

The Politics of Islamic Resurgence: Through Western Eyes: A Bibliographic Survey

By Ahmed Bin Yousef and Ahmad AbulJobain. Springfield, IL: United Association for Studies and Research, Inc., 1992, 199 pp.

This bibliography covers articles in journals and daily newspapers, books, conference papers, and dissertations published in western languages (mainly English) during 1970-92. The attempted coverage of articles published in daily newspapers and conference papers, the last to be thought of and difficult to cover, is in itself admirable. However, while the limitation of "Through Western Eyes" is suitable for the three introductory chapters, it is not so for the bibliography, as most of the literature cited is written by non-Muslims. In fact, only roughly one quarter (368) of all works cited (1405) are written by Muslims. This raises a question about the objective, although the compilers declare that it seeks to "present the Western intelligentsia—scholars, politicians, journalists—with Muslim comment and a bibliographic collection of Western articles that have tackled the issue of Islamic revival" (p. ii).

The book is divided into two parts: three introductory chapters and the actual bibliography. The first part was written by the compilers individually "to provide substantive analysis as essays that reflect Muslim responses to the precarious relationship with the West . . . [and they] aim at crystallizing the frequently distorted image of political Islam and the Islamic revival" (p. ii).

Chapter one, "The Western Pen: A Sword in Disguise?," deals with western media bias and the consequent distortion of Islam through a) reproducing photos that appear as covers of such famous magazines as *The Economist* and *Time* and b) using slanted titles (i.e., "The Sword of Islam" and "Muhammad's Militants: Spreading Islam by the Sword—Again") and special semantics (i.e., "fear," "impose," and "purge" as well as "fundamentalist network" and "wealthy fundamentalist businessmen") to propagate paranoia about Islam. The chapter highlights, through quotations from various sources, fabricated stories, subjective opinions, and general unfamiliarity with Islam and tends to condemn western authors and journalists for their role in formulating people's opinions. It concludes that "Islamic 'fundamentalism' is an all-encompassing term. It is

applied to despots, atheists, secularists, pragmatists, philosophers, murderers, monarchies, oligarchies, and opposition groups alike; anyone who associates with Islam, be it on the basis of questionable or sincere intent, is subject to the label" (p. 18).

Chapter two, "Islamists and the West: From Confrontation to Cooperation," raises questions regarding the increasing interest in Islam and Islamists after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It presents an historical account of western perceptions of Islam and the Islamic revival and covers geopolitical transformation, sociogeographic cohesion, and economic forces. The chapter highlights "Islamic fundamentalism" as presented in the western media and then moves on to allegations of "Islamic terrorism." Later on, it compares the Islamic definition of democracy with its practice in the West. The Islamic concepts of *shūrā*, *ijmā'*, and *ijtihad* are also discussed. After looking at the relationship between the Islamists and the West from each side's point of view, it concludes that "a plan exists, written or otherwise, to achieve three goals: undermine Islamists' attempts to participate in elections, force Islamists to lose faith in democracy, as a result, and compel them to employ violence as a means of venting their frustrations" (p. 41).

Chapter three, "Islam and the West: Realities and Potentialities," identifies ideological differences between the two parties, in a sociocultural context, through the terms "ummah" and "scientific fundamentalism." It then gives a brief historical background of positivism, colonialism, liberalism, secularism, modernism, and Islamism. The author evaluates western democracy, as opposed to hypocrisy, in his discussion of the Bosnian and Gulf crises. He then derives positive indicators for the current relationship between Islam and the West: a) western scholars who seek to bridge the ideological divide; b) increasingly receptive elements in the western media when it comes to the Muslim world; c) resolute efforts of western human rights organizations, political parties, and diplomats to expose the inhumane politics of despots in the Muslim world; and d) the new phenomenon of Muslim communities in western cities and the conversion of many non-Muslims. The chapter ends on a hopeful note: "extensive research and magnanimous comments made by several western intellectuals . . . regarding Muslims . . . [and] the contemporary scholarly activity [which] is also tempered with a knowledge of Arabic . . . [if they] are complemented in diplomatic circles, the walls dividing the two civilizations will become bridges" (p. 45).

These chapters are much lengthier than is normal for a bibliographic compilation. They are also somewhat overlapping. It would have been better if they were written as an introductory section, as this would have limited the scope and identified the type of publications included.

The actual bibliography classifies all entries as articles, books, and conferences/dissertations and then subdivides them by region. Multi-regional studies, or those topics having only a few citations, are placed under "Islamic Resurgence—General." This scheme is very unusual. First, such an arrangement is unhelpful, for related entries are scattered through three sections and sometimes appear under different subheadings. This could have been overcome by including a supporting subject index. However, this was not provided and is a major drawback. Technically speaking, such an absence renders the bibliography incomplete. Moreover, the selection of subject headings within each section is not systematic. For example, literature about Afghanistan is found under "Afghanistan" in the articles section and under "Asia" in the other two sections (neither of which have an "Afghanistan" subheading). Listing the conference papers with the dissertations in the same section is also very unusual. It would have been more appropriate to include them in the articles section or give them a separate section.

The bibliography contains many typing errors. While some in the introductory chapters may be overlooked, those appearing in the bibliography can prevent a researcher from finding the desired information. For instance, in the first entry on page 94, the journal cited is *Middle East Studies*. The correct title is *Middle Eastern Studies*. Another type of error is found in the list of abbreviations (used for journals with "long" titles). However, some abbreviations are not uniform throughout the bibliography: *AAAPSS* (*Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*) appears in the article section as *AAPSS* (pp. 59, 62, 64, 679, 86, 88, 95, and 111) and as *AAAPSS* (pp. 99, 103, 106, and 111).

Standardization is another problem. Although "the style used for this book is based on the *Chicago Manual of Style*" (p. 1), this source is not followed for punctuation. For example, the colon (Chicago style) and the comma (MLA style) are used interchangeably to separate the year and the page numbers. The haphazard use of brackets to identify the year is also a mixing of the Chicago and LC styles.

There are further limitations on the professional side. The compilers' statement that "not all journals were reviewed due to the vast volume" (p. ii) is unacceptable professionally. In addition, the criteria for selection is not stated. The time frame is also a problem. The compilers say that the bibliography has "concentrated roughly on a twenty-year period—1970 to the present" (p. ii) and then do not justify why "several works prior to this time frame have been included, however, due to their relevance to the subject at hand" (p. ii). Moreover, the languages to be covered are not stated. Although the term "western" may imply western European languages in general, the literature covered is in English, along with a very

few articles and books in French. The bibliography thus could be considered as dealing with English-language, as opposed to western, publications. On the other hand, if the compilers did in fact attempt to cover all publications in "western" languages, then the result is very shortsighted.

Finally, the book ends with brief biographies of forty-six "scholars and authors who wrote on the Islamic resurgence . . . [and are] deeply involved in the Islamic and Arab worlds" (p. 190). These are very useful and are to the compilers' credit, for they identify these authors' professional capacities. But again, the criteria of selection was not stated and could be seen by unmentioned scholars as a biased stand.

Hani M. Atiyah, Assistant Professor
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Book Review

Islamic System: A Modern Muslim Alternative Proposed by the Prophet

By Hassan Ali Khan, Founder, Islamic Center of America
New York, New York: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1992
137 pp.

Hassan Ali Khan's *Islamic System: A Modern Muslim Alternative Proposed by the Prophet* is a book that is both timely and relevant. It is a book that is written for the Muslim community and for the non-Muslim community alike. It is a book that is written for the Muslim community and for the non-Muslim community alike. It is a book that is written for the Muslim community and for the non-Muslim community alike. It is a book that is written for the Muslim community and for the non-Muslim community alike.

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