

THE SOCIETY OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERS

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PART I · HISTORY

I

HASAN AL-BANNA AND THE FOUNDING OF THE SOCIETY OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERS¹

HASAN AL-BANNA

HASAN AL-BANNA was born in October 1906, in the province of Buhayra, in the small town of Mahmudiyya, about ninety miles north-west of Cairo. His father, Shaykh Ahmad 'Abd al-Rahman al-Banna al-Sa'ati, was the local *ma'dhun*, *imam* and teacher for the mosque, and student and author of various works on the *hadith*; he had been educated at Azhar University at the time of Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh.² In between his religious duties, reading, and studying, he practised the art of watch repairing, which, along

¹ The primary source for the life of Banna is his own autobiographical material collected and compiled from the pages of the Society's newspapers and magazines. The first book of memoirs, presumably gathered together by a Syrian (see *MDA* (15 Apr. 1951), 8), appeared in Beirut and was called *Mudhakkarat Hasan al-Banna*, vol. 1 (n.d.). It dealt with the life of Banna and the first few years of the history of the movement. A Cairo edition, *Mudhakkarat al-da'wa wa'l-da'iyya* (n.d.), is the original text of the Beirut edition with additions by an Egyptian which take the story to the beginning of World War II. Presumably the first text appeared in Beirut shortly after the first major dissolution of the Society in 1948 and the second in the early period of its reorganization after 1950. The Cairo edition will be used for this study and will be noted hereafter simply as *Mudh*. Because this chapter is largely based on this material, references will be noted, in parentheses, in the body of the study. Unfortunately, there are no critical sources, to our knowledge, with which to compare this autobiographical material.

For insights into the life, personality, and influence of Banna, the unofficial but authoritative journal *Majallat al-Da'wa* is useful; see especially the commemorative issues which appeared on the anniversary of Banna's death: *MDA*, 13 Feb. 1951; 12 Feb. 1952; 10 Feb. 1953; 16 Feb. 1954; 15 Feb. 1955. The best and earliest summary and analysis of the data available on Banna is Husayni, *Ikhwan*, pp. 7-8, 12-19, 40-62.

² Husayni, *Ikhwan*, p. 42, lists among his works two arrangements of the legists Shaf'i and Ibn Hanbal. Husayni draws his material from the only lengthy treatment of the life and background of Banna's father, in Hajjaji, *RWR*, 101-22.

with his broad classical and traditional learning and piety, he passed on to his son.

Hasan, the eldest of five sons, began his formal education at the age of eight³ at a *kuttab* school.⁴ His teacher, Shaykh Muhammad Zahran, was among the first, after his father, who profoundly affected his development.

At the age of twelve, Banna was enrolled in a primary school, where he quickly joined the first of the many religious societies to which he committed himself through the phases of his development. His teacher there—another formative influence—organized and, at first, directed the Society for Moral Behaviour, the purpose of which was to sensitize its members to moral offences. A system of increasingly burdensome fines was levied on all members who cursed their fellows and their families, or cursed in the name of religion. Within a short time, Banna became the leader of the society (pp. 6–7).

Not satisfied with this, some of the younger boys formed another group called the Society for the Prevention of the Forbidden, whose work was intended to reach deeper into the town life. One of their main activities was the composition and distribution of secret and often threatening letters, to those they regarded as living in violation of the teachings of Islam (pp. 8–9).

It was during this early part of his life that Banna witnessed his first *dhikr*, the mystic circle of the Order of the Hasafiyya Brothers. Deeply impressed, he became involved with this particular order for the next twenty years, and with Sufism in a special way for most of his life. He read avidly from the materials available on the founders of the order and on Sufism, becoming, in the meantime, an ardent member of the *dhikr* circles and a disciple of its leading shaykh (pp. 10–14).

These new associates inspired the creation of yet another organization, called the Hasafiyya Society for Charity, with the twofold aim: to fight for the preservation of Islamic morality, and to resist the work of the Christian missionaries in the town. Banna, at the age of thirteen, became its secretary, and at its head stood Ahmad al-Sukkari, a young man whom he had come to know in the *dhikr* circles, and who afterwards played an important part in developing the idea of the Society of the Muslim Brothers. It was this group which Banna himself later saw as the root and forerunner of the Society (p. 16).

Banna's last year at the primary school coincided with the out-

³ See an account by Banna's father of his infancy and pre-school days, *MMR* (29 Aug. 1952), 16.

⁴ See the recollection of these days 'in the father's Library' by his brother Abd al-Rahman, *MDA* (13 Feb. 1951), 3, 30.

break of the Revolution of 1919. As a student, he participated in demonstrations which erupted in and out of school, and in the composition and recitation of nationalistic poetry. He was afterwards to remember with special bitterness the sight of British forces in occupation of his home town at this time (pp. 22–5). He took these memories with him as he prepared, when just under fourteen, to enroll in the Primary Teachers' Training School at Damanhur, thirteen miles south-west of Mahmudiyya. His newly acquired Sufism became more intense and in 1922 he was accepted as a fully initiated member. For a time, he even adopted the tasselled turban and white outer garment of the order (pp. 14–16, 19–22).⁵

By now his whole outlook was permeated with the teachings of Sufism and with those of the towering figure of Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali (A.D. 1058–1111). The medieval master's views on learning, derived by Banna from the *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, persuaded him of the futility of further formal education. At stake was the final stage in his formal training: higher education in the capital city. In his last year at the Teachers' Training School, Banna recalls struggling within himself, setting against his admitted 'love of learning' and his belief in 'the benefits of learning for individual and society', the Ghazzalian ordering of the sciences and knowledge, and the view that learning was to be confined to what was necessary 'to fulfil the religious duties and earn a livelihood' (p. 29). This attitude towards learning was a basic feature of his preaching to his first followers in the Society; and, throughout his career, it sustained and reinforced what one might call the 'practical and at the same time other-worldly' qualities of his mind. For the time being, however, his teachers persuaded him to put aside his doubts and go on to higher education. At the age of sixteen, in 1923, he left the Teachers' Training School; and later in that same year he entered Dar al-'Ulum in Cairo (pp. 28–9). Dar al-'Ulum had been founded in 1873 as the first Egyptian attempt to provide 'modern' higher learning (sciences) in addition to the traditional religious sciences which were specialities of the traditional and ancient university of al-Azhar. It became essentially a higher teacher-training school, and, with the development of the secular university system in Egypt, it became more and more traditional.

By this time Banna's intellectual and emotional apparatus was taking shape. The two continuous influences on his training so far had been classical Islamic learning and the emotional discipline of Sufism. The extra-academic influence of his father and his teachers had been more important than his formal education. He

⁵ See also Husayni, *Ikhwan*, p. 47.

prided himself on going beyond the dictates of his 'academic programme'. Besides his religious studies he read widely: the literature of Sufism, biographies of the Prophet, and historic tales of heroism—defence of 'the homeland', 'zealotry in defence of religion', and 'struggle in the path of God'. It is not clear whether this last type of reading preceded or followed his awareness of Egypt's occupied status, but he clearly indicates its relationship to this awareness.⁶

All these influences in his life were given a 'practical' orientation by his teachers,⁷ and 'practical' application in the numerous societies with which he became involved. A revealing instance of his religious ardour and convictions is the legendary tale, perhaps apocryphal but undoubtedly symbolic, of his single-handed and successful effort, at the age of ten, to have an 'obscene' statue of a semi-naked woman which was displayed on one of the river boats removed and destroyed by the police.⁸ This propensity for action was to be shaped into new and sharper perspectives by the experience of Cairo.

Banna's arrival in Cairo coincided with the period of intense political and intellectual ferment which marked the 1920s in Egypt. Surveying the scene with 'the eyes of a religious villager',⁹ Banna isolated what were to him the serious problems: the disputed control of Egypt between the Wafd and Liberal Constitutional parties, and the vociferous political debating, with the consequence of 'disunity', which followed in the wake of the revolution of 1919; the post-war 'orientations to apostasy and nihilism' which were engulfing the Muslim world; the attacks on tradition and orthodoxy—emboldened by the 'Kemalist revolt' in Turkey—which were organized into a movement for the 'intellectual and social emancipation' of Egypt; the 'non-Islamic' currents in the newly reorganized Egyptian University, whose inspiration seemed to be the notion that 'the University could not be a lay university unless it revolted against religion and fought the social tradition which derived from it'; the secularist and libertarian 'literary and social salons', societies, and parties; and 'the books, newspapers, and magazines' which propagated those ideas whose sole goal was 'the weakening of the influence of religion' (pp. 46–8).¹⁰

Banna, with friends of like mind, reacted to this picture of

⁶ Beside the works listed by Banna (p. 27), *Husayni, Ikhwān*, pp. 7, 48–9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁸ The story is told by his father among others in *MMR* (29 Aug. 1952), 16 f.

⁹ Ahmad, *Nahda*, p. 105.

¹⁰ See also Jundi, *QDHRM*, pp. 137–9; and Husayni, *Ikhwān*, pp. 10–11.

Cairo: 'No one but God knows how many nights we spent reviewing the state of the nation . . . analysing the sickness, and thinking of the possible remedies. So disturbed were we that we reached the point of tears.'¹¹

In Cairo Banna made contact with the Hasafiyya, and in his second year he joined another religious group, the Islamic Society for Nobility of Character, which organized lectures on Islamic subjects;¹² but first the one and then the other group seemed to him to be inadequate to span the gulf which he saw separating Muslims from the faith and its teaching. Out of a growing conviction that 'the Mosque alone did not suffice' to bring the faith to the people, he organized a group of students from the Azhar University and from Dar al-'Ulum who were willing to train for the task of 'preaching and guidance'. They offered their services to the mosques and also—a more important move which was afterwards to be so successful—to the 'people's institutes' (the coffee-houses and other popular meeting-places) (pp. 44–6). Some of these students, after their training in Cairo, were sent out all over the Egyptian countryside to take up their various appointments and professions, and not only to carry 'the call to the message of Islam',¹³ but also, eventually, to disseminate the idea of the Society of the Muslim Brothers.

Banna's concern with the defection of 'educated youth' from the 'Islamic way of life' led him to seek the counsels of his religious and lay elders. He often went to the Salafiyya book store, at that time directed by Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib; he frequented the heir to the mantle of Muhammad 'Abduh, the Syrian Rashid Rida, editor of the magazine *al-Manar*; and he came to be a loyal admirer of Farid Wajdi and Ahmad Taymur Pasha, all partisans, as he saw it, of the 'Islamic cause' (pp. 49–50, 57–8). He carried his anxiety, finally, to the shaykhs of Azhar University, the intellectual centre of Islam, and bitterly disputed their ineffective opposition and apparent resignation in the face of 'the missionary and atheistic currents' disrupting Islamic society. The 'time for action', he felt and argued, was at hand (pp. 50–4).¹⁴ His own early experiences had prepared him to feel keenly on the matter; for the rest of his life he carried sharp and painful memories of the

¹¹ *RMKH*, p. 7.

¹² See the list of religious societies in Heyworth-Dunne, *Modern Egypt*, p. 30.

¹³ See *RMKH*, p. 6.

¹⁴ Banna claims that out of this exchange of opinion came the two important 'Islamic developments' of 1927: the establishment of the Young Men's Muslim Association (YMMA) modelled on the YMCA and the YMHA; and the founding of the magazine designed to be a 'voice of Islam', *Majallat al-Fath*. See *MDA* (15 Feb. 1955), 18, for information, on Banna's first published articles, which appeared in *Majallat al-Fath*.

profound spiritual malaise which overwhelmed this period of his life in Cairo in his relations with religious 'officialdom'. With more clarity he began to see the kind of 'action' necessary to save Islamic society, and his own role in it.

In his last year at Dar al-'Ulum, his class was called on to write an essay on the subject 'Explain the greatest of your hopes after completion of your studies and show how you will prepare yourselves for their realization.' Banna's essay began: 'I believe that the best people are those who . . . achieve their happiness by making others happy and in counselling them.' This, he decided, could best be achieved in either of two ways. The first was 'the path of true Sufism—sincerity and work' in the service of humanity. The second was 'the way of teaching and counselling, which is similar to the first in requiring sincerity and work, but distinct from it because of its involvement with people'. 'I believe', he added, 'that my people, because of the political stages through which they have passed, the social influences which have passed through them, and under the impact of western civilization . . . materialist philosophy, and *franji* [foreign] traditions, have departed from the goals of their faith.' As a result, the heritage of youth has been a 'corrupted' faith; 'doubt and perplexity' have overwhelmed them and 'rather than faith there is apostasy'. In this situation, Banna saw his mission in life as the reversal of these trends; he would become 'a counsellor and a teacher', giving himself, by day to the children and by night to their parents, to the task of teaching 'the objectives of religion and the sources of their well-being and happiness in life'. He would bring to this mission 'perseverance and sacrifice', study and understanding, and a body willing to face hardship and a soul which he had 'sold to God'. 'That is a covenant between me and my God', he concluded (pp. 54–7).¹⁵

The now dedicated young man graduated from Dar al-'Ulum in the summer of 1927 at the age of twenty-one. For a short time he considered the possibility of joining one of the annual governmental missions for education abroad, but for unknown reasons he did not do so (pp. 58–9).¹⁶ Instead, he accepted an appointment in the state school system. His assigned post was to teach Arabic in a primary school in the Suez Canal Zone city of Isma'iliyya. He remained a schoolmaster until his resignation in 1946, nineteen years later. On 19 September 1927 he left Cairo for his new home and his new job (pp. 59–61).

¹⁵ See also Hajjaji, *RWR*, pp. 85–98, for a detailed and lyrical description of the 'anguished' writing of the essay.

¹⁶ Members themselves have raised the important question as to what might have happened had Banna gone abroad; see *MDA* (15 Feb. 1955), 18; and Ahmad, *Nahda*, p. 104.

THE FOUNDING OF THE ORGANIZATION

From the first Banna began to take an active part in the life of the community of Isma'iliyya. Through the mosque and the school he familiarized himself with the chief personalities, religious and lay, in the town. Soon, as he had promised himself in his graduating essay, he was conducting not only his day classes, but also night instruction for the children's parents. At this time, these were mostly labourers, small merchants, and civil servants (pp. 61–2).¹⁷ While in his early days he used the school and mosque, Banna again resorted to the coffee-houses, as he had done in Cairo, to create an audience; discussion in the mosque prompted this move. It was his practice to make his speech, notice which listeners were most affected, and take these in smaller groups to other rooms for teaching, preaching, and discussion of the cause of Islam. He also sought at this time to acquaint himself with and penetrate the sources of power in the community. These he identified as (1) the '*ulama*'; (2) the shaykhs of the Sufi orders; (3) the 'elders,' by which he meant the leading families and groupings in the broadest sense; and (4) the 'clubs' (social and religious societies). To these, in their turn, he directed his attention, seeking thereby to influence the opinion-makers (pp. 62–71).

When Banna was assigned to Isma'iliyya, he admitted that he did not know its 'exact' location, except that as for most Egyptians, the city was identified with the Suez Canal and all that it implied. His observations of the community heightened his awareness of the role assigned to the city as a focal point, both of the British military occupation and of foreign 'economic occupation'. Here were not only the British military camps, but, equally hateful to Banna, the Suez Canal Company; complete foreign domination of the public utilities; and the conspicuously luxurious homes of the foreigners overlooking the 'miserable' homes of their workers. Even the street signs in the popular Egyptian quarters, he observed, were written in 'the language of the economic occupation' (p. 73).

While his attention was necessarily focused on his new environment, he did not let himself forget Cairo, with both its sins and its hope. He maintained, therefore, his contacts with the 'Islamic groups' there, and with the friends with whom he had pledged himself to serve 'the message of Islam'. He supported the creation in 1927 of the Young Men's Muslim Association and acted as local agent for the newly founded *Majallat al-Fath*, the organ of conservative Islamic groupings at that time, edited by

¹⁷ See also 'Assal, *BKA*, pp. 54–5.

Muhibb al-Dīn al-Khatīb, the director of the Salafiyya bookshop and one of the founding members of the YMMA (pp. 71–2).¹⁸

Very shortly after the founding of the YMMA in Cairo, Banna's own movement was born. In Dhu al-Qi'da, 1347—or March 1928, as recorded by Banna¹⁹—six members of the British camp labour force came to see him, and with their words formally launched the Society of the Muslim Brothers. What they actually said cannot be verified. What it is claimed that they said is worth noting: first, as a highly dramatized but very accurate summing-up of the inspiration and spirit of the movement; and, secondly, as a revealing insight into what came to be a major source of its strength—the relationship between the leader and the led. The account goes as follows: the men came to Banna and, after thanking him for his teaching, said:

We have heard and we have become aware and we have been affected. We know not the practical way to reach the glory [*izzā*] of Islam and to serve the welfare of Muslims. We are weary of this life of humiliation and restriction. Lo, we see that the Arabs and the Muslims have no status [*manzila*] and no dignity [*karama*]. They are not more than mere hirelings belonging to the foreigners. We possess nothing but this blood . . . and these souls . . . and these few coins. . . . We are unable to perceive the road to action as you perceive it, or to know the path to the service of the fatherland [*watan*], the religion, and the nation [*umma*] as you know it. All that we desire now is to present you with all that we possess, to be acquitted by God of the responsibility, and for you to be responsible before Him for us and for what we must do. If a group contracts with God sincerely that it live for His religion and die in His service, seeking only His satisfaction, then its worthiness will assure its success however small its numbers or weak its means.

Banna, duly moved, accepted the burden imposed on him, and together they took an oath to God to be 'troops [*jund*] for the message of Islam'. The name was selected by Banna: 'We are brothers in the service of Islam; hence, we are "the Muslim Brothers"' (pp. 73–4).²⁰

¹⁸ See n. 14, above. Banna never considered the YMMA broad enough in scope to command his full and undivided attention.

¹⁹ Dhu al-Qi'da 1347 translates correctly into April–May 1929, as observed by Heyworth-Dunne, *Modern Egypt*, p. 15, and F. Rosenthal, 'The "Muslim Brethren" of Egypt', *MW* (Oct. 1947), 278. Banna gives the above Arabic date and March 1928. Husayni, *Ikhwan*, p. 17, makes it March 1928 without, however, reference to a Hijra date. Everyone else has followed one or another without reference to the conflict. The tenth anniversary of the Society was celebrated in January 1939, making the 1929 date more appropriate, but the twentieth anniversary was celebrated in September 1948. Most members accepted 1928 as accurate, and it was incorporated in Article 1 of the Society's regulations, *QA*, p. 5, along with the Hijra date above. Cf. Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution*, p. 150.

²⁰ See also Husayni, *Ikhwan*, pp. 17–19; and Banna, *TIWMI*, pp. 18–25.

ISMA'ILIYYA: 1928–32

In the first three years of the life of the Society, its primary goal was the enlargement of its membership in and around Isma'iliyya. Banna and selected deputies pursued this goal by direct contact, touring the countryside on weekends and during vacations, preaching most usually in the mosques but also in the homes, clubs, and other meeting-places of the people. The use of the mosques gave the speakers the legitimacy and respectability they needed. Direct communication with the people in their homes, at their work, and in their places of leisure added to that legitimacy the quality of sincerity and the personal touch. Within four years, there were branches along the eastern edge of the Delta in Isma'iliyya, Port Sa'id, Suez, and abu-Suwayr, and on the western edge as far as Shubra Khit; there was also minor contact with Cairo (pp. 84–6, 100–8).

In Isma'iliyya, the centre of activity, the Society took an old house as headquarters (p. 75). Contributions (including £E500 from the Suez Canal Company) and loans from local merchants helped to finance the building of a mosque completed in 1930 (pp. 82–6, 93–6); to this were afterwards added a school for boys and a club (pp. 96–8), and a school for girls (pp. 109–10). All new branches were founded on the same pattern: the establishment of the headquarters was followed by the creation of some project or another—a mosque, a school, a club, or a small home industry—which came to serve as a focus for the interest or activities of the community.²¹

But as quickly as the Society spread, so also did there appear antipathy and resistance to it, prophetic of what was to come in later years on a scale perhaps undreamed of by Banna. At this time, in 1930, hostility was confined to complaints about the movement and its intentions towards the ministry of Isma'il Sidqi Pasha. The charges made—some by Christians, Banna felt—

There is some dispute about this widely accepted version of the founding of the organization. Partisans of Ahmad al-Sukkari, Banna's lifelong friend and deputy in the Society until his dismissal in 1947, argue that Banna overstates his own role in the story; that Sukkari, as early as their common involvement in the Hasafiyya Order, conceived the idea; that it grew from their common experience in the Order; and that in Cairo it took more definite shape among his friends there than Banna has suggested. After Sukkari left the organization, this view was presented but on the whole rejected by the membership. Banna has undoubtedly emphasized his centrality to the movement's inception, but it is equally true that he never concealed the part played by his long-term associates, especially Sukkari. This is perfectly clear from his own memoirs. And the question is slightly irrelevant, since no observer doubts the centrality of Banna's charisma to the Society's success.

²¹ See Husayni, *Ikhwan*, p. 21; and 'Assal, *BKA*, p. 54.

alleged among other things that Banna was (1) a communist and using communist money for his work; (2) a Wafdist working against Sidqi; (3) a republican working against King Fu'ad; and (4) a criminal violating civil-service provisions against the gathering of funds which he went on to use for illegal purposes. Banna was investigated by the ministry of education on the request of the prime minister but was 'cleared' of all charges (pp. 88-93). If nothing else, the investigation brought the organization to the attention of Sidqi Pasha, who was to have a further role in the unfolding of its history.

After the summer holidays of 1932 Banna asked for and received a transfer to Cairo. His group was already in touch with the Society for Islamic Culture in that city, which was headed by 'Abd al-Rahman al-Banna, one of his younger and equally religious brothers, who was working in Cairo after obtaining his Higher Commercial Diploma. The two groups merged to form the first branch of the Muslim Brothers in Cairo, the merger providing the Society with an organizational entrée to the 'Islamic circles' of the capital. Most of the members of the Cairo group rapidly became leaders of the Society in its new urban setting (pp. 108-9).²²

The need to select a deputy to replace Banna in Isma'iliyya was the occasion of the first dispute in the Society. Banna's own account of the dispute is as follows. After members close to him had asked him to name a deputy, his nominee was unanimously accepted at a general meeting in the mosque. Soon after, however, partisans of a rival aspirant to the post started a whispering campaign against the new appointee, complaining that the meeting had been unconstitutional, because all the members were not present. Banna discussed the matter with the dissidents and agreed to call another, a widely advertised meeting, but demanded and received their prior agreement to abide by that meeting's decision. Nevertheless, when the second meeting upheld the original appointment the dissidents resorted to new devices. First, they rumoured it about that the new appointee was such a bad manager that the loans made to the Society were in jeopardy. Banna, thereupon, with the consent of the Society's creditors, assumed personal responsibility for the whole sum involved. When his action became known, private contributions were made to him enabling him to repay it in full.

Next, the dissidents, among whom was the treasurer of the Society, preferred legal charges that Banna had misused its funds by distributing them to the newly created branches, including the

²² See also Banna, *TIWMI*, pp. 34-6; Buhi, *IWR*, pp. 6-7; Khuli, *QDIHB*, p. 26; and *MDA* (12 Feb. 1952), 11.

one headed by his brother in Cairo. The public prosecutor cleared Banna of the charge when the plaintiff admitted that the members themselves would have supported this practice. Banna now decided that the men had obviously lost their sense of the nature of the Society and 'their faith in obedience to the leadership', and that they must be dismissed. Before he could act they resigned, only to begin another whispering campaign about the dangerousness of the Society and its 'secret works', and above all about its denial of 'freedom of opinion'. After Banna arrived in Cairo some of them attempted to discredit him with the principal of the school to which he had been transferred. Banna's friends beat them and were taken to court, but were all acquitted (pp. 119-35).

This is the only dispute in the Society in Banna's time of which so comprehensive an official account exists. Though not one single part of Banna's account is corroborated by independent evidence, it is worthy of note as typifying all the issues which periodically disturbed the Society's inner unity as it became more prominent, and which were to influence its rise to power, the course of its history, and its final demise.

II

CAIRO: THE RISE TO POWER

CAIRO: 1932-9

THE minor crisis which marred Banna's departure from Isma'iliyya did not impair the sense of elation and expectation which accompanied the move to Cairo. Banna shared his time between the demands of his school and the new organization. We have seen that the merger with the Society for Islamic Culture provided an operational starting-point for the latter. The branch in Isma'iliyya declared the transfer of the headquarters to Cairo, and continued to assist the Cairo operation financially. Banna claims to have rejected, as early as this period, offers of 'aid' in exchange for support of 'the political *status-quo*' made by Isma'il Sidqi Pasha, the perennial palace strong man and foe of the Wafd.¹

Banna took as firm a grip of affairs as his time away from teaching would permit. He followed a regular routine: visiting the headquarters in the morning before school, after school, and in the evening. During these times he attended to all pending business, and lectured to, or merely chatted with, the increasingly large numbers of visitors.² The time between the sunset and evening prayer was usually set aside for formal lectures: mostly Qur'anic exegesis simplified for his first listeners, the poor of the district around the headquarters who were 'without learning and without the will for it'.³

From these modest beginnings, which did not especially distinguish it from the many religious societies which thrived in the capital, the Society of the Muslim Brothers grew, by the outbreak of the second world war, into one of the most important political contestants on the Egyptian scene. Its membership became so diversified as to be virtually representative of every group in Egyptian society. More important, it made effective inroads into the most sought-after of these groups—the civil servants and the

¹ *Mudh.*, p. 109. The offer appears to have been made to the leader of the Cairo Society for Islamic Culture, Banna's brother. If the report is true, this is the first recorded instance of an alleged continuing alliance between Islamic groups and conservative leaders (or the palace) against the Wafd and/or communism. On the early period of the Society in Cairo, see also Hajjaji, *RWR*, pp. 228, 249-53.

² *Buhi*, *IWR*, pp. 8, 10-11.

³ Hajjaji, *RWR*, pp. 253-5.

students—and the most neglected but potentially powerful, the urban labourers and the peasants.

A series of moves brought the Society's headquarters out of the alleys of the popular quarters to the main streets of Cairo, from little rooms to buildings and land⁴ with full-time, paid secretarial and clerical staffs,⁵ in keeping with its growing membership, strength, and internal and external activity. Another measure of the growth of the Society was the size and scope of 'general conferences' called periodically to discuss and plan action, or merely (and more usually) to ratify what had already been done or decided. These conferences also provide a general picture of the activity of the years 1932-9.

The first general conference, in May 1933, concerned itself primarily with the problem of Christian missionary activity and the means of combating it. A letter was sent to King Fu'ad outlining the Society's belief in the urgency of bringing the activities of the foreign missionaries under control.⁶

The second general conference, held later that year, dealt with advertising and instructional propaganda, and authorized 'a small company for the establishment of a press for the Muslim Brothers'.⁷ This was followed in due course by the founding of the first official journalistic voices of the Society: first, a weekly magazine called *Majallat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin*; and later, another called *Majallat al-Nadhir*. The press also printed what came to be the most important indoctrination texts for members—and until 1948 the chief sources for the study of the ideas of the movement—the 'messages' (*vasa'il*). Written by Banna, these either reproduced or summarized the Society's extensive communications to the governments of Egypt about the state of Egyptian society and the path of reform, or were messages written to the membership about one or another of the ideas, duties, and responsibilities of membership. The Society also began rapidly to institutionalize oral communication by instituting weekly lectures at all levels in its headquarters and branches, and by lecturing and preaching in the mosques and wherever else a group could be gathered.⁸ The problem of winning adherents was for Banna the first stage through which all movements must pass, the stage of 'propaganda, communication, and information'.⁹

⁴ See *Mudh.*, p. 144; and Heyworth-Dunne, *Modern Egypt*, p. 17.

⁵ Banna, *TIWMI*, pp. 36-8.

⁶ *Mudh.*, pp. 145, 155-63.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 170-1. The date of the second conference is not certain; that given in the *Memoirs*, Shuwwal 1350/Feb. 1932, appears to be incorrect.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 145, 148-50, 235.

⁹ *RMKH*, pp. 20-1; and *RTH: D*, pp. 11-12 for an instance of Banna's concern with the 'scientific' use of means of propaganda.

The fourth general conference met to celebrate the coronation of King Faruq in 1937 (see below, p. 16). The third and fifth, in March 1935 and January 1939, were important organizational sessions. The third conference, in direct response to the increase in membership, tackled such questions as membership criteria and responsibilities, and the hierarchy and structure of the Society. In particular, it regularized the formations of 'rovers' (*jawwala*) which had gradually been developing out of the athletic training started in the very earliest days at Isma'iliyya.¹⁰ After the rovers came the creation in 1937 of the 'battalions' (*kata'ib*), also with the aim of forging inner loyalties within the Society¹¹ and of supplying instruments for putting its ideas into effect. The fifth conference paid particular attention to these questions of the 'orientation' of the 'internal formations'.¹² Banna described 'this as the second stage of the movement, that of 'formation, selection, and preparation'.¹³

The fifth conference was also the tenth anniversary of the movement. These ten years had produced a set of ideas which, though general in form, were the foundations of the ideology of the Society and the substance of its appeal for the next ten years and beyond. These ideas were, essentially, a definition of 'the Islam of the Muslim Brothers'; the insistence on (1) Islam as a total system, complete unto itself, and the final arbiter of life in all its categories; (2) an Islam formulated from and based on its two primary sources, the revelation in the Qur'an and the wisdom of the Prophet in the Sunna; and (3) an Islam applicable to all times and to all places.¹⁴

Within this framework, Banna defined for the members the scope of the movement of which they were a part: 'The idea of the Muslim Brothers includes in it all categories of reform'; in specific terms he defined the movement as 'a Salafiyya message, a Sunni way, a Sufi truth, a political organization, an athletic group, a cultural-educational union, an economic company, and a social idea'.¹⁵ Among its outstanding qualities were the avoidance of doctrinal disputes, of 'notables and names', and of 'parties and societies'; its concern with organization, programme, and action; and a steady attention to steady growth.¹⁶ From these bases, Banna outlined the attitude of the Society to power and government, the constitution, law, nationalism, and Arabism.¹⁷

¹⁰ See *Mudh.*, pp. 188-212.

¹¹ On the rovers, the battalions, and other matters of organization, see Part II of this study.

¹² *RMKH*, pp. 21-2.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-16.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 33-64. On these and all other matters of 'ideology' see Part III of this study.

¹⁵ *Mudh.*, pp. 259-64, esp. pp. 262-3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-14.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-33.

However, the fifth conference also looked to the future, to the dawn of 'a new life' and 'a new struggle'—to the preparation of the third stage of activity of the movement, the stage of 'execution', 'the active stage out of which the perfected fruits of the mission of the Muslim Brothers will appear'. But apparently already under pressure from his youthful partisans (as we shall see in a moment), Banna seized this opportunity of warning 'the anxious and the hasty' that the way was yet long but that there was no other; that success could only follow patience and planning; and that action, not speech, and preparations, not slogans, would guarantee the victory. He set the terms of this stage in his now famous concluding words:

At the time that there will be ready, Oh ye Muslim Brothers, three hundred battalions, each one equipped spiritually with faith and belief, intellectually with science and learning, and physically with training and athletics, at that time you can demand of me to plunge with you through the turbulent oceans and to rend the skies with you and to conquer with you every obstinate tyrant. God willing, I will do it.¹⁸

Internally, then, the fifth conference of 1939 suggested that the Society had assumed its fundamental shape and was sufficiently strong, in its own mind, to flex its muscles publicly albeit cautiously. Its external activity, limited only by the exigencies of an organization in growth, developed more boldly, more self-assuredly, and more inclusively as its ideas, and the instruments of those ideas, evolved more clearly and precisely.

The letter to King Fu'ad in 1933 concerning missionary activity was the forerunner of many such communications to Egyptian heads of government seeking reform in the name, and within the spirit and letter, of Islam. The most notable of these, a letter addressed in 1936 to King Faruq, his prime minister, Mustafa al-Nahas Pasha, and the heads of all Arab governments, is a basic statement of the early propositions held by Banna; it appeared as the *risala* called *Nahwa al-Nur* (Towards the Light).¹⁹ These letters and the publication of its weekly magazines constituted the Society's chief form of activity during its first years in Cairo.

The disturbances in Palestine between Zionist and Arab nationalism and the British provided the first occasion for active involvement, beyond propaganda, in matters 'political'. This took the

¹⁸ *RMKH*, pp. 22-5; for the quotation, p. 24.

¹⁹ This *risala* is reproduced partly in *Mudh.*, pp. 236-41; the letters to the prime ministers of Egypt were reproduced in *JIM* in a series appearing between 1 and 27 July 1946.

form of collecting funds to aid the Palestinian Arabs to maintain the Arab 'strike' in 1936-9, and demonstrating, pamphleteering, and speechmaking on behalf of their cause.²⁰ Political activity as a part of the movement's interests was officially if belatedly recognized by Banna in the first issue of the weekly, *al-Nadhir*, in May 1938, the appearance of which, he said, marked 'the beginning of their involvement in the external and internal political struggle'.²¹ And the fifth conference of 1939, it will be recalled, defined the Society, *inter alia*, as a 'political organization'. This movement towards political activism seems to have been timed to coincide not only with the Society's growing sense of organizational power, but also with an auspicious trend of political circumstances in Egypt. Henceforth, Egypt itself was to receive some of the consuming political attention being directed to 'Islamic causes' throughout the Arab, South Asian, and North African worlds.

In Egypt, the political situation was dominated by the presence of the newly elevated and much loved young King Faruq, who, after a period of regency beginning in May 1936, was crowned in July 1937. His early religious attitude, inspired by one of his mentors, the rector of the Azhar, Shaykh Mustafa al-Maraghi, won for the new king the esteem of his people. The Brothers' fourth conference, as has already been noted, was called to celebrate his accession. After a long and joyous celebration—in which the rovers played their first important role as forces of 'order and security'—the Brothers gathered at the gates of 'Abidin Palace chanting a traditional oath of loyalty: 'We grant you our allegiance on the Book of God and the Tradition of His Prophet.'²²

The other influence on Faruq, besides Maraghi, was 'Ali Mahir Pasha, an old friend of the royal family and foe of the Wafd. The new king's prestige was transferred to Mahir, who readily seized the opportunity to gain an initiative for the palace in the traditional struggle for power between the royal prerogative and the popular Wafd Party. The Maraghi-Mahir combine, with pan-Arab and even pan-Islamic overtones coupled with anti-Wafd politics, won the support of and in turn encouraged such groups as the Muslim Brothers and Young Egypt (*Misr al-Fatat*)—the 'Green Shirts' led by Ahmad Husayn Effendi. On one level, both groups, as 'popular parties', were useful as counterweights to the Wafd. Besides this, however, the activity of the Muslim Brothers on behalf of Palestine had impressed both Maraghi and Mahir, who saw in this issue, and its partisans, useful material for the enhancement of Egypt's prestige in the Arab world.

²⁰ See also below, p. 17.

²¹ *Mudh.*, p. 150.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 251-5 for an account of the celebration and the *bay'a* to Faruq.

When Mahir, one of the Egyptian representatives at the London Round Table Conference on Palestine held in 1939, returned to Cairo in March, he was welcomed by the Muslim Brothers in force.²³

This relationship between Mahir and the Muslim Brothers took on added significance in the early war years, a matter which will be discussed later in this chapter. As the relationship became more obvious, it became the occasion for a second, and this time more serious, membership defection. Approximately in the autumn of 1939 a small dissident group left the Society to form 'the Society of Our Master Muhammad's Youth' (*jamiyat shabab sayyidna Muhammad*). Three major and separate issues were involved in the defection, but these gradually coalesced into fundamental questions about means and ends.

The first of these issues concerned the use of funds raised by Banna in support of the Arab strike in Palestine and of the Society's activities on their behalf. Most of the members accepted his argument that to spend some of this money on branches of the Society in Egypt—and thereby to make the Society itself more effective—was not to deny the Palestinians but, rather, to help them in another way. For the moment the dissidents were silenced, but their discontent was revived by the second strand in the dispute: the question whether or not the Society should eschew alliances with one or another of the established political forces in the country.

Banna had made it one of the cardinal virtues of the Society to avoid involvement with 'notables and names' and 'parties and societies'. His cordial relationship with 'Ali Mahir—widely believed to have encompassed 'aid' of some sort to the Society, an accusation repudiated but not emphatically denied by Banna²⁴—provided the occasion for an airing of the issue. The dissident group demanded the dismissal of Ahmad al-Sukkari, Banna's childhood friend, and old associate in the idea of the organization, who had recently come to Cairo to assume the role of deputy to the leader. Sukkari, who was regarded as the focus of the problem of relationships with Mahir, had by this time become unofficial political 'liaison officer', a role he was to play until his dismissal in 1947. In 1939 Banna refused to dismiss him, thereby allowing the situation to become still more inflamed. Some of the dissidents were obviously moved by revulsion, not so much from politics or

²³ Heyworth-Dunne, *Modern Egypt*, pp. 23-8, 34; Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Great Britain and Egypt* (1952), pp. 56-7 (RIIA, GBE in later references). The Brothers' reception of Mahir was not unanimously supported, and became part of another dissension in the group as we shall see.

²⁴ *Mudh.*, p. 257.

political alliances as from 'Ali Mahir²⁵ and the thought of permitting the Society to become his instrument with which to fight the Wafd. At this time it had not yet become a contradiction in terms to be a Wafdist member of the Muslim Brothers.

The question of political alliances and political action involved the third, and most important, issue, that of the imperatives, moral and theological, by which the Society would be guided. Though temporarily settled, this last issue was never really resolved. Having joined the Society in 'defence' of Islamic values, some members took this commitment in a literal sense, encouraged by the Society's emphasis on discipline and training, physical as well as spiritual and moral. As the Society grew more powerful, and institutionalized that power in the rover and battalion systems, some of the members became inclined to demand the fulfilment of its mission. For this group, its mission was clear and uncomplicated by political considerations; it was the moral salvation of Egypt, if necessary with 'the force of the hand'. The group turned, in the context, to the Prophetic tradition which said: 'He among you who sees an abomination must correct it with his hand; if he is unable, then with his tongue; if he is unable, then with his heart. The last of these is the weakest of faith.' Banna, in this dispute, rejected the application of the Tradition in favour of the Qur'anic verse (16: 125): 'Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way. Lo! thy Lord is best aware of him who strayeth from His way and He is Best Aware of those who go aright.'²⁶ Between 1937 and 1939 individual members had left the Society because of their dissatisfaction with Banna's attitude on this matter—one seemingly inconsistent with the teachings of the Society. One of these is reported to have made an attempt on his life. In 1939 cumulative anger over the questions of politics and the use of funds in Egypt and in Palestine, and of Banna's continuing refusal to sanction forceful reform bore fruit in the secession movement. The rigidly puritanical attitudes of the new group, the Society of Our Master Muhammad's Youth, suggests the relative importance of the moral issue in the dispute with Banna.

The defection had some immediate consequences. Banna's warning to 'the hasty and the anxious', voiced at the fifth con-

²⁵ Heyworth-Dunne, *Modern Egypt*, pp. 27-8, 30, only discusses this political facet of the dispute, but gives the most complete account of it.

²⁶ The Tradition is recorded in *Sahih Muslim* (Cairo, n.d.), i. 48, in Kitab al-Iman, Bab 83 with a variant in Bab 85. The Qur'anic verse is the translation of Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* (London, 1930), p. 281; unless otherwise noted, Pickthall will be used throughout for translations without further reference. Khuli, *QDIHB*, pp. 73-4, presents the only available written account of the third aspect of the dispute; see also Ahmad, *Nahda*, p. 110.

ference in 1939, was made necessary as a result of this development. Feeling remained so high that the issue had another airing in 1940, which caused more defections to the new group. The most important of these was Mahmud abu Zayd, editor of *al-Nadhir*, who took with him both the magazine and the Society's licence to publish it.²⁷ Finally, it would appear that, because of this response (called 'immature' by later Brothers) of the dissidents to the training programme, the battalion system was deemed to have failed to achieve its purpose, and was allowed to fall into temporary disuse.

Though significant, and wearisome for Banna, the defection of 1939 and the problems it raised did not seriously retard the Society's advance in numbers and influence. The war years and their political and economic consequences for Egypt added momentum to that advance. Tendencies in the Society's thought or structure which had been implicit or potential during the first ten years of its life were clarified and took definite shape. Almost imperceptibly, amid the frustrations and chaos of these years, the Society developed into a force willing and able to play a decisive part in the post-war life of Egypt.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

From the beginning of the second world war the history of the Muslim Brothers is inextricably associated with, and moulded by, that of Egypt. Before describing the development of the Society in detail, some account should therefore be given of general political events in Egypt and also of relations between Egypt and Great Britain. In August 1939 the prime minister, Muhammad Mahmud Pasha, resigned for reasons of ill health. 'Ali Mahir was commissioned by the king to form a new cabinet. Around him Mahir placed, among others, Muhammad Salih Harb Pasha in the strategic ministry of national defence, and 'Abd al-Rahman 'Azzam Bey in the ministry of *awqaf*, later in the ministry of social affairs and, more importantly, as head of Egypt's 'territorial army'. With General 'Aziz 'Ali al-Misri as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and with a king duly impressed and influenced by Mahir, by Maraghi, and by the complex of ideas of pan-Arabism (and perhaps even pan-Islamism) represented by all of these names, Egypt was not in the hands of those who could be regarded by Britain as her most dependable leaders.²⁸

²⁷ *MIM* (20 May 1954), 2.

²⁸ See M. Colombe, *L'Évolution de l'Égypte, 1924-1950* (1951), p. 82; G. Kirk, *The Middle East in the War* (1952), p. 40, speaks of an 'inner Cabinet' of Misri, Harb, and 'Azzam who, under Mahir, 'worked to consolidate the loyalty of the armed forces to the King, and so use them as a support of their own power'. For the historical background in this period we have relied primarily on Colombe, Kirk, and RIIA, *GBE*.

The Egyptian attitude was correct. With the British declaration of war on Germany, Egypt did what was required of her by the treaty of 1936: she

broke off diplomatic and commercial relations with Germany, sequestered German property and interned all German subjects who could not establish an anti-Nazi record. [The government] proclaimed a 'state of siege' with the Prime Minister as Military Governor; placed the ports under British naval control; and imposed a strict censorship of posts, telegraphs, and telephones, and the press, with British participation.²⁹

The government also declared its loyalty and friendship and waited to see the outcome of the war, the prospects of which, in the early stages, seemed to grow progressively dimmer for the Allies.

The news of the course of the war, added to the German propaganda effort, made difficult the British attempt in Egypt to win—short of a declaration of hostilities—a deeper commitment to the increasingly burdensome war effort, and a more active response to the dangers of the deteriorating Allied cause. The issue became serious with the entrance of Italy into the war in June 1940, and the consequent problem of security this created among the large Italian population of Egypt. Faced with a lethargic if not hostile, leadership, British authority inspired a series of changes which considerably strengthened, for the moment, the Allied hand. In February 1940 the commander-in-chief, Misri, was suddenly granted 'sick leave' for three months, which was extended for six more months in May 1940; he was then pensioned off on 7 August and replaced by a general considered by the British authorities to be more dependable. The final removal of Misri was accomplished by a new government. Following the Italian entry into the war 'Ali Mahir, at direct odds with British authority on how to deal with the new situation, 'resigned' as prime minister, being replaced, at the same time, as chief of the royal cabinet by Ahmad Hasanayn Pasha.

Hasan Sabri Pasha's new cabinet, formed on 27 June 1940, without Harb as minister of defence, lasted until his death in November. During that time, as Egypt debated a potential role as belligerent in the war, the battle of Africa was joined and Alexandria itself was bombed. Husayn Sirri Pasha assumed the reins of government in November, a fact which promised a continued amelioration of the relations between the treaty partners, despite the refusal of the Wafd and the Sa'dist parties to join the government. British successes in the Western Desert, followed by a stabilization of that front in the spring of 1941, facilitated the

²⁹ Kirk, *Middle East in the War*, pp. 34 f.

settling of the pattern of Anglo-Egyptian relations into a fairly efficient and co-operative operation to face up to the burdens of the war.

In May 1941, however, the relative calm was broken by the Rashid 'Ali putsch in Iraq, after which the British authority re-examined security in Egypt. 'Ali Mahir, as a potentially subversive person, was confined to his country estate by Sirri. The dismissed Misri, who had meanwhile been reached by Italian and German intelligence, planned an escape from Egypt to reach the insurgents in Iraq. He was intercepted on the night of 15–16 May with two other officers, in an Egyptian air force plane, but escaped only to be re-arrested on 6 June. On 19 May Hasan al-Banna was transferred to Upper Egypt by the ministry of education, under an Egyptian military order. On 20 May, 'Azzam Bey was replaced as head of the Egyptian 'territorial army'.³⁰

Again, for a moment, the situation in Egypt seemed to be in order. Banna was allowed to return from Upper Egypt in the autumn but was re-arrested in October (see below, p. 22). In the broader picture, a poor harvest, supply shortages, and a renewal of tension resulting from the opening of a new German offensive in the Western Desert provoked restiveness in the country which focused on a palace affront at a decision of the government to break off diplomatic relations with Vichy France in January 1942. A mass demonstration of students on 1 February sparked off the resignation of Husayn Sirri's government.

The British Ambassador, Sir Miles Lampson (later Lord Killearn), visited King Faruq and complained that

the co-operation of the well-intentioned Sirri Government with the British had been prevented by intrigue in other quarters; Axis propaganda had not been adequately checked; pro-Axis elements had been left at liberty; the students had been encouraged to demonstrate in favour of Rommel; now that the enemy were advancing in Cyrenaica, the strategic situation was full of dangerous possibilities for Egypt, Britain's vital base in the Middle East. . . . [Therefore] in accordance with constitutional practice, a Government should be formed which commanded a majority in the country and would thus be able to control the internal situation.³¹

He asked the king to call Mustafa al-Nahhas Pasha, head of the Wafd, to form a government. The king promised a conference of all party leaders with a view to forming a coalition. He was advised of the futility of such a gesture and presented with an ultimatum on

³⁰ On this period see especially Sadat, *Safahat*, pp. 85–92.

³¹ Kirk, *Middle East in the War*, p. 209, an 'unofficial' account, but one of the fullest available.

4 February to which, after he had resisted and found his palace surrounded with British armour, he yielded. On 6 February the cabinet of Nahhas Pasha was formed.³²

The Wafdist government remained in power almost to the end of the war, completely fulfilling the expectations of the British as to its ability and will to maintain the order and security necessary to the successful pursuance of the war. Its own internal corruption (which led to a split in its ranks) and, as the war danger receded from the Nile Valley, the emergence of old and new political tensions (especially between the palace and the Wafd) set the stage in October 1944 for a royal dismissal of the Nahhas cabinet. On 9 October a new government was formed by Ahmad Mahir, the Sa'dist Party leader. Mahir ended the war period with his declaration of war on the Axis Powers, for which he paid with his life as he read the proclamation to the chamber of deputies on 24 February 1945.

At the outbreak of war, in a letter to the then prime minister, 'Ali Mahir, the Muslim Brothers declared their support of Egyptian non-belligerency and of the confining of aid to Britain to the strict letter of the Treaty of 1936.³³ Beyond this, on the surface, the Society continued to press its cause; it also took a more active part in the nationalist agitation against Britain, the war notwithstanding. As we have already noticed, Britain reacted with firmness to this potential threat to her rear.

Transferred to Upper Egypt in May 1941 (Sukkari was transferred at the same time to Lower Egypt), Banna used his new location as a headquarters, and publicly continued his activities. His transfer caused a mild parliamentary ruffle. Wafdist seized the chance of embarrassing the government—most likely for reasons other than Banna. When the prime minister, Sirri, justified the transfer on the ground that Banna, a civil servant of the ministry of education, had been neglecting his work, the Society's headquarters prepared a brief which, supplemented by ministry of education inspection files, was presented during the parliamentary debate and appears to have refuted Sirri's observations. Banna and Sukkari were retransferred back to Cairo in September.³⁴ In October, however, after a mass meeting denouncing the British, both were arrested and imprisoned, together with the secretary-

³² For an Egyptian account of the February incident, see Mustafa Mu'min, *Sawt Misr* (1951), pp. 88–110. Mu'min was a student leader at the time and was to become prominent among Muslim Brothers.

³³ *Mudh.*, pp. 280–6.

³⁴ Hajjaji, *RWR*, pp. 230–1; 'Assal, *BKA*, p. 55; Hamid, *QSIHB*, pp. 24–7; and Heyworth-Dunne, *Modern Egypt*, p. 38.

general, 'Abd al-Hakim 'Abidin, and a few of the members. At the same time, the government suppressed the journals of the Society—at that time *al-Ta'aruf* and *al-Shu'a'*, and the well known *al-Manar*, which Banna had recently taken over from the heirs of Rashid Rida. Meetings and any reference in newspapers to the Brothers were forbidden.³⁵ Again, however, within the month, the detainees were released, following an unfavourable public and parliamentary reaction as well as alleged pressure from the palace.³⁶ In the words of the Muslim Brothers, this was the first *mihna* ('persecution') to befall the organization. From that time, no government in Egypt avoided clashing with the Society of the Muslim Brothers.

Banna's transfer in May 1941, coinciding as it did with the banishment of 'Ali Mahir, the dismissal of 'Azzam from the command of the territorial army, and the final retirement of 'Aziz al-Misri from the command of the Egyptian army, suggested relationships between these men which had inspired the common action against them. Banna later denied that in the Mahir ministry of 1939–40 he had known the prime minister or any of the cabinet, except Salih Harb Pasha and 'Azzam Pasha. The latter two were known widely, and especially to the Brothers, for their devotion to Arabic-Islamic causes.³⁷ Mahir, likewise, had come to share this prestige and, contrary to Banna's assertion, had met and come to know him from 1935.³⁸ Beyond this there is little information, save that already noted: that there appeared to be a continuing dependency by Mahir and his associates on the Muslim Brothers for support of nationalist, pan-Arab, and anti-British policies. This complex of relationships presumably encompassed, on the one hand, the palace, Mahir, Harb, 'Azzam, Misri, and Maraghi, and, on the other, the Azhar students, the Muslim Brothers and other Islamic groups, and such organizations as Young Egypt.³⁹ Banna's contact with Mahir—one of the causes, as we have already seen, of defections from the Society just before the war—clearly continued during the first two years of it; but there is virtually no information as to its precise nature.⁴⁰

³⁵ *RNUNA*, pp. 6–7; and *JIM* (3 July 1946), 2.

³⁶ *JIM* (3 July 1946), 2; Husayni, *Ikhwan*, pp. 26–7; and G. Kirk, *A Short History of the Middle East* (Washington, 1949), p. 200.

³⁷ See *JIM* (13 July 1946), 4.

³⁸ See *MDA* (10 Feb. 1953), 3.

³⁹ See Heyworth-Dunne, *Modern Egypt*, pp. 23–8, 33–4, 36–8, followed by Kirk, *Middle East in the War*, p. 207; Jacob Boehm, 'Les Frères musulmans', *Hamizrah Hehadash* (Summer 1952), translated in *Monde non-chrétien* (June 1953), 212; Zvi Kaplinsky, 'The Muslim Brotherhood', *MEA* (Dec. 1954), 380. See also on Maraghi, *COC*, iii (1946), 511.

⁴⁰ See the hints about Banna's 'historic' role during the war in *MDA* (12 Feb. 1952), 15.

Rather more is known about the relationship between Banna and 'Aziz al-Misri. Misri, like 'Azzam and Harb, had distinguished himself by services to various nationalist and Arab causes; he had won for himself military honours and repute in the Ottoman campaigns in Tripolitania and had shared in the ferment which swept the Arabs into revolt against the Sultan of Turkey. He himself records his first meeting with the Brothers, in the person of Banna, after a visit to London in 1937. He was met at the airport, he reports, by three people in 'Islamic dress' who greeted him with words which pleased him so little that he shouted angrily: 'I want to see the Ikhwan representing the idea of renewal and renaissance, even in their clothes. . . . In their hands [I want to see] rather than prayer beads, books with which to dispute with me.' The first meeting was followed by others, in which Banna apparently persuaded Misri that the Brothers were what he sought.⁴¹

From 1938 to 1940 Misri presumably acted in concert with Mahir in wooing not only the Muslim Brothers, but also Young Egypt. Misri, according to Heyworth-Dunne, sought to unify the two groups,⁴² which because of the growing competition between them were experiencing a strain on their relations.⁴³ The friendship between the two men was sufficiently strong for Banna, in 1940, to offer himself as an intermediary—the first on record—between Misri and a group of discontented young army officers which, at a later date and under different stresses, calling themselves the 'Free Officers' led the successful revolution of 23 July 1952.⁴⁴

Anwar al-Sadat, a member of the revolutionary group, was the officer with whom Banna had his first meeting. Whom Sadat represented at that time is not clear, but he was in the army and refers to groups planning revolution. It seems highly unlikely that he had in mind the 'Free Officers' who became the rulers of Egypt. He and Banna are alleged to have met first by chance in the mess hall of a barracks outside Cairo. It was the night of the Prophet's

⁴¹ MDA (12 Feb. 1952), 6.

⁴² Heyworth-Dunne, *Modern Egypt*, p. 36. The name of Young Egypt was changed in 1940 to the Islamic National Party.

⁴³ RMKH, pp. 56–9. Banna was especially angry at the fact that many thought the Muslim Brothers to be a branch of Young Egypt.

⁴⁴ The major source on the relationship of the Muslim Brothers to the present 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, *Faridat 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.

birthday and Banna was making an informal speech as part of the celebrations. The two established a ready rapport and began a series of meetings which lasted for over two years. Sadat goes on to suggest (with seeming retrospective wisdom) that as early as 1938 the idea of revolution had taken root in the army, and that the revolutionary group sought support from within the existing power structure. To this end they hoped to make contact with 'Ali Mahir and 'Aziz al-Misri, the two primary objects of British hostility after the outbreak of war.⁴⁵

Mahir's dismissal in June 1940 put him out of reach of the group. Misri was contacted through Hasan al-Banna. In the autumn of 1940 Sadat met him in the clinic of Dr Ibrahim Hasan, a second deputy in the Society. The two discussed the plight of Egypt under the British occupation, and, despairing of all else, agreed that 'the salvation of the country could be assured only by a coup at the hands of the military', a 'distant goal' which filled Sadat with awe. After this first meeting Banna and Sadat began to reveal the 'secrets' that each suspected the other of having, and for the first time there was open talk of intentions and of uniting ranks for the common goal.⁴⁶ After this series of meetings, Misri seems to have become the central figure around whom groups from the army, the Muslim Brothers, and the police dramatized their discontents, finding in each other mutual reinforcement for their common urge to action against the British.⁴⁷

In May 1941 Misri, with the aid of German intelligence officers and Anwar al-Sadat, made his abortive attempt to join the insurgents in Iraq. One of the two other officers arrested with him was 'Abd al-Mun'im 'Abd al-Ra'uf, a friend both of Sadat and of Misri and one of the army malcontents since 1939. Upon his release in the spring of 1942, and following the arrest of Sadat in August 1942 (for continued contact with German agents), Ra'uf became the chief liaison officer between the army and the Muslim Brothers.⁴⁸ Unlike Sadat, Ra'uf shortly afterwards became a full and dedicated member of the Society. His role in its history is of major importance. At the time, he acted primarily as chief missionary for the discontent in the army, bringing officers to the

⁴⁵ Since the overthrow of Faruq every group in Egypt has put conspicuously on record its recollections of long-standing hostility towards him. It is a matter of some interest, nevertheless, that Sadat's army group sought to contact Misri and Mahir, both palace men. Nationalist discontent, not revolution, was their obvious motive.

⁴⁶ Sadat, *Safahat*, pp. 33–48.

⁴⁷ Sadat in *J* (9 Sept. 1954), 1, 9. Sadat goes too far in speaking of Misri as the first leader of the first 'front' of the army, police, and Muslim Brothers. For similar certitude, see Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution*, p. 180, drawing her material from the same source.

⁴⁸ Sadat, *Safahat*, pp. 85–92, 105, 110.

headquarters to hear Banna and then arranging private meetings for them with him.⁴⁹ Subsequently he assumed a leading position in the ranks of the main and successful stream of army discontent which culminated in the revolution of 1952.

One other point is of importance here. Sadat, in the course of his meetings with Banna, had been overjoyed to see that the latter had already started collecting arms. Without the knowledge of even his closest colleagues, Banna had started a trickle of arms flowing to him through his agent-followers in army ranks.⁵⁰ Just before his arrest in August 1942, however, Sadat had a final meeting with Banna, during which he told all that he could about the army group and its operation. Despite the excitement shown by Banna at the revelations, Sadat felt he was not yet fully committed to the idea of the Society playing the role of civil or 'popular' support for a military movement of liberation from the British. Sadat remained convinced—even when he wrote in 1953—that although Banna was dedicated to the goal 'heart, being, mind and soul', the significant disposition of 'armament and formations' which, by his secretive behaviour, he had led Sadat to believe existed, could not be counted on, and his proffered part in that liberation on the army's terms was in question.⁵¹ As it turned out, for the moment, the issue was academic. Further, it did not prevent more fruitful relations between the army and the Brothers as the idea of revolution gained momentum. It did, however, set a tone of suspicion which continued to prevail, with more or less intensity, in the relations between the groups as they became more involved, and which finally brought ruin to that relationship.

However important this liaison with the army came to be later for the Society, at that time it was confined to Banna alone, and its primary import lay in its relation to the larger picture of nationalist agitation and harassment of the British occupation, an activity given new point and more hopeful meaning by the pressures of the war on England and her resources. The British response was vigorous and conclusive; in retrospect the most serious of the actions taken by them was the installation of the ministry of Nahhas Pasha in February 1942. From this time on, many elements of the national movement began to develop a new and inordinately bitter focus for their agitation.

The first act of the Nahhas ministry, on 7 February, was to dissolve parliament and call new elections. At the sixth general conference of the Muslim Brothers, held around January 1941, it had been decided that, at the proper time, the Society would run

⁴⁹ *MMR* (10 Dec. 1954), 26.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-2.

⁵⁰ Sadat, *Safahat*, pp. 50-2.

candidates in national elections. The elections called by the Wafd were considered appropriate for the first test of the Society's electoral strength. Banna declared himself a candidate for the district of Isma'iliyya, the birthplace of his movement, but no sooner had he done so than Nahhas summoned him and called upon him to withdraw. Without much debate, he consented, but 'at a price' which included (1) freedom for the movement to resume full-scale operations; and (2) a promise of government action against the sale of alcoholic drink and against prostitution. Nahhas agreed, and very shortly ordered restrictions on the sale of liquor at certain times of every day, during Ramadan, and on religious holidays. Similarly, he took steps to make prostitution illegal and immediately closed down some of the brothels. He also permitted the resumption of some of the activities of the Society, including the issue of some of its publications and the holding of meetings.⁵²

The issue of the elections thus muted, in March Banna pledged his support to the Wafdist Government.⁵³ There was no serious nationalist agitation for the remainder of its period of office. However, relations between the Muslim Brothers and the Wafd remained unstable. At the end of 1942 Nahhas again closed down all branches, excepting only the headquarters. In early 1943 the situation was reversed, with the visit to the headquarters of a group of Wafdist dignitaries—mostly ministers—who, after a speech by Banna, declared their 'loyalty' to 'the idea' represented by the Brothers. During the remainder of the life of the ministry relations alternated between the friendly and the hostile: surveillance and censorship, followed by periods of relative freedom.⁵⁴

The inconsistency of the Wafd reflected in part the recognition of the growing power of the Muslim Brothers, and what, from that time on, would be an ambivalent or many-sided approach to it. For the 'liberal' wing of the Wafd, the Muslim Brothers were always anathema. For the 'right' wing, headed from that time by Fu'ad Siraj al-Din, the Society was as a useful instrument against the dangerous social pressures being generated in Egypt—communism especially had flourished during the war. As minister of agriculture in this cabinet, Siraj al-Din is reported to have facilitated the spread of the movement in the countryside. And for the Wafd as a whole, no potential power could be overlooked, for

⁵² Heyworth-Dunne, *Modern Egypt*, p. 40, who also points out that Banna played to the fullest the role of 'martyr' which the sacrifice of his candidacy on behalf of 'Islamic reform' had conferred on him; see also *MIM* (20 May 1954), 2.

⁵³ *RIIA*, *GBE*, p. 72.

⁵⁴ *MMB* (23 Jan. 1951), 4; *JIM* (3 July 1946), 4; and Hajjaji, *IMAM*, ii. 39-51.

the services it might render to the overriding and unabated Wafdist conflict with the palace or for the threat it would pose were the palace to make use of it.⁵⁵

Wafdist relations with the Society were also, however, influenced by Nahhas's anxiety—given the stringent war-time definition of security—lest the Brothers should say or write anything that threatened the all-out support of the Allied cause that he had promised the British—a promise to which he remained true. Though he was unquestionably acting out of both conviction and self-interest, his identification with the British Embassy necessarily laid him open to charges of collusion with the 'imperialists'. In their treatment at the hands of the Wafd the Muslim Brothers saw a continuation of their 'persecution', begun in May 1941, by the 'British oppressor'.

After Banna's release from prison in October 1941 contact was made between the British Embassy and the Muslim Brothers. Who made contact with whom is a matter of dispute, but the fact of the contact seems established, as was its essentially unproductive consequence.⁵⁶ The point here is that the Brothers regard the failure of the British 'to purchase' them as the key to the harassment of the Society by Nahhas: first, by his rejection of Banna's candidacy for the election;⁵⁷ and secondly, in the on-again off-

⁵⁵ See Boehm, 'Les Frères musulmans', 212-13; Kaplinsky, 'The Muslim Brotherhood', 380.

⁵⁶ The Brothers have often publicly mentioned the meeting, alleging that the initiative came from the British, who were afraid of a rapprochement between the Brothers and the palace. After the ideas and programme of the Society had been discussed, the British agent, duly 'impressed', offered 'to aid the organization in the realization of its goals'. Banna, it was said, refused the offer. For versions of this story, see *RNUNA*, pp. 8-9; *JIM* (31 July 1946), 2; *MDA* (29 May 1954), 9; *MIM* (22 July 1954), 9; (29 July 1954), 9.

Heyworth-Dunne, universally reported by the Brothers to have been one of the principals on behalf of the British Embassy, comments that Banna gave out through Egyptians who were in touch with British agents that he would be prepared to co-operate 'and would be amenable to some kind of payment, . . . which made people believe that he had learnt his lesson through internment. But nothing was further from the truth. He had no intention of receiving the money of infidels; he gave much prominence to this question of being offered money during the War in his paper, the *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* (especially in 1946). Ahmad al-Sukkari had a great deal to do with this stratagem. On one occasion he asked for forty thousand dollars and a car, in return for the support of the Ikhwan. For twelve years, the Ikhwan had been fed on anti-British propaganda; it would have been virtually impossible to have asked them to work for the British' (*Modern Egypt*, pp. 38-9).

The relative quiet of the Brothers after the coming of the Wafd has led many to believe that the offer of 'aid' was accepted. Particularly convinced of this are former members of the Young Egypt group which led the great pro-Rommel demonstrations in the summer of 1942, and which the Brothers, as an organization, did not join; see Boehm, 'Les Frères musulmans', 213, and Heyworth-Dunne, *Modern Egypt*, p. 41.

⁵⁷ The British, it was argued, were (1) unsympathetic to the idea of a Muslim Brother in parliament, which would then offer an official platform for diatribes

again hostility towards them while Nahhas remained in office. So certain were the Brothers of this implacable hostility of the British towards them that in mid-1943 Banna, convinced that British intelligence was striving to bring about his exile,⁵⁸ wrote a farewell message to his followers.

This document,⁵⁹ which ranks high on the list of prescribed reading for members, contains the fruit of his first two years' experience of conflict with authority and an oft-quoted warning to members of the travail through which they might expect to pass in the face of growing external hostility. Part of it is worth quoting, both as a reflection of a basic mental attitude of the movement, and as a prediction of things to come.

The Obstacles in our Path

I would like to avow to you frankly that your message is yet unknown to many people, and that when they know it and recognize its purposes, they will meet it with the severest opposition and the cruellest enmity. You will then be obliged to face numerous hardships and obstructions. Only then will you have begun to march on the road of the bearers of missions. . . . The common people's ignorance of the reality of Islam will stand in your way. You will discover that the people of religion and the official 'ulama' will consider your understanding of Islam a strange thing and deny your struggle on its behalf. Your chiefs and leaders, as well as people of rank and title, will envy you. One government after another will obstruct you, and each of them will attempt to hinder your activity and block your progress.

All the oppressors will exert every effort to restrain you and to extinguish the light of your message. They will win the help of weak governments and weak morals and of the hands stretched out—towards them for begging and towards you for evil and oppression. All these will excite suspicion and inspire unjust accusations regarding your message, and they will attempt to give the people an ugly and imperfect picture of it. . . .

This will lead you to the stage of trial, wherein you will be imprisoned, detained, and banished; your property will be confiscated, your special activities stopped, and your homes searched. Indeed, your period of trial may last long. . . . But God has promised that he will assist those who struggle and do good. . . . Are you resolved, my brothers, to be the defenders of God?

Ye Muslim Brothers, listen: I have tried with these words to place your message before you. Perhaps we may have a critical period of time

against them; and (2) fearful of the consequences of an election campaign in the highly sensitive Canal Zone; see *RNUNA*, pp. 7-8; and *MMB* (12 Dec. 1950), 4-5; cf. Heyworth-Dunne, *Modern Egypt*, p. 40.

⁵⁸ *RNUNA*, p. 10.

⁵⁹ *Risalat bayn al-ams wa'l-Yawm* (*RBAWY*), originally titled *Risalat al-Nabi al-amin*, and also *Min tatawwurat al-fikra al-Islamiyya wa-ahdafa*.

during which we will be separated from one another. In this case, I will not be able to talk or write to you. Therefore, I advise you to study them when you can, and gather around them, for each word carries several meanings.

My Brothers: you are not a benevolent society, nor a political party, nor a local organization having limited purposes. Rather, you are a new soul in the heart of this nation to give it life by means of the Qur'an; you are a new light which shines to destroy the darkness of materialism through knowing God; and you are the strong voice which rises to recall the message of the Prophet. . . . You should feel yourselves the bearers of the burden which all others have refused. When asked what it is for which you call, reply that it is Islam, the message of Muhammad, the religion that contains within it government, and has one as of its obligations freedom. If you are told that you are political, answer that Islam admits no such distinction. If you are accused of being revolutionaries, say 'We are voices for right and for peace in which we dearly believe, and of which we are proud. If you rise against us or stand in the path of our message, then we are permitted by God to defend ourselves against your injustice.' . . . If they insist on pursuing their oppression, say to them, 'Peace be upon you, we will ignore the ignorant.'⁶⁰

The threat, real or imagined, to Banna himself never materialized, but his words coincided with the newest internal organizational developments. Friction with the government made the Society more actively hostile to the occupying power; but also, for the first time, it nurtured hostility to the existing order of things in Egypt. It was in these circumstances that Banna moved into the final stage of his organizational planning. Late in 1942 or early in 1943 that unit came into existence which was known inside the Society as 'the special section' [*al-nizam al-khass*], and outside it as 'the secret apparatus' [*al-jihaz al-sirri*].⁶¹ This dating, the most likely of all those possible, refers to the establishment of the unit, not the inception of the idea. Orally, the members themselves have dated the beginning of the secret apparatus anywhere from 1930 to 1947—one of the many reflections of the widespread ignorance within the Society concerning it.

As early as 1930, in Banna's first dispute with dissident members, he was being charged, by rumour and by direct accusation, with 'secret works';⁶² but at this early stage the accusation undoubtedly

⁶⁰ *RBAWY*, pp. 28–31.

⁶¹ The difference in these two phrases was unimportant except for some of those who joined the group. To them, the 'special section' was merely the less open wing of the formal organization into which only the most 'sincere' and 'ardent' servants of the cause were admitted. Because of their trust in the leadership's perception of 'right and wrong', there was no sense of the criminality which came to be attached to the words 'secret apparatus'. On this point, see the confession of the assassin of Nuqrashi Pasha in 1948 (*Qadiyat al-Nuqrashi*, p. 47).

⁶² *Mudh.*, p. 128.

referred to the lack of frankness and directness so often noticed by those close to him. The classification of membership adopted at the third general conference in March 1935, besides the three degrees of (1) 'assistant' (*musa'id*), (2) 'related' (*muntasib*), and (3) 'active' (*amil*), listed a fourth, that of 'struggler' (*mujahid*).⁶³ The precise meaning of this fourth category was not explained at the time. Other information would, however, suggest that Banna did not mean an 'apparatus' but merely a group of the most dedicated and active members, on whom could be placed the primary burden of serving 'God and the message'. By 1936 the rover groups had taken shape, and at the same time Banna began personally to assume the instruction of small groups of ten members in the aims of the Society. Similarly the creation in 1937 of the battalions, with its emphasis on communal training and rigorous night vigils of prayer and meditation, expressed the principle of the dedicated *mujahid* enunciated publicly in the meeting of 1935. These organizational developments corresponded in time with the beginning of the Brothers' concern for, and activity in, Palestine—the issue which, with the British occupation, was most notably identified by the members themselves with the inspiration for political activism in the Society.

But if the secret apparatus as such had not yet been set up, emphasis was laid on secrecy as to the purpose of existing formations. In a remarkable statement, made in 1938 but published only after the revolution in 1952, Banna, informing a questioning youth of the 'revolutionary' nature of the organization in matters of both 'reform' and 'liberation', reminded him that in the face of 'the law', it was a mistake to be candid, and that secrecy was necessary in the beginning of any movement to maintain its solvency and assure its survival.⁶⁴ Only after his first clashes with authority in the early years of the war was a secret organization established. When discussing the basic principles of the Society in his farewell message of 1943 he mentioned 'additional means', both negative and positive—'of which some would agree with the established practice of people, and others would rebel against those practices . . . and some would be gentle and others would be forceful'.⁶⁵ The early war-time contacts with army officers, at first independent of external matters, were later reinforced by those events which exacerbated the national feeling; together, they were direct causes of the formalization of the secret apparatus and the first stages of the resort to extra-legal action.⁶⁶

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 203–5.

⁶⁴ Hajjaji, *RLAT*, pp. 16–19, 22–3, 33–5.

⁶⁵ *RBAWY*, p. 27.

⁶⁶ As late as 1954 there was uncertainty in the Society itself as to whether it was Banna or the acknowledged head of the secret apparatus from 1947 to

Inspired in the first instance as an idea by the concept of *jihād*, formalized into an organization under the pressures of nationalist agitation, the secret apparatus was almost immediately rationalized as an instrument for the defence of Islam and the Society. In 1943 it began to play the part of defender of the movement against the police and the governments of Egypt. A major motive here was already a sense of betrayal of the national leadership, brought sharply into focus by the circumstances of the war, a feeling widely shared⁶⁷ by the Egyptian nationalists, and one which under continued pressure was to direct the attention of the national movement inwards to Egypt and to Egyptians, as well as outwards against the British. In 1944 the secret apparatus also began to infiltrate the communist movement, which during the war had taken on new life and which the Muslim Brothers still considered to be one of their principal enemies.

The creation of the secret apparatus was accompanied by a new and far-reaching development in the open organization. The battalion system, having been regarded as a failure, was supplemented by a more minute, flexible, controllable, and natural form of organization, one which, by its harmony with the ethos of the organization, provided the chief instrument for mobilizing the loyalty of members. This was the system of 'families' (*usar*), the keystone of the organizational power of the Muslim Brothers, the secret apparatus notwithstanding. Late in 1943 a mass-meeting of the Society adopted a report establishing 'the system of co-operative families' (*nizam al-usar al-ta'awuni*), which, from that time on, established the dominant pattern of inner relationships. Essentially, this created an infinite number of cells numerically limited to five members. The cells were primarily indoctrination rather than administrative units, in which the Brother received at first hand, and in a co-operative endeavour, those ideas to which his membership had committed him. Added to a now formalized secret apparatus and an increasingly effective rover system, the

1953, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sanadi, who founded it; (see *Jf* (24 Nov. 1954), 7). Kira, *Mahkama*, i. 33-4, suggests that Banna used German officers to help launch it. The above account is admittedly 'patch-work' and is inspired by the certainty which accompanies ignorance; of considerable weight in this reconstruction is a letter that came into the writer's hands in the 1954 crisis of the Society, meant by its writer, Muhammad 'Alawi 'Abd al-Hadi, for his colleagues in the leadership echelons. In attempting to analyse the problems faced by the Society in its crisis with the government in 1954, the letter throws some useful historical light on other matters of interest, including the secret apparatus and its founding.

⁶⁷ See esp. Sadat, *Safahat*, pp. 142-4.

family system completed the strengthening of the internal fabric of the Society.⁶⁸

With the dismissal of the Wafd in October 1944, the palace selected Ahmad Mahir Pasha, the leader of the Sa'dist party, to form a new government. This was the first of a succession of what the Brothers and the Wafd called 'minority governments'.⁶⁹ From this time until the elections of January 1950 Egypt was ruled by independents and Sa'dists, reflecting the active return of the palace to the field of domestic politics and its success at excluding the Wafd from power. The situation also promised that post-war Egypt, facing critical internal and external problems and ruled by men without a semblance of popular support, was destined to pass through a lively period in its history.

Mahir immediately made preparations for a new general election which the Brothers again prepared to contest. Banna again opted for Isma'iliyya, and five of his chief colleagues chose other areas in Egypt intending to campaign on the basis of an 'Islamic programme'. In January 1945 the elections—believed to have been among the more obviously dishonest held in Egypt—took place, and Banna and all the other Brothers were defeated in constituencies where they had been certain of victory.⁷⁰ Besides the obvious interest of the government in winning seats for its partisans, Mahir had already shown his attitude to the Brothers by seeking, but not getting, a *fatwa* from the rector of the Azhar, Shaykh Maraghi, declaring that there were too many Islamic societies in Egypt—a move felt to be aimed at the Muslim Brothers.⁷¹

When Mahir made known his intent to declare war on the Axis, the Muslim Brothers, together with the great majority of nationalists, including the Wafd, protested; but, determined to secure a place for Egypt in the peace-making, Mahir persisted. On 24 February, as he read the declaration of war in the chamber of deputies, he was assassinated. Banna, Sukkari, and 'Abidin were arrested but almost immediately released, following the investigation and the assassin's confession that he was a member of the

⁶⁸ *RNUNA*, p. 10; see also below, pp. 195-200.

⁶⁹ See e.g. Ghazali, *IMABSR*, 7.

⁷⁰ See Kirk, *Middle East*, p. 263, for a comment on the nature of the election. For the most detailed, though not disinterested, account see Zaki, *Ikhwan*, pp. 21-2. Zaki's book, originally a thesis at Cairo University for the Higher Diploma in Social Work, is offered as an 'impartial' study of the movement. His adviser on the thesis was a prominent leader of the Society (Kamal Khalifa: Harvard, Columbia, and the University of Michigan), and much of the work can be said to be an 'inside' view. Zaki's account of the elections reflects the organizational attitude of frustration at the denial, once more, of the use of the legitimate or 'official' path for propagandizing the movement. On this point, see also below, pp. 307-13.

⁷¹ See *MDA* (10 Feb. 1953), 12-31.

National Party.⁷² Banna visited the new prime minister, Mahmud Fahmi al-Nuqrashi Pasha, a close friend of Mahir and his successor as head of the Sa'dist party, to convey his condolences and to explain the mission of the Society. Nuqrashi responded with orders for the strict surveillance of the activities of the members and the organization,⁷³ a policy which was applied with varying degrees of severity while he remained in office.

Nuqrashi's government, from 25 February 1945 to 14 February 1946, bridged the transition from the wartime to the post-war phase of the history of the movement. The Brothers regard this government as the beginning of the 'great *mihna*',⁷⁴ which carried them over the next three years to their period of greatest power. It was a government headed by Nuqrashi which finally challenged that power.

⁷² Cf. Kirk, *Middle East*, p. 266; and RIIA, *GBE*, p. 81, according to both of which the assassin was said to be from the ranks of Young Egypt. The government in 1954 made the first sustained effort to charge the Society with the crime; see e.g. *MAS* (1 Dec. 1954), 4; and *Irhab*, pp. 21-7.

⁷³ *JIM* (4 July 1946), 4.

⁷⁴ Zaki, *Ikhwan*, p. 23. The use of the term *mihna* was probably intended to invoke the earlier persecutions of the conservative orthodox, especially Ahmad ibn Hanbal, at the hands of rationalist (Mu'tazila)-influenced caliphs of the Ummayyad and early 'Abbasid periods; see P. K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (1949), pp. 429-30.

III

1945-1949: APOGEE AND DISSOLUTION

THE SETTING

THE end of the war brought with it a release of tensions and lifted the lid from hostilities which had long raged beneath the controls of martial law. The death of the prime minister, Ahmad Mahir, was the initial expression of this fact. The impact of the war itself on Egypt's economic, political, and social life had manifold consequences for both the momentum and the direction of the national movement. Issawi, in a few paragraphs, has summed up the most important features of post-war life in Egypt.²

Perhaps the most important single factor was the imposition of a twentieth-century inflation on a social structure in many ways reminiscent of the eighteenth century. The gap between rich and poor, already great, was further enlarged; the unskilled rural and urban labourers suffered severe privations; and the salaried middle and lower middle classes, whose money incomes rose very little, were relentlessly pressed down.

Another trend which was accelerated by war-time conditions was urbanization, with its manifold social consequences. The rapid growth of industry attracted peasants to towns, raised the wages of skilled workmen, and stimulated the formation of trade unions. At the height of the war effort, Allied army workshops and services employed over 200,000 Egyptians, of whom some 10,000 were male clerks, and some 80,000 were skilled or semi-skilled workmen. In addition, several thousands found employment in services catering directly to Allied troops. All these newcomers were naturally drawn into the political life and agitation of the country, which is still mainly confined to the towns. The withdrawal of the bulk of the Allied troops after the war led to an estimated unemployment of over 250,000 and to much distress and agitation.

Into this fertile ground some potent ideas had meanwhile been sown. Egypt had done its best to stay out of the war, but it had been engulfed by the flood of propaganda pouring in from every quarter. Britain and the United States harped incessantly on the themes of democracy, social justice, and, perhaps the one which found the most appreciative audience, the upholding of national independence against Nazi (and subsequently Soviet) aggression. The Germans struck still more responsive chords, whole-heartedly supporting the Egyptian and Arab cause

² C. Issawi, *Egypt at Mid-Century* (1954), pp. 262-3.

It is an understatement to note that such themes were an important aspect of the formal as well as informal training of the members. In the families, along with the 'theoretical' study of *jihad*, the student's 'history lessons' dwelt on the martial glory of early Islamic conquests.⁵⁸ They also included an important section called 'the legality of fighting' (*mashru'iyat al-qital*); in substance, these lessons were exhortations to Muslims to resist the imposition on them of non-Muslim and anti-Muslim ideas and values.⁵⁹ Similarly, one of the important aspects of holiday celebrations was the recollection of the famous military events in Muslim history. Of special significance was the annual celebration of the anniversary of the battle of Badr, during which speakers extolled the spirit of *jihad*. The battle of Badr and its significance for Muslims was the subject of one of the few theatrical productions performed by Brothers for Brothers.⁶⁰

That militant *jihad* and the concept of the 'art of death' had as a necessary corollary an emphasis on martyrdom needs no further elaboration. By fighting and dying in the name of Islam in the Canal Zone, in Palestine, or on the gallows in Egypt, the Brother was sure that his 'noble' death had elevated him to the ranks of the pious heroes of Islam.⁶¹ It was in this spirit that a Brother could calmly observe: 'It is the shortest and easiest step from this life to the life hereafter.' It was this spirit which Hudaibi was unable to conquer, which fellow Egyptians—Muslim and non-Muslim alike—fear, and which, coupled with political activism, Egyptian governments of all shades have been unable to tolerate.

⁵⁸ See variously in the series called *al-Minhaj al-dirasi al-Islami li-Ikhwan al-usar*.

⁵⁹ See e.g. *ibid.*, no. 9, pp. 50–60.

⁶⁰ See below, pp. 292–3.

⁶¹ See e.g. Buhî, *MSI*, *passim*; and numerous small pamphlets on individual 'martyrs', victims of the fighting of 1951–2 in the Canal Zone.

PART III · IDEOLOGY

VIII

THE PROBLEM

THE very active and often violent history of the Society should not obscure the fact that its ideas and non-political activity were to most members the most important part of their membership and, to even the most political of them, matters of vivid concern. While it spent much time doing battle with the government, it spent even more in the service of the multiple needs of its members, not the least of which were 'ideological'. Hence we turn to the complex of notions which in combination produced what the Brothers called the *fikra*—ideology. We shall attempt to reproduce here a coherent statement of these notions which bore the membership along into an all-embracing and passionate commitment to the Society and its leaders, and which, at the same time, set it at odds with all organized authority in Egypt.

Intimately related to this set of ideas was the Brothers' image of the world in which they lived. In general terms this image had three separate facets: Egypt, Islam, and the 'West'. Out of the conglomeration of attitudes and beliefs which informed the perception of these three images was woven the group of ideas which in turn inspired the activity of the Brothers. In so far as what men believe to be real, is real, our concern here will be not the validity of these beliefs, but only the fact of their existence. In the next three chapters we will deal in turn with (1) the image of the world in which the Brothers lived—the problem as it was perceived; (2) the consequent response to that problem in theoretical terms—the ideological solution; and (3) the practical response to the problem—the activity of the Society in the multiple areas of behaviour.

IMAGE OF ISLAM

Muslim History

Like so many of the modern Muslim reformers, the Brothers accepted the view that Islam's decline set in after the end of the

period of the first four caliphs. The state which was ruled by the orthodox caliphs (*al-khilafat al-rashida*) was 'truly representative of Islam as a faith and a system'. The ruler was selected from among the people because of his qualifications: 'competence' and the confidence of the mass in him'. The people knew that they alone were 'the source of authority', ultimate arbiters, with Islam, of their ruler. The ruler was pious, learned in the spirit and the law of Islam. The treasury was at the service of the people, for the people had a 'right' to demand that the ruler and state be responsible for the satisfaction of their needs. And in this state there was unity in the 'brotherhood of religion' and 'equality in rights and duties'.

Unhappily for Islam, 'by mischance', political control passed into the hands of the house of Mu'awiya. The Umayyad period of Islamic history saw: the caliphate become a 'kingship' belonging to one family with arbitrary power, indifferent to the popular source of authority, the rulers with no sense of Islam; the treasury become the private purse of the ruler to the detriment of the needs of the people and the interests of the nation; the 'tribalism' of the *jahiliyya* Arabs reawakened and 'factionalism' become a tool of the ruler to maintain power; 'morality' and 'obedience to God' despised and neglected; and individual rights and freedom sacrificed. Throughout the Umayyad period only the rule of 'Umar II evidenced the 'inner strength' of Islam.

The 'Abbasid successors of the Damascene rulers provided the unhappy climax to the disintegration of the Islamic community. Under them, hereditary rulership evolved into a 'divine right of the sultanate'. Adulation, servile flattery, and praise of the ruler, right or wrong, became the rule. The caliphs wallowed in luxury, pomp, wealth, silks, and, 'some say', drink; they lived off the public purse, their private lives related in no way to their mission as leaders of the message of Islam. They played on Persian and then Turkish tendencies in the milieu, thereby aggravating the dissensions in the Arab community begun by their predecessors.¹

The 'height' of Islamic world power was only a façade which concealed bitter political disputes and factionalism. Religious and 'school' (legal) disputes led to an Islam of words and phrases rather than 'faith and action'; 'fanaticism' replaced discussion and debate; 'stagnation' overtook the religious community; and the 'practical sciences' were neglected for theoretical philosophies. Complacent in its power, the state remained ignorant of the 'social development' of other nations; and when it became alerted, the only response was one of 'imitation'. Meanwhile, the power focus

¹ Ghazali, *IIS*, pp. 172-9, 196-8; Qutb, *AIFI* (Hardie tr.), p. 229, 176-232.

shifted and leadership was transferred to 'non-Arabs—Persians, Daylamites, Mamlukes, and Turks', none of whom ever 'tasted the real Islam' because they could not perceive (presumably because of the language) its true meanings. In this setting the first catastrophes struck and then multiplied—the Crusaders, the Tatars, the Carmathians, and the push of Europe against Islam in Spain, and on the peripheries of the Islamic world as Europe opened its era of discovery.²

The Turks who had now become political leaders in Islam only staved off the day of doom. In a historic sense, the shift of power from the 'Abbasids to the Turks was tantamount 'to treating one disease with another'. The Turks, in the first part of their reign, were like the orthodox caliphs in their faith; their early successes both among Muslims and East Europeans can only thereby be explained. But 'the emotions [of the Turks] . . . towards Islam were greater and more intense than their understanding of its law, and their warmth for it stronger than their understanding of its spirit'. After Sulayman, *al-qamuni*, the empire disintegrated. The evils of inherited authority set the stage for decline; luxury, internecine power struggles, seclusion of crown princes, and female usurpation of power all added to the picture of decay and left the Ottoman Empire a prey to resurgent Europe. By the end of World War I, 'the enemies of Islam' had utterly wrecked the Islamic state³ and ensured its impotence in the face of future encroachments on the peoples of its lands. Zionism aided by imperialism in the Arab world—'the heart of Islam'—and imperialism all over the Muslim world continue with impunity to act at will in the land of Islam.⁴

al-Azhar

It will be recalled that Banna, after his first experiences in Cairo, suffered a profound shock at the religious state of the capital; eventually he found his way to the leaders of the Azhar and poured out his anguish over the debased condition of Islam and Muslims. His revulsion at the sense of futility in the Azhar in the face of the currents battering away at Islam can be said to mark his disenchantment with it as a citadel of defence for the faith. Unlike the leaders of the Salafiyya movement, who had influenced his thinking and who also challenged the efficacy of the Azhar's 'defence of Islam', Banna chose, as we saw, to take this cause directly to the people, an attitude consistent with his own Sufi training. Without in any sense associating itself with the secularist attack on the

² RBAWY, pp. 9-13; RNJM, pp. 15-16.

⁴ RNJM, pp. 17-18.

³ Ghazali, *IIS*, pp. 211-18.

Azhar, his movement was a direct challenge to Azhar authority and a demonstration of its impotence.

In his personal contacts Banna was, of course, friendly to Azharites at all levels. Azhar students came to form an important and active core of the membership of the Society. From the leaders of the Azhar there was no active challenge—except in 1948 and 1954, both instances being politically inspired. During the second rectorship of Mustafa al-Maraghi (April 1935–February 1942) there was even close contact, a fact related to the rise to power of 'Ali Mahir. Maraghi continues to be one of the most highly esteemed by the Brothers of the recent Azhar leaders—an example of a man with 'correct' attitudes about revitalizing both Islam and the Azhar.⁵ He seems to have taken a favourable view apart from politics—of Banna and his movement; during the late 1930s, in fact, he supported 'active co-operation' between the Azhar and the officials of the Society.⁶ Even so, the Society's basic approach to the Azhar was hostile, though Banna was restrained in his public statements. Once, when commenting on the decaying state of the Muslim world, he merely noted that 'the *'ulama'* saw and observed and heard and did nothing'.⁷ He and his followers often took pains publicly to dispel the belief in Egypt that there was tension between the two groups. One writer, however, observed, more to the point, that there were two Islamic groups in Egypt, the 'officials' of the Azhar and those of the 'Islamic societies', and they 'do not co-operate'.⁸ Yet another observation, that the Muslim Brothers have become the champions of the 'Islamic idea' in Egypt, goes to the heart of the matter: the repudiation of the Azhar as the voice of Islam.

The charges levelled at the Azhar by the more articulate and vociferous Brothers were many-faceted, but fundamentally two: (1) that the leading voice of Muslims in the world had failed in its assigned role of spokesman for a living and dynamic Islam; and conversely (2) that it had not been vigorous enough in its resistance to encroachment on the Islamic preserve by foreign ideas and values. The Brothers' special and immediate motive for making these charges was the belief that the Azhar had permitted Egypt to fall into religious, cultural, political, economic, social, legal, and moral decadence and impotence.

⁵ See e.g. Anwar al-Jundi, *al-Imam al-Maraghi* (1952). See also *COC*, iii (1946), 511, for a summary of Maraghi's life on the occasion of his death, 21 Aug. 1945.

⁶ See Heyworth-Dunne, *Modern Egypt*, pp. 32–4; *Mudh*, pp. 273–4; *MDA* (12 Feb. 1952), 2. Boehm, 'Les Frères musulmans', 217–18, generalizes, we think incorrectly, that the Azhar was favourable to the Brothers because of the prestige they brought to Egypt in the Muslim world.

⁷ *MS* (14 Nov. 1947), 3–4.

⁸ Ghazali, *IMABSR*, pp. 26–7.

The first set of attitudes had to do with the question of Islam in the modern world and the role attributed to the Azhar as intellectual keeper of the faith. The consensus was that it had failed to represent Islam to Muslims—ruler and ruled alike—as a vital, living code of life; it had failed 'to lead' and 'to teach', and with the abdication of these duties came the corruption of Muslims. When the *'ulama'* of the Azhar 'went to sleep', the Muslim community followed.⁹ This situation was a betrayal, not only of historical Islam, but also, even more seriously, of the living Muslim community. For the Azhar had persisted in a time-worn, anachronistic approach to Islam and its teachings—dry, dead, ritualistic, and irrelevant to the needs of living Muslims. Its failure to bring Islam abreast of the times was pinpointed and most readily observable in its medieval system of learning: stagnant teaching; the absence of new learning and research; reliance on memory instead of reasoning; the study of ancient and obsolete texts without reference to modern disciplines and new techniques.¹⁰ Banna notes that the failure of the Azhar was that 'it graduated religious literates, not . . . spiritual guides'.¹¹ The Azhar *'ulama'* are thus seen as inefficient teachers of an irrelevant doctrine.

The second general criticism followed from the first: having failed to understand their positive mission the *'ulama'* failed in their negative one—the 'defence of Islam'. In Egypt the Azhar failed to resist the governments of Egypt—the occupier, the palace, the parties—and had thereby contributed to their corruption of all aspects of life in the country. Worse still, the *'ulama'* had not fought the imperialists. Indeed, the dead, resigned, submissive Islam of the Azhar was the Islam 'supported and maintained by the imperialists'; 'if the voice of religion is not heard in the battle for freedom, then whose will be heard?'¹² The *'ulama'*, further, had joined hands and found common cause with the ruling classes and landed interests; they had, thereby, sold their chances to speak out on the great causes of 'exploitation' and 'social justice'. Said Ghazali, 'I know men among the shaykhs of the Azhar who live on Islam, as do the germs of bilharzia and ankylostomiasis on the blood of the wretched peasants.'¹³ For these *'ulama'* who became the servants of a foreign occupation and

⁹ Ghazali, *FMD*, p. 12; Hajjaji, *RMM*, pp. 56–9; 'Awda, *IBJAWAU*, pp. 22–3, 36, 60–4.

¹⁰ For a succinct summary of this view, see the article entitled 'The Mamluke Era continues in the Azhar', *JIM* (1 July 1954), 12.

¹¹ 'Abd al-Majid Fath Allah al-Bajuri, *Hasan al-Banna* [1952 or 1953], p. 26. Father Ayrout, Catholic teacher and student of Egypt's peasantry, in conversation, compared the Brothers' attitude to the Azhar with that of St Ignatius Loyola's protest against the unfeeling religion of the Book.

¹² Ghazali, *IIS*, pp. 6–7, p. 210.

¹³ *Idem*, *IMABSR*, p. 27.

of tyrannical economic and political overlords, the Brothers had a name: 'civil-servant *'ulama'*'—the agents of the government which paid them.¹⁴ Loyal to their salaries above all, they had failed to honour their obligations and had thus dishonoured themselves and the religion in whose name they spoke.

Sufism

Banna, it will be recalled, passed his youth saturated with the symbols, literature, and practice of Sufism, a fact of continuing, negative as well as positive, importance in his life. He did not maintain his formal links with Sufism after the creation of his own organization; but, unlike many of his followers, he never violently attacked or openly broke with it, nor did he ever lose his faith in the validity of 'pure' or 'true' Sufism.

His views¹⁵ on the historical development of Sufism conditioned his response to full participation in its practice as he grew older. He argued that following the extensive spread of Islam and its accompanying material enrichment, a reaction against the worldliness of the Muslim community set in, with the reassertion of the piety and asceticism of the Prophetic and early post-Prophetic days. Once begun, the reaction was institutionalized into formal practices which came to be called Sufism; in their 'pure' form, these practices—the *dhikr*, asceticism, worship, and the intuitive and mystical perception and knowledge of God—were of 'the core and essence of Islam'.

After the first century, however, Sufism went beyond this limit, and it was harmed by elements, foreign to it, like 'the sciences of philosophy and logic and the heritage and thought of ancient nations'; the effect was that 'wide gaps were opened for every atheist, apostate, and corrupter of opinion and faith to enter by this door in the name of Sufism'. This led to factionalism and the setting up of many different Sufi orders; new divisions were thereby created in the Muslim community. While recognizing the part that Sufism had played in the historical spread of Islam, especially in Africa and Asia, Banna nevertheless felt that whatever benefit Islam and Muslims might derive from it was worthless in the light of the greater evils consequent on its corruption. He urged, therefore, a serious reform effort designed to save 'pure' Sufism from its later accretions, and to combat the competitiveness of its organized groups, with an eye to restoring Sufism to all Muslims as a universal and transcendent way of living within Islam.

¹⁴ MDA (6 Feb. 1951), 13.

¹⁵ The following is a summary of those views from *Mudh.*, pp. 16–19.

This, Banna explains, was why he made no effort to present his own organization as an order (*tariqa*). After the Society took root, he continued to enjoy visits from, and disputes with, the leaders of the local orders when they passed through Isma'iliyya; he sought to persuade them of the need for reform so that all might unite and work together for the salvation of Islam. For the Society of the Brothers, he preferred another organizational form: 'I did not want to enter into competition with the other orders; and I did not want it to be confined to one group of Muslims or one aspect of Islamic reform; rather I sought that it be a general message based on learning, education, and *jihad*.'¹⁶

Banna's views of Sufism were shared by his followers who, however, only in passing recognized the positive spiritual qualities he saw in it. It was perhaps necessary to do this because of Banna's well-known early links with formal Sufism; Banna, of course, became a pure example of this acceptable 'spiritual Sufism'.¹⁷ But the esteem accorded the leader in this aspect of his personality did not minimize the widespread revulsion and contempt felt by the articulate and the urban Brothers for Sufism.

Members' views on the origins of Sufism were variants of Banna's theme. In one reported discussion among Brothers, Sufism was seen as a consequence of the failure of the caliphate to discharge its dual function of 'administrative—spiritual guidance'; when the caliphate became a mere political operation, Sufism filled the gap as a community-wide 'reaction'. Again, Sufism was seen in origin to be 'un-Islamic', because its orders were 'based on a class system'. Finally, it was seen as a Greek-Hindu phenomenon which had 'no relation to Islam'. All present agreed that Sufism was a temporary and limited treatment for 'the problems resulting from the absence of a true Islamic life'.¹⁸

The members of the Society shared, with more conviction, Banna's religious and institutional objections to Sufism: that the orders led to community factionalism inspired by an irresponsible struggle for power and prestige among their shaykhs; and that they had permitted the multiplication of 'innovations' (*bida'*)—superstitions, talismans, witchcraft, and saint worship—in violation of the laws of Islam.¹⁹ But for Banna's followers there appeared

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 68–9. Banna's use of the phrase 'the other orders' (*al-turuq al-ukhra*) suggests some foundation for the view of some members that there was much more Sufism involved in the founding of the Society than any care to admit.

¹⁷ See e.g. Hajjaji, *RMM*, pp. 59–60; and *IMAM*, ii. 25: 'There is nothing wrong with it [Sufism] provided it remains within legal bounds.'

¹⁸ See Nadawi, *Mudhakkarat*, pp. 83–5.

¹⁹ With the reference in n. 17, above, see Ghazali, *IIS*, p. 183; Bajuri, *Hasan al-Banna'*, pp. 26–27.

to be other more compelling economic and social objections to Sufism: it was a remnant of the 'feudal ages' used by the unscrupulous 'to drug the masses'; the Sufi shaykhs were corrupters of the countryside, the major obstacles to progress and reform, and 'tools' of the politicians for 'the exploitation of the people'; finally, Sufism inspired and justified a spiritual withdrawal from life which leads to the evil of the socially useless existence. Exploited by shaykhs whose influence over them was complete, victimized Muslims 'resigned' themselves to their economic and social 'fate'. Sufism was the first blow which struck at Islamic thought, and, indeed at the existence of the Islamic nation.²⁰

This latter view of Sufism stemmed from the 'activist' mentality Banna inspired in the Society; in particular, it had to do with a distinction in Sufism made by him. In the essay written at Dar al-'Ulum in which he discussed his preference for teaching as compared with the way of the mystic, he addressed himself to the question of the social value of mystical practice, drawing a distinction between 'isolated spirituality' (*al-ruhaniyya al-i'tisaliyya*) and 'social spirituality' (*al-ruhaniyya al-ijtima'iyya*). For men, beside the mystical aspect of the ritual and the spiritual discipline gained thereby, the obligation was to enter the world and exert 'effort' (*jihad*) towards the solution of social problems.²¹ In a general sense this attitude dominated the Society's outlook on the problems its members faced, and it militated against any sympathetic understanding of Sufism. The definition of the Society by a member as a movement of *effendiyya*²² was a negative one, admittedly designed to dissociate from the perceived stigma of the mystical orders, and especially from the sense of futility which they represented.

Sects and Schools

One of the constant elements in the attitudes of the Brothers to the Azhar and its 'ulama' and Sufism was their concern with Muslim disunity. This was because disunity, i.e. disputation and factionalism, was contrary to the prime duty of every Muslim to live in loving 'brotherhood' with his fellow Muslims; and because it induced and perpetuated the subservience of Muslim states and peoples to foreign ideas and controls. Disunity was not only sinful; it promised to be fatal to the Muslim community. Hence the Society's image of the sects of Islam and its schools of law.

Banna's memoirs clearly indicate his early concern with the division of Muslims into competing and conflicting groups, and

²⁰ See Ghazali, *IMABSR*, pp. 47-8; *IMI*, p. 174; and Qutb, *MIWR*, p. 96.

²¹ See Zaki, *Ikhwan*, pp. 41-2, and above, p. 66.

²² Hajjaji, *QDHRM*, p. 84.

he describes his attempt, once established in Isma'iliyya, to combat this by preaching the essential unimportance of the differences which permissibly exist within the body of Islam. These were, he felt, another element in the decline in the Muslim community; and as a first step towards its regeneration, their importance must be minimized. The Brothers, Banna insisted, belonged to no sect or school. Differences of opinion were, of course, necessary and even desirable, but carried beyond their legitimate function they became harmful to Islam. 'Each of the four schools is respectable', and the difference among them should be debated in an 'atmosphere of love'. The word 'schoolman' (*madhhab*) is properly a term of derision.²³ Banna's favourite plea for unity was often recalled by his followers: 'Let us co-operate in those things on which we can agree and be lenient in those on which we cannot.'

Two groups within Islam, it should be added, were openly excluded from this proposed tolerance of diversity: the Qadiyanis of Pakistan and the Baha'is of Iranian origin. Both were repudiated because of their founders' pretensions to prophecy and the subsequent developments within the 'apostate' groups 'conflicting with Islam'.²⁴

IMAGE OF EGYPT

Egyptian History

Egypt's relation to Islam, felt the Brothers, was unique. From the beginning of Islamic history the destiny of Egypt had been irrevocably bound to the destiny of Muslim peoples. The centre of the oldest civilizations of mankind, Egypt was the logical and historically right place for Islam to base itself. It was Egypt that had carried high the banner of Islam, in the period of the dissolution of the Arab Empire, against the Crusaders and the Tatars. Because Islam had penetrated deeply into the 'conscience and emotions' of Egyptians, because Islam had become 'its faith, its language, and its civilization', Egypt had a unique role to play in Islam's resurgence.²⁵

But first Egypt must recover from the blight which had affected her as well as all other parts of the Muslim world. The 'men of religion' bore the chief initial blame for their failure to bring into

²³ See *Mudh.*, pp. 65-7; *RBAWY*, p. 9; *RTH: D*, pp. 26-8; *RNURT*, pp. 6-7.

²⁴ See *Mudh.*, p. 69, and the pamphlet widely distributed among the Brothers by Lajnat al-Shabab al-Muslim, *al-Mas'ala al-qadyaniyya* (1953), written by abu al-'Ala' al-Mawdudi of Pakistan.

²⁵ See e.g. *RDFTJ*, p. 24.

effect the 'true' Muslim life and thereby check if not prevent the corruption of Muslim society. If the 'men of religion' were negatively responsible by failing to act, the positive cause of decay was imperialism, which had imposed itself and its civilization on Egypt. There were two kinds of imperialism: 'external' (*al-isti'mar al-khariji*), the brute force of the occupying foreign power, and 'internal' or 'domestic' (*al-isti'mar al-dakhili*), the forces which consciously or unconsciously—at best by indifference, at worst by 'treason' to the needs and will of the Muslim community—served the interests of that power. 'Domestic imperialism' spread 'dejection and moral defeat' and diverted Egyptians from their traditional faith to 'a dead pacifism, lowly humiliation, and acceptance of the *status quo*'.²⁶ It was in this context of dual imperialisms in Egypt's history that her political, economic, and social problems were viewed.

Politics and Parties

Political parties, political leaders, and 'partyism' were the first and most vehemently objectionable aspect of the Egyptian scene. The parties were guided by personal greed and interests; there were no programmes and no goals; and their activity was governed by men, not ideas. In reality the parties were 'a front for capitalism', the political instrument by means of which the capitalist exploited the workers and used the legal and administrative apparatus of the state to serve his own ends. Instead of being their servants, the parties had 'ruled the people' illegitimately because they neither reflected the will of the nation nor served its interests.²⁷

These attitudes about parties were largely governed by specific and secular considerations. An even more important facet of the image for the Society was the picture of the parties and their leaders as tools of British and Western ideologies—the leaders of cultural 'domestic imperialism'. The parties, according to this view, followed Western patterns of organization and thought. As such, they were supported and maintained by the military and political might of the occupier, and served and reinforced each other for their mutual gain. The historic mistake of Egyptians, observed one Brother, was in accepting independence, a constitution, and a parliamentary system 'before we expelled England from Egypt'. The corollary to this view, which was, as has been suggested,

²⁶ Ghazali, *MHN* (Faruqi tr.), p. xiii. See also Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, pp. 41–7, esp. p. 47.

²⁷ See for this well-worn theme, and its counterpart that the Muslim Brothers were just the opposite, Ghazali, *TFDWH*, p. 159; and *IMABSR*, p. 119; *RMFDNI*, pp. 55–8.

cultural as well as political in inspiration, was that the leaders were incompetent Muslims; trained in Western ways and thoughts they were inadequate to the task of leading Muslim countries because 'they forgot their glory, their history and their past'.²⁸

Mentally separated from their countrymen and lacking any common cause with them, the party leaders and their tools, the parties, became the agents of division and disunity. The party system weakened the national strength during the crucial battles for political freedom and internal reform. Divided into irresponsible and conflicting groups, the nation forfeited its unity and therefore achieved neither independence nor progress.²⁹

Corruption in the parties and party leaders had a crucial political consequence: parliamentary life and democratic government failed. The 'upper class', the seat of politico-economic power, 'monopolized' government. The people were 'compelled' to choose the parliament from among their 'oppressors': the landlord commanded the votes of his tenants; the 'lord of finance' those of his debtors—the hungry ones'. The people were victimized by a political-economic social tyranny. Though the granting of the parliament of 1923 by the British was intended to mean that the nation would 'rule itself by itself', that very same parliament became a 'cover' for plundering the rights and wealth of the people. It was only a natural—and for the Society and Egypt extremely important—extension of this view of Egypt's parliamentary life to say that 'all the elections since 1923 . . . are spurious'.³⁰

The administration of government had also been the victim of political corruption in the parties. The hallmarks of the bureaucracy had been inefficiency, muddle, and corruption, abuse of authority, and personal power; appointments had been made without regard to the qualifications of the appointee. This situation led to inexcusable complications in dealings with the government: anyone who wanted to send his children to school, enter a hospital, facilitate the completion of government business, leave the country, or get appointed to a job was either 'in need of intercession' (*wasita*) or thought he needed it. This had two fundamental explanations: (1) 'the loss of confidence in the law' and of respect for it as it had been administered by 'corrupt officials'; and (2) the centralization of authority in the hands of the 'powerful leaders' to the point where the subordinates dared not take upon

²⁸ Ghazali, *IIS*, pp. 3, 17–19; Hajjaji, *IMAM*, ii. 20–3; 'Awda, *IBJAWAU*, p. 25.

²⁹ See *YIM* (19 July 1946), 4. For an extended brief against the parties, see three works by Anwar al-Jundi: *Faza'i' al-ahzab al-siyasiyya* (n.d.); *Munawarat al-siyasa* (1947); and *Ta'rikh al-ahzab al-siyasiyya* (1946).

³⁰ Ghazali, *IMABSR*, pp. 118–19; *MDA* (1 Apr. 1952), 18.

themselves responsibility and had become 'tools with neither will nor opinions'.³¹

In this political picture the monarchy figured only slightly before 1952, for obvious reasons. It has already been suggested that Banna through much of his life as leader seemed not to have lost his loyalty to the monarchy, but the forces turned loose in the movement inevitably set it against the palace. The works of Muhammad Ghazali, the first of which appeared in 1948, could be regarded as indirect assaults on monarchical authority and reflections of the spirit of the membership, if not of the leaders. This fact seems to have been clear to the palace, as the 1948 decree of dissolution shows. The 1952 revolution freed the movement's writers from earlier restraints and launched the great campaign to discredit Faruq as the source of all corruption in the country.

Only one other point is worth noting here about the historical image of the monarchy—one which reflected an important contradiction in the Brothers' thinking. Muhammad 'Ali, the founder of the last Egyptian dynasty, received a variety of interpretations. One view extolled him as the 'leader of Egypt'—'the great man who had rejuvenated a great people'. With only three million people he set the nation on its modern path; not only did he build factories, navies, and armies, he also raised Egyptian dignity and prestige. This positive nationalist and secularly patriotic view of Muhammad 'Ali was balanced by a negative religious picture of him as the instrument of the penetration of Western ideas and the further destruction of Islam. Though the validity of his work was grudgingly admitted as 'proving' that Egypt was 'a nation alive', it was none the less felt that he missed the point of all modern reformers and failed to establish Islam as an operative 'socio-political system'.³²

A similar blend of praise and anger was directed towards the Turkish revolution and its leader Mustafa Kemal: on the one hand, praise for the work of consolidating and unifying the nation; on the other, anger at his disestablishment of Islam. The conflict of motives correctly mirrored the complex of factors which underpinned the Society's appeal, a subject which will conclude this study.

Capitalism and Foreign Economic Domination

The economic image of Egypt comprised two main factors: (1) the maldistribution of wealth and land—i.e. Egyptian capital-

³¹ JIM (26 Sept. 1946), 1, and Ghazali, *IMABSR*, pp. 67-70.

³² See JIM (11 Aug. 1946), 1, for the first view; for the second see Ghazali, *TFDH*, pp. 28-30, and Hajjaji, *RWR*, pp. 46-8.

ism and what were deemed to be its evil consequences for the economy and people of Egypt; and (2) foreign economic exploitation—deriving from the imperialist but also from his internal counterpart among the 'domestic imperialists', the foreigner in Egypt.

The image of Egyptian capitalism centred on the land-holder: 'the few' who still owned most of the land as in 'the most oppressive ages of feudalism', and exploited it and its peasants for their own personal interests without regard for the true function of their position as a 'social charge' (*wazifa ijtimaiyya*). But the image of capitalism encompasses much more. Money needed for developmental projects is in the hands of the capitalists who evade their duties towards the state and the people because the government represents them and not the needy masses. The poor people pay the taxes. The capitalist, placing his own interests before those of the nation, fails to use wisely the natural and human resources of the state. The constitution in theory freed the masses from the slavery of feudalism, but in fact slavery continues without the virtue shown by the feudal lord of concern for the body and soul of his slave. The exploited populace lives in a continual economic crisis, with an intolerably low standard of living; its existence is marked not only by poverty but derivative filth and disease. The labourer lives in a home without the water, light, and other facilities necessary to maintain a decent level of life and health; he lives amidst 'piles of sweepings', smothered with flies, in alleys and streets of the city which 'deserve nothing better than destruction by dynamite' so that they may be rebuilt from the foundations.³³

This situation leads to many evils: (1) it 'paralyzes the strength of the nation in work and production'; (2) it 'destroys human dignity and rights'; (3) it 'corrupts the character and the conscience'; (4) 'it denies individual security'; (5) it 'pushes people into the arms of the communists'; (6) it 'violates the spirit of religion'. In short, the situation cannot and must not last, because it rejects 'all principles of humanity, of the age, the nature of things and the simplest economic principles'.³⁴ These views were a graphic demonstration of how far ahead of the leader the members were: Banna, never so direct in his attacks on the

³³ Ghazali, *IMABSR*, p. 106 and *passim*; *IMI*, pp. 153, 159-65, for the bitterest of the attacks on landlords. The same author in *IMI*, pp. 107-8, reveals part of his motivation when he asserts that the irresponsible sale of land by large Arab landowners in Palestine was one of the long-range causes of the loss of that country.

³⁴ Qutb, *MIWR*, p. 7; pp. 9-27 and 47-66, where the author details his case against the leading Egyptian capitalist, 'Abbud Pasha.

economic order, confined himself to denunciation of the gap between the rich and the poor.³⁵

The Brothers' views on Egyptian capitalism were not, of course, separate from their views on foreign economic domination, but the latter had a special and important non-economic aspect. It will be recalled how, early in his life, Banna had expressed his dismay at the extent of foreign control over Isma'iliyya, and how shocked he was to see street signs, even in the popular quarters, written in 'the language of the economic occupation'. The feeling of resentment at the inferior cultural, social, and economic position of Egyptians as compared with the foreigner was enshrined in the words of the labourers who came to Banna and launched the movement.³⁶

Unlike so many other issues, this one moved Banna to only slightly less vehemence than his followers. 'The foreigners', he observed—both the imperialists who have occupied Egypt and those who have assumed 'Egyptian nationality'—have taken for their own and for their native country's interests the best of the natural resources of the country; industry, commerce, and utilities are in their hands; and all of them 'continue to view the Egyptian citizen, the Egyptian worker, and the Egyptian rulers without esteem and without justice'.³⁷ In no discussion of this matter by Banna or his followers was the economic question of control separable from the cultural, religious, societal, or personal question of inferiority and humiliation—an angry response to the conspicuous contempt of the foreign 'economic overlord' for the Egyptian and to 'Muslim servility' before the foreign master'.³⁸

The importance of this attitude cannot be over emphasized; strongly felt and widely held, it remained a constant in the movement's dynamic. Its implications were many, for the foreigner—the *khawaja*—was invariably a Christian or Jew; the posture of the Society 'in defence of Islam' led necessarily to a view of the foreigner which included religious and cultural as well as political and economic objections. And not the least of the implications of this view was the identification of the foreigner with the *local* Christian or Jew, a relationship between majority religious and cultural inferiority and the minority. We will return to this point again.

³⁵ See e.g. *RMFDNI*, pp. 71–2.

³⁶ See above, p. 8, and Nadawi, *Mudhakkarat*, p. 47, for comments by Banna's father on this subject.

³⁷ *RMFDNI*, p. 73; see also *RMK*, p. 30; and *RBAWY*, p. 26.

³⁸ Ghazali, *FMD*, pp. 198–9, and *IWAI*, pp. 72–83, 137–8 for an extensive discussion.

Society and Morality

The evacuation of the British troops from Egypt in 1954 meant for the Brothers the end of 'the military-political-ethical-social invasion'. Here again, in the social order imperialism was seen as the fountain head of corruption. When the armies of Europe came to Egypt, they brought with them their laws, schools, languages, and sciences; but also their 'wine, women, and sin'.³⁹ The introduction of the traditions and values of the West has corrupted society, bred immorality, and destroyed the inherited and traditional values of Muslim society. Social and family life is corrupted by the 'cheap' cinema, stage, radio, and music. The moral and sex problems of youth are related to the 'naked' women in the streets, the 'dirty' films, the 'suggestive' popular music, the 'uncontrolled' press and its lewd pictures, and the permissibility of wine.

Indiscriminate mixing of the sexes has led to debauchery. Women have lost their Muslim virtues by their immodest participation in the partying and dancing which marks so many of the official and unofficial functions. Why? Because 'European women do it and we want to be like Europe in all respects!!' As a consequence, the nation is torn in its personal and home life between an Islamic and a Western pattern; some have remained Muslim while others have 'outwesternized the Westerners'.

This ethical duality has entered into other important areas of the social order; law and education. The nation has a dual system of schools: a religious education leads to the Azhar; a civil education to the university. Each is separate from the other, one a remnant of Islamic heritage, the other an imitation of the West. This anarchic, contradictory, and conflicting situation has led to intellectual backwardness and confusion, chaos and atheism.

Finally, the introduction of Western codes of law has corrupted and perverted the nation's thought, mind, and logic. When imperialism introduced the foreign laws it was not resisted by the 'incompetent *ulama*' or by the leaders, law-makers, and lawyers of the country, who were both ignorant of the nature of the *shari'a* and shackled by a 'self-imposed bondage' to the opinions of Europeans in legal matters. Thus the law of Egypt has no relation to its citizens, is not supported by their beliefs, and does not spring from their hearts. It is man-made law transferred from the laws of the European countries, existing side by side in a dual legal system with a revealed religious law. The inharmonious relation of

³⁹ *MDA* (17 Aug. 1954), 1.

revealed and man-made law has served to shatter the 'unity' of the nation.⁴⁰

The image of Egypt is thus a distressing one. Religious indifference and imperialism and the multiple facets of both have left Egypt in psychological chaos, a prey to 'deadly desperation, lethal indolence, disgraceful cowardice, despicable obsequiousness, effeminacy, miserliness, and egotism'.⁴¹ In the weakened state of the Muslim community, European civilization has invaded, 'strongly and violently', and left it in ruins:

European 'civilization' . . . has developed in us a morbid mentality, a morbid taste and has made of us a morbid community that looks upon its own morbidity and decay as a thing of virtue and a sign of progress. . . . Once corrupt, the greatest corruption is to regard one's corruption as good and desirable.⁴²

IMAGE OF THE WEST

In so far as the ethos of the movement was in such large part a response to the 'enticement' of the Western values and ideas which accompanied the movement of Western power to the East, the image of the West—Western civilization—held by the Brothers was important. It has already been noted by one writer that the Brothers distinguished between Western civilization 'in its own environment' and the Western civilization which was 'thrown at the East'.⁴³ It might further be observed that the Brothers, although distinguishing between its various parts, in general defined 'the West' so as to include both the 'free world' and the communist world.

Western Civilization

Western civilization, as it unfolded in its own environment, had both negative and positive qualities. The 'free world'—primarily England and the United States—had much to commend it so far as its internal way of life was concerned. Its respect for individual freedom and the right of workers to take action to protect their interests was particularly noteworthy. There were effective democratic processes in the West and a truly representative parliamentary life. Related to this was the sense of responsibility of the

⁴⁰ See almost any issue of *MDA*, esp. those of 27 July, 17 Aug. 1954; any issue of *JIM*, esp. those of 19, 21 Sept. 1946; Qutb, *DI*, p. 85; *RMBBM*, *passim*, esp. pp. 112-14; *RDFTY*, pp. 27-8; see also Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, p. 42. For the law see 'Awda, *IWAQ*, and by the same author, *IBJAWAU*, *passim*.

⁴¹ *RTH: D*, pp. 31-2.

⁴² An Azhar appeal for reform quoted in Ghazali, *MHN* (Faruqi tr.), pp. 82-3.

⁴³ Husayni, *Ikhwan*, p. 173.

rulers to their peoples, and the widespread 'social spirit' (*ruh ijtimai*) in Western nations. The 'infidel nation' of England compared favourably with some Muslim countries as regards justice and equality.⁴⁴

The virtues of the communist world, though only of 'outward appearance' and largely theoretical, were, nevertheless, noteworthy: concern for the poor, 'equality', 'mutuality of responsibility' among classes, 'brotherhood', and 'humanitarianism' without distinctions between peoples.⁴⁵ These qualities conduced to 'potential' social justice on a 'material' level—a spiritually barren satisfaction of bodily needs. This was Russian communism and perhaps was the path for Christian Europe: 'we have no good grounds for any hostility between Islam and the thought of social justice such as the hostility which persists between Christianity [the West] and communism'.⁴⁶ 'Irreligious' and 'absolute', Russian socialism, because of its emphasis on social justice, is the only alternative to an 'Islamic socialism based on the cardinal points of monotheism and the brotherhood of man'.⁴⁷

One analogy, which was often made in the Society to demonstrate Islam's priority of possession of the fundamental ideas of the West, neatly summarizes some of its positive attitude to the West; incidentally, it makes a revealing and concise observation about the Brothers' attitude towards Nazism, or more broadly, totalitarianism. The statement is as follows. The truly 'practical social order', which all world systems have touched in part, is found in Islam. The prayer of the Muslim is the best example of this truth. Communism preaches 'equality, the abolition of classes, distinctions, and pride in property'; the Muslim feels this completely, for when he enters the mosque, he knows that the mosque belongs to God, that there are no 'great' and no 'small' within its precincts. The *mu'adhdhin* cries out, prayer begins, everyone follows the *imam* in his actions; there is 'unity and discipline', the best qualities of dictatorship. But the *imam* is no tyrant, for if he errs he must stand corrected by anyone in the congregation who may choose to do so; this is the best aspect of democracy.⁴⁸

The negative views about the West in its own milieu are as instructive and predictable. The Western democracies may have

⁴⁴ See esp. Qutb, *MIWR*, p. 25; Ghazali in *IIS*, p. 162; in *IMABSR*, pp. 68-9; in *TFDH*, p. 131; in *IWAI*, pp. 86-94.

⁴⁵ *JIM* (17 July 1946), 1, written at the peak of its anti-communism.

⁴⁶ Qutb, *AIFI* (Hardie tr.), p. 14.

⁴⁷ Ghazali, *MHN* (Faruqi tr.), p. 135.

⁴⁸ *MS* (14 Nov. 1947), 30-1. See also *JIM* (26 Dec. 1946), 3: communism arranges 'economic matters and social life'; democracy stabilizes the life of 'representative government'; and fascism inspires 'martial strength and military preparedness'.

created satisfying political processes, but democracy has led to the corruption of individuals and thus of societies. An excess of 'individualism' has led to licence and has set man against man and class against class; it has led, too, to moral irresponsibility, 'degeneracy', and 'social chaos', all of which have precipitated crisis in the home—the debasement of women and the weakening and destruction of the family. On another plane, democracy has become synonymous with capitalism and its exploitive basis of legally recognized usury. And, finally, in the leading democracy of the West, failure has marked efforts to solve the 'race issue on the basis of equality and justice'; America has become the defender and leader of 'the empire of the white man'.⁴⁹

The communist world—the 'peoples' democracies'—is equally at fault. There, 'atheism', internal 'political tyranny', and 'international dictatorship' are the hallmarks of the system. 'Freedom of work, speech, and thought' are consistently denied; the Russian 'concept of equality' is so materialistic as to be meaningless; and the guiding principle of the system is 'destructive' and 'incites to revolution'.⁵⁰

The common denominator of all the Western systems is materialism: 'The Western world, during [recent] centuries, has been materialist in tissue and fibre . . . resulting in a deadening of human sentiments and sympathies, and in the extinction of godly endeavours and spiritual values.'⁵¹ And the basic problem is that their values are limited and confining because their goals are finite: 'The criteria of justice and equality and other human virtues are in the hands of humans [as against God] who define their limits.'⁵²

These negative views of the West were summed up in an early indictment by Banna: 'The civilization of the West', proudly strong in its science, and for a period able to subjugate the world, is now 'in bankruptcy and in decline', its political fundamentals destroyed by dictatorship, its economic systems racked by crisis [written in 1936], its social order decaying. 'Revolution is in process everywhere'. 'The people are perplexed'; greed, materialism, and oppression have destroyed the relations between states [reference is to the failing League of Nations]; 'all humanity' is 'tortured' and 'miserable'. Leadership of the world, first Eastern, moved westwards with the Greeks and Romans and eastwards again following the Semitic prophets [*sic*]. And finally with the

⁴⁹ *RBAWY*, pp. 19–20; *JIM* (19 July 1946), 1, 4; (23 Oct. 1946), 1. See also Qutb, *MIWR*, p. 31, and *DI*, p. 107.

⁵⁰ Qutb, *MIWR*, pp. 23–7; Ghazali, *IMABSR*, pp. 36–8.

⁵¹ *RDFTJ*, p. 10.

⁵² Awda, *IWAS*, pp. 78–9.

Renaissance it passed into the hands of a 'tyrannical' and 'oppressive' West. The time has come for the East to rise again.⁵³

'Materialism' and 'greed and tyranny' were the keys to the Brothers' negative attitude to the West—consistently both before and after World War II. This reflected the two important and related levels of thought among the Brothers: resistance to Western secularism (i.e., materialism) and resistance to Western occupation. Since the former was seen as a derivative of the latter, a keystone in the structure of ideas was the question of imperialism—Western civilization in the East.

Imperialism

The hatred and anger felt by the Brothers about the occupation need not be described in detail. What they felt it meant for Egypt has been summed up as 'slow annihilation and profound and complete corruption'.⁵⁴ As an 'international' movement the Brothers were of course concerned with imperialism as it affected every Muslim country, and they accordingly publicized persistently inflammatory attacks on the 'imperial powers' for their international 'political immorality'. This was directed at the traditional imperial powers of the West—Britain and France and the earlier cases of Italy and the Netherlands. And reflecting the post-World War II line-up of nations, attention in these later years focused on the United States as leader of the 'free world' and on Soviet Russia.

Russian imperialism was seen in a historical and purely Muslim perspective: 'Tsarist Russia was one of the most violent in its enmity to Islam and Muslims', a fact intimately connected with 'Christian Crusading fanaticism' (to which reference will shortly be made again). Under the auspices of the Bolsheviks Russian imperialism continued unabated with even greater venom and more terrible bloodshed. For enslaved Muslims the Russian empire became 'a slaughterhouse of religion'.

American imperialism shared with the Russian variety the charge of having been responsible for the outcome of the Palestine question. Palestine was the beginning of the identification of the United States with political imperialism: 'After Roosevelt', the United States joined 'the ranks of the imperialists with the creation of Israel', and began to support imperialism 'wherever Muslims were occupied'. 'Truman', 'four million votes', 'Zionist pressure', and 'Jewish gold and Zionist influence'—these were the explanations for American support of Israel. America, which 'theoreti-

⁵³ *RTH*: *NN*, pp. 87–9.

⁵⁴ *JIM* (24 Oct. 1946), 3, as an example. Qutb, *DI*, pp. 96–8, 207–14, and the columns of the daily, *JIM*, esp. e.g. 23 July 1946.

cally' believed in the 'rights of man', 'social justice', and the United Nations Charter, belied her principles by joining England in support of the 'Zionist aggressors', and 'gave Palestine to the Jews'. And among those things which most inflamed opinion were the effect of the American 'Zionist-dominated' press, radio, and films in destroying 'the reputation and honour' of everything 'Muslim and Eastern' in the campaign to win Palestine, and the related Zionist fund-raising drives, which at one point allegedly featured the slogan 'Pay a dollar and kill an Arab'.⁵⁵

The Palestine question became the starting-point for attacks on the United States. Other sore points were that country's alleged support of England in Egypt and France in North Africa. Because of the 'violations of freedom by the free world' in Muslim countries and because of 'racism' in America, the United States was seen to be the new defender and leader of 'the empire of the white man'. Occasionally, these attitudes were qualified by the notion that the United States was only stupid rather than evil. Mostly it was simpler to explain the policies of the world's leading 'capitalist state', both as regards to 'colonial countries' and to the continuing 'cold war' with Russia, in terms of imperialism.⁵⁶

America's capitalism was also the type image of economic imperialism. Before World War II consideration of economic imperialism by the movement was confined to indignation over the 'exploitation' of the nation's resources by 'the imperialist oppressor'. With the emergence of the 'cold war' and the concomitant wooing of Asia by both parties to it, the issue crystallized more firmly around the theoretical question of capitalism and communism, both of which the Brothers rejected. As we have observed, economic reasons were not the only ones for this rejection: capitalism was equated with licentious individualism and thus with social chaos, communism with atheism, and both with materialism. Moreover, bitterness towards Egyptian capitalism and its abuses predisposed the Society to come to regard the 'capitalist West', especially the United States, as the real enemy, seeking through the technical and economic aid programmes to pervert the political independence of the countries aided, and to establish this 'commercial dominance' by 'glutting the local markets'.⁵⁷ Israel, it should also be noted was seen as a device to

⁵⁵ See Qutb, *MIWR*, pp. 41-2; Hedaybi in *JA* (25 Nov. 1953), 6, 11; and *MDA* (22 Nov. 1955), 1, for a statement about the Zionist fund-raising campaigns and this slogan.

⁵⁶ Qutb, *DI*, p. 107, and *SAWI*, pp. 157-64. Qutb, in the USA before the Korean war, was enamoured of the view that war in America has become 'a necessity of national life'. His position as head of the section for propaganda of the message made him an important opinion-maker at the time.

⁵⁷ Qutb, *SAWI*, p. 164, and Hedaybi in *JA* (25 Nov. 1953), 11.

establish commercial hegemony over the Middle East. Thus, along with the Brothers' religious interpretation—communism has no religion and capitalism has a hypocritical religion—there was a clear political view of 'economic imperialism': communism is a threat 'at the gates of the nation', capitalism is a threat 'within its boundaries'; 'we believe that purging the nation of its painful economic oppressions is its protection from both red and white imperialism'.⁵⁸

The movement also concerned itself with another kind of imperialism not always the object of nationalist attack: cultural imperialism. This was the imperialism which 'entered the minds of the people with its teachings and thoughts' and which tried 'to dominate the social situation' in the country.⁵⁹ On this important level, the response of the Society was very revealing.

This attitude to cultural imperialism became more conspicuous during and after the Palestine war. For example, United Nations activity in Palestine was seen as 'a new declaration of Zionist-Crusading war against the Arab and Islamic peoples'. The full identification of Zionism with crusading Western imperialism was indicated by the interchangeable use of terms such as 'European crusading' (*al-salibiyya al-urabbiyya*) and 'Jewish crusading' (*al-salibiyya al-yahudiyya*).⁶⁰ There was, of course, a specific historical foundation for this attitude, and the same implications persisted. In so far as the Brothers saw religion not as a mere facet of society or culture but as synonymous with these, 'crusade' had both political and cultural connotations for them. 'Western imperialistic crusading' thus appeared as an attempt not only to conquer Muslim lands but to subvert Muslim society. In statements stronger than those usually made on this issue one writer says:

The West surely seeks to humiliate us, to occupy our lands and begin destroying Islam by annulling its laws and abolishing its traditions. In doing this, the West acts under the guidance of the Church.

The power of the Church is operative in orienting the internal and foreign policies of the Western bloc, led by England and America A hundred years ago the situation was one of enmity between the State and Christianity. Today, however, the relationship is obviously a cordial alliance.⁶¹

The historical Crusades succeeded in unleashing in Europe 'a

⁵⁸ Ghazali, *IMABSR*, p. 10.

⁵⁹ Hedaybi in *JA* (25 Nov. 1953), 6.

⁶⁰ See e.g. *MS* (14 Nov. 1947), 86-8; and Nadawi, *Mudhakkarat*, p. 43.

⁶¹ Ghazali, *MHN* (Faruqi tr.), pp. 22, 15, xvi-xvii; see also the pamphlet circulated by the student section of the Society, Qism al-Tullab, *al-Mustimum bayn al-tabshir wa'l-isti'mar* (Cairo, 1952), *passim*, esp. p. 19. Ahmad, *Nahda*, p. 49, sees the 'religious renaissance' of Islam as a function of 'Western Christian imperialism'.

hatred and a sinister fury against us that has raged unappeased to the present day'. Today, 'the old hatred combines with covetousness and fanaticism' to produce 'Christian imperialism'. Combining this thought with the attitude towards 'aggressive Zionism', Qutb could logically conclude by saying: 'General Allenby was no more than typical of the mind of all Europe when, entering Jerusalem during World War I, he said: "Only now have the Crusades come to an end."'⁶²

On the question of how the crusading spirit could still exist in a 'Europe which has discarded Its Christianity', Qutb answers:

Crusading was not confined to the clangor of arms, but was, before and above all else, an intellectual enmity.

European imperial interests can never forget that the spirit of Islam is firmly opposed to the spirit of Imperialism. . . .

There are those who hold that it is the financial influence of the Jews of the United States and elsewhere which has governed the policy of the West. There are those who say that it is English ambition and Anglo-Saxon guile which are responsible. . . . And there are those who believe that it is the antipathy between East and West. . . . All these opinions overlook one vital element in the question . . . , the Crusader spirit which runs in the blood of all Westerners.

In this sense, there is no distinction between Russia and the United States. Both share in a common crusade against 'the spirit of Islam'.⁶³

What is at stake is not the advance of the *religion* of Christianity at the expense of Islam, but the retreat of Muslim *civilization* before Western *civilization*. Banna warned his followers early and often that 'formal political independence' was worthless unless accompanied by 'intellectual, social, and cultural independence'.⁶⁴ And one of his most frequently quoted sayings (one adopted by Hudaybi) was 'Eject imperialism from your souls, and it will leave your lands'. Subsequent writers adopted the same tone. Ghazali deplored 'this age, created by the cultural invasion, which bears Muslim names, but has not a Muslim heart or a Muslim mind'. 'The cultural invasion . . . makes Muslims ignorant of their religion and loads their minds with limited truths, then leaves their hearts a vacuum.'⁶⁵ And Qutb warns the Brothers that 'spiritual and mental imperialism is the true danger' for unlike military or political imperialism which inspires opposition, this type dulls, calms, and deceives its victims. 'Holy war' must be declared against 'the apparatus which directs the operation of deception': the 'modern' techniques of the imperialism of the 'free world'—

⁶² Qutb, *AIFI* (Hardie tr.), p. 235.

⁶⁴ See *JIM* (9 July 1946), 4.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 236–40.

⁶⁵ *MDA* (27 July 1954), 3.

foundations, technical aid, UNESCO, and the 'pens and tongues' of the 'people's democracies'.⁶⁶

The most dangerous operators of this apparatus, for Qutb, were the missionaries and the researchers—orientalists and social scientists who were 'probing the most sensitive parts of our country'.⁶⁷ Concern with the work of orientalists was a recent development and derived from an increased awareness of, and sensitivity to what Westerners were saying about Islam and Muslims, and about the Muslim Brothers. Attention focused on Western scholars for what were regarded as misrepresentations of Muslim history, and for the critiques which destroy Islam's 'sacredness'; indeed the latter point was the most serious objection raised against Western research.⁶⁸ Egyptian writers who shared or adopted the 'false ideas' of the orientalists about Islam were regarded as having abetted, 'intentionally or not', the cultural imperialism of the West. Well-known writers accused of this tendency were Taha Husayn, 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq, Khalid Muhammad Khalid, and Amin 'Uthman.⁶⁹

The missionary, however, was the major 'agent' of cultural imperialism and the chief object of the Brothers' criticism. 'It was natural', recalls Banna, 'that there should be a clash between the two [Brothers and missionaries] in view of the fact that one of them defends Islam and the second attacks it.'⁷⁰ There was no clearer and simpler statement of the Society's image of missionaries.

One other aspect of this problem is worthy of note here. Missionaries were normally identified as 'Western' Christian missionaries from whom not only Muslims but Eastern Christians were to be protected. This distinction between Eastern and Western Christians was an important one for the Society (p. 271). Here it need only be said that the Brothers encouraged and supported both Christian and Muslim writers who attacked Western, especially Protestant, 'subversion' of the local Orthodox and Coptic heritage.

⁶⁶ Qutb, *DI*, pp. 163–6; for another recognition of this problem, see F. S. C. Northrop, *The Taming of the Nations* (1952), p. 67. Out of this mood was generated the futile 'book-burnings' (see above, p. 50).

⁶⁷ Qutb, *DI*, p. 163.

⁶⁸ See esp. *RNYM*, pp. 19–22. However, the hostility to orientalists was not unrelieved: *JIM* (2 June 1954), 13, in an article by a 'non-political' member, Muhammad Yusuf Musa, admits the 'service' of the orientalists to Islam and Muslim culture. A book circulated among, and discussed with interest by, English-reading and speaking members was Gibb's *Modern Trends in Islam*. In our own research, we encountered more than once the articulated hope that this study would not 'abuse Islam'.

⁶⁹ See Ghazali, *MHN* (Faruqi tr.), pp. xiii–xvi.

⁷⁰ *Mudh.*, p. 157; above, pp. 6, 13.

interesting

IX

THE SOLUTION

THE RETURN TO ISLAM

THE image of the world in which the Brothers lived was one vividly characterized by decay and humiliation: the corruption of the faith was serious enough, worse still, it resulted not only in the abuse and disregard of its teachings, but in their headlong replacement by foreign values brought by the invader and incompetently resisted by the political, intellectual, and spiritual leaders of the country. Egypt, wrote Banna to Faruq, is 'at the crossroads'. It is facing in two directions: 'the way of the West' and 'the way of Islam'. Advocates of both summon the nation to follow one or the other. The Muslim Brothers, true to the faith, plead that the nation be restored to Islam. Egypt's role is unique, for just as Egyptian reform begins with Islam, so the regeneration of Islam must begin in Egypt, for the rebirth of 'international Islam', in both its ideal and historical sense, requires first a strong 'Muslim state' (*dawla muslima*).¹

This Islam to which we beckon—this pure Islam is 'the Islam of the Muslim Brothers'. Not a new Islam,² it differs from many of the incorrect historical interpretations given it by Muslims. There are those who see Islam as mere worship and ritual—that is the widespread meaning among the mass of Muslims. Others see it as 'noble virtues' or 'spirituality' protecting them from material things. Yet others see it solely in its earthly 'practical' aspects. And finally, there are those who see it merely as an 'inherited faith'—'untroubled and unprogressive'; these are 'disgusted with Islam and all that has to do with Islam'. This view is found mostly among those with foreign education who are unfamiliar with Islam in its original state or know it only from the 'defaced picture' presented by those who do not practice it correctly.

We believe the provisions of Islam and its teachings are all inclusive, encompassing the affairs of the people in this world and the hereafter. And those who think that these teachings are concerned only with the

¹ RTH: NN, p. 85; RDTY, pp. 11-12.

² Much was made of the point that the movement represented no innovation: see RMKH, p. 8, RDTY, pp. 30-1, and RD, p. 3.

spiritual or ritualistic aspects are mistaken in this belief because Islam is a faith and a ritual, a nation (*watan*) and a nationality, a religion and a state, spirit and deed, holy text and sword. . . . The Glorious Qur'an . . . considers [these things] to be the core of Islam and its essence. . . .³

The ideologies of the West must be resisted: they are the forward arm of corruption, 'the silken curtain' behind which hide 'the greed of graspers and the dreams of dominators'. There is 'no salvation for the Arabs and the Muslims, and no self respect for the East' until it rids itself of all of them 'rising from itself', and depending 'on the grace of God'. It is possible for Muslims to resist the foreign ideologies because they do not need them. Islam includes in its teachings the best features of all of them:

Internationalism, nationalism, socialism, capitalism, bolshevism, war, the distribution of wealth, the relation between producers and consumers, and whatever is related to these topics . . . which have occupied the leaders of nations and philosophers of society—all of these, we believe, Islam has penetrated to the core. Islam established for the world the system through which man can benefit from the good and avoid dangers and calamities.⁴

And again:

If the French Revolution decreed the rights of man and declared for freedom, equality, and brotherhood, and if the Russian revolution brought closer the classes and social justice for people, the great Islamic revolution decreed all that 1,300 years before. It did not confine itself to philosophical theories but rather spread these principles through daily life, and added to them [the notions of the] divinity of mankind, and the perfectibility of his virtues and [the fulfilment of] his spiritual tendencies.⁵

Islam then includes all the virtues of other systems, it is sufficient in itself for the renaissance of the nation: 'Its history has testified to its fitness and has exhibited to humanity as a whole . . . one of the strongest, noblest, most merciful, virtuous, and blessed of nations'. In building our lives on our own principles, not on others, we are asserting, as with our political independence, our truly 'social and existential independence'. The Islamic way is 'complete and total', establishing itself on both 'practical and spiritual' foundations—a fact unique to Islam as a system. Islam can give a nation that is being reborn all that it needs. It gives 'hope'; it creates 'will and determination' without which life cannot be rekindled. 'Despair is a road to blasphemy, and despondency is an expression of error.' Finally, it gives 'national self-respect',

³ RMKH, p. 10 and previously, pp. 8-9. This has been one of the most enduring of Banna's statements and was often reproduced.

⁴ RIASNN, p. 30.

⁵ JIM (19 Sept. 1946), 1, 4.

for every nation must respect its own nationhood, its glories, and its history.⁶

The essential step in the renaissance, and more important than 'practical reform', is a vast 'spiritual awakening' among individuals. 'Verily God does not change a people (*qawm*) until they change what is in themselves' (Qur'an 13: 12). A people cannot be saved until individuals are. The reason for 'the weakness of nations and humiliations of peoples' is that hearts and souls become weak and emptied of 'noble virtues and the qualities of true manhood'. The nation which is overwhelmed by 'material things' and 'earthliness', and which has forgotten 'hardship and struggle on behalf of truth', has lost its self-respect and hope. 'Material strength', which the East so obviously needs, is secondary to a mobilization of its 'spiritual strength'. Once the individual regains his spiritual balance, then the effect of his reform will find its way to his family and thence to the nation at large. The nation will continue to suffer so long as its individuals lack the qualities necessary to make it great.⁷

The Prophet Muhammad placed in the hearts of his followers three principles: (1) they have received final Truth in a final Revelation; (2) since they are the possessors of Truth, their mission in life is teaching; (3) because of these facts, 'God stands with them'. The Muslim Brothers preached these cornerstones also, even before the five pillars: 'Faith in the grandeur of the message, pride in its adoption, and hope for the support of God.'⁸

Therefore, until Muslims return to what inspired the first Muslims, there can be no salvation. 'The noble Qur'an is an inclusive book in which God has gathered the fundamentals of faith, the foundations of social virtues and all worldly legislation.' If Muslims have deviated from these truths: 'Our mission is to return—ourselves and whoever will follow—to the [true] path'.⁹ This is a call to return to Islamic principles and not a literal return to the seventh century; those who say this are confusing 'the historical beginning of Islam with the system of Islam itself'.¹⁰

AL-NIZAM AL-ISLAMI

The ultimate goal of the Muslim Brothers was the creation of an 'Islamic order' (*al-nizam al-islami*). In practice, this phrase was

⁶ RTH: NN, pp. 85–91, esp. 89–91.

⁷ RMKH, pp. 4–5; and esp. RIASNN, pp. 25–9; RDFTY, pp. 21–4. If any single idea could be said to have been a keystone in Banna's 'system' it was this one; it was so regarded by the membership.

⁸ RIASNN, pp. 3–4.

⁹ Qutb, MIWR, pp. 84 ff. Hudaybi (RD, pp. 3–4) records his surprise that people at large believed the Society to advocate 'the abandonment of most of the characteristics of civilization and a return to the life of the *badu* in the desert'.

¹⁰ RDFTY, pp. 18–20.

sometimes loosely used to mean a 'Muslim state'; mostly, however, it referred to a set of legal (not political) principles which were regarded as fundamental to Muslim society whatever the particular form of political order. The *shari'a*—its implementation or non-implementation—was the determinant in the definition of a true Islamic order.

The distinction between an 'Islamic order' and a 'Muslim state' in a medieval sense is a fundamental one and distinguishes our analysis of the Society from most others, which view it as a reactionary movement fanatically dedicated to re-creating a seventh-century political order. Apart from the question of revolutionary intent, such a view does not explain its relative indifference, as we shall soon see, to such issues as the caliphate. It makes impossible an analysis of the complexity of motives which prompted membership. Quite apart from the secularist and nationalist members, few even of the 'traditional' Brothers, let alone those who had entered in varying degrees the 'modern' world, would have considered this a possible goal if even a desirable one. We take essentially at face value the view attributed to Banna and expressed by Hudaybi, and in writings by members of the Society, that the existing constitutional parliamentary framework in Egypt, if reformed, would satisfy the political requirements of Islam for a 'Muslim state'.¹¹

If this was true, then the political activism of the Society meant something other than an attempt to overthrow the existing order in the name of a 'theocracy'. The truly important 'religious' aspect of this was the larger question of the imperatives of Muslim society: the centrality of the *shari'a* to it. A Muslim Brother could, and indeed did, concede 'development' of specific aspects of community or political organization, but he could not remain true to his image of Islam and deny the ultimate validity of God's law as revealed in the Qur'an. The rejection of the religious foundation of Muslim society which was symbolized in the rejection of the *shari'a* for Western codes, and in the consequent separation of religious and secular authority, not only violated Muslim history

¹¹ We are not saying this statement is true. Safran, *Egypt*, p. 290, points out, in challenging this idea as a camouflage for the call to revolt, that obviously Egypt was not an Islamic state. This is true if the referent were the caliphate of the seventh or eighth century; our referent, and why we think the statement important, is what articulate Muslim Brothers probably actually felt to be the case. Hudaybi made this abundantly clear in his letters to the government in 1954. Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution*, pp. 162–3, follows Husayni, *Moslem Brethren*, who believes that 'religious government' was a primary goal of the Society. We are not sure what Husayni intends. Our attempted distinction here is between religious government (a 'Muslim state') and a government inspired by religion, the 'Islamic order'.

but destroyed the essence of Muslim society. In setting the state apart from the revelation, Muslims had rebuked God by the creation of a *shirk*. Thus to return to the distinction just made, the immediate concern of the Muslim Brothers was not the organization of a 'Muslim state' (although, as we shall see, this was considered), but rather the more profound issue of the nature and destiny of Muslim society in the twentieth century—the 'Islamic order', the most important elements of which were: (1) the *shari'a* and its validity for modern times; and (2) the related question of 'the separation of church and state'.

The Shari'a

It would be difficult to overstate the intensity of the Brothers' conviction that while other civilizations could dispense with religious institutions (because of multiple roots), Muslim civilization without the *shari'a* as its central inspiration was meaningless, a 'loss of cultural direction' and 'a contradiction in terms', leaving 'a society of cultural mongrels and spiritual half-castes'.¹²

This belief emphasized the indispensability of the *shari'a* to the healthy Muslim community, what Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith has called the 'theological imperative' in current Islamic social reform. 'It has two sides: the community's external relations and its internal order. Islam being what it is, Muslims feel that they must solve the problem or perish. It is not only the welfare of the community which is at stake but the validity of the faith.'¹³

To live by the *shari'a* was both religiously and socially necessary. The Qur'anic injunctions to rule 'by what God has revealed' are sufficient to make putting it into effect an 'obligation'. 'Thus we will satisfy our Lord, who said, 'Rule with what God has revealed'; he did not say with what resembles what God has revealed.'¹⁴

The religious sanctions were obviously important; equally so, however, was the social sense of disorder and disequilibrium and historical dislocation. The point was often made that the people of Egypt were being subjected to laws foreign to their history, traditions, and spirit with a consequent social demoralization. 'Law does not perform its function unless it rests on principles accepted by the people and in which individuals and societies have faith. . . . Unless it is this, it cannot fulfil its function.'¹⁵ Banna warned those who were being enticed by Western ideas of the

¹² *Arafat*, i/1 (Sept. 1946), 32. Although Pakistani in origin, this magazine reflected well some of the positions of the Brothers.

¹³ 'Trends in Muslim Thought', *MW* (Oct. 1952), 322.

¹⁴ *RD*, pp. 5-6, 11.

¹⁵ *MDA* (22 Apr. 1951), 8-9.

rootlessness of the foreign values ('without father or mother') that they were accepting, whereas what these values replaced was 'deep of root and firm of bond with our history, our society, and the needs of our environment'.¹⁶ Indeed, the intensity of feeling among Brothers on what might be called the 'social or cultural imperative' involved in the establishment of the *shari'a* perhaps outdid the theological imperative.

Given the necessity of the *shari'a*, the next important consideration for the Brothers was its definition. Banna himself was restrained on this question. Confining himself to generalities, he felt no need to elaborate on the obvious; or, from another view, to discuss matters which would provoke divisiveness. He was undoubtedly less concerned than his followers about the intellectual assumptions of the movement, especially after 1952. He would agree that the *shari'a* was first and foremost a derivative of the Qur'an; that of about 6,000 verses in this, 500 are concerned with legislation on which was built the science of jurisprudence. To this would be added the deeds of the Prophet—the Traditions, 'purified' and taken from 'trustworthy' authorities.¹⁷ To emphasize Islam's 'flexibility', Banna recalled that the legist Shafi'i gave different rulings in similar-type cases in Egypt and Iraq, and that another famous judge decided differently from season to season.¹⁸

Banna may have believed but never made it an issue, as did his followers, that the *shari'a* is not and never was inclusive of the four schools of law. Qutb, for example, notes the confusion between the *shari'a* and 'the historical origins of Islamic jurisprudence'. The rulings of the legists of the Islamic tradition are obviously inadequate, he says, for the needs of society through time. Because jurisprudence ceased developing when Islamic society failed, this does not mean the *shari'a* is dead.¹⁹ The most widely circulated 'legal' book among the Brothers deplores the confusion between the 'words of the legal scholars' and the *shari'a*, and connects this confusion with the decline of Islamic society.²⁰ The legal scholars, as *mujtahidun*, are important historical and substantive guides to the present, but Muslims today are free 'to do as they did for our times and our situations'.²¹ The Brothers expressed themselves just as frankly about the corpus of exegesis transmitted from the past. Thus, without denying the validity of the exegetical legacy

¹⁶ See Hajjaji, *RLAT*, pp. 20-1.

¹⁷ *RD*, pp. 4-5; *RNURT*, p. 3. In his own works he used the 'most dependable' of the records—al-Bukhari and Muslim (*RJ*, p. 11).

¹⁸ See e.g. *RMFDNI*, pp. 19-20, and Ta'lib, *al-Bay'a*, p. 16, for a more restrictive view.

¹⁹ Qutb, *MIWR*, pp. 84-7.

²⁰ al-Sayyid Sabiq, *Fiqh al-sunna* (1954), i. 17-24.

²¹ See *JIM* (29 July 1954), 14; see also Samman, *IM*, pp. 18-19, 92-4.

of Muslims, one Brother expressed the view that most of the works are irrelevant or meaningless, that the 'concise' exegesis are good 'dictionaries of the language', and the 'lengthy' studies are 'sources for researchers', full of 'wearisome padding, tiring debate, and distorted repetition', and that neither type satisfies the need of the Muslim community for clear pronouncements about the 'vital meanings' of the Qur'an.²²

The Traditions, finally, were felt to need serious re-study. Delayed in their collation, subjected to the vicissitudes of partisan and internecine struggle within the Muslim community, they inevitably suffered corruption. In this light, Muslims must not be bound by the books of Tradition simply because they are ancient. There must be a serious re-examination of the Traditions to determine the true from the false; new books must be written in the light of these studies; and the great books of Islam examined for new Traditions and new light on the Traditions. A common belief among Brothers was that no more than a handful of Traditions would survive such a study; an extreme form of this view held that only one Tradition would survive, and that this would have the Prophet say 'Take from me only the Qur'an'.²³ The following observation by a member of the Society is not typical in its literal implications but is characteristic of an attitude: speaking about the *sunna* he noted that 'it is a kind of supplement to the legal injunctions of the Qur'an, but mostly it is a spiritual inspiration and guide to the whole Islamic system'; it could be described, he concluded, as 'a fallible man's experience in society guiding fallible men'.

This, briefly, was the conception of the *shari'a*: its two fundamental sources were the Qur'an and *sunna*; the former requiring new and clearer interpretation and the latter, expurgation of falsity in order to give both more relevance to the life of the Muslim. And by depriving the legists and their *fiqh* of a popularly attributed sacredness and insisting only on their historicity, the Brothers claimed to offer the contemporary Muslim freedom from tradition: 'the attribution of sacredness to the old stands always in the path of every renaissance';²⁴ rejection of the 'slavish worship of tradition' was necessary if Islam was to keep abreast of the times and be true to its nature of 'renewal' (*tajdid*), not 'imitation' (*taqlid*).²⁵ A *shari'a* so viewed was eminently less difficult to cope with, for

²² Samman, *IM*, pp. 86-92, esp. 86-7. Samman observes that no useful exegesis exists except those of Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida, and Ibn Kathir.

²³ We were unable to trace this Tradition. For the preceding, see Samman, *IM*, pp. 94-6. We found oral sources considerably more useful here than written ones.

²⁵ *JIM* (29 July 1954), 14.

²⁴ Samman, *IM*, p. 92.

insistence on freedom from the past was a necessary prelude to the assertion that the *shari'a* was 'general', 'flexible', 'developing,' and 'universal' in scope, that it prescribed the 'principles of action' necessary for progress and happiness in all times and places.²⁶

The first of these 'principles of action', in line with the rejection of tradition, was the 'opening of the door of *ijtihad*' for the endeavour of present-day Muslims to meet the needs of the community.²⁷ Then, of course, there were the traditionally accepted principles of 'analogy' (*qiyas*) and 'consensus' (*ijma'*) for bringing Islam abreast of the times. And to these devices were added the 'powers' given the Muslim ruler to legislate for the 'general welfare'.²⁸

Two of the most widely read of the Society's writers pay special attention to this last aspect of the issue. Sayyid Qutb argues that the 'wide powers' given to the head of state to legislate for the general welfare include: (1) the 'public interest' (*al-maslahah al-mursala*); and (2) the 'blocking of means' (*sadd al-dhara'i'*). 'Any measure which has no specific detailed authority to support it is known as a measure of public interest' and can thus be legislated. The 'blocking of means' was more complicated. 'A means is that which leads to an end and to "block a means" is to remove it. The sense of the phrase is that anything leading to a forbidden end is itself forbidden while anything leading to a desirable end is itself desirable.' Qutb explains further and concludes:

These two principles . . . both derive from a common root, that of ensuring the welfare of society. They are integrally connected with the established laws of Islam and with its general purposes. It is these two principles which can give guidance for the legislation necessary to ensure a sound form of Islamic life including comprehensive social justice in its scope.²⁹

Muhammad Ghazali, the other writer who discussed this problem, also suggested that Islam gave the ruler rights (established in

²⁶ Samman, *IM*, pp. 13-17; *RD*, p. 8; 'Awda, *IBJAWAU*, pp. 13-17; Qutb, *MIWR*, pp. 77, 108; and Ghazali, *MHN* (Faruqi tr.), pp. 18-19.

²⁷ See Samman, *IM*, pp. 92-3; Sabiq, *Fiqh al-sunna*, i. 19-20.

²⁸ Qutb, *AIFI* (Hardie tr.), p. 248; and Ghazali, *IMABSR*, pp. 104-5. *Ijma'* was more often chosen than *qiyas* by Brothers as a 'principle of movement'. We think that to the younger Brothers it had pleasing 'democratic' and thus political overtones rather than legal or religious ones.

²⁹ Qutb, *AIFI* (Hardie tr.), pp. 260-6. In a briefer treatment of this subject in a pamphlet put out by his section, Qutb lists as some of the 'new matters' which could be treated with this concept of the public interest new types of companies, contracts, and food and drink at hotels; see Qism Nashr al-Da'wa, *al-Tashri' al-Islami* (Cairo, 1953), pp. 8-9. Banna briefly mentioned the concept of the public interest in *RNURT*, pp. 18-19, but was clearly not as preoccupied as his followers with this question.

'principles upon which Islamic jurisprudence was founded') to legislate for the welfare of the community. Without going into detail, he listed the devices mentioned by Qutb and suggested numerous others; and he went further to suggest that Islam gave the ruler power 'to interfere' in some of the behaviour permitted to a Muslim by the Qur'an and Prophetic Tradition if behind the interference was a 'sound purpose', i.e. in accordance with the general welfare. An illustration of this point for Ghazali was the effort made by the former rector of the Azhar, Shaykh al-Maraghi, to mitigate divorce and polygamy even though both are 'textually guaranteed by the Qur'an'; the objections raised were not legal—for al-Maraghi, according to Ghazali, was within his rights—but social, all turning on the decadent state of Egyptian society.³⁰ This power of the ruler was discussed, incidentally, in the context of an argument for the necessity of controlling private ownership, and pointed out the importance of the secular economic and social, as well as religious, motivation for ideas of reform in Ghazali as well as in Qutb. That this was true of the articulate movement as a whole was an important factor in its success.

If all this was true, then the *shari'a* was eminently adaptable to the times. But the issue of establishing it as the fundamental code of the nation always compelled the Brothers to meet 'objections' to it which focused on certain provisions in the fields of criminal and commercial law—the much discussed punishments for theft and adultery, and the question of usury. The question of usury will be discussed later; here it is sufficient to note that the Brothers remained true to traditional thinking on the matter though with some slight qualification. The more emotional issue of the punishments of stoning for the crime of adultery and the cutting off of the hand for theft aroused less intellectual activity than extensive sensitivity. The provisions of the law could not be gainsaid, but, in the face of universal criticism, they could be, and were, 'explained'. As the Brothers saw it, these matters had simply been 'misunderstood'. On the punishment for theft, the real position of Islam is that a thief is sentenced to the ultimate punishment only if he commits his crime *after* society has provided him with all his needs; the state protects itself and its citizens from theft by assuring for every man sufficient food, clothing, and shelter; the citizen

³⁰ Ghazali (*IMABSR*, pp. 103-7) argues that the devices he mentions are sufficient to permit progress and development without denying the faith; he specifically repudiates the secularist idea—based on the Tradition which says 'You are more knowing in the affairs of your world'—that religion has no say in worldly matters. This same Tradition, used by secularists to defend the notion of the separation of church and state, was used widely by university Brothers especially as an example of one of the important and valid Traditions which would in fact pave the way for movement in the Islamic community.

does not steal, because his wants are supplied. In this light, the question of punishment for theft is academic, for as long as there is no 'truly Muslim society' there is no application of the law.³¹ This attitude was best expressed in the strongly worded condemnation of the implementation of the law of cutting off hands in Saudi Arabia 'while the rulers swim in the gold stolen from the state treasury and the wealth of the people'.³²

The explanation for the texts requiring the stoning of adulterers was less expansive but equally interpretive: since either confession of one or both of the guilty parties or the evidence of four witnesses is required for effecting the punishment, it is virtually unenforceable.³³

On a more general level, and reflecting the obvious need to recognize the existence of the regulations, these punishments were seen on the whole as 'preventive' and 'just', because they could not be applied except in a truly Islamic society. They were 'severe' because of the need to protect 'the safety, security, and stability of society'; 'fear of punishment stops the commission of crime'. As though further to meet the objections raised to this aspect of the Muslim law, Hudaybi also suggested exploring the possibilities of the concept in jurisprudence known as *ta'zir*, a non-Qur'anic tradition of punishment whose precedents were built on the discretionary rulings of judges.³⁴

Separation of Church and State

Curiously enough, on different occasions, the two leading legal minds of the Society, Hudaybi and 'Awda, observed that the law imported into Egypt and Islamic countries, apart from a few exceptions (already noted, in the fields of criminal and commercial law), 'was in agreement with the text of the *shari'a* and did not violate its general principles'.³⁵ If such was the case, why then

³¹ See *RD*, pp. 10-11; Ghazali, *IWAI*, pp. 43-4; 'Awda, *IBJAWAU*, pp. 53-4. Qutb, *MIWR*, p. 105, had another variation: if there are 'social or individual justifications which compel the act, then there is no punishment'. Banna was not so apologetic and made the traditional case in *JIM* (16 July 1946), 3. Illustrative of the increased sensitivity in the Society, when the above article was reproduced later (*MMN*, Feb.-Mar. 1954, p. 24), it contained a footnote explaining the proposition in the above terms.

³² Ghazali, *MHN* (Faruqi tr.), p. 8. See also Samman, *IM*, pp. 20-3, for criticism of the 'synthetic staidness' of the Yemen and the Hijaz and of the falsity of attempting to recreate the 'externals' of the first century.

³³ References as in n. 31, above.

³⁴ *RD*, p. 11; and Qutb, *AIFI* (Hardie tr.), p. 67; see 'Ta'zir', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, iv. 710-11.

³⁵ 'Awda, *IBJAWAU*, p. 23; *JY* (19 Nov. 1954), 7, for an expression along the same lines by Hudaybi at his trial. See also Husayni, *Ikhwan* (Beirut Eng. ed.), pp. 138, 150.

insist on the *shari'a*? The question as such was never raised by the Brothers, but their apparent answer had two related aspects: (1) dismay at the current of 'imitation' of the West by Muslims; and (2) the theological and social imperatives involved in being Muslim. Imitation of the West was one of Banna's principal anathemas:

We want to think independently, depending on . . . Islam and not upon imitation which ties us to the theories and attitudes of the West in everything. We want to be distinguished by our own values and the qualities of our life as a great . . . nation which has its past.³⁶

Another Brother notes that the West has its virtues and evils which must be seriously considered, but if imitation is founded on the basis of a sloughing off of all our valuable heritage and useful traditions in the sense that everything we have is corrupt and everything Westerners have is good, then imitation is destructive of our meaningful existence—national, historical, and religious.³⁷

Banna revealingly observes that just as the Soviets regard the basis of their state as 'communism' and Anglo-American governments base themselves on 'democracy', so every Muslim state has the right to build on 'Islamism'.³⁸

The tone of this last argument reflected the deeply felt need for cultural identity: the establishment of the *shari'a* would help preserve the 'national pride' and its 'integrity'; and it would give 'active expression to the treasured heritage that history has transmitted'.³⁹ The tradition of Islam met the spiritual and emotional as well as the legal needs of the community, a tradition which was not merely of law but of sacred law. 'Positive law' was a necessary part of any nation's legal structure, but man-made law, it was argued, merely reflects a society's development; the *shari'a*, God's law, performed the even more fundamental task of 'the organization of society and its direction'.⁴⁰ For Islam this meant primarily the total unity of man, and thus of society. The establishment of the *shari'a* would assure the primacy of God's law and thus the application of the only criterion whereby man's behaviour could become genuinely, totally moral.

For the Brothers, the argument focused on the question of the 'separation of Church and state', the ultimate question for those who would actively restore the *shari'a* as the arbiter of men's lives.

³⁶ *RDFTJ*, p. 24.

³⁸ *JIM* (5 July 1946), 2. In this respect, Ghazali, *MHN* (Faruqi tr.), p. 22, expresses his admiration for Zionists for returning to their past, unashamed of their religion, to call themselves Israel; 'What evil must we not expect to befall Islam at the hands of such adversaries.'

⁴⁰ 'Awda, *IBJAWAU*, pp. 8-18.

³⁷ *RMBBM*, p. 112.

³⁹ *RD*, p. 11.

The question was stated simply, but the answer was complex. If there was revelation which contained a law governing man's relation to man (as well as to God), how was this fact to be given expression in the modern world of secular nations and states? What was to be the relationship of the 'religious' to the 'secular' in man's life, and how would this relationship once defined, govern, if at all, men's behaviour? To formulate an answer to this question had immediate political implications, for this could be a way of setting aside the objections to this 'religious' organization's involvement in 'politics'. But even more fundamental was the ideological issue for Islam in the twentieth century: for to insist on the *shari'a* was to insist on a complex of corollaries which appeared, even in terms of Egypt, anachronistic; but to insist on less would have been to repudiate what was regarded as the 'essence' of Islam.

The question of 'separation of Church and state' always raised the issue of 'theocracy'; could a state, organized and directed by revelation, escape being an 'ecclesiastical tyranny'? The Brothers' answers to this question revolved around two points. First, there is no 'religious class' in Islam, and because this is so there can be no fear of theocracy as it was known to 'Christian Europe'. Banna put it another way: 'Men of religion are different from the religion itself.' And in the same vein, Qutb argues: 'The rule of Islam would not be effected because a religious class was in power—if Islam recognized a religious class—but rather because Islamic law would be established.'⁴¹

The second point was a simple and non-traditional political one: in Islamic political organization, authority to rule derives from men, not God; the ruler receives this authority from 'the people', who grant it because he will obey the law. The concept of 'consultation' (*shura*) in Islam assures human control of human affairs within the bounds of the law.⁴²

Apart from the political aspect of theocracy, the very concept of the 'separation' of religion from state—of the *din* from the *dawla*—was inadmissible. The word 'Islam' was not synonymous with 'religion'. Rather, 'Islam' was a word including in its total meaning religion, politics, economics, society, etc. In other terms, *dawla* is not the equal or opposite of *din*; both are expressions of Islam.⁴³ But since the issue was most often discussed in the

⁴¹ Ghazali, *MHN* (Faruqi tr.), p. 7; *RTH*: NN, pp. 108-9; Qutb, *MIWR*, p. 91.

⁴² Qutb, *AIFI* (Hardie tr.), pp. 87-99; 'Awda, *IWAS*, pp. 77-80.

⁴³ Qutb, *DI*, pp. 202-3, argues the existence of the Society as proof of this point: the Muslim Brothers are not a 'religious society' in the Western sense of the word.

Western terms of church and state—God and Caesar, it was answered in those terms. It is not of our making, Banna argued that politics is a part of religion, that Islam encompasses the ruler and the ruled. Thus there is not in its teachings a rendering to Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God that which is God's. Rather . . . Caesar and what belongs to Caesar is for God Almighty alone.

In another place, he adds:

there is no authority in Islam except the authority of the state which protects the teachings of Islam and guides the nations to the fruits of both religion and the world . . . Islam does not recognize the conflict which occurred in Europe between the spiritual and temporal [powers] . . . between the Church and the state . . .⁴⁴

Two reasons for this situation in the West were described by Qutb: (1) the differing circumstances of origin—Christianity appeared on the scene when Roman law and custom were already firmly established; (2) the difference in intent—Christ 'came to preach only spiritual purity, mercy, kindness, tolerance, chastity, and obedience'. Christianity thus developed as a religion primarily concerned with man's relation to God. Relations between men, and between man and the state, were left to temporal law. Islam, on the other hand, in the circumstances of its origin could and did command a 'unity of life'; to impose upon Islam the Christian separation of loyalties was to deny it its essential meaning and very existence.⁴⁵

This belief was pursued to its conclusion: 'Rule is in the nature of Islam', for if the Qur'an gives a law, it also requires a state to enforce the law.⁴⁶ There are certain duties incumbent on Muslims which they cannot pursue individually; the state is necessary to facilitate these duties. 'Where Islam is dispossessed of power, the greater part of its teachings remain as mere ink on paper.' Moreover, besides being necessary for the fulfilment of individual duties, the state was necessary to 'protect' Islam.

Faith should not be left without a political stronghold to give it protection, . . . and to champion the cause of believers everywhere. . . . Seldom, if ever, has Islam needed the state more than today—not merely because the state is an integral part of it, but also because Islam itself is threatened with extinction in a world where only the strong can survive.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *Mudh.*, pp. 102-3; and *JIM* (12 May 1946), 1, 4. For a similar position taken by Shaykh Maraghi, former rector of the Azhar, see Gardet, *La Cité musulmane*, p. 25.

⁴⁵ Qutb, *AIFI* (Hardie tr.), pp. 2-4, 7-8; 'Awda, *IWAQ*, pp. 104-7.

⁴⁶ 'Awda, *IWAQ*, pp. 55-63.

⁴⁷ Ghazali, *MHN* (Faruqi tr.), p. 26, 14-15.

That there was felt to be a political as well as religious need for the state requires no emphasizing but the strength of the purely ideological issue should not thereby be minimized. Every aspect of the 'renaissance' of Islam in the twentieth century focused on this central problem of the *shari'a* and its corollary, the 'unity of life'. As already suggested, for the Brothers to deny the problem was to deny the essential meaning of ideal Islam; if history had only briefly shown the ideal in practice, this was the fault of man, not of God's work. It was incumbent upon Muslims to restore the community which God had intended, to redeem their history.⁴⁸

THE ISLAMIC STATE

The *shari'a* was the distinguishing characteristic of the 'Islamic order'; within this order would exist the 'Islamic state'. We have already indicated our belief, generated in part by the paucity of 'official' organization literature about it, that the precise nature of a Muslim state was not a burning question. The absence of material on the subject also reflected the absence of thought and imprecision in the Society's ideology, a fact which became apparent after Banna's death. With the loss of his charisma, it became necessary to attempt to formulate, in its fullest implications, the characteristic outward forms of a Muslim state. Consistent with the other areas of the Society's thought, the attempts were confined to generalities which would 'unite the words and hearts of men'. But generalities were also used because history had not bequeathed to Muslims an immediately discernible theoretical legacy. Qutb was one of the few who recognized this: 'When we come to discuss political and economic theory from the practical point of view of the state, we find that the course of history shows an exemplary failure in the life of Islam.'⁴⁹ Thus, with only the short period of the orthodox caliphate as an acceptable source of example, would-be theoreticians were compelled to emphasize the 'principles' which would guide an Islamic state; the 'specifics' would be left to 'time, place and the needs of the people'.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Smith, 'Trends in Muslim Thought', 321-2; and the same author's sensitive study, *Islam in Modern History*, ch. 1.

⁴⁹ *AIFI* (Hardie tr.), p. 175.

⁵⁰ On no other issue were Brothers with whom we talked less certain. The above formulation was widely used, and reflected in our mind, the general acceptance of the political and legal development of modern Egypt. It could also be argued further that indifference to the forms of the Muslim state inspired the generalities and uncertainties. Professor R. Bayly Winder has suggested, quite correctly, that this condition may also have resulted from historical indifference to political forms.

Political Organization

The political structure of the Islamic state was to be bound by three principles: (1) the Qur'an is the fundamental constitution; (2) government operates on the concept of consultation (*shura*); (3) the executive ruler is bound by the teachings of Islam and the will of the people. Founded on these three principles, the Islamic state would have a just and efficient government, be consistent with the traditions of the society, and be capable of securing the general welfare. The details of organization would follow from these principles.⁵¹

The name given to the executive in the Islamic state would be unimportant. *Khalifa*, *imam*, king, governor (*hakim*)—these and any other words used in the Qur'an are acceptable, for the idea of 'ruler' principally refers to the idea of 'leadership' (*ri'asa*) in its 'general meaning' and indicates no 'specific system' of government. If he governs with 'obedience to the commands of God' and with respect for the limitations placed on him by the concept of 'consultation', then the name given him is a matter of indifference; without these conditions, whatever Islamic name be given him, the system is not Islamic.

There were two acceptable types of central authority, Banna felt: (1) on the British pattern, 'ministerial' or 'delegated' (*tafwid*) authority; (2) on the American pattern, 'executive' (*tanfidh*) authority. Banna and most of his followers seemed to incline to the latter form, a fact clearly related to the revulsion from irresponsible ministerial government in Egypt.

Whatever the form of rulership, its occupant must have certain qualities: he must be Muslim, male, adult, sane of mind, and healthy in body; he must be knowledgeable in Muslim jurisprudence, just, pious, and virtuous; and he must be capable of leadership. He need not be—contrary to the traditional view—a member of the Quraysh. Unless he resigns or is removed for legal, moral, or physical reasons, his tenure may be for life; this decision is left for 'the nation' (*al-umma*) to make as it sees fit.

'The nation', 'the people', in fact, are the source of all the ruler's authority: 'The nation alone is the source of power; bowing to its will is a religious obligation.' The ruler has no legal existence and

⁵¹ 'Awda, *IWAS* is the most detailed and 'original' of the very few works available on this subject. Our outline of the political aspects of the Muslim state is based largely on this work, which has been summarized and in part translated by F. Bertier, 'L'idéologie politique des Frères musulmans', *Temps modernes*, 8th yr. (Sept. 1952), 540-6. Bertier makes the point (p. 543) that 'Awda was trained in French law. For the very limited thoughts of Banna on this question, see *RMFDNI*, pp. 40-4, and *RD*, p. 8. *MDA*, 7, 21 June 1955, contains important statements on this question of political organization.

deserves no loyalty except as 'he reflects the spirit of the society and is in harmony with its goals'.⁵² Banna described the relationship of ruler and ruled as a 'social contract' (*'aqd ijtima'i*) in which the ruler is defined as a 'trustee' (*'amil*) and 'agent' (*ajir*). This view immediately and automatically excludes the possibility of hereditary leadership; religious texts and historical experience from the time of the Orthodox caliphs repudiate this possibility.⁵³ Since the ruler is the 'agent contracted for' by the nation, he is 'elected' by it. The Qur'an designated no specific ways of holding elections. Hudaybi believed they could be held in any way seen fit by the people concerned, perhaps even 'directly by the people'.⁵⁴ 'Awda suggested that it could be done by *ahl al-shura* (see below, pp. 247-8) in three stages: (1) 'nomination', either by the previous ruler or by one of the *ahl al-shura*; (2) 'selection and acceptance' by the *ahl al-shura*; and (3) *bay'a* (oath of loyalty), during which the ruler swears to govern 'by the Book and *sunna* and in truth and justice', and the *ahl al-shura* swear to obey him as long as he rules by God's laws. The people of the nation are then bound by the oath sworn in their name by their 'representatives'. A government established 'by force' should not command the loyalties of the people, for the ruler will have violated the principle—symbolized in his selection by the *ahl al-shura*—that 'the authority of the ruler must come from the nation'.⁵⁵

The ruler, as the chosen agent of the people, is responsible to them for all his acts—political, civil, or criminal; to his person attaches no special privilege, and if necessary he is subject to trial by ordinary courts. His chief function is the establishment and maintenance of Islam and the execution of its laws, a duty which automatically ensures the general welfare. Obedience derives from the execution of the law—'that is the contract with the ruler'; failure to do so frees the nation from loyalty to him. If he deviates from his assigned tasks, he must be 'warned', 'guided', and then removed.

The practice of 'consultation' (*shura*) is a mandatory and fundamental part of the Islamic state: 'He [God] commanded consultation among themselves' (Qur'an 42: 38). The institution whereby consultation operates is the *ahl al-shura* (or *ahl al-hall wa'l-'aqd*);

⁵² Cf. Ghazali, *IIS*, pp. 52-4, 162-3.

⁵³ Qutb, *AIFI* (Hardie tr.), pp. 176-83; 'Awda, *IWAS*, p. 73; Ghazali, *IIS*, pp. 180-7; and *FMD*, pp. 109-28 for a statement by Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib on the subject. It was this position which *inter alia* set Faruq in opposition to the Society and won the enmity of the then king of Saudi Arabia, Ibn Sa'ud.

⁵⁴ *MMN*, iii/1 (Nov. 1953), 7.

⁵⁵ It is one of the many ironies of this Society's history that the author of that thought, 'Awda, died on the gallows in 1954 for his alleged role in a plot to overthrow the regime by violence.

as representative of the people, this body commands the obedience of both ruler and ruled; in it lies the real power in the state, for it represents the real source of power, the nation. Since its members represent the people, they too, would be 'elected'; the question of how, and of their numbers, is a 'secondary' matter not defined by Islam and therefore left to the circumstances of each age and place. Whatever procedures are used for elections, they must be 'universal' in scope, 'reaching the opinion of all' so that the nation is truly reflected. The system used by no means necessarily involves the use of political parties.⁵⁶

Who would be eligible for election to the *ahl al-shura*? Banna felt that it should consist of two types of people: (1) 'legists', with a background of 'general knowledge'; and (2) men practised in leadership—heads of families, tribes, and other organized groups. Elections are only desirable if they lead to the selection of such people.⁵⁷ 'Awda was only slightly less specific: the *ahl al-shura* would comprise people most of whom would be knowledgeable in the law; the demands of the modern scientific world would make desirable the addition of specialists and technicians, but the final word would rest with the legists. Precise arrangements on this matter could be left to time and place.

As the 'true rulers of the Islamic state', the *ahl al-shura* would have the right to expect all matters to be submitted to them for deliberation and decision. A majority opinion would be required for a decision; after a period of free expression and debate on any issue, the minority should support the majority decision; this is the valid procedure because the Prophet has already said 'My community cannot agree on error'. In its deliberations the body may concern itself with every matter but two; (1) 'the facts of the sciences'; and (2) 'the principles of religion'. In other words, the principle of *shura* applies everywhere except for certain matters which 'admit only a single view'.⁵⁸

There are five 'powers' in the Islamic state; executive power belongs to the ruler alone; legislative power is shared between the ruler and *ahl al-shura*; judicial power is exercised by judges nominated by the ruler who, because of their role as interpreters of the law are 'absolutely independent'; financial power by officials appointed by the ruler but responsible to the community; and the power of 'control and reform' belongs to the community at large in the persons of the *ahl al-shura*.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Cf. Qutb, *MIWR*, pp. 92-9.

⁵⁷ *RMFDNI*, pp. 60-1.

⁵⁸ This concept was also used in a discussion of Banna's role as leader of the Society; see e.g. Hajjaji, *IMAM*, ii. 62.

⁵⁹ Besides 'Awda, see Ramadan, *MT*, p. 66.

The Islamic state thus outlined would be unique; as already noted, it would not be a theocracy because the authority of the ruler derives from men not God; it would not be a dictatorship because the ruled may remove their ruler if he breaks his contract; and it would not be a monarchy because the ruler has no hereditary authority.

The individual in such a state has a set of guaranteed rights. From the time of its revelation, Islam has contained guarantees for the protection of the 'personal rights'⁶⁰ of all individuals encompassed by it. These rights were designed 'to raise the standards of individuals, permit their participation in activities which would serve the welfare of society, safeguard human dignity, nurture individual talents, and aid in the exploitation of their physical and intellectual resources'. These rights are inclusive. *Equality* is guaranteed 'absolutely' by the revelation and the tradition of Islam. No individual, group, race, or colour is superior to another. Muslim and non-Muslim share equally in rights, duties, and responsibilities. Muslim and *dhimmi* are equal in all respects except those relating to 'faith'; in those areas the *dhimmi* is governed by his own law.

Freedom in all its aspects is clearly proclaimed by Islam—freedom of thought, of worship, of expression, of education, and of possession. *Freedom of thought*: Islam encourages man to think freely and clearly, liberated from 'fear, superstition, and imitation', and to accept nothing 'which is not acceptable to reason'; Islam frowns on the man who 'abrogates his reason and sets aside thought'. *Freedom of worship*: 'Islam's was the first law which permitted freedom of worship; in accordance with the *shari'a*, each man may accept the faith he wishes and no one can compel him to leave his faith for another; in the face of 'error', one may only persuade or advise. 'There is no compulsion in religion' (Qur'an 2: 256). *Freedom of expression*: This is not only a right but a duty for every Muslim; each person must 'say what he believes to be the truth, and defend this belief with tongue and pen'. He may speak on all matters pertaining to morals, the general welfare, and the 'general system', subject only to the restriction that what is said should not violate 'the text or spirit of the *shari'a*' and should be devoid of 'evil intent and hostility'. Within these limits, freedom of expression is 'beneficial to individuals and the nation, leads to the growth of brotherhood and respect between individuals and between groups, unites the people in truth, creates a state of constant co-operation, and limits personal and factional disputation'. *Freedom of education*: Islam not only decreed the right to education

⁶⁰ See 'Awda, *IWAS*, pp. 195-201 for what follows.

but made it a 'religious obligation'. Both God and the Prophet elevate learning to a divine level; it is, indeed, 'the path to God'. The provision of education so defined is an obligation of the Muslim state. *Freedom of possession*: Islam has decreed that a man may own what pleases him, within the limits set by the law—that property be owned in proportion to its usefulness (without excessive deprivation or luxury), and that excessive wealth be distributed according to Islamic law.

Economic Organization

Within the framework of political organization so conceived, the individual was to be a full participant in the political life of the community and was to have a share in the decisions which would affect his own life. That much of this political thinking was intimately related to political frustration in Egypt seems obvious. The same might be said of the economic thought of the Society, which had much the same blend of pragmatic response to the actual world and concern with issues of ideological import for twentieth-century Islam.

Banna, perhaps more than his followers, was single-minded about the 'moral' dimensions of economic behaviour, an approach admittedly inspired by the Muslim view of the indivisibility of man's morality. It was in this framework also that the concept of 'social justice' was applied: economics without reference to 'social justice and the principles of morality' violated the fundamental teachings of God. This moralistic approach was matched by other constants in Banna's economic thinking. His concern with 'unity' in the nation led to a strong affirmation of Islam's revulsion from 'economic class conflict'. And the problem of 'foreign economic control' in Egypt led him to emphasize the 'duty' of Muslims to build a strong 'national economy'. These points were the essentials of the 'Islamic economic system' as discerned by Banna and elaborated upon by his followers, who placed them in a more coherent if still vague relationship with one another and with other economic issues.⁶¹

As in all other human affairs, Islam confines itself, in the area of economic thought, to the establishment of 'general principles'. Specific economic institutions 'develop with every age and change with the progress of sciences and the ways of life'. Thus Islam leaves it to 'human thought' to provide 'what is needed for the realization of a people's interests within the framework of its general legislation'. This adaptability to all time and place is a

⁶¹ See the outline in *RMFDNI*, pp. 74–82, reproduced in *MDA* (24 Feb. 1953), 7.

fundamental, then, of Islamic economic theory. It is matched in importance only by the characteristic which makes the Islamic economic system unique in human history; the moral imperative which guides it and the social justice which is its goal. 'Islam does not treat economic activity independently of its moral principles.' The life of man is 'a spiritual and material unity', a view in direct opposition to the image of the 'economic man' held by 'the Western doctors of economics'. In this respect, Islam is consistent with the latest scientific analysis of the economic behaviour of men in terms of 'psychological motivations'; 'there is no measure for them in the material world'.⁶²

The corollary, or end, of moralistic economic behaviour is social justice—the important foundation of the Islamic state.⁶³ Social justice in Islam derives from two of its principles: 'the absolute, just, and coherent unity of existence; and the general, mutual responsibility of individuals and societies'. Its most fundamental quality is that it is

a comprehensive social justice, and not merely an economic justice; that is to say, it embraces all sides of life and all aspects of freedom. It is concerned alike with the mind and the body, with the heart and conscience. The values with which this justice deals are not only economic values, nor are they merely material values in general; rather they are a mixture of moral and spiritual values together. Christianity looks at man only from the standpoint of his spiritual desires and seeks to crush down the human instincts in order to encourage those desires. On the other hand, communism looks at man only from the standpoint of his material needs; it looks not only at human nature but also at the world and at life from a purely material point of view. But Islam looks upon man as forming a unity whose spiritual desires cannot be separated from his bodily appetites and whose moral needs cannot be divorced from his material needs. . . . In this fact lies the main divergence between communism, Christianity, and Islam.⁶⁴

The principles of economic theory are placed in this setting.⁶⁵

Property. All 'wealth' (*mal*) belongs to society and ultimately to God. Man merely utilizes it, within the limits of the law, in the role of 'steward'. The acquisition of wealth is possible only

⁶² Ramadan, *MT*, pp. 42–3.

⁶³ We will follow here the best-known work on this subject, Qutb, *AIFI*. See also the less well-known works of Ghazali, *IMI* and *IMABSR*.

⁶⁴ Qutb, *AIFI* (Hardie tr.), pp. 24, 25, 100.

⁶⁵ For a short statement, see Ramadan, *MT*, pp. 44–51. Like the Brothers, we have confined ourselves to general propositions. Especially in this area, the bulk of writing of the Brothers was vague and largely uninformed. We were told in mid-1954 that the committee for economics in the headquarters was charged with the responsibility of harmonizing 'the views of Islam and the scholars [*ulama*]' of economics'. This development was another sign, in this period, of dissatisfaction with the slogans which had carried the Society so far.

through 'work of any kind or variety'. Those enumerated by Islam include hunting, fishing, mining, raiding, working for others for a wage, and the like. All ultimately point to the fact that 'labour' is the only genuine foundation for possession. This means, in Islam, that there are no class distinctions based on material possession; whatever differences exist between men are of a mental and spiritual nature.

Every person has the right to private ownership. But unlike capitalism, which defends this absolutely (thus inspiring chaos), and communism, which denies it absolutely (thus restricting individual freedom), Islam recognizes the principle of possession but hedges it with controls in accordance with its primary concern 'the general welfare'.⁶⁶ 'Islam . . . ratifies that right of private property but along with it, it ratifies other principles which almost makes it theoretical rather than practical.'⁶⁷ For the Brothers the historical figure symbolizing these views was the Prophetic Companion, abu Dharr. Although he was viewed by the 'official 'ulama' (the Azhar) as a 'communist', the Brothers saw his teaching as a 'reaction', 'in the true spirit of Islam', to the corruption of Islam in his day.⁶⁸

Inheritance procedures in Islam are a device for controlling large properties and the monopolization of wealth; they have been formulated with the express purpose of doing justice to all the heirs. The regulations surrounding inheritance are only part of the large scheme of control over the augmentation of wealth. Men may increase their possessions, but only within legal bounds. Forbidden practices for the accretion of wealth include *dishonesty*, *monopoly*, and *usury*.

Dishonest practices not only 'defile the conscience' but they are contrary to the principle of acquisition of wealth by work. Similarly monopolistic practices, especially in the area of 'necessities of life', are forbidden as an abhorrent and illegal method of gain. Usury, a sin comparable to 'thirty-six acts of adultery', is absolutely condemned. Besides being harmful to men's human relations, usury in the present age leads to the 'amassing of a vast amount of capital wealth which does not depend on effort or labour'. This fact leads to two 'social ills': the growth of 'unlimited fortunes'; and the 'division of society into two classes'.

To those who need it, money should be loaned 'freely'. Loans 'to encourage production' are made on the principle that 'the profit

⁶⁶ Ghazali, *IMABSR*, pp. 96-102. In a later chapter, pp. 142-7, Ghazali takes a critical view of the former mufti of Egypt, Shaykh Muhammad Hasanayn Makhluf, for rejecting the view of Islam as a 'socialistic religion' and for making an unwarranted defence of 'capitalism' in Egypt.

⁶⁷ Qutb, *AIFI* (Hardie tr.), pp. 104-16.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 214-16.

is made rather by the effort expended than by the money borrowed, for money cannot make profits except by effort', and it is that effort which is the important thing in the eyes of Islam. In all loans it is incumbent on the creditor to be 'indulgent' if the debtor is in 'adverse circumstances'; it is equally incumbent on the debtor 'to spare no effort to pay back his debt'. In these terms the financial problems of a Muslim community would be negligible. And Islam would not be out of harmony with the times, for the Soviet Union has made the abolition of usury a cardinal point in its doctrine.⁶⁹

Zakat is 'the outstanding social pillar of Islam' and 'the most essential part of the economic theory of Islam'. 'Payment of the poor tax is a duty.' Because Islam disapproves both of 'people being in poverty or need' and of 'the existence of class distinctions', it necessitates the payment of the tax on the basis of 'a statutory level of property'. The principle of *zakat*, along with the general powers given to the head of the state 'to assign levies on capital—that is to say, forced contributions from capital at a reasonable rate'—provide the state with adequate means for maintaining the welfare of all in the community and the stability of society.⁷⁰

If 'labour' is the foundation of property, then it is 'a fundamental economic and social value'. Because of this, Islam invests labour with 'sacredness' and 'dignity'. Consequently, Islam has established certain rights and duties for the worker. His relationship with his employer is governed by the principle governing all human relations—'a mutuality of duties and rights' based on mutual 'respect and sympathy' and ordered by the 'spirit of brotherhood'. He has the right to a healthy and clean home, wages adequate to provide the needs of life and 'punctually' paid, and limited hours of work. The worker is forbidden to 'allocate any part of his wages' to his leaders. In return for these rights he shall 'perform his work fully and faithfully', thus respecting the rights of management and fulfilling his own responsibilities.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Qutb, *AIFI* (Hardie tr.), pp. 116-24; Ghazali, *IMI*, pp. 111-21, 134-40. Ghazali, like most other Brothers, does not go much further than stating the illegality of usury. Qutb, *AIFI* (Hardie tr.), pp. 272-5, has a suggestion for the problem of capital development in the form of 'share-issuing companies' which are permitted by Islam. The issue was a lively one in the Society but more effort was expended in justifying the injunction because it was Islamic than in offering proposals to alter the world-wide use of interest.

⁷⁰ Qutb, *AIFI* (Hardie tr.), pp. 133-8, 221-5, 267-76; Qutb, *MIWR*, pp. 51-4, is at particular pains to deny that the emphasis on *zakat* was essentially charity, a criticism very often made of this aspect of the Society's thinking.

⁷¹ See Ghazali, *IMI*, pp. 142-59; and *JIM* (20 June 1946), 3. For this view, the Society won the wrath of communist and other radical groups in Egypt and confirmed the view of those groups (already noted) that its labour activities were designed to further the interests of capital and the ruling classes. The earlier

Social Organization

'The foundation of every healthy society is the virtuous individual.' For this reason Islam paid heed to the individual's needs for education, made individuals 'responsible for themselves before God', made them responsible for the 'liberation of the soul from superstition and depravity', and taught the preservation of the delicate balance between 'the demands of the body and the demands of the spirit'. The renaissance of the nation and the successful preservation of society is impossible without a fundamental concern for the state of the individual.⁷²

If the family is the cornerstone of the social structure, its salvation lies in the salvation of the individual; and the nation can be saved only if the family is; for the nation's values and morals are born and nurtured in the bosom of the family. Islam has structured the family relationship to assure a tranquil and stable society, but this has been misunderstood, says Ghazali, by Westerners and Easterners alike.

Some of us constrain woman with the traditions of the East; others give the licence of the West. On one side it is narrow-mindedness and chains; on the other, absolute freedom and libertinage. Both factions use the holy books of Islam for support and authority. In truth, Islam is far from either side. . . .

The most important Oriental traditions . . . can be summarized as follows:

- (1) Because of her physical constitution, woman occupies an inferior position. Man is unconditionally superior.
- (2) Woman's *raison d'être* is limited to sensual pleasure and reproduction. Hence, her rights and duties should not transcend the emotional and intellectual scope of this *raison d'être*.
- (3) The standard of woman's personality and moral worth shall be her chastity alone, whereas in the case of man, the standard shall include other and more important values.

These three traditional principles give rise to a whole system of detailed manners and customs to which woman is inevitably and ruthlessly subjected. The tragedy of this system is that its adherents think it is part and parcel of Islam itself.

view of the Society was expressed in lectures given by Banna to union groups in which he taught workers their duties towards 'God, himself, and the owner of the plant'; see *JIM* (24 Aug. 1946), 5. While obedience to the principle of 'mutuality' in labour-management relations continued to prevail, the shift leftward in a widely read Qutb was very real. For a more comprehensive statement of the question of labour in Islam, see Jamal al-Din al-Ayyad, *Nuzum al-'amal fi'l-Islam* (1952). Both he and Ghazali make extensive use of the economic studies of Rashid al-Barrawi, regarded in some circles in Egypt as 'liberal' in his economic views.

⁷² Ramadan, *MT*, pp. 30, 31-2.

The women's organizations that presumably are opposed by Islam are really opposed by these traditions which they mistake as being those of Islam.

On the other hand, the Western traditions are:

- (1) Absolute equality of men and women in everything.
- (2) The foundation of society upon the free and complete association of the sexes.
- (3) The consideration of the sexual life as something absolutely private and subject to the person's own free choice and natural inclinations.

These Western traditions have many admirers among us who enthusiastically spread them about. Our society is gradually being dragged down by them.

Islam . . . should be . . . distinguished from both Oriental and Western nonsense.⁷³

In the eyes of Islam women are the equals of men. Islam resisted the early tribal notion that 'a girl child was a disaster', and raised her status, giving her, *inter alia*, rights of inheritance, possession, and administration of property; she also has the right to reject or accept a husband.⁷⁴ Unlike the Western world, Islam never debated the existence of a soul in women. What discrimination exists (in inheritance, legal hearings, prayer) is a function of the greater responsibility devolving on men and of the difference in the mental and emotional attributes of the sexes. Because mental power and emotional stability belong in larger measure to men, they are placed in a position of 'leadership'—a fact confirmed by history—and thus, 'one step' above women. This is a leadership of 'responsibility' and 'experience'—his are greater—and is not a priority of maleness over femaleness. Thus the only qualification to equality between male and female is a consequence of the 'practical' needs of living; this 'limited superiority', one based on larger responsibility, is 'purely a dictate of worldly efficiency'. This does not preclude, e.g. in the family, that husband and wife 'work together' in their respective areas, sharing and consulting on joint problems 'to fulfill the mission of life'.

⁷³ Ghazali, *MHN* (Faruqi tr.), pp. 106-7.

⁷⁴ Qutb, *AIFI* (Hardie tr.), pp. 51-2. In this section on the family and women we follow primarily *RMBBM*, *passim*. This *risala* was written by al-Bahi al-Khuli, an old and respected member of the Society, and published in 1953 as a commission by the Society with a preface by Hudaybi recommending its contents to members. Its appearance reflected the importance the new leadership attached to classifying the organization's social attitudes; it also reflected pressure from within the organization for comprehensible guidance on the perplexing problems of adolescence, sex, and marriage in a changing society. The result is an 'official' manual for the happy life, both frank and comprehensive. See also Ghazali, *MHN* (Faruqi tr.), pp. 108-28; Ramadan, *MT*, pp. 32-4; Qutb, *MIWR*, p. 111.

Women's 'rights' in society are well defined; they create a role contrary to that of woman's role in the West where she has an open invitation to 'licence and debauchery'. The West has surpassed Islam in its treatment of woman only in granting her 'freedom of recklessness'. Islam, on the other hand, has granted woman her 'rights', consistently with the axiom that the natural place for the mission of women is in the home.

The mixing of the sexes should be controlled and confined to 'necessity' and for 'logical reasons'.⁷⁵ Conversation and discussion are appropriate occasions for this. In the home, the woman must never be alone with any man other than her husband; she may go out to visit, to lectures, to prayers, or to the market; she should have holidays and go sightseeing; in getting from one place to another she should walk if possible, take a taxi if the distance is far and money is available, and use public transport only when necessary. Husbands who do not take their wives out, or if they do, permit a wife to walk behind for fear of being shamed, show a 'disgraceful ignorance' of the teachings of Islam.

The woman who leaves her home should be 'decently dressed'. 'The clothes of which virtue approves are well known. They mirror the moral state, dignity, self-respect of the person who wears them. Categorically, Islam does not tolerate the uncovering of arms, legs, and breast, or the wearing of transparent or semi-transparent clothes.' The veil has not been commanded by Islam although recommended by some Traditions and jurists in order 'to keep women from undue interference and avoid the possibility of temptation'. 'We do not think this is a very efficient means of precaution and we consider that Muslims have adopted it in a time of weakness and indecision. Training men and women for virtue requires a more comprehensive and positive programme.'⁷⁶

Properly dressed, a woman may pursue her 'lawful' interests outside the home. This must include education and may include gainful employment. Education is not only desirable but necessary in the same measure for women as for men, the training should be addressed to preparing the woman for her primary function in life as wife and mother. Girls may study such things as agriculture, law, chemistry, and engineering, but in so doing they sacrifice some of their 'femininity' and 'sensitivity'. Medicine and teaching are desirable objectives for women students. No subject of study is forbidden to women by Islam, but the 'welfare' of society poses

⁷⁵ Qutb, *SAWI*, pp. 57-60, accepts as an ideal the notion of mixing the sexes but, taking the United States as an example and discussing divorce and infidelity, he insists that the concept is impracticable because of 'the nature of man and woman'.

⁷⁶ Ghazali, *MHN* (Faruqi tr.), pp. 117 ff.

questions about absolute freedom of selection and suggests specialization in those fields of endeavour which accord with the character and role of women in society. As to the question of accommodation at the university, there would be no harm in co-education were Islamic values understood; until they are, there should be special universities or special classes for women.⁷⁷

Islam does not prohibit a woman from being 'a merchant or a doctor or a lawyer' or anything else which will bring lawful gain, provided it is necessary, that it be done in 'noble surroundings', and that the woman be rigorously decorous in behaviour and dress. Even under these conditions, however, the desirability of such a goal for women is questionable. 'True female progress' is not measured solely by a woman's right to become a merchant, doctor, or lawyer. Rather, the more genuine progress is in the development of her 'humanity': 'the education of her mind, the elevation of her character, and the purification of her heart and nature.'⁷⁸ Her Western model is devoid of 'honour and dignity'. The West has capitalized on woman as female; their beauty and femaleness have become primary elements in the market-place, 'instruments' of 'increased profits'. The prominent place of 'the beautiful secretary', 'the cashier hostess' (*sic*), 'the salesgirl', 'the model' in advertisements is an instance of 'the employment of the sex instinct by the tycoons and potentates of the merchant world'.⁷⁹

Woman's real job is still the home and family: she creates 'for the son his manhood'; she is 'the spiritual source of love and kindness for her husband'; she alone creates 'the future of the nation'. These are the most noble of tasks. 'Religion does not forbid woman to work, but it does forbid her to flee from her natural place without excuse'.⁸⁰

The same propositions apply to women's 'political rights' with added emphasis on the time dimension: 'in the present political, social, and legislative circumstances', political rights for women, recognized by Islam, should be left in abeyance until both men and women are more educated—intellectually and spiritually—and more faithful adherents of the principles and practices of the faith. Before granting political rights to women, society should be purged of its corruption; when the community begins to abide by 'religion

⁷⁷ Hudaybi in *MMR* (27 Nov. 1953), 25. See also Ghazali, *MHN* (Faruqi tr.), 125-8.

⁷⁸ *RMBBM*, p. 122.

⁷⁹ Qutb, *AIFI* (Hardie tr.), pp. 52-4.

⁸⁰ *RMBBM*, p. 127, and pp. 128-35 for similar observations about government and military service. In a by-the-way to this problem, and on another level, it was suggested (see Banna in *JIM* (8 Aug. 1946), 3) that concern about the 'right' of women to work be set aside until the problem of unemployment for family men be solved.

and reason', the way will have been prepared for the creation of the 'noble society' in which women will exercise their political rights.

The question of women's rights was one more and more frequently put to the spokesmen of the Society in its later years. Hudaybi, on a number of occasions, summed up these views in a way that was not possible for many members of the Society:

The woman's natural place is in the home, but if she finds that after doing her duty in the home she has time, she can use part of it in the service of society, on condition that this is done within the legal limits which preserve her dignity and morality. I remember I left my daughters freedom to choose the kind of education which fitted them. The elder entered the faculty of medicine, is now a doctor and practises professionally. The second is a graduate of the faculty of science and is now a teacher in the faculty. Both are married and I hope that they have found harmony between their homes and jobs.⁸¹

The question of women's rights in Islam was, of course, intimately bound up with the two fundamental issues of *polygamy* and *divorce*. The prevailing view in the Society was the modernist, apologetic one which held that the Islamic attitude to the institution of polygamy was an historic advance over prior social practices, in that it limited men to four wives. But this limitation was even further qualified so as to make its literal application difficult. The warning that a man must be equal in treatment to all wives (Qur'an 3: 4) or confine himself to one is a virtual prohibition because it is impossible of fulfilment. Besides, the entire complex of problems arising from multiple wives and competing families in effect violates the more basic directives of Islam about marriage as an act of love, kindness, and mercy. The principle was preserved, however because of the times when 'necessity' demands its practice. These occasions are clear: when the wife is sterile; when the wife is chronically ill, in which case it would be better to marry again in 'purity and chastity' than to seek out a prostitute or commit adultery as is done in the Western world; and when the woman is 'unique', i.e. has a 'negative nature which does not harmonize with men and does not respond to the desires of her mate'. To these personal cases would be added the possibility of

⁸¹ *MMR* (25 July 1952), 13. See also *MMR* (27 Nov. 1953), 25; *MDA* (29 Apr. 1953), 3. See *Jf* (18 Mar. 1954) 1, for a much more alarmed Azhar view of female political activity on the occasion of a hunger strike of women in March 1954. 'Awda, on the other hand, was closer to the Azhar. While serving on the 'committee of rights and general freedoms' as a representative of the Society in the constitutional committee set up by the RCC in 1953 he fought against political rights for women. When asked why, he defended his position in terms of male precedence in political leadership. Admitting for argument the right of women to vote—he did not accept it as a given in Islam—he felt it could serve no useful purpose. See *MDA* (1 Sept. 1953), 3; (24 Nov. 1953), 6.

other kinds of needs: economic need, 'as in underpopulated parts of the countryside' where extra 'working hands' are needed; social and moral needs, in the case of the decimation of male populations and the problems arising therefrom ('as in Germany after World War I'). The real objection to polygamy is not the principle but the abuse of the spirit in which it was intended by its use as a device of 'lust' and 'sin'. The answer is not the abolition of the principle, which can and does have its function, but the education and training of the people in the truths of the faith. The problem will 'solve itself by itself'; as in urban centres, polygamy will continue to decrease until it is confined to the real 'area of need'.

'Divorce is the most hateful to God of the lawful things.' This Prophetic Tradition, according to the Brothers, should be the guide to Muslims on this problem. The answer to its evil consequences is a more profound dedication to the principles of the faith and a more sincere application of the devices provided by Islam for the settlement of marital disputes. Divorce is not mentioned in the Qur'an as a final solution of marriage disputes—even if the man 'hates' his wife. This is consistent with the sacredness with which Islam has invested the marriage bond. Woman is helpless before the constant threat of divorce only because of the abuse of the institution, and this is so because of the repudiation of the genuine Islamic spirit in life. The answer is not 'the abolition of what is permitted' but a return to the fundamentals of Islamic life.⁸²

⁸² Qutb, *SAWI*, pp. 64–9 in addition to *RMBBM*, pp. 60–76.