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Sunni Polemical Writings on the Shi’a and the Iranian Revolution

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In his famous work *Umm al-Qura*, the fictional proceedings of a secret Pan-Islamic congress alleged to have been held at Mecca in 1898, Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi presents the “charter” of a permanent body which the “congress” had decided to establish. Two from among the principles of that body, the *jam‘iyyat ta‘lim al-muwahhidin*, as laid down in the charter, relate to the existence of “schools” (*madhahib*) in Islam and to the attitude of the *jam‘iyya* towards them. Paragraphs 16 and 17 read as follows:

(16) “The Society (*jam‘iyya*) is in no way affiliated to any particular *madhhab* or religious party (*shi‘a*) of Islam,” and (17) “The Society adjusts its religious course of action to the moderate Salafi school of thought (*mashrab*), to the rejection of every addition or innovation in [the realm of] religion, and to [the principle] to argue over (religious matters) only in the best [or: kindest] way possible (illa bi-llati hiya ahsan)” (see Qur’an 29:46).

There can be no doubt that at the turn of the century, when Kawakibi’s book was published, there was a widespread feeling in the Muslim world—at least among the modern-educated urban elite (both Sunni and Shi‘i)—that any dispute over religious issues should be avoided. If that proved impossible, it should at least be carried out in a spirit of Muslim solidarity. The main argument was that the enemies of Islam, i.e. western colonialism in all its different forms, would exploit the lack of Muslim unity in order to perpetuate its influence throughout the world of Islam. Even today, this is the standard argument used by all those who would like to see a friendly dialogue between Sunnis and Shi‘is—and who would like that dialogue to result in a *rapprochement*.

The argument that communal strife among Muslims is likely to invite outside interference is certainly not altogether unjustified. However, in the minds of some Muslim writers and of many of their readers this argument develops into something like an obsession. Communal strife cannot always be avoided, especially in countries with a confessionally mixed population such as India and Pakistan. When it happens, some spokesmen of both Sunni and Shi‘i Islam are eager to prove that imperialism is always plotting
behind the scenes in order to split the ranks of the umma, using for its own purposes naïve or evil-minded elements from this or that Muslim community. For a number of reasons, conspiracy theories, i.e. speculation about the enemies of Islam hatching plots of all sorts against the umma, are very popular in the modern Muslim world. Many of these theories—if "theory" is the right word—are a strange mixture of more or less distorted views on:

1) The history of Islam and other religions;
2) Traditional ethnic and/or religious prejudice (more often than not corroborated by fragments of western ideologies, opinions of orientalists etc.); and
3) An exaggerated belief in the role and capabilities of secret services in international politics, past and present.

In the case of the precarious relationship between Sunnis and Shi'is in the 20th century, presumed foreign conspiracies are often cited to explain, or explain away, the many setbacks the Muslims suffered on the road to unity or, at least, to a mutual rapprochement.

Many of the more fanciful explanations may never appear in print, but some find their way into the vast (and in most Muslim countries semi-clandestine) market of booklets and periodicals where traditionalists, militant fundamentalists and secular chauvinists propagate their ideas. Many of these explanations remain unknown to the public at large. But spectacular events such as the bloody incidents of Friday, 31 July 1987 at Mecca, involving Iranian pilgrims (see chapter by Goldberg), do prepare the ground for media "disclosures" which, under other circumstances, would not have been made. This holds true both for the Iranian and the Saudi media. As an example from Iran, we may cite here an article published—a few weeks after the clashes at Mecca—in Kayhan-e Hava'i. It described the Wahhabiyya as a doctrine which British imperialism, represented by an agent of the East India Company, had instilled in its founder, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, with the aim of deepening the rift between Sunni and Shi'i Islam to the benefit of the British. The article seems to present the gist of a book first published in Persian whose author claimed that his information concerning that agent of the East India Company, one "Mister H-m-f-r," was taken from an Arabic book printed many years earlier in Beirut.

Some Sunni polemicists, on the other hand, do not hesitate to portray Khomeini as a secret ally of the United States and Israel and to describe his revolution as part of an international "scenario." In proof of that, the most far-fetched "clues" are offered not only by politicians and journalists, but also by academics and religious writers. For instance: an assistant professor of Islamic Studies at Yarmuk University tries to prove, in a book published in 1983, that an unnamed orientalist connected with Princeton University and working for the CIA is the real author of Khomeini's famous booklet Al-Hukuma al-Islamiyya.
Examples of this kind of wild speculation could easily be multiplied. But I only wanted to give an idea of the atmosphere in which religious polemic articles, pamphlets and books, in the present case against the Shi'a, are being written and distributed.

In what follows I would like to address myself to two subjects:

1) The main issue of Sunni-Shi'i controversy in modern times; and
2) the way in which the various topics of dispute are handled by Sunni polemicists, especially in recent years.

If not stated otherwise, references to Shi'is will be to the Shi'a Imamiyya, (the Twelver Shi'a or 'Ja'fariyya)—by far the largest contemporary group of Shi'is. With regard to the topics chosen by today's Sunni polemicists, obviously a number of issues treated in great detail in mediaeval Muslim heresiography etc. are no longer discussed by present-day authors or have become marginal. This is true, e.g., of the problem of mash ala al-khuffayn, i.e. whether or not Muslims are allowed under certain circumstances to retain their footwear during the ritual ablution. From a comprehensive survey I made of Sunni polemical writings composed and published in Arabic from the beginning of this century onward, it becomes clear that one or two topics of dispute have become salient (at the expense of others) or rather, have acquired a new dimension as a result of modern developments. As will be shown presently, the question of prophet Muhammad's companions is a case in point. However, all these points of dissent have already been basic issues of dispute in the past. In other words: some motifs have passed into desuetude, but no new ones have been added.

The live issues can be subsumed under the following general topics:

1) The Qur'an and its interpretation, as well as the integrity or alleged distortion (tahrif) of its text.
2) The authenticity of the prophet's traditions (hadiths) and what Shi'is consider to be the hadiths of their Imams.
3) The image of the Prophet Muhammad's companions, the sahaba, including A'isha and the other "mothers of the believers." The Shi'i view that the majority of the sahaba committed a grave sin by not supporting Ali's claim to the caliphate is unacceptable to Sunnis. Closely linked to this topic is the question of how to define the concept of the "people of the house" (ahl al-bayt).
4) There is, next, the history and concept of the Imamate (imama)—in fact the central issue of controversy between Sunnis and Shi'is. All other points of dispute are derived, in one way or another, from it. The Shi'i belief in, and extreme veneration of, the Imams as leaders of the community, appointed by God, the belief in the Imams' infallibility and sinlessness (isma), in their potential knowledge of all hidden things past, present and future are all seen by Sunnis as
historically wrong and theologically untenable and dangerous, if not altogether too close to polytheism.\textsuperscript{15}

5) The Shi’is’ concept of the \textit{imama} has direct repercussions on their view of history,\textsuperscript{16} including the question of legitimate power.\textsuperscript{17} But in a somewhat intricate way, it is also linked to

6) certain legal details such as the endorsement in Ja’fari law of temporary marriage (\textit{mut’a}), a much-discussed topic in recent years.\textsuperscript{18}

7) The example of the Imams is also the basis of the Shi’i theory and practice of \textit{taqiyya}, i.e. the dissimulation of one’s real religious belief in circumstances of danger.\textsuperscript{19} There is, finally,

8) The wide range of Shi’i lore and practice,\textsuperscript{20} such as the processions and self-flagellations of Muharram or the holiday of Ghadir al-Khum etc., which most Sunnis see as unlawful innovations (\textit{bid’a}) and as expressions of hatred against non-Shi’is.

To this list of main topics, I would like to add two observations: 1) The motifs mentioned here are all, in one way or another, inter-related. At their root lie different views of early Islamic history. Sunni-Shi’i disagreement on its interpretation appears to be as strong as ever—in spite of (or rather, because of) the fact that there have been certain pro-Shi’i tendencies in modern Sunni thought. By this I mean an inclination among Sunni writers, especially at the time of Jamal Abd al-Nasser, to defend and support contemporary revolutionary socialist policies by partially repainting the picture of early Islam. In this new picture, Ali and his supporters, especially Abu Dharr, became representatives of the “left,” and the Umayyads with their allies were cast as the counter-revolutionary “right wing.”\textsuperscript{21} As this interpretation touches directly on the image of the \textit{sahaba}, it was, and is being, attacked by Sunni enemies, whether traditionalist or fundamentalist, of ideologies such as Nasserism. When these critics came to realize that the view of Islamic history propagated by the Sunni “socialists” was being applauded by Shi’i authors, they began to interpret it as a \textit{de facto} move towards Shi’ism and as a betrayal of Sunni principles and presented it as a lamentable success for modern Shi’i writings. Abu Dharr—a companion of the prophet and a supporter of Imam Ali, a fierce critic of Mu’awiya and Uthman and the supposed founding-father of Shi’is in Syria and Lebanon—figures prominently in the religious propaganda of the Iranian revolution. Thus the old issue of the integrity of \textit{all} the \textit{sahaba} (despite the civil war in which they were involved) viz. the long-established Sunni opposition to passing a negative judgment on one or some of them, has become an issue of current political relevance. In other words: defending the religious and moral integrity of \textit{all} the \textit{sahaba} entails refuting the Shi’i view of history as well as that of the modern Sunni “Islamic-socialists” who, among other things, dare to criticize some of the most famous \textit{sahaba} for the wealth they amassed.\textsuperscript{22} By citing from Shi’i works vilifying the first three caliphs and many prominent \textit{sahaba},\textsuperscript{23} the polemicists hope to discredit the whole Shi’i (and, implicitly, the modern Sunni socialist) interpretation
of history. (Some of those vilifications, it must be said, are bizarre by any standard).

2) My second observation concerns the function of taqiyya. The lawfulness of taqiyya for Shi'is serves Sunni polemicists as the ultimate argument against all assertions (whether from Sunni or Shi'i supporters of a rapprochement) of there being a new, conciliatory attitude on the part of the modern Shi'a toward controversial issues. All statements made by Shi'i spokesmen to the effect that there is no disagreement on this or that issue (such as the integrity of the Qur'anic text in the redaction supervised by Caliph Uthman), that disagreements are a matter of the past, that they arose only from a misunderstanding or concern only minor points—all this can be discounted by pointing to the principle of taqiyya: whatever Shi'is might say, so the polemicists argue, they dissimulate and Sunnis cannot trust them.24

Nonetheless, beginning from the start of this century, Islam has witnessed a number of attempts by both Shi'i and Sunni ulama, intellectuals and politicians to achieve unity or, at least, a rapprochement (tagrib or taqarub) between the two communities. At the same time, however, some individuals and groups on both sides, but especially among Sunnis, have been campaigning against these efforts. It is interesting to note that Sunni and Shi'i critics and/or enemies of tagrib use similar arguments to defend their position. The most important one is that, while unity of the Muslim world must indeed be the aim, it can be arrived at only on the basis of what is religiously correct, not by a false compromise. Since, in the view of such critics, the topics of dissent between Sunnis and Shi'is are fundamental, in fact: irreconcilable, tagrib would mean that one of the two madhhabs must give up its doctrine more or less completely or, alternatively, that a new sect would arise from this ill-conceived attempt at compromise. The latter would mean a new evil for Islam.25 Some Sunni polemicists who have been speaking out against the ecumenical movement in recent years tend to point to the experience of certain prominent earlier Sunni writers who worked for tagrib but finally became disillusioned. Muhammad Rashid Rida, the editor of al-Manar, and Mustafa al-Siba'i, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria, are mentioned as typical examples, and their bitter comments on the failure of such ecumenical attempts are quoted with satisfaction by present-day Sunni enemies of tagrib.26

It remains true, nevertheless, that at certain times in this century the Muslim ecumenical movement made some progress. Broadly speaking, one can say that until the mid-1920s, there was a widespread (but never undisputed!) readiness among Sunni and Shi'i religious leaders to unite under the banner of pan-Islam (until 1918 sponsored by Ottoman Turkey) and avoid controversy whenever possible. The public support shown by a number of Shi'i ulama for the Ottoman Sultan before World War I—some of them even addressed him as "caliph"—is a case in point.27 The leading journal of the Sunni Salafiyya, al-Manar of Cairo, again and again expressed itself in favor of a rapprochement.

One should not forget, however, that this ecumenical spirit had no deep roots. When, in 1908, al-Manar published an article by an anonymous Iraqi
who, among other things, warned of the consequences of Shi'i missionary work among the Sunni tribes of his country, a Lebanese scholar, Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin, wrote a sharp reply. In the twenties, we find the same person in the front line of those Shi'i authors who, from 1924/25 onwards, complained bitterly about the Saudi-Wahhabi takeover in the Hijaz and attacked those Sunni scholars and writers who (like Rashid Rida) were now coming forward in defence of the Wahhabs and their newly established rule over Mecca and Medina. Even some friendly words and gestures at the pan-Islamic congress in Jerusalem in 1931 which was attended by a number of Shi'i religious leaders, could not heal the fresh wounds. Not a few of the polemical works published by both Sunni and Shi'i authors in the second half of the 1920s and in the 1930s have been reprinted in recent years and are quoted at length by today's polemists.

From the late 1940s to the 1960s, however, there was much hope that a rapprochement would be possible, and would include an understanding on theological as well as political issues. Some scholars and intellectuals from both sides did in fact enter into a dialogue, e.g. by exchanging letters on problems of dogma. Others composed fictitious protocols of imaginary ecumenical discussions.

In 1948 a society was established in Cairo which for some time became the most important center of ecumenical activities: the jam'iyyat al-tagrib bayn al-madhahib al-islamiyya. With an Iranian divine, Muhammad Taqi Qomi, as its founder and secretary-general, it had the support of a number of prominent ulama of al-Azhar and also of some Egyptian politicians. Both Sunni and Shi'i authors published articles on religious topics in its journal, Risalat al-Islam, but for the most part avoided the most controversial ones. Until his assassination in 1949, Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, was in contact with the taqrib society and even participated in some of its meetings. Until today, Shi'i writers rarely fail to mention this when writing about the society and its work. Members and sympathizers of the Brotherhood, on the other hand, tend to pass it over in silence or explain it away.

The greatest success of jam'iyyat al-tagrib was a fatwa issued in the summer of 1959 by the then Shaykh al-Azhar, Mahmud Shaltut. It declared worship according to the doctrine of the Twelve Shi'a to be valid and recognized the Imamiyya as a madhhab within Islam.

From the very beginning of its activity, however, the jam'iyyat al-tagrib came under fire from several directions, and especially from Wahhabi-Salafi circles. The most radical spokesman of those circles was Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib (d. 1969), a Syrian-born publisher, journalist and editor of classical works living in Cairo (see below). For Khatib as well as his partisans and disciples, the jam'iyyat al-tagrib was nothing but a Shi'i missionary institution designed to make converts in Egypt and elsewhere, and its Sunni supporters no more than an unholy alliance of simpletons, opportunists or adventurers.

Among the things which embittered Khatib and like-minded men, was the fact that Dar al-Taqrib, an institute established in Cairo by the jam'iyya,
started distributing Shi'i literature printed in Iran, Lebanon and Iraq. From the late 1950s onward, moreover, Shi'i books printed in Egypt itself appeared on the market there. There is, e.g., Matba'at al-Najah, a Shi'i publishing house (probably originating in Iraq) which has re-printed a number of modern Shi'i classics in Cairo. Among them were: Shaykh Muhammad Hasan Muzaffar's Dala'il al-Sidq, Sayyid Hasan al-Sadr's Al-Shi'a wa-Funun al-Islam, and Sayyid Abd al-Husayn Sharaf al-Din's Muraja'at. Also included were Tawfiq al-Fukayki's defence of temporary marriage (mut'a), and Shaykh Abdallah al-Subayti's Tahta Rayat al-Haqq, a scathing critique of what Ahmad Amin had written on the Shi'a in his Fajr al-Islam. All these are apologetic Shi'i writings, and not a few of them are violently polemic.

That these works were reprinted in Cairo before and/or after the Iranian revolution is worth noting. So is the parallel development of the formation of religious circles which, in one way or another, seem to support Shi'i missionary work or at least actively to propagate a Sunni-Shi'i rapprochement. While Dar al-Tagrib had already lost much of its momentum in the second half of the 1960s and quietly disappeared from the stage after the departure from Egypt of Shaykh Muhammad Taqi Qomi about 1979, some new, though smaller, institutions appear to carry on at least part of its mission. There is, e.g., jam'iyyat ahl al-bayt. A Sunni author, As'ad Sayyid Ahmad, expressly mentions its activities in Cairo—where he says it has been registered since 1974—as one reason for his editing a series of pamphlets defending the sahaba against what he considers to be slanderous Shi'i attacks. The series is called Ma ana alayhi wa-Ashabi. In his foreword to pamphlet No. 3 in the series, a booklet by Muhammad Malallah, Ahmad puts Shi'i religious and cultural activities in Cairo into the wider—and rather fanciful—perspective of an international conspiracy. For this he sees proof in a general Shi'i congress alleged to have convened in Paris in 1973, and, of course, in the victory of the Iranian revolution and in some of the circumstances attending it.

With the outbreak of the Gulf War in 1980 and the political developments resulting from it, some Sunni polemicists found it necessary to point to what they see as bridgeheads of Shi'i influence in the realm of Sunni Islam. In a book published in Cairo in 1983, Wa-ja'a Dawr al-Majus, Abdallah Muhammad Gharib presents a detailed account of the number of Shi'i mosques, husayniyyas and bookshops in Kuwait, mentioning names, addresses etc. Given the general tendency of the book—the author claims that the Shi'a of modern times is even more dangerous to "true" Islam than the Shi'a of the past—this sub-chapter amounts to an outright denunciation of the Shi'i community in Kuwait as a dangerous "fifth column." Another aspect of recent Sunni polemical writing is caused by the apparent fascination of not a few—especially younger—members of radical "Islamist" Sunni movements with Khomeini's achievement. Moreover, many members of those movements have become aware that Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb and other Sunni Muslim radicals of the past are considered there as being among the martyrs who prepared the ground for Iran's "Islamic Revolution."
After some initial hesitation, however, the leadership of most of the Sunni "Islamist" movements turned critical of, and finally attacked Khomeini, his regime and his ideas, thereby, so they claim, "opening the eyes" of their followers to the "reality" of Shi‘ism. This decision was of course influenced by developments in Syria, i.e. by what most Sunni "Islamists" view as the suppression of the Sunni majority of that country by a Shi‘i regime in alliance with Iran. Not a few of the anti-Shi‘i books and pamphlets published in recent years in Jordan, Egypt and elsewhere were obviously written by persons belonging to (or connected with) the Syrian Islamist groups in exile. One feature they have in common is that they equate—and denounce—all Shi‘i groups, past and present. In other words, they totally deny any real difference between the Imamiyya on the one hand and "extremist" sects (ghulat) such as the Nusayris or Alawids of Syria on the other. All statements to the contrary by Imami or Sunni authors are dismissed as a result of taqiyya or, on the part of the Sunnis, naïveté.

Another cause of embarrassment for the polemicists lies in the fact that books and articles in favor of taqrīb are still being published by Sunni authors not belonging to any of the Islamist movements who are therefore not easily impressed by arguments appealing mainly to a fundamentalist frame of mind. Rather, their authors appear to be "moderates" with both a traditional Muslim and a western education. To illustrate: in 1984, Dr. Abd al-Wahid Wafi, an Egyptian sociologist and educationalist, published a book called Al-Shi‘a wa-ahl al-Sunna; also in 1984, Dr. Mustafa al-Rafi‘i, a Lebanese judge, diplomat and scholar, published Islamuna fi al-tawfiq bayn al-Sunna wal-Shi‘a which calls for a renewed ecumenical effort. Both authors, incidentally, studied in Paris.

Wafi’s book was fiercely attacked by a Pakistani author who can be described as the most prolific Sunni polemicist in recent years: Ihsan IJJahi Zahir, the editor of a religious journal called Tarjuman al-Hadith (published in Lahore). He was fatally wounded in March 1987 when a bomb exploded in Lahore during a rally of jam‘iyyat ahl al-Hadith, a Wahhabi movement of which Zahir was secretary-general. He died a few days later in Riyadh, where he had been flown for treatment, and was buried at Medina.

Zahir seems to have considered himself to be the heir of Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib as a campaigner against the Shi‘a and against all Sunni sympathizers of taqrīb. He [Zahir] describes Wafi as someone who, at best, is ignorant of real Shi‘ism and who has fallen into the trap of modern Shi‘i apologetics. Zahir claims that Wafi never read a single line of the mediaeval Shi‘i works which he mentions in the bibliography of his book. And it is these works one has to know in order to understand Shi‘ism and its danger for true (Sunni) Islam—not only the modern Shi‘i apologetical writings which are all designed to lead naive Sunnis astray.

The accusation of ignorance, as far as mediaeval Shi‘i sources are concerned, may not be wrong in the case of Wafi. The same could, however, also be said of quite a few partisans of Khatib and Zahir, i.e. hardline Sunni polemicists of today, since it is obvious that many of them draw most of
their information on Shi'i belief and practice from a rather limited selection of Sunni sources. They may possibly include a few classical works such as Ibn Taymiyya's *Minhaj al-Sunna*, alongside a small number of 20th-century polemical writings. Of special importance in this respect are Khatib's commentaries on two mediaeval works he edited, namely: *Al-Awasim min al-Qawasim* by the Andalusian qadi Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi (d. 1148), and Dhahabi's *Muntaqa min Minhaj al-I'tidal*, a mukhtasar of Ibn Taimiyya's *Minhaj al-Sunna*. Together with Khatib's *Khutut Arida*—a pamphlet seething with hatred, in which he describes the Shi'a as another religion (*din*), not just a *madhhab* within Islam⁴⁹—these are the main sources of information for many Sunni polemicists.⁵⁰ While Zahir had read widely in both mediaeval and modern Shi'i literature, including some works in Persian, the majority of contemporary Sunni polemicists look somewhat amateurish in their attempts to corroborate their judgments on Shi'ism by quoting Shi'i sources. The same holds true for their writings on the history of Iran, the place of the Shi'a in Iranian history and the roots of Khomeini's revolution. Even their description of what they call the plight of the Sunnis in post-revolutionary Iran is, in general, rather sketchy.⁵¹ An additional reason for that may be the fact that almost all the Sunni polemicists have fundamentalist convictions. They must therefore be critical of all manifestations of secular nationalism within Islam and prefer not to touch on them. They do not, for instance, deal with Kurdish nationalism. Were they to do so, they would have to admit that—much like under the shah—the situation of the Kurds in the Islamic Republic cannot be described solely, or even mainly, in terms of a sectarian clash between Sunni Kurds and Shi'i “Persians.” But to support the Kurdish movement for what it is, i.e. a largely secular-nationalist movement, is something they cannot bring themselves to do.

To end this survey, I would like to say a few words about the Iranian Islamic constitution of 1979 as seen by Sunni observers, even though a full discussion of this issue cannot be given here.

Many Sunni polemicists content themselves with showing that the figure of the rahbar (leader) and the concept of *velayat-e faqih* are deeply rooted in Shi'i thought and/or Iranian tradition, and are therefore altogether unacceptable to Sunnis.⁵² Some of them were delighted to discover that even some Shi'i divines such as Ayatollah Kazem Shari'atmadari and the Lebanese scholar Muhammad Jawad Mughniyya have criticized Khomeini's interpretation of *velayat-e faqih*.⁵³ One Iraqi polemicist hints at the fact that Khomeini has been accused of plagiarizing (in a distorting way) the main points of his theory from an Iraqi Shi'i scholar, Ali Kashif al-Ghita.⁵⁴ (Cf. chapter by Baram).

A rather interesting criticism of the 1979 Iranian constitution was published by the Islamic Liberation Party (*hizb al-tahrir al-Islami*) in August 1979, only a few days after the Majles-e Khebregan in Tehran began its discussions of the original draft.⁵⁵ In a memorandum, *hizb al-tahrir* (a somewhat old-fashioned, Sunni pan-Islamic movement) objected to a number of basic principles and fundamental statements in the draft, including the fact that
the constitution was obviously meant for Iran as a national entity. It assumes a state capable of concluding treaties with other Muslim and non-Muslim states; it declares Persian (rather than Arabic) to be the official language and the Twelver Shi'i madhhab to be the official religion of the country; and it stipulates that only an Iranian can be president. (For all these points, see chapter by Menashri). Furthermore, hizb al-tahrir criticizes the draft for clearly being inspired by western concepts such as "democracy," "republic," "public opinion" etc. A real Islamic constitution, it argues, would be based on truly Islamic principles, be structured according to classical (Sunni) law and place the caliphate at the center of the state.56

The document is not polemic in its tone, but rather written in a mood of disappointment. Earlier in 1979, representatives of the Liberation Party—which is banned in all Muslim countries because of its radical rejection of the national state and its institutions—had made contact with Khomeini and other leaders of the revolution in order to look for common ground in an attempt to re-establish the universal caliphate. Their critical memorandum may be seen as a last attempt to influence developments in Iran.

It is evident that the memorandum of hizb al-tahrir, critical though it is, was still written in a spirit of basic solidarity. Since then, it seems that hard-line polemicists have gained the upper hand and may have it for some time to come—even after the cease-fire in the Gulf war. Kawakibi's appeal, based on a verse of the Qur'an, "to argue over religious matters only in the best [or: kindest] way possible," now appears a far cry from reality. Perhaps it will not be forgotten altogether.

Notes

4. As an example see the many reports in the Saudi daily al-Jazira concerning an alleged alliance (not only an arms deal) between revolutionary Iran and Israel (e.g., 26 September 1987 and 4 October 1987), and the summary of a panel discussion organized by that paper on the topic of Khomeini's "extremism" and its roots (al-Jazira, 21 September 1987). See also ibid., 17 and 28 February 1988.
8. The Sunni fuqaha allow this. Zaydi and Imami Shi'is as well as the Kharijis reject it. See Rudolf Strothmann, Kultus der Zaiditen (Strassburg: 1912), 21–46. For modern Shi'i statements see Najm al-Din al-Askari et. al (ed. Murtada al-Radawi
al-Kashmiri), Al-Wudu fi al-Kitab wal-Sunna (Cairo: 1961), 125–160; Abd al-Husayn Sharaf al-Din, Al-Mash ala al-arjul (etc.). The same also in idem, Masa'il Fiqhiyya (Sidon: 1951; and other editions).

9. A survey of these issues—as seen by a Sunni polemicist—is to be found in Saeed Ismaeel, The Difference between the Shi'i and the Majority of Muslim Scholars, ed. by “A Muslim Group” (Carbondale: 1983?).


11. For the Shi’i definition and point of view see Seyyed Hossein Nasr’s introduction (5–11) to William C. Chittick, A Shi’ite Anthology, selected by Allamah Tabataba’i (Albany: 1981); see further Momen, op. cit., 173–75. Sunni polemics against the Shi’i hadith collections (and also against the way in which Shi’i scholars are using Sunni hadith literature in order to corroborate their own interpretation) can be found in many of the books and pamphlets mentioned in the footnotes below, especially Nos. 13–15.


15. This is the central thesis of a number of polemic works such as Ali Ahmad Salus, Athar al-Imama fi al-Fiqh al-Ja’fari wa-Usulihi (Cairo: 1982).


23. See the publications mentioned in note 13.


31. One of the less known examples is Khalil Azmi, *Bayn al-Shi'a wal-Sunna* (Baghdad: 1952).


34. Arabic text in Shirazi, ibid., 22; an English version was published by Dar al-Taqreeb, *Two Historical Documents* (Cairo: 1963/64).
36. These books are advertised at the end of Sayyid Murtada al-Radawi, Ma'a Rijal al-Fikr fi al-Qahira (fourth edition; Cairo: 1979).
37. For more information about the authors and titles mentioned, see Ende, Arabische Nation, index, and (concerning Fukayki) *Idem, Ehe auf Zeit* (note 18 above), 18–21.
40. This term (in Arabic: *tabur khamis*) is already used by Khatib, Al-Khutut (see note 49 below), 28.
41. Concerning Qutb, see, e.g., article "In Memory of Seyyed Qutb," *Echo of Islam*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (June 1987), 12–13 (showing a postal stamp issued in 1984 “on the memory of the Seyyed Ghotb’s martyrdom” [sic]).
44. The book was published in Cairo by Dar Nahdat Misr. For some time the author was dean of the Faculty of Education, al-Azhar University.
45. The book was published in Beirut by Mu’assasat al-A’lam, and a short biography of the author is to be found in pp. 5–8.
47. His first book on the issue of Sunni-Shi‘i relations, Al-Shi’a wal-Sunna (Lahore: 1973), is a response to Lutfallah al-Safi, Ma’ a al-Khatib fi Khututih al-Arida. Saﬁ’s *radd* was written about 1962/63 and has since been reprinted several times. See also his Sawt al-Haqq wa-Da’wat al-Sidq (Beirut: 1977). An English translation of Zahir’s book was printed at Lahore in 1984 (Ehsan Elahi Zaheer, *The Shi‘ites and the Sunna*).
48. Zahir, Al-Radd (note 42 above), 8–9, 211–12.
49. First Arabic edition (there was an earlier one in Urdu), Jeddah 1960/61, several reprints in Cairo, Riyadh and elsewhere.
50. About Khatib and his “school” see Ende, Arabische Nation, 91–110.
52. Dr. Ahmad Matlub, Shaykh Amin al-Naqshbandi et al., *Nahj Khomeini fi Mizan al-Fikr al-Islami* (Amman: 1985); Sa’id Hawwa et al., *Fada‘i al-Khomeiniyya* (Baghdad: 1987; this is a publication of Munazzamat al-Mu’tamar al-Islami al-Sha’bi). Further
Nu‘mani, *Al-Thawra al-Iraniyya*. There is also a translation (by one Muhammad al-Bundari) of Khomeini’s *Kashf-e Asrar* into Arabic, with polemical commentaries by Salim al-Hilali and an introduction by Dr. Muhammad Ahmad al-Khatib, a member of *Kulliyat al-Shari‘a*, University of Jordan (Amman: 1987).


54. Abd al-Jabbar al-Umar, *Al-Khomeini bayn al-Din wal-Dawla* (Baghdad: 1984), 5; concerning Mughniyya’s and Shari‘atmadari’s criticism, see ibid., 46 ff. and 144 ff., respectively.


56. For a preliminary study of the genesis of the constitution see Silvia Tellenbach, *Untersuchungen zur Verfassung der Islamischen Republik Iran vom 15 November 1979* (Berlin: 1985), with German translation of the first draft (11–46) and of the final text (47–107). See also Hamid Algar (trs.), *Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran* (Berkeley: 1980), preface (7–10).