

2, 26, 40, 52, 54, 58, 62, 69, 70, 71 and 91)

**POLITICAL ISLAM
FUNDAMENTALISM
OR
NATIONAL STRUGGLE?**

A Materialist Critique

**Adel Samara
1995**

Contents
Introduction
Between Islam and Political Islam
The Start of Political Islam
A Response to External Challenge
The Social and Class Origin of Political Islam
Against Modernization or Victims of Marginalization?
The Position of Political Islam between the Two Development Arab
Trajectories
The Tactic of Political Islam and Arab Regimes Today
Political Islam and Imperialism
The Political Islam in Palestine
Notes

Introduction

... (miss Page 3)

Capitalism nor Socialism), blocked democracy, blocked secularism, and a total defeat in Palestine. It was fifty years of traditional period which ended in total blockade.

It is obvious, however, that resistance is still a strong motivator within these societies. They are ready to support the party that is ready to fight for the focal issue or issues. In this context we have to place the rise of Political Islam (PI), and its support in Palestine.

Why suddenly, did PI come to the center of confrontation against the Capitalist culture, and the Arab dependant comprador Capitalist regimes, and the Israeli Occupation? why are these people jumping from the status of helots to that of freedom fighters? Why did both the nationalist and communist movements in the Arab countries fail and degraded for the sake of PI?

Most interpretations of the rise of PI are attributed to the failure of nationalist and communist movements in the Arab Homeland (AH) to achieve the goals of the masses. But we should draw the line between:

- The failure of the nationalist and communist movements and;
- The direct reason for the rise of PI in the last decade.

The direct reason behind the rise and popular support of PI is related to the nature and role of the ruling Arab regimes in the past thirty years, i.e. after the defeat of the progressive nationalist bourgeoisie regimes and the “victory” of the second trajectory of the Arab development policies. According to the fragmentation of the Arab countries, their developments took two trajectories.

The first trajectory represented by the progressive regimes of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and later to a certain extend, Algeria. This trajectory was struggling to achieve development, liberation of Palestine and Arab Unity. These regimes emerged in the Arab countries with some agricultural surplus to finance industrialization. They were the birth place of the emerging new Arab nationalism. Their independence was the result of struggle against Colonialism. Their regimes were against Imperialism and Zionism. The second trajectory was created

and protected by Colonialism. These countries were poor in terms of natural endowment, especially agriculture. As their ruling “class” was dependent on Imperialism, those rulers were used systematically to counter Arab national movement. Later, some of these countries became wealthy because of oil revenue. These countries are Saudi Arabia, and Gulf Cooperation Council. There are other countries that fit politically into this group even though they are not naturally endowed like Jordan, Yemen and Morocco.

The war of 1967 ended by the defeat of the first trajectory, and accordingly, most of the Arab ruling classes became:

- A comprador economically and;
- *Iqlimi* ideologically (for the two trajectories see later)

While the nationalist and communist were trying to get rid of Colonialism and dependency and achieve development and Arab unity, the comprador classes were deepening dependency and articulating the national economies with those capitalist in the center. Thus the nationalists and communists were not the cause of crisis. They were the party which was defeated by the crisis. The nature of the comprador program (generalizing the Internalization of Defeat), which is supported by Imperialism is the main cause of the crisis and of the popular inclination towards PI at the same time.

The role of Imperialism here is not limited to encouraging the PI in the last tree decades; the imperialist countries launched a war aimed at blocking the development of the Arab Homeland which leads to an economic, social and political crisis.

When societies fall into crisis, they will of course look for away out. In many cases, especially when the crisis is hard to be transcended, the society becomes ready to accept or even support the leadership of a social force which offers an ideology as a salvation from the crisis. That’s how a new force, i.e. the PI came to existence.

BETWEEN ISLAM AND POLITICAL ISLAM

To deal with the PI, we must differentiate between the religious establishment, which is related to the regime in the AH, the Islamic group which is the Political Islam, and the Muslim believers, the ordinary Muslims. (See below)

Here, I am using the term PI, not Fundamentalism, because fundamentalism is related more to the religion itself on the one hand, and because the religion is part of the heritage of any society

on the other. Heritage is not a dead body as many are contending. Its failure and/or continuity are conditioned by the way we treat it.

What is now heritage, was in its own age a highly applicable ideology, social system or culture. What remains alive today is mainly its role as part of the culture of the current community. That's why the past might help in understanding aspects of the modern life, but fails to answer all our questions and tackle our problems.

Concerning the PI claim of applying pure Islam, or return to the original Islam, it is impossible for any individual or group to go back to the past in an absolute manner. This in addition to the fact that even the conduct of PI themselves does not reflect a return to Islam in its mere beginning. This in addition to the fact that the PI is in fact a political party (political elite) which is competing for power.

By dealing with PI, we must differentiate between three categories of Islam:

- The religious establishment, which is related to the ruling political regimes in the Arab countries.
- The Islamic group, namely the PI, and;
- The Moslem believers, i.e. the ordinary believers the ordinary Muslims.

My intention here is to separate the PI as a political party from Islam as religion, and from the ordinary religious people.

Ordinary Muslims are not included in this paper because they are not part of PI. An ordinary Muslim considers his "principle" as his individual relation to God. While the PI is deducing from Islam his own principles and insisting that these principles are eternal, and every thing in the world must be changed according to the needs and eternal laws of these principles. He is unable to separate religion from civil society. Unification of religion and civil society is the citadel of the PI, i.e. the state of Islam.

Because the principle of the ordinary Muslim is in heaven, has automatically separating his daily life from his principle. That is why he is flexible towards politics. The case of the PI, especially *Jihad* Movement, is the opposite since they unify the daily life and the principles. That is why *Jihad* in PI reached the point of "de link" with the society which for them is infidel (*Kafer*) through the two steps of their decision: *Al Takfir Wal Hijra*).

For the PI, *Al Takfir* (Infidelity) of all others goes back to the end of the first thirty years of Islam. (Qotb, 1948). This means that all Muslim societies became infidel after that short period.

This movement of political Islam represented by *Al Jamaa'ah Al Islamiah*, and *Al Jihad* in Egypt. These are the direct followers of Sayid Qutb.¹

For the ordinary Muslim, the class position is a determinant factor for his social life. While Islam recognized private property and makes decrees to regulate it and transform it from generation to generation, poor Muslims hailed radical social changes which abandon private property and gave land back to the poor under the rule of the progressive nationalist regimes in Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Algeria. While rich Muslims insisted that Islamic laws of private property were sacred.

Why did PI entrenched itself around the “Holiness” of private property, and to which extent is this position in harmony with capitalism and the World Capitalist Order?

Political Islam preachers for moral, not material equality. When the material equality is raised, they delay it to the after-life “*Akhera*”. At that time, the poor and women (*Almustada'foun*) (those without rights) will receive their needs. That is why, in Iran, the regime of PI failed to touch the private ownership.² Eventually this would lead to the gradual depreciation of its spiritual esteem which motivated the poor masses.

Amin noted that:

“This interpretation, the conservative one, does not exclude the justification of reform measures that may be called for by circumstances and evolution. As it happens it is Qutb’s own interpretation that defines his political program (Qutb, 1948:22) with three goals: Redistribution of property (agrarian reform?); Nationalization of public services (still to be defined) and minimum wage... it is no different from what inspires Christianity for example... But the interpretation may be pushed just this far to admit the most radical social changes. That happened in history. During the revolt of the oppressed (Qarmatian and others) there were calls for equal distribution or for the abolition of slavery, etc. Nothing in the text would today, according to some, prevent the

¹ Sayid Qutb’s ideology is the main theory of the (Jihadi) movement. His main book is *Ma’alem A’la al Tariq*, 1948.

² In the beginning of Iran’s Islamic Revolution, Khomeini said in a mass meeting that: “*Lil Mustaza’fin an Yasta’ido Huqoqyhm*”, the disinherited have to restore their rights, the peasants attacked the land lords and restore land, But the Iran’ police clashed with them and deterred them.

socialist distribution of production (public ownership and worker's control, etc." (182:1990).

It is so clear here that all movements of PI lack the Qarmatian interpretation of the text and are way behind the content of the text itself, since it is possible to expand its interpretation to a radical one. In fact, Islam as a text in Koran fluctuates between Charity, mercantilism order and Socialism. So, it depends on who interprets Islam. But for the PI there is one interpretation, their.

Zakat is one of the five main pillars of Islam. It is a form of voluntary fixed percentage of tax. But, it is inapplicable today, because the needs of the modern state are much more than the percentage of Zakat. But Zakat stand between the two main interpretations of Islam: Charity and Socialism.

The text stated "*Wa fi amwallehem haq ma'aloum lil saa'ili wal mahroum*", there is well known right in their money for the beggar and the disinherited. The text stated as well: "*Khuth min amwalihim sadakatan tutahirohim*", take fro their money a charity to purify them. Prophet Mohammad himself said: "People own jointly tree things: water, food and fire". At that time this meant: ownership of the most important things in life is a communal.

While the PI is keeping Islam limited within charity and Zakat, the Qarmatian and others called for equal distribution of wealth, and the abolition of slavery, etc. Nothing in the text would, according to some, prevent today the socialist organization of production "public ownership and workers control" (Amin, 1990:182).

This means that the mercantile PI is lacking behind the text on one hand, and leaving the Arab countries under dependency and blocked development on the other. Falling into problems and crisis, the PI's ideology and project are impractical and unable to afford a proper alternative. But, what is dangerous is the fact that the Arab masses in several Arab countries, while supporting political Islam, are not serious to examine its social program. This is the job of the left, which is in the crisis itself.

THE START OF POLITICAL ISLAM A RESPONSE TO AN EXTERNAL CHALLENGE

Islam response to Western modernity started with the gradual integration of the Ottoman social-formation into the world Capitalist order in the last quarter of the 19th century. It came in response

against western Christianity and the new culture of the capitalist colonizers.

The first writings were those of Mohammad Abdo and Jamal el Din Al-Afghani in the end of the last century and the beginnings of this one. It should be noted here that all Islamic Political or theoretical movements started in Arab countries, mainly in Egypt. Strange, however, that most PI movements from Arab and non-Arab countries concentrate their attack against Arab nationalism.

While in the 1920s, the political Islamists, as a politicized movement, started in the Arab countries as a social groups preaching the maintenance of Islamic morals and traditions and confronting the Western modernization.

Their tactic was to avoid dealing with politics and accordingly elude paying the high cost of political struggle. Even their social work wasn't crystallized to become a reformist movement trying to maintain the Arab-Islamic culture. This is different from the social activities which developed later in Egypt, Algeria and Palestine (See later).

This study will explain why PI is defending culture, not-economic interest of the people. Culture is their strong defence line. They can mobilize the poor masses for this issue especially since Colonialism and Imperialism are continuously attacking and humiliating the Arab-Islamic culture. For the Marxist-Leninists it is possible for turn culture into motive for class struggle e.g.... It is possible to use culture for the sake of the direct material interests of masses.

The PI crystallized in the movement of the Muslim Brotherhood which started in Egypt in 1920s and spread the other Arab and Islamic countries. Of the variety of PI currents, the Muslim Brotherhood is the only "international" political Islam current. This movement was motivated by the defence of Islamic culture against foreign associations (Western Christian Missions) which became active among Copts in Egypt, the Arab country with the largest Christian Arab community. It is important to note here that Western Christian missions were tools of Colonialism, i.e. capitalist Crusade.

To start with, it is clear that World Capitalist order and its goals to infiltrate and colonize Arab societies through the pretext of religion were the main reasons behind provoking an Islamic defence. This form of defence might be considered cultural rather than fundamental or purely political Islam. It wasn't response against modernization as many westerns argue. One, however, should not ignore the fact that this "modernization" came through colonialism. (See later)

For the sake of comparison, when Arab Nationalism was dominant and dynamic (during Nasserism in Egypt), Arab masses were not attracted to PI with its conservative agenda and alliance with the reactionary regimes despite the fact that Islam as religion dominated the Arab Homeland centuries before *Modern Arab Nationalism*. Masses choose Nationalism because, in that period, they were in a position to choose modernization with development and national dignity on one hand or conservatism with dependency, and neo-colonialism on the other. People's position was clear.

During the area of radical Arab Nationalist movement, the PI failed to offer a radical alternative to the Arab street. Thus it failed to lead or even influence the Arab masses. In fact the situation was even worse, since it allied itself with the reactionary Arab regimes which were/and still are protected by Imperialism.

In the era of national renaissance, the religious factor was a latent one. It was more religious than political. The citizen was at least nationally satisfied, while in the reactionary regimes, PI wasn't supported by the masses for the same reason mentioned before.

In conclusion, while PI started as response to the external Capitalist challenge (Colonialism), it did not stand against capitalism itself. That is why it supported, and still supports the Arab regimes who adopt the market economy. Accordingly, it started as defence against the colonizers who used Christianity to dominate the Islamic countries. PI defended the Islamic state, but they had no fight with Capitalism.

THE SOCIAL AND CLASS ORIGINS OF THE POLITICAL ISLAM

According to what was already mentioned, the PI was a result and expression of a crisis. It failed to flourish when the society was a revolutionary.

Before the ruling Arab dependent capitalist classes internalized the defeat, each of the two major social classes (capitalist & workers/peasants) had its own project. The marginalized one, who had no project, was the middle class. During that period, this class wasn't large and strong enough, by its nature; it lacked the ability to envision its own clear social, economical and political project. This class was absorbed in the service sector of the bureaucratic system. It also was satisfied with its role in the national struggle and project, since political, social and economic crisis in the Arab countries wasn't strong enough to marginalize this class.

The working class and peasants were motivated and absorbed the national liberation, socialist project and Arab unity. The capitalist class was fighting against the progressive nationalist regimes to divert their “socialist” project towards capitalism. The confrontation between the two projects, in addition to the Imperialist Zionist aggression of 1967, resulted in a “victory” for the dependant capitalist class, it became (miss page 26)

The Comprador Project Contains its Negation:

When the comprador regime reached its “final” position of total dependency, it bore within itself economic and social crisis resulting in unemployment especially for the middle class graduates. The PI contradicted the regime because the crisis affected its social class.

In the Arab countries of the second trajectory, the unholy alliance between the comprador *Iqlimi* capital and the PI was a short lived honeymoon. Following the failure of the nationalist project and its replacement with the comprador, the PI flourished in all Arab countries, enjoying the “liberal” margin afforded by the ruling comprador which was seeking a political alliance with parties who support capitalist dependency.

In every country of the first trajectory the relationship with PI took a different shape. Egypt ruling class was the first. Its alliance started in 1979s and broke down in the 90s. Algeria came later. The alliance took place in the 1980s and broke down in the 90s. In Syria, for instance, the confrontation took place earlier in 1976, while it didn't happen in Iraq, because the nationalist bourgeoisie regime there was strong enough to continue building its independent development until it was destroyed by the Imperialist/external aggression of 1991. The secular orientation of the *Ba'ath* regime contributed in minimizing the influence of PI in Iraq and Syria, while Algeria, it was the opposite since the revolution there was highly motivated by Islam.

In the oil producing countries, the confrontation was delayed because social conflict was offset by oil revenues. In the aftermath of the Gulf Wars, and the sharp decrease of oil revenues, the area began to witness a surging conflict between the regimes and the PI.

How did the middle class, the cradle of the PI expand?

Following the failure of independent development in the Arab countries, expansion of the service sector exceeded the productive one. Oil revenues (rent) were devoted to services rather than productive sector both in oil producing and non producing countries. Through the expansion of the service sector, especially in education,

a large number of educated youths graduated, but there was a shortage in available jobs.

A large number of graduates realized suddenly that they became a reserve army in the labour market. The oil countries absorbed part of them.

Before and during the oil price hikes, most of the Arab regimes expanded their bureaucratic structures and absorbed large number of graduated in an artificial job market (Disguised Unemployment). These jobs were financed by oil revenue or remittance or donations.

When the oil prices went down, the resources for the salaries declined, and at least the new graduated became unemployed.

To elaborate, this large number of graduates needed a dynamic economical and social system, a productive one, to employ them and adapt itself to re-employ those who are come to the market annually. The crisis of unemployment took place first in the non oil-producing Arab countries, and resulted in a crisis for the middle class which by then had become the main supporter of PI i.e. students, university graduates and youth in general. In an attempt to transcend the crisis, oil producing countries started to fire the expatriate workers. Most of them Arabs from other countries.

Is the PI a Rural Phenomenon?

Some argue that the base of the PI is the rural areas. They try to limit it there. First of all, we have to distinguish between the source and y the base of PI.

Rural areas in general, are the base of most of Third World uprisings, but it is not a pre-condition that the militants came from rural areas.

It is understandable that religion is closer to the rural life (agriculture) since it is more related to the nature and metaphysics, that argument however, remains related to the religion itself not the PI. Expansion of the service sector, mainly education reached the rural areas, and accordingly, these areas were affected by unemployment. Urban population basically gains jobs much easier than those in the remote rural areas. This might contribute to increase support of the PI as the most marginalized parts of the society, but not because they are in the rural areas. Here the reasons are geographical on one hand, and related to the corruption of the government and its dysfunctional administration in the other. It has nothing to do with metaphysic.

Regarding the place, it is clear that the dwellers of the poor areas around cities incline to support the PI more than those in rural areas. The same is true for the Palestinians in the refugee camps.

Accordingly, if support for PI in the rural areas is attributed to poverty, it is understandable. It is not a condition that rich peasant must be religious because he is living in the rural areas, or even if he is living in an area which is not capitalist mode of production, and is not a fully capitalized social formation.

In the Arab countries, the authorities (power) controlled the rural areas through several mechanisms, either traditionally through tax extraction as it was during the Ottoman rule, or through capitalist integration of the rural areas either as part of its national market or tax reasons or both, or through the expanding education as it is in the recent decades. But, what put the regimes' position in the rural areas in a critical situation is in fact when the progressive nationalist regimes fell in crisis which generated a large number of unemployed, taking into consideration that the education services has covered the rural areas as well.

While the rural areas were not fully integrated by and through the capitalist mode of production, the political religion there, kept latent. In the developed capitalist systems, the capitalization process reached the rural areas, and continued there in parallel with the city's and industrialization. While in the Arab countries, this process is still blocked. The result of this blockade was high percentage of unemployment, which is in other words, a good environment, which is in other words, a good environment for the PI. This blocked development led to the blocking of possible democracy.

This helps us prove that the crisis in the Arab countries did not result from the transformation of the agricultural society to an industrialized one, because there was no real industrialization there. The problem wasn't a result of the integration of rural areas by the central government in the "modern" state, as a different situation from that of the Ottoman rule. The problem stemmed from the fact that during almost fifty years, the society reached a blocked situation and stopped in the middle. It's neither transformed to a developed capitalist social formation nor stayed as a purely pre-capitalist one. The projects of the two main social classes ended in crisis.

It is a situation of struggle between the:

- Traditional classes; merchants, landlords and aristocrats which were defeated by the progressive nationalist regimes, and;
- The new regimes of the petty-bourgeoisie (the progressive nationalist ones) who, finally failed to achieve their aims of

development and unity. One of the reasons behind that was the failure of radical regimes to be radical enough in their social and economic programs. However, the result was the return of the comprador.

Here, imperialism stands as the protector of part of the traditional (non capitalist modes of production) on the one hand, and blocking the final development of the new mode of production (the capitalist one) on the other. And since the national bourgeoisie was defeated in this struggle, the result will be the compradorization (Amin's term), or the decision of the dependent capitalism to adapt itself to the role of the protector of the imperialist interests in its own country. These interests are in fact the wealth of the society. In fact, due to the length of the period in which these developments took place, it is not easy to call it a transitional period.

How did the Current Crisis Started?

Under the rule of this bourgeoisie (the comprador), the crisis in the Arab Homeland took the shape of the following three forms:

- The national crisis appeared in the defeat in the struggle against Zionism.
- The economic crisis appeared in the failure of achieving unity, independent development and facing the challenge of massive unemployment, indebtedness and lack of food security.
- A social crisis appeared in a massive increase of the marginalized population in the political, social and economic spheres, which led to a cultural crisis, and search for identity.

The sensitivity of the "social" crisis in particular, appears in the fragility of the political movement, its lack of a national dimension which led to a closed relationship with the ruling class despite the fact that these ruling classes are rejected by the popular classes. This is one of the clear indicators that the political and national movement fell in the crisis of *Internalization of the Defeat*, IOD and came to the same position of the ruling classes.

What delayed the massive explosion of the crisis is the fact that:

- Large sections of the Arab national and democratic forces degenerated to the situation of internalization of defeat especially from 1967 – 1990, despite the fact that the crisis reached a chronicle level crystallized in a diffused revolutionaries, and:
- The new policy of oil countries, even relatively until today, of still making some money liquidity available to the ruling

political elites in the non oil Arab countries, to enable them to bribe some sectors of the society.

The deformed situation made it possible for the PI to occupy the political scene, and to preempt the possibility of a revolutionary alternative.

When the regimes of Egypt and Algeria were “relatively” deprived of the oil rent, they lost many of their supporters, and the PI was the only well organized force to recruit these people. In Tunisia, the reason was the decrease of oil revenues combined with the withdrawal of some of the multinational corporations from the country. In this case, political Islam evaded the **(miss page 40)**

AGAINST MODERNIZATION OR VICTIMS OF MARGINALIZATION?

In their propaganda, Imperialists and Arab regimes are disseminating information that the PI activists reject “civilization”, i.e. they are against the modernized capitalist life-style. But it is a well known fact that PI is benefiting from the latest technology. Their rejection is the social results and effects of this civilization especially the economic marginalization of the middle class. The PI refuse neither the modern technology, nor the capitalist social relations of production and distribution, despite the fact that these relations are the cause of the marginalization of the middle class in Arab modern societies.

This means, in case these societies reached a prosperous capitalist status, the PI will make no objection. That is why the PI were and, to a certain extent, are allied with the renter regimes who are not following the Islamic principles, and letting the “others”, the Imperialist enjoying the wealth of the Muslim Nation “*Ummat al Islam*”.

Since PI is ready to reconcile with the prosperous capitalist regime, and failed to recruit the masses against the nationalist regimes, a central industrialized Arab state will always be able to minimize the social base of the PI, i.e. the era of Nasser in Egypt.

The success of the European countries to achieve auto-centricity, to control and accumulate their surplus turned them into industrialized developed countries.

The absence of Political Christianity finds its roots in the success of capitalist development while the PI finds its roots in the absence of developed capitalism.

The auto-centric capitalism solves the problem of the middle class through avoiding its economic and political marginalization, while in the Arab countries the middle class found itself in a shaky position since the projects of the capitalist and working classes were blocked. Such threat radicalized the middle class enough to look for alternative, the PI. That alternative, however, did not have a different economical or social program.

The PI is not interested in radicalizing the interpretation of Islam to touch the private property. Since it is rooted and adopted by the middle class, not the productive ones, it focused on the commercial content of the text.

This is clear, in the ideology of PI in Egypt which copied the Islamic experience of the oil rich countries, the “Petro-Islam”, the luxurious Islam, which have no fight with Imperialism the plunderer of most of the wealth there.

The PI copied the oil regimes comfortable life style while maintaining its principle which is commerce. That is why the PI in Egypt initiated the money investment enterprise, speculation activities and not productive ones.

It seems that it is an international phenomenon that when a capitalist class falls in an economic crisis, it becomes closer to fundamentalism. The recent economic crisis in the center, the high percentage of unemployment led to an increase in voices calling for women to leave the work place and become “good mothers” and “good wives”.

The mature and developed capitalism in the west considered religion a historical issue. It becomes a relationship between man and God. The efficiency of the capitalist mode of production is of vital importance. But the latent development in the Arab countries, and the situation of uncertainty of the middle class pushed the poor classes to spiritual safety, since the material one is not available.

THE POSITION OF ISLAM BETWEEN THE TWO DEVELOPMENT ARAB TRAJECTORIES

In the noteworthy that PI relation with the oil regimes goes back to the early fifties. The Islamic political movements were in coalition with the Arab regimes which were created, protected and in fact are still supported by imperialism.

That alliance was justified by their joint enmity to the Nationalist secularism represented by Nasser's regime in Egypt and to Communism everywhere. Both Nationalism and Communism were the first two significant targets of the imperialist campaign against the Arab countries. The third significant target was to block development and transformation including capitalist transformation of the Arab Nation. This last goal had no conflict with the ruling oil rich Arab regimes whose economic policies were mainly designed by imperialism.

It should be noted here, that while the PI and the Arab regimes were against both Nationalism and the Communism, they also were in continues polemic fight against each other.

During that period, while the Nationalist bourgeoisie struggle against Imperialism, Zionism and reactionary Arab regimes, the PI were in alliance with the reactionary Arab regimes. This failure of the PI to deal with Arab Nationalism limited its social base. At that period of time, the PI leadership failed to grasp the focal point and thus to seize the moment.

What weakened the Nationalists and Communists at that time was the traditional Arab communists stand, like the PI, against Arab aspirations of nationalism, unity and the liberation of Palestine. Even though the Communists reasons differ from that of the PI, the destructive effects of their position against Arab Nationalism were as damaging.

Both, the PI and the communists based their argument geographically on local (*Iqlimi*) and international (cosmopolitan) dimensions respectively. Both failed to consider the middle dimension, the national one which practically is the necessary link between the other two.

One the class level, both movements were too remote from the popular classes. While the PI supported the reactionary Arab regimes, Communists were struggling for the dictatorship of the proletariat in a homeland that had no industry. Each was supporting a small elite totally disconnected from the masses. The Nationalist movement was in a much better stand, but not good enough; it was indeed fighting for the focal issues of the Arab Nation, but it failed to be radical enough to represent more than the middle class (See later). During that period, as it is always, the religious establishments in all Arab countries were tools of the state. The

ordinary religious or believers have no fight with secularism. Most of the people were interested in Arab unity, liberation of Palestine and development.

This negative and even hostile position of the PI against Arab Nationalism made it easy for the Nationalist bourgeoisie to recruit the masses against the PI, since these masses were fighting for independence, unity and development. This struggle was directly against Imperialism which supported the reactionary regimes with which the PI allied itself.

In fact, Arab Nationalism wasn't in contradiction with Islam. The Nationalism bourgeoisie regimes were not real secular; their secularism is synonym to their blocked development and blocked democracy. For the PI, to justify its rejection of secularism, it argued that: "Islam was a social religion, not individual like Christianity" (Amin, 1990:299).

The progressive Nationalist regimes were believers, and their constitutions noted that Islam was the religion of the state.

In Algeria, Islam was one of the main pillars of struggle against the French Colonialism, Nasser of Egypt, the secular, was the main Arab supporter of Algeria's struggle, while the religious regimes of the oil countries never supported Algerians despite the fact that their struggle was largely as an Islamic one.

Nasser's regimes in Egypt started in close alliance with the Muslim Brothers. Their Party was legitimized under the secular government until 1954 when the regime illegalized their movement.

The PI failed to grasp the fact that Arab Nationalism was not an obstacle in the path of the unification of the Islamic Nation, *Umma*. They failed to realized that a united Arab Homeland could take a much more effective role in the unity of *Ummat al* (miss page 52)

...struggle against Imperialist, Zionist and reactionary Arab regimes, the Arab Nationalist project lost the battle in 1967, and the result was the strengthening of the oil rich Arab regimes, mainly that of Saudi Arabia. The defeated nationalist regimes changed their discourse to concentrate on religion, i.e. Nasser's regime after the defeat of 1967.

The Nationalist Movement failed because of its bourgeoisie ideology. It represented the middle class, part of the local capitalist factions (what Nasser termed: the nationalist capital – the clean capital). Because of that, their program wasn't radical enough to represent the interests of the popular classes, the masses. This internal and decisive factor, in addition to the harsh and continued

campaign from the Imperialist, Zionist and reactionary Arab regimes, had led to the defeat of that (miss page 54)

... gave the lead of the Arab countries to Saudi Arabia, an historical ally of the US Imperialism and a base for the PI.

The large surplus of oil rent strengthened the role of Saudi Arabia in the Arab Homeland, and paved the way for its PI allies to work in relative freedom in Egypt. The economic deterioration in Egypt, for instance, made the regime, since Nasser's last years, encourage the people to go to Saudi Arabia. This step from the Egyptian regime meant to the popular and middle classes that: "the regime is unable to afford the unemployed people, including the new graduates, the job needy and contended that every individual should seek his own interests".

The regime, in fact, betrayed the masses that supported it for a long period of time. The availability of oil surplus enabled the oil regimes to absorb large numbers of the unemployed from the Arab, Islamic and other countries.

The Arabs from non oil countries, especially from Egypt, who succeeded to become rich in the oil countries, were influenced by the "ideology" of Rich Islam, which is:

- Maintaining the principles of Islam, i.e. commercialism.
- Rejecting Arab Nationalism, and;
- Opposing the secular regimes of their own countries which were unable to provide to them a comfortable life style.

This new form of PI avoided touching the Imperialist connection of these regimes or at least to clarify this point on their agenda. When they returned to their countries, to Egypt for instance, they established their economic base which is:

- Finance investment companies which are in the field of speculation not productive investment. They used the Islamic cloth, invested in commerce, paid high interests to the clients, and kept the management of the companies in the family.
- Humble social projects inside the poor areas which strengthened their social links and base.

By investing in the investment financial companies, the PI leaders were fighting to avoid their past as a marginalized faction of graduates. They became like every social faction which are fighting to maintain its standard of life.

Their intention of limiting themselves to the commercial financial level is related to the unproductive culture in the oil countries, and to the PI's own interpretation of Islam as a religion of commerce, i.e. pro capitalism. It should be noted here that the totally **(miss page 58)**

... practices violence. Its roots were in the Muslim Brotherhood. Its main two wings are Egypt, *Al Jama'ah Al Islamiah* and Jihad Organization. Part of the Muslim Brothers followed this current.

Third: A current with common ideology in several countries, but not unified in all places. It is the new current, like *Al Nahda* in Tunis, the Islamic Front in Sudan, some members of Egyptian Labour Party and, to certain extends, the Islamic Salvation Front, FIS, in Algeria, despite the fact it has a Jihadi wing.

Hasan al Turabi, of Sudanese Islamic Front, is challenging the Muslim Brotherhood, in his attempt to establish an international structure for this current, in addition to building continuous contacts with Imperialism and Arab regimes.

Important to note here that there is close relationship between the new current and the Jihadi one. This pushed to Muslim Brothers to try to minimize their differences with the Jihadi. Therefore they are increasing their challenge to the power of the state, which is new in their tradition, i.e. all PI currents are moving towards less reconciliation with the ruling political elites.

THE TACTIC OF POLITICAL ISLAM AND ARAB REGIMES TODAY

The 1967 war wasn't simply a war between some Arab armies and that of Israel. It was a battle between Imperialism, Zionism and Arab Comprador *Iqlimi* Capitalist (IZACIC) regimes on one hand, and the Arab Nationalist project on the other.

The main result of that war was the defeat of most of the Arab Nationalist regimes, which enable the comprador capitalists to seize **(miss page 62)**

... its most important battle: pushing the Arab masses to internalize the defeat.

The period 1967 & 1990 witnessed the failure of Nationalists and Communists to offer an alternative. This weakness, a direct result of the reformist mentality of their leadership never considered

mobilizing the masses. Therefore PI found fertile ground to mobilize masses towards its alternative.

The ruling comprador classes themselves had no alternative. In fact, the only alternative they offer is dependency, poverty and repression.

The new comprador Arab ruling classes were so unpopular that even an opposition, like the PI, with no social program was, and is gaining popular support since the regime's record is bad enough. In fact, PI did not need to deepen its political discourse to include anti-imperialism slogans in its program to be able to gain support. That is why PI groups could offer themselves as a *political* alternative neither social nor *economic* one.

Change in the Tactic of Political Islam

The main difference between PI thinking before and after 1967 was the result of a more experienced and sophisticated PI that was by then their leadership began to highly consider the needs of the masses. The PI leader realized that Arab masses are looking for:

- Any alternative to the ruling regimes
- Any victory or at least challenge to Imperialism and,
- Development and dignity
- The liberation of Palestine

Even though nationalist regimes were defeated, some of the PI figures avoided any directly attacks against Arab Nationalism, *Al Ghanouchi* in Tunisia for example. Some of them, Hamas, for instance, concealed the fact that they were funded by Arab oil regimes, since they knew how despicable and unpopular these regimes were by Arab masses.

Regarding their position towards imperialism, the PI groups in Egypt and Algeria, stand short of attacking imperialism openly, neither would they attack Capitalism. Their main attack would ambiguously be against citizens of "some" imperialist countries. (Zenin, 1995)

Others avoid discussing their anti-imperialist stand all together. In fact, they try constantly to confirm that they have no contradiction with the west. (See later)

The political Islamic movement in Jordan and Palestine stood against Iraq in the first two days following Iraq's unification of Kuwait. Yet, when they sensed the massive popular support of Iraq, they cleverly twisted their position and supported Iraq.

They were first to realize that Arab masses were ready to embrace “any” alternative to the current situation, and that they (the masses) found in Saddam Hussein the leader to stand his ground to restore Arab dignity.

The massive demonstrations in support of Iraq in Algeria, was the largest in the Arab Homeland. Millions marched the streets spontaneously to support the national cause. That same mass support or at least large percentage of it elected PI two years later.

Despite the notoriously harsh oppression in Morocco, mass demonstrations forced King Hassan to withdraw his army from the Imperialist led coalition against Iraq. Briefly speaking, this is the national solidarity and ambitions which the PI was able to grasp and reoriented while the left and the democratic forces failed.

In the absence of the democratic alternative of a progressive nationalist movement, the Arab masses were confronted with one of the two choices:

- Support the ruling classes, or
- Support the PI

Desperate for an alternative, the masses dare not inquire about the relationship of some PI groups with one imperialist power or another, question the role of PI in Afghanistan, or even compare the discourse of the Arab PI in relation to Nationalism and that of other PI in Islamic/non Arab countries who are not attacking their nationalism and continuously attacking Arab nationalism as an anti-Islam trend, i.e. Iran, Indonesia, Nigeria, etc. The party who would be interested in finding answers would be a revolutionary party.

Accordingly, the Arab masses were concentrating on the short comes of the Arab regimes regarding their position towards dependency, poverty, lack for development strategy, repression, the massive unbalanced distribution of wealth and the defeat in the struggle against Israel.

In some Arab countries, this form of regimes (**miss pages 69-71**)

POLITICAL ISLAM AND IMPERIALISM

It is clear today that PI is not one movement as it is noted below. It contains large variety. This argument contradicts Imperialist

journalistic propaganda which highly simplifies the issue and reduces it to a mere fundamental and unified one.

Since the fragmentation of the former Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War, Imperialist Propaganda in its frantic search for enemy to fill the vacuum waged a War against Political Islam. This war was launched from the imperialist circles and the Arab ruling regimes as well. From a practical point of view, this war needs more facts to be justified:

It is clear that imperialist circles are too busy waging a war against an enemy they themselves exaggerated in size and power. An enemy with whom they were allied for a long time. Assuming that the PI will be radical enough, it means that Imperialism has in fact created its negation. PI in general, however, is still far from reaching this position.

This war is in fact against a certain faction of the PI, namely Jihad. While the main current of the PI (Muslim Brotherhood) never severed its relation with the imperialist circles and even governments so is the case of the new Islamic movements, they merely are trying to replace the Muslim Brothers (Al Turabi and al Ghanouchi).

One might have the right to conclude that this imperialist exaggeration of the power of PI is in fact a smoke screen to conceal the special relation with another faction of PI to keep them as reserves to replace some Arabic regimes when necessary. This reserve will be counter revolution to confront the radical progressive one which is Imperialists main enemy. The example of South Yemen might shed the light on this analogy: When Imperialism and the comprador (*Iqlimi*) regimes in the Arab oil countries had to choose between the socialist party of South Yemen, and the military regimes and its Islamic ally (the Islamic Party of Reform), they chose the Islamic one, despite the imperialist media propaganda and artificial sympathy with the socialist party. What the Sudanese government did against Carlos is also related.

In May 1995, it was disclosed that North Yemen cooperated with Germany and the United State to capture Carlos, who was in South Yemen, and handed him to the intelligence services of these two imperialist countries. Accordingly, one can speculate that this exaggeration propaganda could be a tactical campaign, especially since it is nor really against all PI factions.

The long history if relationship between imperialism and PI, especially through its Arab dependent regimes, help and justify this analysis. In addition, no changes took place on the program or social level of PI in the Arab countries. The long history of the Imperialists

draining the Arab Nations' oil wealth never provoked the PI in the Arab oil producing countries. What they were interested in was to maintain the application of Islam in the daily life of people. The left must put the PI in a critical situation by introducing a class analysis, and a socio-economic program. This in addition to the practice of armed struggle when possible or necessary, i.e. according to the situation in each country. The recent crisis of the ruling *Iqlimi* capitalist classes in the Arab countries never radicalized the PI social program, except for hints in the political discourse of FIS (as noted below).

There are no guarantees that these hints will ever developed into new radical/social projects. The PI's position towards the crisis has resulted in their desire to literally replace the government in their ruling stage, i.e. not replace their economic policies; this position is welcomed heartedly within the imperialist circles.

This led the reformist left and the nationalists in Egypt to back the regime in its power struggle with PI. Their argument is that the PI will make the social situation even worst than it is under the current deformed secular regime. This position however, is a vivid expression of their own crisis. Doing so, they will loose more, since it proves their integration in the policy of the dependent ruling class which has no popular support what-so-ever.

It is clear that under the PI rule, the situation of women, development and popular classes will deteriorate even more, not to mention the situation of the Marxists and secularists. This, in no way is an enemy of its own people and a ruling class which is a traitor to its country. In fact, it is the nature of this regime which enabled the PI to gain social support.

The Marxists-Leninist organizations failed to put the PI in critical situation or on the defense, because many of them are supporting the comprador regimes (in Algeria and Egypt). The bad reputation of the regimes, their oppressive internal policies, and their dependency on Imperialism, forced the people to look for a change without even asking about the program of the coming regime. The absence of the Marxist-Leninists, the only partners qualified to enlighten the masses and offer them the real progressive alternative paid a great assistance to the PI which won the street by default.

It is worth noting here that the oil producing countries, especially the Saudi monarchy was the main supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood. Its policy was part of the imperialist of waging continuous was against Arab Nationalism and Communism. The defeat of these two forces, and the crisis of the (*Iqlimi*) capitalist and comprador regimes, gave PI the strength to be the only organized opposition. The popular deterioration of these regimes, whether on

the economical front or the national defeat, automatically pushed PI to compete for power. In the recent years, PI started relatively to criticize the Saudi regime itself especially after the second Gulf War in 1991 which brought the US army to the Holy land of Islam. The PI in Saudi Arabia is raising some demands in relation to “democracy”. It is worth noting that their opposition started from London!!

If the PI will stand firmly against the Saudi regime, it will prove again that this regime created its negation. This is too far from being conducted by PI in the social and economic levels, but it is possible in the political level (See later).

These developments mean that even the Saudis themselves are facing the same fate which they conspired lengthily to bring upon their Nationalist and Communist enemies.

In its struggle against the imperialist settlement, the PI does not focus its analysis and critique on the essence of Imperialism as the center of the capitalist world order. Only Marxist analysis is qualified to do so thus force the PI analysis towards more patriotic, national/social and class rejection of Capitalism and Imperialism. Unless PI takes that position, people will uncover its main weakness.

This will put the new generation of PI in argument with their traditional leadership, the political one, which is trying to show that the contradiction between East and West is basically cultural. Dr. Mahmoud Al Zahar noted that: “the world division of today is cultural. This land is religious by its nature” (Hijazi, 1994:91).

It is clear that he is avoiding any discussion of class matter, the economic system and the world division into center and periphery. In his answer to a question about the relationship between Hamas and US imperialism since 1991, he noted: “There is no enemy between us and the West. We are merely the medical doctor who is treating the patient, the West” (Hijazi, 1994:92).

This trend of Palestinian PI is not that much far from establishing good relationship with Imperialism. Despite the fact that Hamas’ struggle is indirectly against Imperialism. Its lack of a progressive social program, anti-capitalist one, made it try to be accepted by imperialism itself. In some cases, it became clear that the PI is trying to replace the Arab regimes in the dependent relationship with Imperialism. In addition to its bourgeoisie discourse which pushed it towards Imperialism, prohibiting it from de linking with it, it is clear that PI still maintain this reconciliation wit Imperialism through its ling relationship with the comprador Arab ruling classes in the oil producing countries.

Rashid al Ghanouchi, president of the Renaissance Party (Al Nahda) in Tunes noted that:

“...The Arab regimes are terrified whenever they hear of an Islamic movement having dialogue with the West. Such is the case in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Algeria or Tunisia.

They feel that they might loose their own legitimacy because they know that their legitimacy comes from the West. They know that if the West accepts Islam, they are finished.

The dictatorships in the Arab world claim that Islam is a threat to democracy, but it is these regimes that are the threat to democracy.”
(Brieger, 1995:31)

A strong relationship between the FIS of Algerians and the United States and Germany is another proof of the relationship between PI and Imperialism. The same could be said of Hassan al Turabi of Sudan and the US as well.

The trend in PI which maintains a good relationship with Imperialism is a large one. It is the same current which was allied with the Arab reactionary regimes. It seems that these regimes, from the point of view of this movement, expired. The movement therefore, is trying to offer itself as the alternative in the region. In fact, this alternative is not totally rejected. It is clear that the Imperialist campaign is devoted against the Jihad trend (militancy) in PI which advocates change by force and war against Israel. Yemen again is a good example. The Islamic Party of Reform supported the compromise of leaving parts of Yemen for the Saudi regime, while it provoked the military regime to launch a brutal liquidation against the Socialist Party of South Yemen. Those two allies, the Islamic party of reform and the Yemeni regime, rejected the suggestion from the Socialist party to change the unity of the north and south to a confederation and waged a bloody campaign killing tens of thousands of their own people.

For the time being, the imperialists are offering a new strategy in the Arab countries, which, if passed, might succeed to prolong the life of the Arab regimes. It is the partnership between the narrow political elite and the private capital which was raised in Casablanca in October 1994. Many of the PI leaders are capitalists (merchants). This might be a trial and error from Imperialism, either to strengthen the current regimes by the private capital, including some Islamic portions, and to maintain a relationship with the PI. If the new partnership will fail, the Imperialists will support the PI to control power as a pre emptive step to prevent the leftists from seizing power.

Nationalism:

Another contradiction between the new and old generation of PI is their position towards Arab Nationalism. While the new generation of Hamas is indulged in national struggle against the Israeli occupation, the old generation is attacking Arab nationalism harshly and calling for reconciliation with the Palestinian autonomy and even with Imperialism. Al Zahar noted that:

“I believe in the depreciation of the Palestinian secular national experience it will fail. It is a form of Arab nationalism, which is secular, and with no future. It is Islam that gave content to Arab nationalism. The economic program of this nationalism is Marxism, since the Soviet Union disappeared, there is no future for Arab Nationalism.

The first flag which fell down was that of South Yemen while the flag of Sudan is going up. All flags are falling down on the stage of defeat with Israel. It is a matter of time before our project will be achieved” (Hijazi, 194:92).

Ghanouchi noted:

“Islam could unify the area and block the plans of this small country, which presents itself as a protector of Western interests against Communism and Arab Nationalism. Now the Arab nationalists and communists are gone. Zionism is like an old lady without lovers” (Brieger, 1995:33)

What he meant here is that Imperialism will leave Israel and endorse the PI. This really is a strange, naive way of thinking. When the first imperialists thought of creating a Jewish entity in Palestine, (Napoleon in the early 1800 or Palmerston in 1838), there was neither an Arab modern nationalist movement nor communism. For the imperialists, any time there was no Israel, they had to create it.

THE PI IN PALESTINE

The Palestinian people demands are the best example for the focal point. The Israeli settler colonial regime is determined to terminate the Palestinian society and culture. This made it easy for the Palestinian people to knowledge those who are struggling for the focal point and who are not. This explains Hamas popularity.

Despite the fact that Israel is joined the reactionary, comprador and dependent Arab regimes in supporting the PI, it has one way or another created its own negation. Due to the peculiarity of the Palestinian struggle, even the PI in Palestine was different than PIs in other Arab countries. Before 1948, the PI participated heavily in the armed struggle against the British Colonialism and the Jewish settlers. This position changed to a compromising one during the Jordanian rule and the Israeli occupation until the beginning of the *Intifada*. On the Palestinian level, the Imperialist propaganda machine is limiting opposition to the Imperialist settlement of the Arab –Israeli struggle to the PI. It has great interest to show the world that when the Palestinian society supports the PI it is moving towards fundamentalism.

Palestinian democratic and Marxist movements should base their evaluation of the Palestinian PI significantly on the PIs' practices within the country, not according to (miss page 91)

... alliance with others.

The other possible dangerous scenario could happen if the left tightens its relation to the Self Rulers (SR) authorities, as is the case in Egypt. In Palestine, such alliance it is possible due to the low level of struggle of the left. This will be a catastrophe. The only route for the left is to radicalize its analysis, position and struggle. Only after that it will be able to draw the real line for alliance.

It is clear that Hamas answered successfully the most important question the Palestinian struggle is asking: What is the main contradiction at the present time? Opposite of the past, Hamas was clever enough in avoided falling in the trap of building a pragmatic or even opportunistic relationship with Arab regimes. But, the question is: to what extend will the young generation be able to maintain its pressure on the leadership to maintain this position?

Accordingly, the question of elections, democracy, development, women and secularism are important. Following are expected questions concerning Hamas:

- If Hamas will participate in the SR elections (practically a direct acceptance of Oslo agreement), what would the response of its members be?
- Will they brake into groups like other organizations?
- Will they become like the old Muslim Brotherhood and fight against nationalism and communism?
- If Hamas accept the elections and become part of the authority (reach power), would its social and economic program be able to satisfy its members and supporters, as the

program of paying stipends for some members during the underground struggle? This problem will become obvious if Iran's finance to Hamas decreases or come to a halt following its participation in the elections.

Briefly speaking, the limited economic infrastructure which is possible now, during the secret struggle, might not be able to carry the heavy load later. The leadership will face the challenge of adopting a new social program for the poor masses of its members, supporters and even the middle class people who are looking for steady employment. In this situation, Hamas' leadership would have either support Arafat's regime or to radicalize its own social program. Since it is unlikely to do the latter, what might be radicalized are its members in the lower social status.

It should be noted here that, the last military operations of Hamas and Al Jihad are the only means which uncover the fragility of the "settlement" of Madrid and Oslo. This gave them a high credit. There is a great doubt that they will sacrifice all this for a share in a shaky self rule government. Their operations were so effective it led Israel to re-design the relationship between its territories and the SR. The more effective the operations of Hamas, the more gaps between its traditional leaders and its new cadres will be bridged and enlarged at the same time.

The possible contradiction here is as follows:

The gap will be bridged between the leadership and members, because the traditional leaders have to raise their political ceiling to keep their positions in the organization. But, it will be enlarged, if the SR authorities became strong enough, and if the military operations will harm the interest of more people, or if the current Israeli policy of closure and siege leads to more deteriorating economic situation; famine spreads to more people and at the same time people will reach the point where they would be unable to fight the SR authorities. So they would, even indirectly, feel that the operations are unacceptable.

For the time being, it is still clear that the people are supporting the struggle, despite all suffering. For Hamas, they might continue their clever tactic of not challenging the SR authorities, but concentrate all their efforts against Israel. Through this policy, they are terminating SR position, never allowing it the chance to attack them in the grounds that Hamas and Jihad are "killing" Palestinians, as the case is in Egypt and Algeria. At the same time, the PI will continue saying that they "might" participate in elections, etc. but in parallel with armed struggle.

CONCLUSIONS:

- It is clear that most of the important developments (positive and negatives) which took place in and affected the Arab Homeland started in Egypt: Nationalism, Socialism, Political Islam, Secularism and even imperialist-imposed peace settlement for the Israeli-Arab struggle.
- Colonialism and Imperialism by blocking economic development of the Arab countries, in fact blocked secularism and democracy.
- The crisis in Arab countries is: they are neither Capitalist nor Socialists countries.
- The long period of blocked development (over fifty years), can not possibly be called transitional period.
- Since the Arab political and national liberation movements (the communist and the nationalist) internalized the defeat, the path was cleared for PI to take the lead and apply its project which is no more than replacing one ruling political elite with another.
- While imperialism maintained good relation with the ruling political elite and the PI, it seems that the Imperialism Front is the main player in this game.
- Accordingly, the Imperialist campaign against PI is a tactic.

Marxist-Leninists can not stop at contending that the PI will fail to offer a solution to the crisis. While this is true, it is dangerous to sit and wait. Nobody knows when or how long that might take.

A radical social, economic and political program by the Marxists is more than essential to mobilize the masses towards development, gender equality, democracy, Arab unity, the Liberation of Palestine, etc.

References:

- Amin, Samir – *Delinking: Towards a Polycentric World*, Zed Books, 1990, London.
- Hijazi, Hussein – An Interview with Dr. Mahmoud al Zahar, a political leader of Hamas in Gaza Strip. In *Dirasat Filistiniah Magazine*, Issue #20 fall, 194, pp 87-97.
- Brieger, Pedro – “The image of Islam has been Distorted” Interview with Rashid al Ghanouchi. *News From Within*, N° 6, June 1995.
- Qotb, Sayid – *Ma’alem A’ala al Tariq*.
- Samara, Adel – *(Al demokratiah, wal Islam al Siyasi wal Yasar)* Democracy, Political Islam and the Left. Published by al Zahara Research Center, Jerusalem & Ramallah, 1994.

- Shimodi, Ada – The Islamic Movement in Israel, in News from Within, March 1995, pp 12.
- Wannas, al Munsef – (*al Dawlah al Wataniah wal Mujtama'a al Madani fil Jazayer*) The National State and the Civil Society in Algeria. *Al Mustaqbal al Arabi Magazine*, Issue # 191, 1995, pp 104-117.
- Zenin, Noureldein, in Kana'an, Issue # 63, March 1995.

@@@@

ABBREVIATIONS

A.H Arab Homeland. F.I.S. Islamic Salvation Front. I.D.O Internalization of Defeat. I.Z.A.C.I.C. Imperialist Zionist Arab Comprador Iqlimi Capitalism. P.I. Political Islam.

P2

in fact, the natural heir of the defeated progressive nationalist regimes. The new class directly made its compradoric U turn which prohibited it from having a large social base. It became a political elite protected by a repressive police apparatus.

Thorough its transforamtion from the productive nationalist regime to a comprador the ruling (capitalist comprador) class tried to expand its base and coalition with the PI. Imperialism facilitated and supported this alliance, and adopted a flexible position towards PI.

The US imperialism encouraged Sadat regims¹ tactic of assuming Islamic inclination, while Israel gave lip service to the PI in the Occupied Territories.(see below).

P26

social crisis by dominating the political power,
not adopting a radical social program. It
started to compete with the political elite in the
power level, not in the
social program level

p40

--

In their open rejection to Arab unity, the PI groups in fact support and facilitated the mission of the enemies of the Arab masses, They supported:

- * The Arab secessionist regimes who, in order to stay in power would go to war to keep the Arab countries fragmented ;
- * Zionism , whose goal in the Arab Homeland and Middle East is to keep the Arabs in two dozens countries;
- * finally, Imperialism and its goal of perpetuating the Arab fragmentation and thus continue to control their wealth.

After a long struggle between the nationalist Arab bourgeoisie regimes who's aspirations were to achieve unity, development & the liberation of Palestine through continuous

movement in 1967.

It should be noted here that, the 1967 aggression against Egypt was motivated by the Imperialist fear that Nasser's army that was in Yemen at that time was very close to the oil wells in Arabia. This explains why the Iraqi army was beaten in Kuwait.

When Sadat came to power in Egypt, he made a U turn for the sake of both Imperialism and PI. When the Nationalist Arab regimes were defeated by the Imperialist and Zionist project in 1967, the productive capitalist factions left the stage for the sake of the comprador. In Egypt, it was represented by Anwar al Sadat, who adopted the "Open Door policy", and announced that all the cards of the Arab Israeli struggle are in the hands of the United States. This readiness of the defeated regimes

controllable PI in the oil countries, became uncontrollable in other Arab countries, and under regimes like Egypt and Algeria. This phenomenon is related to the socio-economic situation in the Arab countries and is expanding to other Arab countries, Tunisia, Morocco

co, Yemen and even some Arab oil countries, Bahrain and Oman. In Sudan, a military form of PI is in power.

The position of these PI movement towards Imperialism is not clear and it is different from place to place.

In general, there are three main currents inside the active PI in the Arab countries:

First: The current of Moslem Brotherhood which started in Egypt in the 1920s, and spread to other Arab and Islamic countries. Until today, it is the only "international" Islamic party.

Second: Jihad current, which endorses and

power supported by US Imperialism.

The most important development in that context was that the Arab ruling comprador capitalists reached the point of Internazation of the Defeat (IOD)

. During the period between 1967 & 1990, the IOD has extended to include large sections of

the Arab liberation movement (mainly the Nationalist and communist factions) which paved the way for a new ideology. This level of IOD became clear during the Imperialist invasion of Iraq. While the Arab masses stood firmly against the invasion, the political parties which should've mobilized the masses against the police of the regimes, were absent at best or supported the regimes' policies.

Today, the situation became more complicated. The IZACIC is now fighting

P62

led the PI to restore to an extreme methods to reach power, as it is in Egypt and Algeria • It should also be noted that both Egypt and Algeria are good examples for understanding PI in the Arab Homeland. The similarity of the two regimes there grounded similar tactics of the PI in the two countries.

The regimes in both countries, are considered seculars. In fact, even their secularity reached a dead end.

Secularism is never measured by the distance between state and religion. It is measured by the ability of the state to provide for the people real development and drastic change in life. In time of prosperity, and revolution, (Nasser in Egypt and Bu Median in Algeria) PI retreated in both countries for the sake of ordinary Islam.

P69

The failure to transform societies in the two countries to socialism, the corruption of Sadat and Chazl i clique s burdened by other crises of the regimes ended in blocked development, blocked secularism, and even blocked capitalist development which if

achieved could have provided the society with political democracy. The blocked development and blocked secularism gave PI a pretext to charge the progressive Nationalist regimes with infidelity (Ilhad). Today, the present regimes in Algeria and Egypt carry the burden of that accusation. It should be noted here that even though Pi's opposition in Egypt is directed against the ruling political elite, it is not against their external relationship with Imperialism. The PI reached the point where they consider that the whole society became infidel "kafer", or

P70

it has been "Kafer" for a long period of time. This explains why these groups separated themselves from other members of the society. They gathered in the University of Ain Shams, preparing to start their campaign to the rest of the society. The rigidity of their principles led them to isolation in a special place, and even to wear certain dress code.

"Hijra" in fact, had its roots in Islamic society, which is the Mosque. In the Mosque, the PI followers find their sanctuary which separates them from the rest of the society. They separate themselves five times a day from the society, then go back after being spiritually charged. The Mosque is the place to train people for the large Hijra.

P71

the academic evaluation of the outsiders and the self-proclaimed "Experts". The difference between the explanation of those outsiders and the reality of the streets is so vast, it is pathetic. Dependency on the analysis of others about our own situation should come to an end.

At the same time, the fierce struggle of the PI against the imperialist settlement should not deviate the left from developing a concrete evaluation of this movement.

It is clear that an alliance with the PI is not easily possible, at least not without a fatal dangers. This in addition to the fact that PI themselves are against any alliance with others especially the left Their alliance is decided according to their influence in each position. When and where they are strong enough they hesitate or ignore any

