

Islamic Awakening and Its Role in Islamic Solidarity in Egypt: Contribution of the Muslim Brotherhood

Saodah Abd. Rahman*

Abu Sadat Nurullah**

Abstract

Islamic revivalism led to the development of Islamic awakening throughout the Muslim world by uniting the Muslim society. In the process of liberating the Muslim countries from the colonists, all Muslims, including the traditionalists and secularists, felt the necessity of unity. Historically, Islamic awakening brought about the spirit of establishing principles of Islam in all affairs of the country, including the establishment of an Islamic state and the implementation of Islamic laws. In the case of Egypt, the Islamic awakening resulted in the emergence of three distinct Muslim groups, namely moderate Muslims, secularists, and radicals. This paper concentrates on the moderate Muslims, because in our view they are able to successfully incorporate Islamic principles at the grass root level. The Islamic organization, i.e. the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*), was established by the moderate Muslims and are actively involved in social services and charity activities.

Key Words: Revivalism, spiritual nourishment, Islamic state, *ijtihad*, welfare, education, *Shari'ah*.

Abstrak

Kebangkitan Islam telah membawa kepada teretusnya gelombang kebangkitan kesedaran Islam di seluruh pelusuk dunia Islam yang menyatukan penganut-penganutnya dengan satu suara. Dalam proses memerdekakan negara-negara Islam dari cengkaman penjajahan, kesemua orang Islam samada di kalangan pendukung fahaman tradisi dan sekular mersakan betapa perlunya mereka untuk bersatu. Dari segi sejarahnya, gelombang kesedaran Islam telah membawa kepada terasasnya prinsip-prinsip keIslaman dalam semua aspek kehidupan dalam sesebuah negara; di antaranya ialah agenda penubuhan negara Islam dan pelaksanaan undang-undang Islam. Dalam konteks Mesir, gelombang kesedaran ini telah melahirkan beberapa kumpulan-kumpulan Islam yang mempunyai latar belakang yang jelas berbeza-golongan sederhana, golongan sekular dan golongan radikal. Kajian ini tertumpu kepada golongan yang sederhana, kerana, pada pendapat kami, mereka adalah yang paling berjaya dalam memasukkan nilai-nilai Islam hinggalah ke peringkar akar umbi. Di antara kumpulan yang tergolong di dalam kategori ini ialah Ikhwan Muslimin yang ditubuhkan oleh kumpulan berfahaman sederhana yang amat aktif terlibat dalam kerja-kerja kemasyarakatan dan kebajikan.

Kata kunci: Fahaman kebangkitan, pengkayaan rohani, negaraIslam, *ijtihad*, kabajikan, pendidikan, *Syariah*.

* Assistant Professor, Department of Usuluddin and Comparative Religion, International Islamic University Malaysia.

** PhD student, Department of Sociology, University of Alberta, Canada.

Introduction

This study explores the role of Islamic awakening for the establishment and advancement of Islamic solidarity in Egypt. It highlights the accomplishment of Islamic awakening in Egypt based on a tri-dimensional perspective, i.e. socio-economic well-being, strength of the expansion of Islamic education, and political stability. The key argument is based on the assertion that Islamic movements have been successful in establishing Islamic solidarity among people.

There are many Islamic movements in Egypt which play very important role for Islamic awakening. One of those movements is the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*), which was founded by Ḥasan al-Bannā in 1928. The model of this movement was later widely adopted in most part of the world because of its widespread success. Therefore, it is vital to understand the historical background which paved the way for the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The European colonial domination in Egypt had enormous impact on the culture and religious values among people. With the construction of the Suez Canal and the rapid transformation of communication and infrastructure, Egypt was exposed to European economic modernization. The political and economic domination of Europe was accompanied by the cultural imperialism visible in the political leaders and wealthy elite of Egypt who adopted Western values and ideology without regard for following Islamic principles.¹ According to David Commins, “the political climate surrounding Bannā’s early years of social awareness was marked by foreign domination and resistance to it.”² This secular environment predominant at that time motivated Ḥasan al-Bannā to form an organization capable of reinforcing Islamic values and principles among people in Egypt. His ideas have transformed numerous other Islamic movements to advance their actions and devise practical mechanisms for the implementation of Islamic principles in a comprehensive way.

The Muslim Brotherhood grew rapidly and its branches spread over Arab and African countries, including Syria, Jordan, Sudan, Algeria, Palestine, Morocco, and Tunisia.³ By the late 1940s there were estimated two

¹David Commins, “Hasan al-Banna,” in *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, edited by Ali Rahnama (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1994), p. 126.

²Ibid.

³Rafiq Zakaria, *The Struggle within Islam: The Conflict between Religion and Politics* (London: The Penguin Group, 1988), p. 185.

thousand branches of the Muslim Brotherhood with five hundred thousand members in the North African and Arab countries.⁴

Islamic Awakening in Egypt

The key factor in the emergence of the Islamic awakening in Egypt was the establishment of Islamic organizations. In this paper, our focus is on Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*), which was the first to strengthen Islamic solidarity among common Muslims in Egypt. The intelligence of Ḥasan al-Bannā in drawing up the policy of the Muslim Brotherhood which was based on Islamic teachings, together with its structure of activities, especially in welfare and social programs, led the Muslim Brotherhood to be one of the most powerful organizations in Egypt. Through his observation of the social, political and religious environment, he built the ideological structure of the Muslim Brotherhood. He indicated various aims of the organization's activities, which include *salafī*, *ṣūfī*, cultural, social, physical and economic aspects and political activities.⁵

Although Ḥasan al-Bannā was only twenty-two years old when he established the Muslim Brotherhood and was not then a *mujtahid*, he clearly demonstrated his ability to set up a systematic organization.⁶ The prudence and tolerance of Ḥasan al-Bannā in dealing with the community made him become one of the most prominent religious leaders among Muslim societies. The third Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood 'Umar al-Tilmisānī claimed that he joined the organization because he was deeply impressed by the words and personality of Ḥasan al-Bannā. Although Ḥasan al-Bannā followed the way of the Islamic reformers Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad 'Abduh and Rashīd Ridā, he was more successful in constructing ideas for the development of Egyptian society, especially in spreading a political consciousness among the middle and lower classes.⁷

In order to show that the Muslim Brotherhood was an authentic organization, Ḥasan al-Bannā tried to avoid any contradiction between his doctrine and the teachings of al-Azhar. The Azharites showed great respect

⁴Munson, *Islam and Revolution in the Middle East*, p. 77.

⁵Iyasa Ade Bello, "The Society of the Muslim Brethren: An Ideological Study," in *Islamic Studies*, 20(2), (1981), p.112; and see also Eric Davis, "The Concept of Revival and the Study of Islam and Politics," in *The Islamic Impulse*, edited by Barbara and Frayer Stowasser (London: Croom Helm, 1987), p. 47; Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 14.

⁶Kenneth Cragg, *Counsels in Contemporary Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1965), p. 113; Majid Khadduri, *Political Trends in the Arab World: The Role of Ideas and Ideal in Politics* (London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), p. 74.

⁷Davis, *The Concept of Revival and the Study of Islam and Politics*, p. 47.

for him and his works because his teachings were full of strength and his ideas of Islam were much more vital than the saint worshipping cults.⁸ Anwar Sadat noted the outstanding personality of Ḥasan al-Bannā and his systematic organization by saying:

He (Ḥasan al-Bannā) was indeed qualified from all points of view, to be a religious leader. Besides, he was a true Egyptian, good humored, decent and tolerant.... The man spoke of worldly as well as other-worldly matters, using a style quite uncommon among religious preachers. My admiration was unbounded. I was struck by the perfect organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, and by respect even extraordinary reverence which the Supreme Guide commanded. Members of the Muslim Brotherhood hallowed him.⁹

The objectives of the Muslim Brotherhood were: 1. to participate in general welfare and services of the society whenever conditions allowed; 2. to affirm the growth of national prosperity; 3. to promote universal peace and humanitarian civilization based on Islamic principles; 4. to liberate the Muslim world from colonization; 5. to reestablish an Islamic state in the Muslim countries; 6. to unify Egypt and other Islamic nations based on Islamic principles; 7. to strengthen the Muslim nations by advocating and practicing Islamic morals and laws; 8. to reform the structure of society and rulers by modifying and altering them according to the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* of the Prophet; 9. to provide a precise explanation of the Qur'ān, which is applicable for all time and in all places by referring to its origins and its universal elements; and 10. to help the Muslim minorities by establishing a Muslim League.¹⁰

The Muslim Brotherhood called for the unification of the Muslim world and the oneness of its rule and government in order to reestablish an Islamic caliphate as a symbol of Muslim unity. They called upon Muslims to struggle hard for full independence from the governments which refuse to follow the teachings of Islam and implement them in the state.¹¹ Ḥasan al-Bannā asserted that as a way of establishing a free nation, Muslim countries should

⁸Ibid., pp. 34-35.

⁹Anwar el Sadat, *In Search of Identity: An Autobiography* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1977), p. 22.

¹⁰Maḥmūd 'Abd al-Ḥalīm, *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn* (Iskandariyyah: Dār al-Da'wah lil-Tib'ī wal-Nashr wal-Tawzi', n.d., vol. 2), p. 377; see also A. Z. al-Abidin, "The Political Thought of Hasan al-Banna," in *Hamdard Islamicus*, 11(3), (Autumn 1988), p. 58.

¹¹Tariq al-Mahdawi, *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn 'ala Madhbih al-Munāwarah 1928-1986* (Beirut: Dar al-Azal lil Tiba'ah wal-Nashr al-Tawzi', 1986, vol.1), pp. 21-22.

be liberated. A free Islamic state should be formed based on Islamic laws. All of the corrupting factors can be liquidated under the Islamic order.¹²

Ḥasan al-Bannā emphasized that he was happy when Muslim countries obtained their freedom, although it was on pure nationalist bases.¹³ However, he accepted nationalism only in the sense of collective struggle of a Muslim nation opposing foreign domination.¹⁴ Although the Muslim Brotherhood called for national revolution, they did not support revolutionary change in the ruling system. They believed that the ruling system should be changed through an evolutionary process.¹⁵

The Muslim Brotherhood tried to retain the policy of evolutionary action of the ruling system even though some of its members opposed it. Its third Supreme Guide ‘Umar al-Tilmisānī emphasized that “only through gradual change can the community accept Islam as the basis of its economic, social, legal, and political structure.”¹⁶ According to Ḥasan al-Bannā, political parties should be abolished and replaced by the universality of the Islamic system and principles.¹⁷ He said: “Islam regulates the affairs of this life and the hereafter. It is an all-embracing religion, a religion of peace and brotherhood and of sincere collaboration, but one cannot approve of party politics.”¹⁸

Ḥasan al-Bannā noted that the weaknesses of Western systems which had been imposed on the Muslim world encouraged some Muslim intellectuals to consider the reestablishment of Islamic system among Muslim societies. He observed that the emergence of Islamic movements, particularly in the Arab world caused fear in governments. As a way of defending their authority and power, they tried to convince the society that Islamic system was unable to solve national problems. They were of the view that Islamic organizations were extremists and brought fanaticism and inertia.¹⁹

¹²Henry Munson Jr., *Islam and Revolution in the Middle East* (London: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 76-77.

¹³Al-Abidin, *The Political Thought of Hasan al-Banna*, p. 58.

¹⁴Alan R. Taylor, *The Islamic Question in Middle East Politics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), p. 56.

¹⁵Al-Mahdawi, *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, p. 22.

¹⁶Quoted by Amira Sonbol el-Azhary, “Egypt,” in *The Politics of Islamic Revivalism*, edited by Shireen T. Hunter (Washington: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 1988), p. 30.

¹⁷Cragg, *Counsels in Contemporary Islam*, p. 115.

¹⁸Quoted in Khadduri, *Political Trends in the Arab World*, p. 76.

¹⁹Hasan al-Banna, “Renaissance in the Islamic World,” in *Political and Social Thought in the Contemporary Middle East*, ed. Kemal H. Karpat (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), pp. 98-99.

In an attempt to avoid any manipulation of the Muslim Brotherhood by the government, Ḥasan al-Bannā emphasized that his organization was not an extremist group. It was not established as a result of present political and economic pressure, but it grew out of three main causes: 1. the failure of Western systems in building up spiritual nourishment; 2. the perfection of Islam; and 3. the development of social conditions in the countries which adopted certain policies, such as democracy, socialism, and communism.²⁰

Ḥasan al-Bannā said that the materialistic way of life which had been adopted by the Western world could not bring spiritual comfort; instead it led to the degradation of moral status, egotism, class conflict, and the disintegration of the family.²¹ In his view, Western civilization was materialistic in character, contrasting with the spirituality of early Christianity which appealed to Sufism.²² He stressed that Western materialistic culture which had been exported to Muslim countries through education, political, economic, and social systems led to the emasculation of Muslim personality. He pointed to Turkey as a good example of a Muslim country, which accepted and implemented the Western way of life and declared itself a secular state.²³ Ḥasan al-Bannā observed:

(After the World War II) ... there was an increase in spiritual and ideological disintegration in the name of intellectual freedom. There was also a deterioration of behavior, morals, and deeds in the name of individual freedom.... I saw that the social life of the beloved Egyptian nation was oscillating between her dear and precious Islamic way which she had inherited, defended, lived with, and became accustomed to,... and this severe Western invasion which is alarmed and equipped with all the destructive and degenerative influence of money, wealth, prestige, ostentation, material enjoyment, power, and means of propaganda.²⁴

The Muslim Brotherhood insisted that Islam is the only religion which can solve the spiritual and moral problems. Islam provided a system which can bring freedom, equality and justice for all mankind. It can solve social, economic and political problems. It also can build a spirit of brotherhood and social morality.²⁵ The Muslim Brotherhood emphasized that all systems which have been practiced by Muslims and non-Muslims in the world today

²⁰Ibid., pp. 98-101.

²¹Al-Banna, *Renaissance in the Islamic World*, p. 99.

²²Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Al-Rasā'il al-Thalath* (Cairo: Dār al-Ṭiba'ah wal-Nashr al-Islāmiyyah, n. d.), p. 101.

²³Al-Abidin, *The Political Thought of Hasan al-Banna*, p. 57.

²⁴Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Mudhakkirāt al-Da'wa waAl-Dā'iyah*, quoted and translated by C. Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt: The Role of the Muslim Brotherhood* (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1964), pp. 43-44, 146.

²⁵Khadduri, *Political Trends in the Arab World*, p. 77.

are secular in nature and pay little or no attention to religion. All these systems, according to them, will fall into error because they are not established on a religious basis.²⁶ Ḥasan al-Bannā said that although communism could reinforce the equality of nations, it destroyed family structure and brought about dictatorship.²⁷ In addition, the democratic system could not be safe from anarchy, and freedom of thought could not be guaranteed in it.²⁸

Ḥasan al-Bannā stressed that Egyptian society, with its political, economic, and social systems, should be based on Islamic principles.²⁹ In his view, the weakness of Islamic society could only be solved by reforming the hearts and souls of the Muslims and by practicing the teachings of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ).³⁰ Ḥasan al-Bannā pointed out several factors which emasculated Muslims from the time of the Abbasid caliphate to the nineteenth century. They were: 1. the divergence of political power among Muslims, and the struggle for power and wealth; 2. the emergence of sectarian classes; 3. the corruption of Muslim rulers; 4. the transference of political power from the Arabs to the non-Arabs, such as Persians and Turks who, he claimed, did not understand the Qur'ān; 5. the negligence of Muslims in the study of practical disciplines and cosmic knowledge, and instead attending to philosophical theories; 6. the belief among Muslims about their power and its consequences on the political and social developments of other nations; 7. the failure of Muslims to observe and practice the Islamic way of life, especially its ethics.³¹

According to Ḥasan al-Bannā, the major mistake made by Muslims was that they neglected to adopt useful knowledge from the West, such as science and technology which could help to develop Muslim countries.³² He regretted that some Muslims did not understand Islam accurately; thus, they could not see Islam as a complete code of life. He added that some Muslim scholars, who were brought up in secular education, completely adopted foreign economic systems because they did not realize that Islam has provided an

²⁶Ibid., p. 79.

²⁷Al-Banna, *Renaissance in the Islamic World*, p. 101.

²⁸Ibid., p. 100-102.

²⁹Adrienne L. Edgar, "The Islamic Opposition in Egypt: Orthodoxy Versus Subculture, or Division of Labor?," in *The Muslim World*, 78(3-4), (July/October 1988), pp. 189-208.

³⁰John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), p. 175.

³¹Al-Abidin, *The Political Thought of Hasan al-Banna*, p. 57.

³²Ibid.

ideal and perfect economic system for mankind.³³ In order to show that Islam is a complete code of life, the Muslim Brotherhood tried to reconcile Islam with the modern world. They redefined economic, political and social organizations based on Muslim ethos and incorporated them into Islam.³⁴ They practiced *ijtihād* (effort of research and interpretation) as a way of freeing themselves from the grip of a short sighted traditionalism.

Ḥasan al-Bannā observed that although the Egyptian constitution stated that the religion of the country was Islam, this was not really implemented by the government. The laws which were imposed by the government contrasted with the Islamic tenet, such as allowing the practice of gambling and fornication (*zinā*), and *ribā* (interest).³⁵ The Muslim Brotherhood claimed that the Egyptian constitution has failed to explain distinctly that ultimate responsibility rested with the nation. The Egyptian ruling system, according to them, is unsuccessful in achieving the principle of the unity of the nation.³⁶ In order to solve social problems, Ḥasan al-Bannā demanded that the Egyptian government should immediately implement imperative laws for the perfection of good manners and character, and the Islamic faith.

The Muslim Brotherhood drew on three primary principles of Islamic sovereignty which should be observed and fulfilled by the government. These were the principles of representation, unity of the nation, and national will. They emphasized that an Islamic government must be a representative and responsive to the will of the nation. In their view, the rulers are not masters of the people, but their servants, to ensure that Allah's order and law are carried out. They add that Muslims must constitute one nation.

Ḥasan al-Bannā was dissatisfied with the extreme competition among politicians. He called for the leaders and authorities of the country to stop contending with one another.³⁷ He warned the members of the Muslim Brotherhood to protect the organization from the patronage of rich and notable people. It should be maintained as an organization independent of political parties. Ḥasan al-Bannā also suggested that the government should implement certain laws and preside over the economic life of the society in order to develop the prosperity of the community and to preserve the interest of the individuals on an equitable basis.

The Muslim Brotherhood asserted that the Egyptian system failed to solve economic problems. All economic systems which have been imposed

³³Khadduri, *Political Trends in the Arab World*, p. 82.

³⁴Al-Banna, *Renaissance in the Islamic World*, p. 98.

³⁵Khadduri, *Political Trends in the Arab World*, pp. 80-81.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 80-81.

³⁷Ibid., p. 77.

by the government depressed the poor and led to the emergence of the working class population and corruption of the government. According to them, the economic profits were exploited by foreigners and Egypt's elites. The Muslim Brotherhood raised the issue of the despotism of monopoly of companies which are not concerned with advantages and benefits of the public.³⁸ They criticized the exploitation of foreign companies in the Egyptian economy. In Ḥasan al-Bannā's view, foreign firms gained huge profits in Egypt by controlling trade, industry, monetary institutions and public services, such as electricity, water supply, and transport. He also claimed that the tight control of foreign companies in the Egyptian economy, and the misdistribution of wealth resulted in more than half a million unemployed people in Egypt.³⁹ Ḥasan al-Bannā criticized the religious institutions in Muslim countries by saying that they were passive and did not fulfill their duty as the religious authority of the state. They had practiced expediency and became slaves of worldly ambitions. Therefore, they became the target of criticism of the majority of Muslim secularists who were among the educated class.⁴⁰

The Muslim Brotherhood was more open than other Islamic groups in recruiting women as members of the organization. Ḥasan al-Bannā emphasized that the role of women in Islam is very important. Therefore, they should be educated together with men in order to establish an ideal society.⁴¹ Based on this view, the Muslim Brotherhood established schools for girls and special programs for women. The Muslim Brotherhood was the first to promote the study-circle system (*halaqah*) for the promotion of Islamic understanding and discussion.

The social environment in Egypt helped the success and influence of the Muslim Brotherhood among the middle and lower classes and poor. Before the revolution of July 1952, the gap between the elites and the masses was very wide. The elites controlled all economic and administrative matters. Therefore, the Muslim Brotherhood focused its activities on setting up economic programs and social welfare for the middle and lower classes. For instance, they collected tithes and alms based on Islamic legislation for the purpose of charity and welfare, such as setting up orphanages and asylums for old and disabled people. When they established a branch it was often followed by the creation of projects, such as schools, *masājid*, medical

³⁸Manfred Halpern, *The Politics and Social Change in Middle East and North Africa* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 114.

³⁹Al-Abidin, *The Political Thought of Hasan al-Banna*, pp. 62-63.

⁴⁰Shaukat Ali, *Master of Muslim Thought* (Lahore: Aziz Publisher, 1983, vol.2), p. 565.

⁴¹Abd al-Ḥalīm, *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, p. 252.

treatments, halls, and small home industries. They built cemeteries for the poor and provided food for them during the fasting month. They also established commercial companies, such as printing, spinning, weaving and engineering.

They also had investment companies. One of these companies is al-Rayyān, which established nurseries, schools, medical clinics, restaurants, and publishing houses. In the mid-1980s, it was reported by the press that the Islamic investment companies belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood owned between US\$5 and US\$15 billion dollars. Although the government tried to spread propaganda against these companies including al-Rayyān, it failed to topple the credibility of these companies. In fact, the services offered by these companies were better than the government organizations.

Before 1936, the Muslim Brotherhood was well-known as a social and welfare organization. It focused more on religious preaching, moral laxity, metaphysical matters, educational and economic enterprises, and spreading the ideas of the organization.⁴² However, by 1938 the Muslim Brotherhood had appeared as a political organization. Their organization showed clearly its interest in political activity by launching a weekly political magazine called *al-Nadhīr*. Ḥasan al-Bannā convinced the members of the Muslim Brotherhood that politics is a part of Islam because government is also included in Islam.⁴³ He emphasized that those who claim that Islam is not related to politics do not understand the real meaning of Islam.⁴⁴ Bannā did not call for the overthrow of Egypt's current political order; rather, he wanted to reform it.⁴⁵

From about 1992, the government again resorted repressive measures to stem the Brotherhood's increasing influence. In 1995 and 1996, more than thousand brothers were arrested. At the same time, the government directed a huge media campaign against the Brotherhood, accusing it of being a terrorist group. This reaction can be explained as an effort to stave off a nonviolent popular challenge to the regime's power, by preventing the Brotherhood from participating in elections.⁴⁶ After a period of soul-searching and retrenchment, the Brotherhood made a comeback in recent years, as its middle-generation leaders became more influential within the organization. In 2000, the Brotherhood won 17 seats despite the government's strenuous

⁴² Al-Abidin, *The Political Thought of Hasan al-Banna*, p. 64.

⁴³ Al-Bannā, *Mudhakkirāt al-Da'wah wa'l-Dā'iyah*, p. 143.

⁴⁴ Khadduri, *Political Trends in the Arab World*, p. 79.

⁴⁵ Commins, *Hasan al-Banna*, p. 137.

⁴⁶ History of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, see online http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Muslim_Brotherhood_in_Egypt

media campaign against it and the arrest of its several candidates shortly before the vote. In recent years, the Brotherhood has frequently called for greater democracy in the Middle East. The Muslim Brothers believe that the Western governments are one of the main reasons for the lack of democracy in the region because they support dictatorship in the Arab and Islamic region, despite the fact that it has been proved that the absence of democracy and freedom is the reason for terrorism and violence.⁴⁷

In summary, the Muslim Brotherhood was successful in bringing Islamic solidarity in Egyptian society by creating an Islamic awakening through an organized and systematic way. The mastermind behind this movement was Ḥasan al-Bannā, who was able to effectively mobilize the organization to become a success and to be emulated by numerous other organizations all over the world. A scholar has noted that to understand Banna's impact on modern Muslim history, one must try to imagine the magnetism of his personality, ability to inspire and lead by example, which continue to resonate in Muslims' lives.⁴⁸ Finally, the Brotherhood differs from admonitory precedents, its road to power is not revolutionary; it depends on winning hearts through gradual and peaceful Islamization.⁴⁹

The thought of Ḥasan al-Bannā was partially influenced by several other Muslim intellectuals, including Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad 'Abduh, and Rashīd Riḍā. Afghānī emphasizes on *waṭan* (national homeland) by saying that the national education begins with homeland and ends with homeland.⁵⁰ Thus, his pan-Islamism never undervalued the local nationalists. It also assimilated the modern scientific values into Islam. Although Afghānī saw the West as a threat to Islam, he did not deny that the development of the West is something to be followed as a model. He strongly convinced the Muslims to practice reason and technology as par with the West to develop themselves.⁵¹ Afghānī devoted himself sincerely to the missionary zeal. The Pan-Islamic movement shifted from Tangier to Damascus and thus introduced new ideas to the Arab civilization. Countries like Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan were created by the French and British after World War

⁴⁷International Crisis Group (ICG). Islamism in North Africa II: Egypt's Opportunity (Cairo/Brussels: International Crisis Group, 20 April 2004). See online <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=2619&l=1>

⁴⁸Commins, Hasan al-Banna, p. 150.

⁴⁹Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke, "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood," in *Foreign Affairs*, 86(2), (Mar/Apr2007), pp. 107-119.

⁵⁰Asghar Ali Engineer, *The Islamic State* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1980), pp. 92-93.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 96.

I.⁵² As a result, the need for unity among the Arabs became strong. Afghānī saw pan-Islamism as an important method to forge unity among Muslims and to present a solid front to the imperialism of the West.⁵³

Muḥammad ‘Abduh was the most trusted follower of Afghānī. He was influenced by the thoughts of Afghānī. In a book by Mahmudul Haq, he stated that Muḥammad ‘Abduh equipped the minds of the Muslims to accept modern science and rationalism, and contributed to the understanding of the development of modern Islamic reformation in the Muslim world. Afghānī was very much in the leading position of the political reformation in Egypt, which was aimed against British and Turkish rulings.⁵⁴ Afghānī was not a blind imitator of the West. He did not declare the idea of dividing society into two compartments: the profane and the holy. He stood for the reinterpretation of the laws of *Sharī‘ah* that change according to the conditions and widened the scope of Westernization. ‘Abduh held the view that it was not necessary to follow the Prophet’s opinion in worldly affairs in reference to the saying of the Prophet that when He gave a command in daily matters, he was only a human being.⁵⁵

Rashīd Riḍā was Muḥammad ‘Abduh’s prominent follower. His work *al-Khilāfah aw al-Imāmah al-‘Uzmā*, according to Rosenthal, can be considered not only as the program of the reformist party, but also as the authoritative pronouncement on the attitude of modernism to politics.⁵⁶ Rashid Riḍā also emphasized on *ijtihād*. According to him, it has two dimensions: (1) ridding Islam of later accretions to restore its perfect purity, and (2) to make it more acceptable to the requirements of the modern age. *Ijtihād*, according to Riḍā, is an entirely fresh and new reinterpretation of the primary sources of Islamic law. Eventually, He sponsored opening of an institute of *mujtahidūn*.⁵⁷ He believed that the formation of an Islamic State is the best solution for the whole of mankind because it stands for justice, equality, and legitimate objectives and interests of everybody, whether he/she is a Muslim or a non-Muslim. He completely ignored the modern state taxation and finance which represent a materialistic and atheistic government. Rosenthal assessed the work of Riḍā and questioned on the scope and content

⁵²Ibid., p. 97.

⁵³Ibid., p. 98.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 99.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 100.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 105.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 106.

of his writing, whether it really touched the fundamentals of modern life or his reforms.⁵⁸

However, Riḍā's ideas on the power and duties of a caliph heading the Islamic state are inconsistent. At one point he stated that the caliph should have authority over education and personal status, but in another place he is said to be a purely secular ruler and in the third he compared his spiritual guidance with that of Pope.⁵⁹ Thus, we can see that Riḍā has become remorseful when confronting with the new realities of the modern age.

Although Muḥammad 'Abduh was under the influence of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, he became less interested in the latter's political program and more interested in educational and legal reforms. 'Abduh wanted to reform Muslim society because of the unsatisfactory condition in Egypt and Islamic countries as a result of separation between conventional and religious education. He was also aware of the weaknesses in traditional Islamic education at higher levels which concentrated more on memorization of texts without much comprehension of their meaning. He stressed the importance of rational understanding of the texts by Muslim students. In addition, he saw the need for extensive legal reforms for education and tradition.⁶⁰ Muḥammad 'Abduh further stressed that the troubles of Egypt and other Islamic countries are due to the failure of Muslims to live according to Islamic principles adequately. Therefore, he focused more on the reformation of Islamic education.⁶¹ To some extent, Ḥasan al-Bannā was influenced by the ideas of Muḥammad 'Abduh. He also agreed in deploring the low level of Islamic praxis among the Muslim society and emphasized the need to work for a purer Islam.⁶²

Conclusion

In Egypt, Islamic solidarity has been strengthened through the works of the Islamic organization *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*. Based on the Islamic principles of social welfare and following the line of the Islamic reformers like Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad 'Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā, Ḥasan al-Bannā was more successful in constructing ideas for the development of Egyptian society, especially in spreading a political consciousness among the middle and lower classes. The objectives of *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn* clearly

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 107-108.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 109.

⁶⁰W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Fundamentalism and Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 51.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 52.

⁶²Ibid., p. 53.

demonstrate that Islamic solidarity is possible through dedication, social welfare, national prosperity, social reform, and political stability to promote universal peace and humanitarian civilization based on Islamic awakening.

Ḥasan al-Bannā, the founder of *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, was aware of increasing secularization of society and imposition of Western systems which led the Muslim world to socio-cultural and intellectual bankruptcy. At the same time, the political leaders in the Arab world were mostly corrupted and followed the West. In this process, the society lost its moral strength and religious values. Ḥasan al-Bannā observed that the materialistic way of life which had been adopted by the Western world could not bring spiritual comfort; instead it led to the degradation of moral status, egotism, class conflict, and the disintegration of the social system. As a response, the Muslim Brotherhood insisted that Islam is the only religion which can solve the spiritual and moral problems in a society.

Overall, Islamic awakening promoted solidarity and welfare in the pluralistic society of Egypt, where social works are conducted mostly by the Islamic movements, and therefore they are more popular and influential among the masses. In addition, the individual commitment is strong among the members of Islamic movements in Egypt. However, the challenges in dealing with the government are acute in Egypt due to more political scrutiny of the government; and as such, Islamic awakening is promoted through private funding. Finally, Islamic movements in Egypt are socially oriented.