the Jamâ'ah al-Islâmîyya see the following two sections of this chapter.

<25> Daniel Crecelius, "The Course of Secularization in Modern Egypt," in Islam and Development: Religion and Sociopolitical Change, ed. by John L. Esposito (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1980), p. 69.

<26> Ghali Shoukri, Egypt: Portrait of a President (London: Zed Press, 1981), p. 168.

<27> Cemam 4, p. 53; Portrait, pp. 168-69.

<28> Cemam 4, pp. 51-52.

<29> Ibid., p. 57.

<30> Heikal, Autumn of Fury, pp. 217-18. Also see Portrait, pp. 290-92.

<31> Autumn, pp. 217-18; Portrait, pp. 290-92.

<32> Autumn, pp. 218-19.

<33> Cemam 4, p. 71.

<34> Ibid., p. 58. For an English translation of the full text of the draft laws drawn up by the Azharîs, see Portrait, pp. 443-447.

<35> In 1971, King Fayṣal had offered Shaykh Maḥmûd $100 million "to be spent on a campaign against atheism and for the triumph of Islam." Autumn, pp. 115-16; cf. Cemam 4, pp. 57-58.

<36> Herbert J. Liebesny, "Judicial Systems in the Near and Middle East: Evolutionary Development and Islamic Revival," MEJ, 37:2 (Spring 1983), 204-5.

<37> Warburg, 139.

<38> Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups," 451 and Autumn, p. 214.

<39> Ayubi, "The Political Revival of Islam," 489-90.

<40> Ibrahim, 435 and 438.

<41> Ayubi, 487-88.

<42> R. Hrair Dekmejian, Egypt under Nasir: A Study in Political Dynamics (Albany: SUNY Press, 1971), p. 338.

<43> John Alden Williams, "Veiling in Egypt as a Political and Social Phenomenon," in Islam and Development: Religion and Sociopolitical Change, ed. by John L. Esposito (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1980), p. 82

<44> Ayubi, 487.

<45> Judith Tucker, "While Sadat Shuffles: Economic Decay, Political Ferment in Egypt," MERIP Reports, No. 65, 8:2 (March 1978), 6.

<46> Shoukri, Portrait, p. 244.

<47> Autumn, p. 116 and Portrait, p. 244.

<48> Autumn, p. 117

<49> Portrait, p. 244.

<50> Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "The Islamic Resurgence: Sources, Dynamics, and Implications," in Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World, ed. by Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 18.

<51> Autumn, p.117.

<52> Dessouki, p. 20.

<53> Ayubi, 499.

<54> Dessouki, p. 20.

<55> Ibid.

<56> Ibid., p. 21 and Warburg, 148-49.

<57> Warburg, 150.

<58> Ibid., 151.

<59> Ibid.

<60> Dessouki, p. 21 and Ibrahim, 428.

<61> Dessouki, p. 20.

<62> Warburg, 150.

<63> Autumn, p. 221.

<64> Cemam 4, p. 209.

<65> Ibid., p. 210; Williams, "Veiling in Egypt," pp. 80-81; and Tucker, "While Sadat Shuffles," 6.

<66> Portrait, p. 72.

<67> Hamied N. Ansari, "The Islamic Militants in Egyptian Politics," IJMES, 16 (1984), 128-29.

<68> Williams, pp. 74 and 76. It is interesting to note that the wearing of al-ziyy al-shar'ī was prevalent mainly among certain middle class women in cities. Their lower class counterparts in the cities and townswomen, on the other hand, aspired to having western-style wardrobes, and the womenfolk of the villages wore the traditional forms of the veil rather than the constraining fundamentalist brand. Op cit., p. 75.

<69> Ibid., p. 75.

<70> Crecelius, "The Course of Secularization," p. 68; Ayubi, 491.

<71> Autumn, p. 133.

<72> Ibid., p. 134

<73> Portrait, p. 113.

<74> Ibid., p. 72.

<75> Ayubi, 492.

<76> Ibid., 493 and Ansari, "Islamic Militants," 126.

<77> Autumn, p. 134.

<78> Ibid., p. 109.

<79> Autumn, p. 134.

Chapter IV

Militant Neofundamentalism

The Nature of the Islamic Neofundamentalism

The existence of organized militant and radical Islamic fundamentalism in the Egypt of the 1970s is often confused by observers with the more moderate manifestations of the phenomenon in the forms of the better-known groups like the Ikhwân al-Muslimûn and the Jamâ'ah al-Islâmîyya. The movement has been given different names by various writers: 'neofundamentalists',<1> 'neo-Ikhwan',<2> 'neo-Mahdists',<3> 'jihâd groups',<4> 'Islamic militants',<5> 'militant Jama'ât'. <6> Although they had connections with both, the Ikhwân and the Jamâ'ah, the neofundamentalists formed a distinct movement within the general resurgence of Islamic feeling in Egypt. They could be described as representing the most extreme form of Islamic fundamentalism in the country at this time. This radical grouping had no ties with the government unlike the other two organizations; indeed, it actively sought to unseat the regime in power.

The clandestine, militant groups operated in great secrecy, and as a result of this there remains considerable confusion about their respective identities, membership, origins, ideologies and modes of operation. There is obfuscation even about the names of the specific groups within this amorphous underground movement and the relations between them.<7> Among the units which have been identified are al-Jihâd; al-I'tiṣâm <8>; Jund Allâh; Hizb al-Taḥrîr al-Islâmî <9>; Shabâb Muḥammad (also known as Munaẓẓamat

al-Taḥrîr al-Islâmî <10> and as al-Jamâ'ah al-Fannîyya al-'Askariyya); Jamâ'at al-Muslimîn (also known as Jamâ'at al-Takfîr wa'l Hijra <11>) and Tanzîm al-Jihâd. <12> There were scattered confrontations between government forces and these and other militant neofundamentalist groups, but it was the last three of the above-mentioned organizations that attracted the widest publicity. The serious clashes between a militant group and the security services usually ended in the complete suppression of the former by the latter, with the captured rebels either being sentenced to long terms in jail or to death. However, Sa'ad al-Dîn Ibrâhîm contends that for "every group that is liquidated two or three organizations emerge spontaneously."<13> The appeal of these groups to the individuals who were particularly affected by the economic and social deprivation was great, and such people were the prime potential recruits from amongst the disaffected of Egypt.

The ideology of the neofundamentalists was strongly influenced by the writings of Sayyid Quṭb,<14> a former leader of the Ikhwân al-Muslimûn in Egypt, and of Abû'l-A'lâ Mawdûdî,<15> who had founded the fundamentalist Jama'ât-e-Islâmî in India and Pakistan. It was the avowed objective of the Egyptian neofundamentalists to force the political élite of the country, whom they viewed as corrupt and un-Islamic, either to conform to the precepts and edicts of Islam or be overthrown. Among the basic concepts that the neofundamentalists shared with the fundamentalists were

that there were eternal and unchanging behavorial features that Muslims shared at all times and places, and that Muslims constituted an undifferentiated entity that transcended variations in social status, culture and national origins. They applied to this vision of Islam as a monolith an eclectic perception of Islamic history, holding that their image of 'true Islam' was practised when the religion was in its period of glory.<16> Islam, as they perceived it, became the ideology and the rallying cry of the just state which they hoped to usher.

Therefore, if Islam and its symbols were used by Anwar al-Sâdât to acquire legitimacy for his leadership of Egypt, then the same were being employed by his opponents to call for an end to his rule. ʿAlî Hilâl Dusûqî attempts to analyze this phenomenon in th following manner:

> "there are two basic distinctions that must be drawn at the outset of any substantive discussion of Islamic resurgence. The first is made between the resort to Islam by governments or ruling classes and by the opposition or dissident groups, which I call Islam from above and Islam from below. In the contemporary Arab world, Islam appears both as an apology for the status quo and as a regime-challenging ideology."<17>

Al-Ra'îs - al-Mu'min spoke of applying the Sharî'ah and declared Islam as the religion of the state, and the Islamic fundamentalists also spoke of applying the Sharî'ah and of making Egypt an Islamic state. Both had their own understanding of Islam and its place in the state, and each side strove to make its own vision of the ideal state acceptable to Egyptians. Ghâlî Shukrî attempts to untangle the apparent paradox of the Pious President's regime's involvement in supporting the Islamically-inclined forces and its conflict with other groups who also leaned toward Islam, from his viewpoint:

> "The action adopted by the regime against the armed extremist organizations shows that the struggle for power even within the coalition which holds it is far from over. On the other hand, certain individuals in the regime, known historically for having set up religious cadres, have deliberately provoked religious troubles and discredited the left, are associated with the reasons for the presence of such extremist organisations. But most striking is that the coalition in power, composed of rich people from the countryside and the import-export brokers, had two contradictory ideologies. Agricultural capitalism and bureaucracy prefer to be cushioned by religion. The parasites, however, prefer consumer values, pleasures

> and amusements, and all that is forbidden by religion. One takes the mosque as its fortress, the other the nightclub .... In Egypt, one conservative party supports religious officials, the information media and some members of parliament; the other supports the extremist organisations; and a third party supports the Wafdist right."<18>

Shukrî's assumption here is that the regime, or certain members of it, had control over the militant neofundamentalists. He, like some other observers,<19> confuses the Jamâ'ah al-Islâmîyya, who did have connections with certain individual members of the government, with the neofundamentalists, who operated as a secret and clandestine movement.

There were similarities in the basic ideology of the militants and the other Islamic groups, like the 'ulamâ', the Ikhwân and the Jamâ'ah, who agitated for the establishment of an Islamic state in Egypt and the adoption of the Sharî'ah as the national code of legislation. However, the former had developed a more radical and uncompromising stance towards the existing state of affairs and the manner in which it could be replaced by an Islamic order. Ḥamîd Anṣârî summarises the difference between the two as follows:

"(1) the rules according to which the society is governed; (2) the link between personal belief and the exercise of authority; (3) the legitimacy of armed revolt against the established government; and (4) conduct toward and relations with non-Muslims."<20>

These points of contention among the 'Islamic moderates' and the neofundamentalists became apparent in the conflict between the two. The neofundamentalists severely criticized the official Islamic establishment of the country of having sold out to the regime. The 'ulamâ' were seen by them as a group of state employees and were termed as babbaghawât al-manâbir ('pulpit parrots'), who were "the greatest obstacle" in attaining the Islamic revolution in Egypt.<21> The endorsement by the Azharîs of first the policies of Nâşir and later those of Sâdât had caused the loss of credibility in them, and they appeared to the militants to be hypocrites and opportunists who were willing to pass fatwâs (religious edicts) to suit the government on whose payroll they currently were.

Neofundamentalists refused to pray behind state-approved imâms (prayer leaders) and stayed away from mosques taken over by the government. With the general Islamic resurgence in the country, the number of private mosques had increased two-fold between 1970 and 1981.<22> As a result, the mosque take-over programme of the Ministry of Awqâf was unable to

meet its objective of 'nationalizing' all the private mosques in the land. The militants went to the latter places of worship, some of which had independent-minded and charismatic preachers who criticized the regime. The private mosques became recruiting grounds for neofundamentalist groups: it was at the local mosque at Bûlâq al-Dakrûr, a suburb of Cairo, where a leader of the Tanzîm al-Jihâd first met Khâlid Islâmbûlî, the man who led the assassination squad against President Sâdât.<23> A report on communal clashes at Minyâ, a centre of neofundamentalist activity, stated that only one-fourth of its 2,000 mosques were under the control of officially approved imâms. <24>

The shaykh of the mosque was increasingly becoming the symbol of moral authority as the image of the government declined through the spread of corruption.<25> Since the time of Nâşir the Ministry of Awqâf had sent out a model sermon for the Friday Khuṭbah, giving instructions on the subjects to be preached. But some of the bolder shaykhs in the villages and in the cities began to stray from the official guidelines and started to broach forbidden topics like the Shâh of Iran and corruption in the country. Among the more popular vituperative preachers were the shaykhs Kishk (of Qubba Mosque in Cairo), Maḥallâwî (of Ibrâhîm Mosque in Alexandria) 'Îd (of Hidâyah Mosque in Alexandria)<26>, Salâmah (in Suez)<27>, Imâm<28> and al-Ghazzâlî<29>. In many cases the inflammatory khuṭbas were recorded on tape cassettes and circulated widely, as had

happened with the sermons of the exiled Âyatullâh Khumaynî before the Iranian Revolution.<30> Shaykh ʿId also invited prominent intellectuals to speak on current affairs to the congregation in the mosque. Thus, "the mosques had not only usurped the authority of the old religious establishment, but were performing the critical function which, in the days of greater freedom, had belonged to the newspapers."<31> Even in this aspect of opposition to the government, it was religion that became the medium for expression in the face of the regime's censorship of the mass media.

The official ʿulamâ', as was to be expected, were highly critical of the activities of the neofundamentalists. After the first major incident in which a militant Islamic group, Shabâb Muḥammad, attacked the Military Technical Academy in 1974, some Azharîs wrote articles accusing the young rebels of being atheists.<32> Al-Azhar initiated a campaign against the militants and warned people not to confuse religion with those who exploited it for political purposes. Among the more vocal critic of the neofundamentalists from the ʿulamâ' was Dr. Ḥusayn al-Dhahabî, who also happened to be the Minister of Awqâf in the Sâdât regime. It was Dhahabî who was made the target of a kidnap-murder in July 1977 by the Takfîr wa'l Hijra. <33> By acting against a man who was a representative of both, the Islamic establishment as well as the government, the militant group was exhibiting its contempt for the two institutions at the same time.

The militant groups also viewed the current members of al-Ikhwân al-Muslimûn as having betrayed the original purpose of their movement. Ḥasan al-Bannâ', the founder of the Muslim Brethren was admired by the neofundamentalists, but they denounced the current state of accommodation that existed between the Ikhwân under al-Tilmisânî and the Sâdât regime. A major point of ideological divergence between the militants and the Brethren was the question of al-takfîr, which Ḥamîd N. Anṣârî describes as "the apellation of unbelief (kufr), the awesome weapon which confers legitimacy on armed revolt."<34> The neofundamentalists viewed the members of the regime as having commited the cardinal sin of kufr in betraying Islam by not implementing it faithfully in Egypt.

A pamphlet written by a member of the Tanzîm al-Jihâd titled al-Farîḍah al-Ghâ'ibah, <35> also stressed the importance of the concept of al-ḥâkimiyya, the rule of God on earth. Sayyid Quṭb, a previous leader of the Brethren, had advocated this principle in the early 1960s and was the first to brand society and its leaders as unbelievers living in jâhilîyya (the pre-Islamic state of ignorance).<36> The leadership of the Ikhwân, however, had moderated their militant views upon the accession of the Pious President who appeared to be championing Islam.

> "The moderate elements rejected the widespread belief among the militants that the only way to deal with the authorities was

> to oppose violence with violence. In an interview with Mayo, the newspaper of the ruling party, Tilmisani remarked that 'while some Muslim Brethren decided to bear in silence their sufferings under their oppressors, others decided to take an independent course of action'. As a proof of their moderation the Ikhwan pointed out that Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the movement, settled the question of takfir when he said that 'al-kufr means the open denial of the existence of God. Therefore, no Muslim who pronounced al-Shahada (the Islamic profession of faith affirming the unity God) can be accused of unbelief even if he committed a grave sin.' Similar opinions were expressed by other prominent Ikhwan leaders such as al-Hudaibi who argued in his book Du'a la Quda (literally, Propagandists, not Judges) that "one must not sit in judgement over the belief of others, including the rulers."<37>

The militants' doctrine also sanctioned the taking of booty from non-Mulims. This resulted in attacks on churches and other Christian property, particularly jewellery stores, in different parts of the country.<38> While, in seeking to be sanctioned by the state as an official political party, the Ikhwân al-Muslimûn had publicly affirmed their harmonious

stance vis-à-vis the Copts.<39>

Despite these crucial ideological differences between the two Islamic movements there remained two kinds of links binding their respective membership. The first was that some of the neofundamentalists were former Brethren who had served long prison terms under Nâşir's rule and had become embittered and militant, developing a 'Manichaen' view of the world. Secondly, the members of Ikhwân who became disenchanted with the modus vivendi arrived at between the moderates and the Sâdât government also adopted a radical stance.<40>

There were also similarities in the factors which led to the rising of the two movements and the backgrounds of their respective memberships. They had both risen in times of national crisis. Besides the continuing torment over the war with the Zionists, the Ikhwân and the neofundamentalists were deeply perturbed by the presence of other alien forces in the nation:

> "There seems also to be, in each case an acute national crisis intertwined with social and psychological frustration. (With the Muslim Brethren there were the British occupying the country.) ... during the late 1960s and the 1970s there was a national defeat (1967), followed by an increasing foreign presence (Russians, then Americans),

> hardening of the social and political arteries of the country (as upward mobility and political participation significantly diminished), soaring inflation, dim future prospects for the youngest and the brightest members of the middle and the lower middle classes."<41>

Interestingly enough, the 'wanted list' of fugitive Brethren issued in 1954 by the government listed men with backgrounds remarkably similar to the membership of the 'neo-Ikhwân': students, technicians, police and army officers, labourers, and the unemployed.<42>

The Muslim Brethren had, however, taken a longer time (10 years) to prepare themselves and had attained a membership of about one million before openly confronting the government.<43> They had also been fortunate in having had a string of remarkably intelligent leaders following the founder of the movement, Ḥasan al-Bannâ', who had succeeded in laying a solid foundation. The movement, which had been banned for a period of time, was thus able to re-appear on the national scene, albeit in a moderate form. The neofundamentalists, on the other hand, were unable to attract large numbers because of their radical positions and modes of operation, nor had the individual groups prepared well enough before launching their respective challenges on the government. Hence, although the Takfîr wa'l-Hijra was able to kidnap a member of Sâdât's cabinet (Dhahabî) and the

Tanzîm al-Jihâd succeeded in assassinating the President himself,<44> these spectacular incidents ended in the virtual extinction of the two groups without the attainment of their objective of overthrowing the regime. Their extremist ideas also failed to effect a popular revolution of the kind which occurred in Iran.

> "The militant view is confined to a segment of the population on the margin of urban society. It has no impact either on the urban masses or the traditional rural society. Islamic militancy is especially appealing to the young men or to the rural immigrants who become caught in the web of an urban society whose most manifest feature is the unbridled consumerism resulting from the liberalization policy initiated by Sâdât. For this segment of the population which is experiencing an acute sense of deprivation, the resort to Islam was more a sign of social protest than a way of life."<45>

Structural Conduciveness Factors

While the 'modernization' theories of the 1950s and the 1960s had tended to ignore Islam as an important socio-political force in the Muslim world, with the current resurgence in the active reassertion of Islamic groups "there is inherent danger of an 'academic overreaction' or an 'intellectual backlash' that exaggerates, mystifies, or metaphysicalizes the Islamic 'comeback'"<46> It is thus important to study the causes which led to the latter phenomenon in its various manifestations through a careful perusal of concrete data. There were numerous factors which coalesced to create the rise of militant neofundamentalism in Egypt, of which certain reasons can be identified as setting the potential for the phenomenon and others as actually leading to its materialization. In his endeavour to analyze the general resurgence of Islam in the 1970s, 'Alî Hilâl Dusûqî divides its causes under the two categories of 'structural conduciveness' and 'precipitatory factors':

> "One can argue that the 'society in crisis' created the necessary but not the sufficient conditions for Islamic resurgence. We have to distinguish two sets of factors in interpreting the phenomenon: those responsible for establishing the milieu in which Islamic resurgence can develop and prosper (these may be called the structural conduciveness factors) and those acting as a

> trigger to the emergence, reappearance, or strengthening of Islamic groups (the precipitatory factors). The crisis variables did create structural conduciveness, but other supportive, precipitatory factors were needed to trigger the situation."<47>

Among the primary structural conduciveness factors for the rise of Islamic militancy in Egypt were the prevailing socio-economic conditions. The phenomenal growth in the rate of urbanization in the country had caused severe problems of social, psychological and economic adjustment for the millions of migrants who flocked from the countryside to the cities.<48> Neofundamentalism was especially strong in the burgeoning urban centres of Upper Egypt, particularly in the provincial capitals such as Asyûţ, whose population doubled in the past two decades. Enrollment at Asyûţ University, a major breeding ground for Islamic militancy, jumped from about 15,000 in 1971/72 to 28,000 students in 1976/77. Asyûţ, together with another provincial capital of Minyâ, had the highest share of communal disturbances.<49> The former city was also the venue for the massive Jamâ'ah al-Islâmîyya conference held in March 1980 to protest Sâdât's offer of asylum to the Shâh of Iran. It was at this particular time that the leaders of Tanzîm al-Jihâd from all over the country reportedly met together for the first time in same city.<50> The high rate of Islamic militancy at Asyûţ was probably due to the sudden rate of urbanization in

an area where traditional values had long remained unchallenged.

Most of the members of the neofundamentalist groups were of "recent rural background, experiencing for the first time life in the huge metropolitan areas where foreign influence is most apparent and where impersonal forces are at maximum strength."<51> Immigrants to the cities suffered from alienation, identity problems and the weakening of traditional sources of solidarity; while the Islamic groups, with their strong sense of communal identity, offered psychological comfort and refuge to the displaced villager lost in the bewildering and unfriendly urban jungle. (Kinship relationships were also a strong feature of the membership of the militant groups.<52>) Those new migrants who were particularly affected by the new situation saw in the militants people who were upholding in the 'immoral cities' the traditional values (adherence to the Sharî'ah, disdain of western ideas and modes of life etc.) which they had grown up with. Islamic neofundamentalism provided them with a programme to reinstate the pre-eminence of their faith in the wayward society, a task which they were urged was their religious obligation.

> "Just imagine a recent immigrant from a village or a small town who has to cope with the dismal problems of a city like Cairo (the crowding, the noise, the crumbling, decayed and moribund infrastucture etc.) and who

would, on top of that all suspect that, under all kinds of pressures, his father might not be so correct (financially) and his sister might not be so correct (sexually); is not this the kind of situation that would lead people to search for a simple, strong, clear-cut formula that would answer their many disturbing questions and provide them with certainty and assurance."<53>

Another major factor in the growth of neofundamentalism was the unfulfillment of the expectations of the educated youth. Rampant unemployment and lack of upward mobility in the socio-economic structure of the country led to severe and widespread frustration among the university graduates which the nation's universities churned out in increasingly large numbers. Students formed a large proportion of the militant groups: 43.9% of the membership of Tanzîm al-Jihâd was composed of students and 77.5% of the group was under the age of 30.<54> The median age for the Shabâb Muḥammad was 22 and that for the Takfîr wa'l Hijra was 24.<55>

"The militants represent predominantly a special segment within the lower middle classes holding low-income jobs. What makes this segment special is its political awareness, relatively high literacy rate, and higher mobility patterns. Even the unemployed militants had the benefit of technical

education."<56>

The hopes of advancement of these highly motivated and expectant youths were stunted by the corrupt and stagnant society. Such people in similar circumstances have turned to socialist or Marxist groups to attain a greater measure of social justice for their classes. However, the Sâdât regime had succeeded in thoroughly discrediting the leftist movement in Egypt by continually portraying its members as agents of the atheist Soviets and as bent on destroying the Islamic and national heritage.<57> Socialism, in any case, had had an unfavourable image since the defeat of 1967, and the religious mood of the nation did not tolerate any ideology that smacked of secularism or 'atheism'.

A major criticism of both Nâşir and Sâdât was their failure in creating a broad base of political participation in the nation. According to R. Hrair Dekmejian,

> "To a significant degree the movement back to Islam apears to be a reaction to the failure of the élites of Islamic countries to establish legitimate public order within viable political communities ....
> The legitimacy crisis in Islamic countries has its roots in the failure of political and intellectual élites to substitute secular ideologies of legitimization and social cohesion for traditional Islamic legitimacy."<58>

Anwar al-Sâdât severely restricted political activity in the country by either banning certain political parties or by imprisoning its members, while on the other hand making 'faith' a criterion for national leadership. Lacking the courage and political will to foster participatory political activity in the nation, the Pious President leaned on religion to exploit its emotional appeal and gain legitimacy for his regime. Thus, forced to operate within this political framework, the opponents of the government also had to turn to Islamic channels to express their political opposition to the government.

Neofundamentalism was a prime example of this kind of politically-induced religious movement. The lack of theological awareness among many members of the militant groups was apparent in the parrot-like manner in which they recited 'Islamic' solutions to the problems of the nation. Upon being interviewed separately "almost the same words and phrases, the same Qur'anic verses, and the same Hadith were used by most members of each group (Shabâb Muhammad and Takfîr wa'l Hijra) in making their points regarding various issues."<59> Most of the student members had studied scientific subjects rather than theological ones at university; and whereas 'religious' violence was rabid at secular universities like that of Asyût, it was almost unheard of at al-Azhar University -- the centre of Islamic studies in the country. Although the leaders of the various neofundamentalist groups were considered by their respective

followers to be knowledgeable about theological matters, this faith may not always have been justified. The head of Shabâb Muḥammad, Ṣâliḥ Sirriyya, the amîr of the Takfîr wa'l Hijra, Shukrî Muṣṭafâ, and Muḥammad 'Abd al-Salâm Faraj, the author of al-Farîḍah al-Ghâ'ibah (the ideological statement of the Tanzîm al-Jihâd), all had science degrees but no known formal training in Islamic theology.<60> As the faith of dîn wa dawlah, Islam was, under the circumstances, the most effective means of mobilizing a movement to change the status quo, and men who might have otherwise employed secular ideologies to attain their political goals turned to religion for these purposes.

The Egyptian government had also unwittingly created the potential for the rise of an internal force capable of physically challenging its own security forces by imparting military training to a substantial section of the youth of the nation. Between 1967 and 1974 two million young men had passed through the army, returning to their villages and towns with the knowledge of handling sophisticated armaments. And after the 1973 War, large quantities of weapons from both sides of the Suez Canal found their way into private hands.<61> In fact, it was within a year of that war that the armed members of the Shabâb Muḥammad were able to launch an attack on the Military Technical Academy.

> "Arduous training in the use of various arms, infiltration of the army and the police, detailed study of the behaviour and daily

routines of the President and other leaders, map construction and map reading of all important strategic sites in the capital, and communiques to be aired on radio and television were all prepared long in advance."<62>

Personnel actively serving in the state security forces also featured significantly in the membership of the militant groups. The operational head of the section of the Tanzîm al-Jihâd which killed Sâdât, ʿAbbûd al-Zumur, was a colonel in military intelligence; the leader of the assassination squad itself, Khâlid al-Islâmbûlî, was a lieutenant in the army; and the man believed to have fired the fatal shot at the President, Ḥusayn ʿAbbâs Muḥammad, happened to be a sergeant instructor in the Civil Defence School and for seven years was the champion marksman of the army.<63>

Precipitatory Factors

The socio-economic and the political problems of the country were thus among the major structural conduciveness factors which set the stage for the rise of Islamic militanty in Egypt. Among the primary precipitatory causes which actually sparked off the formation of the neofundamentalist groups was the torment over the national question of the

failure against Israel in 1967. As discussed previously, the feeling of national humiliation caused the growth of religiosity among various sections of the society. The angst in certain quarters seemed to be particularly strongly-felt and led to the taking of drastic personal decisions about the course to take to rectify the sorry state of affairs. Thus from the ashes of defeat arose radical concepts about the role of religion in the state, and the men who had felt particular anguish about the failure of the Arabs set about organizing what they hoped would become the nucleus of a national revolution. The founders of the neofundamentalist fraternities were such men: for example, Ṣâliḥ Sirriyya, the leader of Shabâb Muḥammad, was a Palestinian who had been affected by the war and had had to move to Egypt in 1971.<64>

The partial success of Egypt in the Ramâḍan War of 1973, which was charged with religious symbolism, seemed to confirm the path that the nation should take. To the neofundamentalists and others the answer seemed to be in the increased Islamicization of the state, which, however, the Pious President seemed reluctant to carry out to its logical end. Thus, resentment toward the foreign aggressor began to be overshadowed by resentment toward the internal government, and these feelings grew as President Sâdât moved closer to making peace with Israel. The assault by the Shabâb Muḥammad on the Military Technical Academy in 1974 was prompted by Sâdât's early moves towards an accommodation

with the Jewish state.<65> And one of the reasons that Khâlid al-Islâmbûlî of the Tanzîm al-Jihâd gave for his part in the assassination of the Egyptian President was the latter's peace treaty with Israel.<66>

Events in other Muslim countries also served as precipitatory causes leading to the radicalization of Islamic fundamentalism in Egypt. Islamic resurgence throughout the Muslim world, particularly in Iran, encouraged the Egyptian militant groups that a popular Islamic revolution was possible. Many tactics like massive demonstrations and the distribution of recordings of anti-government sermons were apparently adopted from the Iranian experience.<67> The Sâdât regime's own reaction to the revolution in Iran also went to further exacerbate militant feelings against it. The President's unrestrained and constant villification of Âyatullâh Khumaynî and his offer of asylum to the deposed Shâh infuriated the Islamic groups in Egypt. Some of the largest demonstrations resulted from the latter decision of the Egyptian President, especially the one that began after the Jamâ'ah conference at Asyûṭ in March 1980 held primarily to discuss this issue.<68> The government seemed to have sensed the rise in tension among the neofundamentalists during the Iranian crisis and amongst its responses was the tightening of security at the prisons where members of militant groups were being held.<69>

The neofundamentalist groups which took shape around this time, for example the Tanzîm al-Jihâd, recognized the potential of a mass Islamic movement working against the state and constructed its strategy with this factor in mind. The group hoped to effect an Iranian-style popular uprising against the government with its own members acting as the spearhead of the envisioned revolution: immediately after the assassination of the President a section of the Tanzîm led by 'Abbûd al-Zumur, counting on the fundamentalist character of Asyût, attempted to stage a rebellion from the city.<70> (The attempt, however, failed, underlining the basic inability of the neofundamentalists to garner the support of the disaffected masses even in a place as militant as Asyût.)

Another important precipitatory factor arose from the economic policy of Anwar al-Sâdât and its consequences. His opening of the doors (infitâh) to free trade with the West caused some serious imbalances in the economic structure of the nation. It benefited only about five percent of the population<71> which became the millionaire class in a mass of poverty. Among the chief beneficiaries of the new-found prosperity for the few were the President's own relatives. His brother, 'Iṣmat, and his daughters' fathers-in-law, 'Uthmân Aḥmad 'Uthmân and Sayyid Mar'î, were the most prominent examples of the infitâh millionaire.<72> This only served to focus the resentment of the deprived onto Sâdât himself.

For the poor the only fruit of the President's policy was the ever-spiralling rate of inflation, which consequently led to the decline in their standards of life. The masses reacted with fury against the government in January 1977 when the latter sought to lift its price subsidies for basic commodities.<73> In this atmosphere of deep resentment against what was seen as an unjust regime the call to Islamic justice was becoming increasingly audible.

> "Strongly imbedded in the Islâmic conscience is the notion of social justice (ʿadâlah). Gross disparities of wealth and privilege fly in the face of traditional Islâmic maxims of communal sharing of basic resources. In the context of increasing class polarization and massive poverty, when political élites are perceived as the perpetrators of social-economic injustice, Islam could well become a potent protest ideology to oppose the 'establishment' with religious sanction."<74>

Participation by members of the Jamâʿah and neofundamentalist groups was significant in the 1977 food riots,<75> which were among the first signs of the increasing militancy of the Islamic groups. After the violence of this year, riots against the government became a perennial feature of fundamentalist protest against the regime, leading to the huge and bloody demonstrations

opposing the peace treaty and the Shâh's stay in Egypt. Therefore, severe economic deprival had precipitated a wave of violent protests which the Islamic groups increasingly orchestrated.

The massive migration to the cities led to chronic overcrowding, with many of the newcomers having to reside in slum areas or in dilapidated housing. Half of the members of the Tanzîm al-Jihâd lived either in Greater Cairo or Giza, and were particularly concentrated in the northern belt of the metropolis which has been "the receptacle for most of the twentieth-century rural migrants" in Egypt.<76> These were the epicentres of communal violence in Greater Cairo, while the older and more stable sections of the city had almost no evidence of similar disturbances.<77>

There seems to have been a direct relationship in the kind of property construction development that was carried out by the regime and the rise of militant groups. The construction boom that came with the infitâh was to result in the uprooting and resettlement of the residents of some of the slum areas. Between 1979 and 1981 5,000 families or 30,000 individuals were moved from the urban districts of 'Ishâsh al-Turjumân and Arab al-Muḥammadî to those of al-Zâwiya al-Ḥamrâ and 'Ayn Shams to make way for the building of business offices, luxury hotels and tourist centres.<78> This disruption of the lives of members of substantial communities, leading to the disintegration of

their social relations systems and, in some instances, the loss of livelihood, served to further embitter them against the authorities. The deep resentment erupted into the open in the communal riots at al-Zâwiya al-Ḥamrâ in June 1981, in which the major targets of destruction were public structures and Coptic property.<79> Members of the Tanzîm al-Jihâd featured prominently in these riots, and Ḥamîd Anṣârî goes as far as isolating this set of incidents as the ultimate cause which led to the assassination of Anwar al-Sâdât.<80> As members of this secret group had become exposed to the authorities through their involvement in the disturbances, they sought to eliminate the man whom they considered primarily responsible for their persecution by the police.

The President himself was personally involved in the growth of luxury construction at the expense of the underprivileged, thus further increasing the latter's resentment towards him.

> "The area near the pyramids, al-Haram, also had a large proportion of militants. This area has witnessed a tremendous residential expansion in the past decade through the conversion of agricultural land to urban property. Some of the choicest pieces of real estate went to influential persons. The Pyramids' Plateau itself was converted into a resort area in which some of the richest and

> most influential persons, including the president, built little huts and small villas that distorted the scenic beauty of the area. Nightclubs also became an endemic feature of the Pyramid Road. Thus the inhabitants of the villages of Nahia, Kirdasa, and Saft al-Laban -- in which some of the most active militants grew up -- including 'Abbûd al-Zomor and his large family, which extended throughout the area -- might have been dismayed by the brutal assault on their life-style and traditional values."<81>

Conservative Islamic sensibilities were outraged by what they saw as the moral degradation of their neigbourhood, which had become a playground for the rich. The deterioration of public moral standards, particularly in the Pyramid Road area, was appalling: the Centre for Social Research reported that between 1976 and 1977 the number of nightclubs there increased by 375%, the apartments used for prostitution rose by 1,000%, and the rapes and kidnappings of girls by 400%.<82> Such alarming developments could not have failed to enrage the residents of the area with what they viewed as the 'un-Islamic' regime which was permitting their home district to be transformed into a centre of vice.

'Modernization' of the nation had brought no advantages to the poor in Egypt. The infitâḥ policy of Anwar al-Sâdât had

merely increased their financial hardship with the inflation that it caused, as it contrarily raised expectations by creating consumerist attitudes. Along with western products had come what the religiously conservative saw as western vices. While the wealthy wallowed in the benefits of the infitâh, for the deprived the 'open door' had only let in a host of evils. The reaction was thus to turn back to traditional norms and values and against the form of modernization that was introduced by the Sâdât regime, namely, westernization. Returning to Islam provided a frame of familiar reference for one's identity, symbols of self-assertion , and a consciousness rooted in one's heritage as opposed to foreign penetration and cultural domination.<83> Sâdât, with his western modes of dressing and behaviour, seemed to represent everything that had become repugnant to the disaffected section of the populace.

A crucial precipitatory factor in the rise of Islamic militancy was, ironically, the encouragement that the Ra'îs al-Mu'min himself continued to give it even near the end of his rule. As discussed previously, the President had relied upon his 'Islamic base' to counterbalance the strength of the left. In order to placate and pacify his supporters from the Islamic groups Sâdât used Islamic symbolism and terminolgy and made promises to instate Sharî'ah legislation, which, while failing to satisfy them, only antagonized the Copts of Egypt.<84> When the latter began to react vehemently to the Pious President's public promises of

the Islamicization of the country, Sâdât assailed them and their Pope, Shinûda III. He accused the Copts of bringing pressure through their world-wide connections to bear upon the Egyptian government to abandon the Islamic character of the state. At the same time, in a very clear attempt to play up to a Muslim audience he also declared that he was "a Muslim ruler of an Islamic country and that he would oppose any attempt to dilute the Islamic identity of Egypt."<85>

These inflammatory words of the President served to increase the tensions between the Muslims and the Copts in the country, which had remained in a state of communal harmony for the greater part of their common past.<86> Always seeking to prop up his political legitimacy through the emotional appeal of Islam, the Pious President was attempting to distract his Muslim opponents by diverting their attention upon the Copts. However, while he succeeded in pitting the two communities against each other, leading to greater militancy among both, Sâdât failed to win the loyalty of the Islamic neofundamentalists as they became increasingly bolder in their anti-state actions.

The Final Showdown

President Sâdât personally bears a significant portion of the responsibility for the radicalization of Islamic militancy in Egypt. Besides actually establishing and encouraging the Jamâ'ah al-Islâmîyya, his constant tendency to play upon the symbols of Islam to gain sympathy only served to intensify religious fervour among the fundamentalists. His disregard for the sensibilities of the underprivileged, whence came the majority of the militants, as he steamrollered through their lives with a financial policy that filled a few pockets and emptied many, increased the ranks of his opponents. The peace initiative with Israel was more popular outside Egypt and the Arab world than inside. It was condemned as a betrayal of Islam by all fundamentalist Islamic elements even though Sâdât prevailed upon al-Azhar to provide its approval along with 'Islamic' rationalization for the Camp David accord. The Egyptian President's denunciation of the Iranian Revolution and his offer of asylum to the Shâh was also greeted with fundamentalist ire. Token institution of Sharî'ah legislation by the government of the Ra'îs al-Mu'min failed in pacifying Islamic groups. Finally, when he saw that he was unable to stem the growth of opposition, made up of the myriad of elements representing the various sections of Egyptian society which he had managed to alienate in the course of his presidency, Sâdât abandoned the carrot for the stick -- with fatal consequences for himself.

Anwar al-Sâdât and his government seemed to have failed to recognize the threat of the new phenomenon of militant neofundamentalism until it was too late to stem its growth. The Pious President, who had employed Islamic symbolism to legitimize his rule, found himself in the awkward position of having to attack opponents whose watchword was also Islam. Not willing to engage in a religious debate with his new opponents or to seriously look into the causes giving rise to their movement, he dismissed them as mere religious and social deviants operating with foreign support. He characterized the neofundamentalist Islamic movement in the following manner a year after the 1974 attack on the Military Technical Academy by the Shabâb Muḥammad:

> "(The plurality of secret religious associations in Egypt) is similar to the hippie phenomenon which swept Europe after the World War II. The difference is that, because our region is deeply immersed in religion, this wave has emerged under the cloak of religion. This is not religion, but a religious eye-wash. An outside element has instigated the affair of the Military Technical College .... I have drawn the attention of the Prime Minister to the fact that some of the preachers are following this course in their sermons, thus driving the youth to extremism. This can be amended through a positive information campaign among

the people ..."<87>

The 'outside element' referred to by Sâdât was most probably Muʿammar al-Qadhdhafi, who was implicated in the interrogation of a member of the Shabâb Muḥammad. <88> Later, it became the habit of the regime to blame the disturbances created by Islamic militants on Nâşirîs and communists, working with the aid of Moscow, thus lumping "the secular left, the atheist forces, and the religious militants into one sinister alliance directed by the Soviets."<89> Even after the occurrence of the second major incident caused by a neofundamentalist group -- the kidnapping of Ḥusayn al-Dhahâbî in 1977 -- the regime did not seem to see its connection with the 1974 attack or with the general growth of Islamic militancy in Egypt.<90>

Sâdât appears to have finally realized the explosive potency of the mixture of religious ideals and politics when, from 1979 onwards, he began to talk about the separation of the two, even accusing the moderate fundamentalists like the Muslim Brethren of wanting to create a state within a state.<91> He was responding to the stepped-up critcism by the Ikhwân, the Jamâʿah and the militants against the Camp David treaty and his offer of asylum to the Shâh. The regime no longer seemed to be able to control the Jamâʿah, which it itself had sponsored, and in May 1980 the President banned all student religious societies accusing them of promoting religious fanaticism, extremism and communal strife, and

also warned against using mosques for political purposes.<92> However, Sâdât seems to have continued to be lenient towards the militant students as mentioned above,<93> and although he did publicly threaten al-Tilmisânî with the closure of al-Da'wah, he never did carry out his threat.<94>

As the Pious President began reversing his former stance on the unity of state and religion implied in his policy of 'Ilm wa Îmân, he is reported to have warned that "those who wish to practice Islam can go to the mosques, and those who wish to engage in politics can do so through legal institutions."<95> This statement marked the about-face which Sâdât carried out as he seems to have begun to realise the consequences of his former policy. On May 16, 1980 he proposed a constitutional amendment to instate the Sharî'ah as the primary basis of legislation, something that he had avoided doing despite the persistent demand of the traditionalist lobby to carry out this move; however, on the same day he also made an announcement insisting on the separation of religion and politics.<96> It appears thus that the President was desperately attempting to placate the Islamic groups while at the same time carrying out a reversal of his policy upon which he had based his political legitimacy since coming to power in 1970. The measures, however, came too late and only made a bad situation worse by further damaging the credibility of Anwar al-Sâdât.

The Islamic groups continued carrying out their militant activities and they even appeared to become more defiant against the government. Finally, on September 3, 1981, Sâdât decided to clamp down on all his critics and opponents who were not already behind bars. Besides the rebel shaykhs and imâms, members of the Ikhwân and the Jamâ'ah, and the known members of neofundamentalist groups, Christian religious leaders, politicians of various ideological hues and other critics were also rounded up and put into prison. Those arrested included 'Umar al-Tilmisânî, Shaykh Mahallâwî, Shaykh Kishk, Shaykh 'Id, Fu'âd Sirâj al-Dîn (the leader of the New Wafd party), Hilmî Murâd (Secretary-General of the Action Party), Fathî Radwân (a cabinet member under Nâsir) and Muhammad Haykal (a prominent writer and journalist, and a former member of the cabinet). Over 3,000 people were arrested. The vociferous Coptic leader, Pope Shinûda III, was suspended and had his functions transferred to a patriarchal committee.<97>

Those affected by the police operation came from diverse backgrounds, holding various religious and political beliefs, but all had, at one time or another, criticized the President's domestic or foreign policy. The official reason given for the arrests was the religious strife in the country; but this was apparently only a means for the regime to suppress all its opponents -- religious as well as secular. Even the imprisonment of the moderate fundamentalists was a result of 'over-kill', the opportunity

for which had been provided by the militant activities of the neofundamentalists.<98> This political opportunism on the part of Sâdât served to unite all his opponents against him. However, more than the impotent wrath of his jailed critics, the desperation of the militants who were still at large was to prove the folly of the President's actions.

The neofundamentalists had taken the ultimate decision of eliminating the man whom they viewed as the irreligious ruler of the country. A fatwâ condemning the errant leader to death had been obtained by the militants since the beginning of the year.

> "A theoretical question had been put to the Mufti Dr. Omar Abdel-Rahman Ali Abdel-Rahman: 'Is it lawful to shed the blood of a ruler who does not rule according to God's ordinances?' His answer -- though neither answer nor question mentioned any specific name -- was that the shedding of such blood was lawful. Later, when he was asked to give a specific opinion about Sadat, but without being told of the action proposed against the President, he hesitated: 'I cannot say that he has definitely crossed the line into infidelity.' After this the conspirators had no further use for him."<99>

The Pious President had been judged by the neofundamentalists as lacking in sincerity in instituting

Islamic laws in the country and as having sinned grievously in making peace with Israel. Thus in order to establish al-ḥâkimiyya, the rule of God on earth, the sinful Sâdât had to be eliminated.

Tension between the militants and the government increased as the year wore on, with the former looking for the opportunity to make good the execution order on the President. Besides the violent riots like those at al-Ząwiya al-Ḥamrâ in June, the security apparatus' stepped-up house-to-house searches for weapons in the homes of suspected militants led to a further deterioration in relations.<100> The pitch of tension between the neofundamentalists and the regime had reached a crescendo in September when Sâdât ordered the massive clampdown. Among those who were jailed then included the relatives of the members of the Tanzîm al-Jihâd, including the brother of Khâlid al-Islâmbûlî, who was reported to have sworn to avenge the misfortune which had befallen his family.<101> One month later, on October 6, Lieutenant Islâmbûlî led the assassination squad against the President as he was reviewing the parade of the Egyptian armed forces on the anniversary of the beginning of the Ramâḍan War.<102>

The reasons for his actions that the young officer gave upon interrogation were the peace treaty that Sâdât had signed with Israel, the sufferings of Muslims because the laws of the country were not consistent with the Sharî'ah, and the

humiliation and persecution of the Muslim leaders who had been imprisoned by the government.<103> Islâmbûlî's sense of justice had been outraged by the socio-economic disparity that was so visible to him in the slums of Cairo: his understanding of Islam told him that a society ruled by the Sharî'ah would not permit such a gulf to exist between the wealthy and the poor. The conflict between the Arabs and the Jews had long been portrayed as a religious conflict, a jihâd, by the government as well as by the Muslim leaders of the country. Now the same were making peace with the Zionists. Among the possessions of the arrested members of the Tanzîm al-Jihâd were found tape cassettes of the anti-government sermons of dissident preachers like Shaykh Kishk and Shaykh Maḥallâwî.<104> The popular shaykhs and imâms along with other Islamic leaders were now languishing in prisons. The wanted list of the September operation of government security forces had also included the names of the leaders of the Tanzîm al-Jihâd, most of whom remained uncaptured; the police were, nevertheless, closing in on them.<105> Therefore, the elimination of Anwar al-Sâdât must have seemed to be the imperative solution to all the current problems of the militant group and the larger problems of the nation. The popular revolution that the Tanzîm members hoped would follow the assassination of the impious President would usher in the Islamic state in which the Sharî'ah would ensure justice and prosperity for all.

Notes: Chapter IV

<1> Nazih Ayubi, "The Political Revival of Islam: The Case of Egypt," IJMES, 12:4 (Dec. 1980), 488.

<2> John Waterbury, Egypt: Burdens of the Past, Options for the Future (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 18:4, p. 7.

<3> Gabriel R. Warburg, "Islam and Politics in Egypt: 1952-1980," MES, 18:2 (April 1982), 151.

<4> Mohamed Heikal, Autumn of Fury: The Assassination of Sadat (London: Andre Deutsch, 1983), p. 267.

<5> Hamied N. Ansari, "The Islamic Militants in Egyptian Politics," IJMES, 16 (1984), 123.

<6> Hamied Ansari, "Sectarian Conflict in Egypt and the Political Expediency of Religion," MEJ, 38:3 (Summer 1984), 406.

<7> The confusion is exacerbated by certain simililarities in aspects of ideology between certain neofundamentalist groups and instances of intermarraige among their membership; see Ansari, "Islamic Militants," 128 and 138. The Tanzîm al-Jihâd maintained secrecy by organizing themselves in cell-like units called anqud (literally, a bunch of grapes), "each 'anqud being separate and self-contained, so that if plucked from the main bunch none of the other 'anquds would suffer, nor would the removal of one grape on a bunch affect the other grapes." Heikal, Autumn, pp. 242-43.

<8> Michael C. Hudson, "Islam and Political Development" in Islam and Political Development: Religion and Socio-political Change, ed. by John L. Esposito (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1980), p. 21.

<9> Ayubi, 499.

<10> Warburg, 157. Henceforth the term Shabâb Muhammad will be used to refer to this group.

<11> Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups: Methodological Note and Preliminary Findings," IJMES, 12:4 (Dec. 1980), 425 and 450. Henceforth the term Takfîr wa'l-Hijra will be used to refer to this group.

<12> Ansari, "Sectarian Conflict," 413. "The official view is that the Tanzim had its origins in 1974 when some

followers of a group that was liquidated after its attack on the Military Technical Academy reorganized themselves. The new group (which came to be known as the Jihad) was liquidated in 1978 after a bloody confrontation with the security forces in Alexandria .... One of the Jihad leaders, Mohammad Abd al-Salam Farag, assumed the responsibility for reorganizing the splinter groups. That explains why the Tanzim is often referred to as the Jihad Tanzim." Idem, "Islamic Militants," 125-26.

<13> Ibrahim, 426. Dr. Ibrâhîm, together with a team of scholarly researchers, carried out extensive interviews of jailed militants; op cit., 423-53.

<14> See Sami A. Hanna and George H. Gardner, "Islamic Socialism," in Arab Socialism: A Documentary Survey, ed. by Sami A. Hanna and George H. Gardner (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969); Fawzi M. Najjar, "Islam and Socialism in the UAR," Journal of Contemporary History, 3:3 (1968), 183-99.

<15> See Charles J. Adams, "The Ideology of Maududi" in South Asian Politics and Religion, ed. by D. Smith (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) and Kalim Bahadur, The Jamaat i Islami of Pakistan (Lahore: Progressive Books, 1978).

<16> Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "The Islamic Resurgence: Sources, Dynamics, and Implications," in Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World, ed. by Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 7.

<17> Ibid., p. 8.

<18> Ghali Shoukri, Egypt: Portrait of a President (London: Zed Press, 1981), pp. 299-300.

<19> Heikal, Autumn, p. 243 and Derek Hopwood, Egypt: Politics and Society 1945-1981 (London: George & Allen Unwin, 1982), p. 117. Although there was probably some overlapping among individual members of the Jamâ'ah and the militant groups, the distinction being made here is that of the two separate movements in their respective entirety.

<20> "Islamic Militants," 136; cf. Ibrahim, 430.

<21> Ibrahim, 433.

<22> Ansari, "Islamic Militants," 129.

<23> Ibid.

<24> Ibid., 131.

<25> Autumn, p. 223.

<26> Ibid. Also see Paul A. Jureidini, The Themes and Appeals of Sheikh Abdul Hamid Kishk (Alexandria, Va.: Abbot Associates, 1980).

<27> Ansari, "Sectarian Conflict," 412.

<28> Hudson, "Islam and Political Development," p. 21.

<29> Dessouki, p. 12.

<30> Autumn, pp. 223-24.

<31> Ibid., p. 224. Cf. Majid Tehranian "Iran: Communication, Alienation, Revolution," Intermedia, 7:2 (March 1979), 6-12.

<32> Shoukri, Portrait, p. 284.

<33> Ibid., p. 293.

<34> Ansari, "Islamic Militants," 136. According to this defination, the translation of takfir as 'repentance' (which most other observers use) would not be valid.

<35> Ibid.

<36> Najjar, "Islam and Socialism," 193-94.

<37> "Islamic Militants," 140.

<38> Ibid., 138.

<39> Warburg, "Islam and Politics in Egypt," 149.

<40> "Islamic Militants," 135. Both these types of ex-Brethren often held leadership positions in the neofundamentalist groups. Sâliḥ Sirriyya, the leader of Shabâb Muḥammad, and Shukrî Muṣṭafâ, the leader of Takfîr wa'l-Hijra, were examples of former Brethren who were disillusioned with the current leadership of Ikhwân al-Muslimûn, while Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Salâm Faraj, the chief ideologue of Tanzîm al-Jihâd can be characterized as belonging to the second category of neofundamentalists with links to the Muslim Brethren; op cit., 135 and Ibrahim, 436.

<41> Ibrahim, 446.

<42> Ayubi, "Political Revival of Islam," 493; "Islamic Militants," 133; and R. Hrair Dekmejian, Egypt under Nasir: A Study in Political Dynamics (Albany: SUNY,

1971), p. 233.

<43> Ibrahim, 445. The active following of the Takfîr wa'l-Hijra was estimated at being between 3,000 and 5,000; Warburg, 152. And the Tanzîm al-Jihâd had only 280 members throughout the country; "Islamic Militants," 132.

<44> "Islamic Militants," 138 and Ibrahim, 433.

<45> "Islamic Militants," 141.

<46> Ibrahim, 423.

<47> Dessouki, "Islamic Resurgence," p. 25.

<48> Ayubi, 495.

<49> "Islamic Militants," 131.

<50> Ibid., 126. This fact would point to some links between the Jamâ'ah and the neofundamentalists, but as discussed above, these are believed to have been of a limited nature.

<51> Ibrahim, 446.

<52> "Islamic Militants," 128.

<53> Ayubi, 495.

<54> "Islamic Militants," 133.

<55> Ibrahim, 438.

<56> "Islamic Militants," 133-34.

<57> Ibrahim, 447.

<58> R. Hrair Dekmejian, "The Anatomy of Islamic Revival: Legitimacy Crisis and the Search for Islamic Alternatives," MEJ, 34:1 (Winter 1980), 3.

<59> Ibrahim, 429.

<60> Ibid., 436 and "Islamic Militants," 135.

<61> Autumn, 103-4.

<62> Ibrahim, 441-42.

<63> Autumn, pp. 250-51.

<64> Ibrahim, 435-36.

<65> Ibid., 437.

<66> Autumn, p. 246.

<67> Ibrahim, 442.

<68> Ibid., 452.

<69> Ibid., 428.

<70> Autumn, p. 262 and "Islamic Militants," 128.

<71> Kemal Karpat, Political and Social Thought in the Contemporary Middle East (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 185.

<72> Autumn, pp. 183-200.

<73> Warburg, "Islam and Politics in Egypt," 132.

<74> Dekmejian, "Anatomy of Islamic Revival," 8.

<75> Cemam Report, 4 (1976): Islamic Law and Change in Arab Society (Beirut: Dar el-Mashreq, 1978), p. 73.

<76> "Islamic Militants," 132.

<77> Ibid.

<78> Ibid., 133 and "Sectarian Conflict," 408-9.

<79> "Sectarian Conflict," 411.

<80> Ibid., 408.

<81> "Islamic Militants," 132.

<82> Shoukri, Portrait, p. 304.

<83> Dessouki, p. 23.

<84> Autumn, pp. 217-19.

<85> "Sectarian Conflict," 404. This was said in a speech in May 1980 when Sâdât had recently returned from the U.S.A., where he had been publicly heckled by members of the local Coptic community.

<86> Portrait, p. iii. Also see Moustafa el-Feki, "Christian Minority in a Muslim Country -- The Copts: Historical Background and Community Institutions," Islam in the Modern Age, 14:4 (May 1983), 79-103.

<87> Raphael Israeli, The Public Diary of President Sadat (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), III, pp. 931-32.

<88> Ibid., II, p. 549.

<89> Ibrahim, 425.

<90> Portrait, p. 295.

<91> Warburg, "Islam and Politics in Egypt," 151; cf. Daniel Crecelius, "The Course of Secularization in Modern Egypt," in Islam and Development: Religion and Socio-political Change, ed. by John L. Esposito (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1980), p. 67.

<92> Dessouki, p. 12.

<93> Autumn, p. 134. Supra, Chapter III: State-Sponsored Fundamentalism.

<94> Ibid., pp. 131-32.

<95> Hopwood, Politics and Society 1945-1981, p. 117.

<96> Ibrahim, 451.

<97> Autumn, pp. 231-240.

<98> Ibrahim, 426 and "Sectarian Conflict," 415. Sâdât accused the militants of being the secret army of al-Ikhwân al-Muslimûn, "Sectarian Conflict," 406. 65 mosques, including many of those which had been frequented by the Jamâ'ah and the neofundamentalists, were also put under the control of the Ministry of Awqâf in September 1981; "Islamic Militants," 129.

<99> Autumn, p. 243.

<100> "Islamic Militants," 131.

<101> Ibid., 130. The brother-in-law of Ḥusayn 'Abbâs, the crack shot whose fire is believed to have actually killed Sâdât, was also a member of Tanzîm al-Jihâd and was arrested by the authorities on September 25. Op cit., 128.

<102> Autumn, pp 254-55.

<103> Ibid., p.246.

<104> Ibid., p. 264.

<105> "Islamic Militants," 130.

Conclusion

When Anwar al-Sâdât had come to power in 1970 he stressed that he would establish the pre-eminence of faith in Egypt; hence, his assassination was all the more ironic in that it was carried out in the name of religion. Islam had been used to justify the actions of the ruling establishment as well as of those who sought to challenge it. These contrary visions of the faith, and all the others that existed besides them, left little room for alternative interpretations of the 14-centuries old religion, each claiming to represent its 'true version'. The proponents of the modernist, the tradionalist, the fundamentalist and the neofundamentalist interpretations of Islam, respectively, seemed to claim an absolute monopoly on truth and insist on the righteousness of their individual stances. This attitude bred intolerance and led to tendencies in which each faction attempted to impose its own understanding of religion upon the others. Such a lack of acceptance of the possibility of the validity of different interpretations of Islam can perhaps be singled out as a primary cause of the conflict amongst Muslims in Egypt, and amongst Muslims elsewhere.

The place of the Sharî'ah in the state is the subject of major concern and much discussion in the Islamic world today. Despite various attempts to modify traditional Islamic law to suit the requirements of the modern age these have proved unsatisfactory to one or the other sections of

Muslim society. Anwar al-Sâdât had a unique opportunity to attempt to adapt the Sharî'ah to the current conditions of Egypt. Upon assuming the political leadership of the nation he appeared to have the confidence of the traditionally-minded Muslims of the country due to his faith-based attitude towards the state. With this favourable image of his, the Pious President could have conceivably made some advances in creating the right atmosphere for the blending of Islamic law with modern legislation, something which was more difficult to attain under other circumstances. Sâdât, however, chose to dissipate his advantages on political maneuvering, and seemed to view the Islamic institutions of the land as tools in combatting his political and religious opponents and in the legitimization of his policies.

Although the Egyptian President had adopted a modernist interpretation of Islam and had proclaimed 'Ilm wa Îmân as the guiding policies of his rule, he did not appear to have a well-formulated vision of the place of religion in the public life of Egypt. He was found lacking in the courage of his convictions and failed in grappling with the real problem of finding a place for the Sharî'ah in the state. Instead, he proceeded to indulge in a political game with the traditionalist forces, granting concessions when he was dependant on them and imposing his own will when he had the upper hand. Despite having the services of a premier insitution of Islamic learning at his disposal, Sâdât failed

to develop an overall policy toward the adaptation of Islamic law to the legislative system of the modern Egyptian state to the mutual agreement of both, the modernist and the traditionalist circles. Such a development could have possibly prevented the radicalization of Islamic militancy, the force which eventually compelled the Egyptian President to take the desperate step of initiating proceedings to make the Sharî'ah the primary basis of legislation in the country.

The failure of Anwar al-Sâdât to provide for participatory government in Egypt was perhaps one of his greatest shortcomings and may have been a major cause of the problems that developed in the latter part of his presidency. Admission of the more 'respectable' fundamentalists like al-Ikhwân al-Muslimûn and secular political groups into the national political arena could have served to prevent the radicalization of his militant opponents who represented the most tangible threat to the stability of his regime, and who ultimately took his life. Sâdât was, however, unwilling to risk the presence of the vitriolic Muslim Brethren, who regularly lambasted his policies in their newspaper, and other vocal groups within the walls of the national assembly. He only seemed interested in using Islamic organizations and institutions against the elements whom he considered his most dangerous enemies -- the leftists. The metamorphosis of the Jamâ'ah al-Islâmîyya from being the nominal supporters of the state to becoming amongst its most

vociferous and violent opponents illustrated Sâdât's failure to perceive where the greatest threat to his power lay.

During the course of his career Anwar al-Sâdât had exploited Islam, its symbols and its institutions in order to further his own political goals. With his misleading and opportunist use of Islamic rhetoric, the effect of which he seems to have misjudged, the Pious President had aroused the expectations of the religiously orthodox. In the course of time, the contradictions in the words of the leader abounded. The Islamic clichés began to sound hollow, especially as the promises of economic and social justice remained unfulfilled, and the regime which had talked about basing itself on faith permitted the growth of vice and economic disparity. The accommodation with Israel was explained with Islamic rationalization whereas until the very recent past the conflict with the Jewish state had also been portrayed in religious terms.

The feeling of betrayal turned into violent anger against the regime and led to the growth of militant neofundamentalism which justified its existence by an extremely radical and intolerant interpretation of Islam. This movement was perhaps the logical outcome of the gross exploitation and perversion of religion that had been carried out in the land with the cooperation of the official Islamic establishment. The closure of all respectable political activity in the country had caused the prevalent

socio-economic disaffection to appear in the guise of religious militancy. In a nation where faith had become the language for most political discourse, it was in the name of faith that political opposition arose.

When the government did finally begin to awake to the growth of a real threat to the status quo, it acted in a typically heavy-handed manner by first attempting to completely reverse its policy of the involvement of religion in politics and then by incarcerating all its opponents, regardless of their political or religious orientation or their actual guilt. This revealed the inability of the Sâdât regime to differentiate genuine political opposition from opposition of a more subversive kind. The latter saw Anwar al-Sâdât as the epitome of hypocrisy and the primary cause of the evil that existed in the country: to it his appellation al-Ra'îs al-Mu'mîn was a gross mockery of Islam. Therefore, in the view of the neofundamentalists, the purging of the impious ra'îs seemed to be the primary solution in alleviating the predicament of Islam in Egypt. They carried out this action, ironically, on the seventh anniversary of what is generally regarded in Egypt as the most tangible achievement of Anwar al-Sâdât.

Political usage of religion, even with the sincerest of intentions, can thus lead to the encouragement of the most intolerant and extremist brands of religious militancy, resulting in national instability and the distortion of the

central message of a faith. Leaders who seek to buttress their stances on moral issues by invoking edicts of specific religious traditions may be risking the opening of a Pandora's box of unexpected and unwelcome evils. By making piety the rule of correct behaviour the Pious President prepared the way for others to judge him by the same standard and find him sorely deficient.

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