

The organizational structure and membership of al-Ikhwān are dealt with in chapter twelve. Very little is said about *usrah* organization and activities. *Jawlah* training and its organizational structure and the impact of Sufism on al-Bannā are also not attended to.

The book, as rightly described by the author, provides an insight about the shortcomings that many movements could face during the course of their struggle. It suffers from various typographical errors, especially in the references. The bibliography also needs to be rearranged according to bibliographic rules.

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Political System of Islam

Political System of Islam, by Lukman Thaib. Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Amal, 1994. Pp. 184.

Lukman Thaib's book addresses a variety of topics, including political legitimacy, the Islamic state, the position of non-Muslims and women in public offices, political parties, electoral politics and nationalism. Thus this book, is a collection of essays on various aspects of Islamic political system.

The first chapter deals with the legitimacy of state in Islam. Most of the discussion, however, deals with the migration of the Prophet (SAS) and his companions to al-Madīnah and the consequent establishment of the first Islamic state there. Curiously absent from this discussion, as from the whole book, is any mention of the Constitution of al-Madīnah. The second chapter is devoted to the objectives of the Islamic state. It needs to be emphasized that the objectives of Islamic state constitute the basis of its legitimacy.

In the two succeeding chapters, the author discusses the legitimacy of political authority and sovereignty in Islam. He uses these concepts to mean the "right to rule," but at times they are used to refer to "those in authority." This conceptual confusion is compounded by the author's interchangeable use of "political authority," "political power," and

"sovereignty." To him, authority is the right to rule whereas power is the supreme legitimate force (p. 33). Similarly, the term *legitimacy*, which appears in Chapter 3 (though its use began in chapter 1), suffers from inconsistency. Needless to say, conceptual clarification is essential for a presentation of Islamic perspectives on the political system of Islam.

The author's discussion of what he calls the "notion of political parties in Islamic political thought" has some major problems. First, nowhere has he defined the concept of political party. Second, he ignores the fact that Islam does not permit the grouping of people simply for the sake of capturing power, which is what the political parties in the West aim at. Finally, the author is of the opinion that political parties are compatible with Islam and needed in the Islamic state for two reasons: to safeguard the *sharīah*-approved rights of the individual and to promote democracy. However, he does not explain why political parties, in particular, are needed for safeguarding *sharīah*-based rights, nor does he provide any argument for the convergence of Islam and conventional democratic thought.

One of the most important chapters in the book is the one on nationalism and Islam. This is certainly a very important topic, albeit a controversial one. Having presented various definitions, the author turns to the issue of reconciling nationalism with Islam. He concludes that the "original idea of Ummah" is not applicable in the twentieth century (p. 138) and recommends, as he puts it, a dynamic interpretation of Islam to reconcile it with nationalism (p. 140). In view of the significance of the issue, any effort to address it is commendable. However, the author should have done more to better address the issue. He should have discussed the opinions of more scholars, not simply those of scholars from the Indian subcontinent.

Another very important topic addressed in the book is *shūrā*. Mainly juristic and historical, the discussion here lacks minimal political analysis. The significance of *shūrā* has not been analysed and its relationship to democracy not spelled out. Curiously enough, the word *democracy* is not even mentioned in this chapter despite the author's contention in an earlier chapter that Islam and democracy have a common ground.

The chapter on the regulation of electoral campaigns provides some guidelines for comparative politics. The basis for these guidelines is the author's argument that popular elections are compatible with *Sharīah*. To further support his argument, he cites Muhammad Asad's assertion that in complex societies popular consultation can only take the form of

elections (p. 86). However, Muhammad Asad¹ does not endorse self-cavassing, a distinctive feature of competitive electoral campaigns, for elective offices. In other words, there is a need to discuss various elements of the electoral system by referring to the so-called Islamic constitutional theory, which is repeatedly mentioned in this chapter but never explained.

In his chapter on the eligibility of non-Muslims for the membership of the *majlis al-shūrā*, the author is quite ambivalent. He points out that although non-Muslims are to be trusted with public offices for which they are qualified, public policy-making positions should be assigned only to Muslims (p. 101). He cites the Qur'ān (4:59) to support the latter point. Elsewhere, however, he argues that non-Muslims are eligible for membership of a *majlis al-shūrā* and for participation in its decision-making processes (pp. 106 -107). This contradicts the previous point, as it implies that membership in a *majlis al-shūrā* is not a public policy-making position.

Apart from this ambivalence, the author also fails to consider an important point regarding the eligibility of non-Muslims for public administrative positions. He endorses this eligibility since, as he indicates, the only recruitment criterion should be one's competence. However, one of the indisputable facts in the real world of public policy-making is that public administrators do make public policy. This implies, in the light of the author's argument, that non-Muslims would not qualify for any public offices in the Islamic state.

The chapter on the eligibility of women for public office also suffers from the same ambivalence, albeit to a lesser degree. Here the author argues that women are as eligible as men for public office, including membership in a *majlis al-shūrā*. However, he is not clear on women playing a leadership role in public affairs. After indicating the doubtful authenticity, as he puts it, of the prophetic tradition which disapproves of woman leadership in the public affairs of Muslims, he does not draw any conclusion nor does he make any further point in regard to the issue of women's leadership in public office.

To conclude, the book should be commended for addressing many important concepts from an Islamic perspective. However, it fails to delineate the basic ingredients of the system, particularly those that are uniquely or distinctively Islamic, and it contains no discussion of government, its functions, or its branches, and the relationship among these branches. Curiously enough, the author consistently fails to distinguish between state and government. Finally, the text is replete

with too many and quite lengthy quotations, and is also fraught with numerous proof-reading errors. A little more attention to these details would have improved the readability of the book.

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Notes

1. Muhammad Asad, *The Principles of State and Government in Islam* (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1980).

A Correction

In the article "The Failure of Muslim Reformation: 'Jadidism' in Eastern Europe" by Atallah Bogdan Kopanski, in volume 2, issue 2 of *Intellectual Discourse*, there was a statement that the Kazakh were formerly called Kara (Black) Kyrgyz and the Kyrgyz themselves were called Ak (White) Kyrgyz. In fact the reverse is true: the Kazakh were once called Ak Kyrgyz, and the Kyrgyz were called Kara Kyrgyz. This error was made by *ID* staff, and not by Dr. Kopanski.

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