

a misunderstanding of her thesis. Rather it is based on the assumption that cultural dependency analysis does not supply the analytical framework necessary for an understanding of Third World problems and their solution.

I stand by my objection to Önder's assertion that "Saudi Arabia is capable of agricultural independence." There is simply not enough fertile land available to do so. Transportation costs are not the main item.

There is a reference to Jewish sources of finance on page 21; line 1: ". . . überwiegend jüdischen Finanzquellen." I stand by my observation that references to international Jewish capital (p. 331) and Jewish orientalis (p. 164) are not useful.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Dr. Önder's letter.

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To the Editor:

I was disappointed by the review by Khalid Bin Sayeed of John Obert Voll's *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (MEJ 37, no. 2, Spring 1983); Mr. Bin Sayeed does not appreciate that this is the most important assessment of Islam to appear since the publication of Wilfred Cantwell Smith's *Islam in Modern History* in 1957. Allow me to justify this claim by surveying Mr. Voll's accomplishment.

He establishes a framework by identifying the four "temperaments" of Islamic experience: The adaptionist temperament involves "a willingness to make adjustments to changing conditions in a pragmatic manner" (29). The conservative temperament is characterized by "a mistrust of innovation" (30). The fundamentalist temperament "insists on rigorous adherence to the specific and the general rules of the faith" (30). And the individualist temperament, which meant an emphasis on "individual piety rather than on communal obligation" (355) directed Muslims to "the more personal and individual aspects of Islam" (31).

Using the first three of these tempera-

ments, Mr. Voll traces the rhythms of Islamic history from Muhammad's time to the current revival. He sees the first centuries of Islam as adaptionist; early Muslims from Arabia were eager to learn from the more civilized peoples they conquered. As a result, cities such as Baghdad and Medina became centers of international culture and the Muslims enjoyed a great florescence during the medieval period.

Then, from about the year 1000, a new spirit of conservation took hold, attempting to preserve the outlines of Islam's civilization and way of life. As the power of the caliphs declined and military rulers took their place, the 'ulama emerged as the cultural and social leaders who "gave a sense of political identity and order to society" (16).

The conservative temperament was challenged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as Islam expanded to new regions. "The problem of coping with the tremendous diversity of peoples and cultures that had been brought into the world of Islam helped set the tone for this era". One response was a reaction against compromise, "a more strict exclusivism" (18). Beginning as a conservative impulse, this developed in the eighteenth century into "a relatively widespread spirit of socio-moral reconstruction based on more strict adherence" to Islamic laws—it developed, that is, into fundamentalism.

Usually dismissed as the dark age of Islam, the eighteenth century nevertheless had special importance for modern times; Mr. Voll convincingly shows that radical notions of religious purifications, now so common, derive from that era. Although it had roots in earlier times, fundamentalism emerged as a major force only in the eighteenth century. In the book's most original chapter, he surveys the whole of the Muslim world in the eighteenth century, with special attention to the fundamentalists.

In the modern era of Muslim history—from the late eighteenth century on, when Europe began to impinge heavily—Mr. Voll discerns four periods: the domination by Europe, the struggle for independence, the post-independence generation, and the Islamic revival.

Nearly all Muslims fell under the control of Europe in a period that began with the conquest of Bengal in 1764 and ended with the occupation of Iraq in 1919. As they struggled to come to terms with the power and culture of the West, some Muslims again responded in fundamentalist ways. Fundamentalists, who dominated in such places as Algeria, the Sudan and Western China, resisted modern influences and sought solutions to their problems by adhering more strictly to Islamic solutions.

Islam had varied roles in the national struggles for independence, depending on the proportion of Muslims in the population. Where Muslims constituted over 85 per cent of the populace, as in North Africa or the Middle East, Islam complemented nationalist feelings and increased the sense of common purpose. Where Muslims made up only a small majority or a large minority, as in India or Saharan Africa, Islam conflicted with other allegiances, leading to such massive civil conflicts as the partition of India and the Anyanya war in the Sudan. Finally, where Muslims constituted less than 25 per cent of the population, Islamic loyalties scared the non-Muslims, and were frequently crushed with violence, as in Yugoslavia, Thailand and the Philippines.

Most Muslim countries received their independence between 1946 and 1962; henceforth, Mr. Voll points out, questions of development, both economic and social, took precedence over all else. If Islam had often helped in the struggle for independence, it appeared less useful for modernization, and adaptationism became predominant in the post-independence period. During these years, both conservative and fundamentalist Islam were discredited and appeared doomed.

But by 1970 circumstances had changed and fundamentalism again became prevalent. For many Muslims, adaptationism had proven itself incapable of ending the poverty, injustice and weakness which afflicted their countries. While still seeking the benefits of modernity, Muslims increasingly insisted on distinguishing what was modern (and therefore essential) from what was Western (and

therefore not critical). Fundamentalism provided a way "to modernize without Westernizing, to create social structures that [were] both modern and authentically Islamic" (281). For Muslims everywhere, "the 1970s was a time when the dominant adaptationist style was significantly challenged by a more fundamentalist style of Islam" (347). Mr. Voll concludes the book with an assessment that the recent Islamic revival is an experience of "major transformations in all dimensions" (347) and a watershed in Muslim history.

My criticisms of *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* concern the author's tendency to break the narrative into many small segments; the history of Turkey, for example, is presented in nine separate parts. Also, while scholarly diffidence is commendable, especially when dealing with a topic as combustible as Islam and politics, Mr. Voll's reluctance to displease any readers sometimes leaves his account flaccid.

These points of disagreement, however, in no way diminish my admiration for Mr. Voll's achievement. Two features deserve special praise. First, unlike so many writers who write about Islam and the Muslims as a whole, but who restrict themselves to the Middle East, the author has made the effort to take in the full geographic range of the Islamic experience. Mr. Bin Sayeed dismisses this with the assertion that Voll, "by spreading his net so wide, has sacrificed depth." Quite the contrary, I would say; Voll brings an unparalleled knowledge to this book, knowledge as wide as it is accurate. This work of quiet erudition and calm judgment has no rival as an account of Muslim history in the modern age.

Second, by envisioning the *umma* as a unit, John Voll makes it possible for others to do so as well. With luck, this book should alert others to the rewards of discarding regional constraints and of studying the history of the Muslims as a whole. This perspective offers a new and solid approach to some of the questions now most heatedly debated—such as the importance of Islam in the process of modernization or the role of Islam in defining

political identity. In this way, Mr. Voll's work is pathbreaking.

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To the Editor:

I have just recently had the opportunity to read Yvonne Haddad's article in the Winter 1983 issue of your journal. In a footnote to this article you note that her explanation of *takfir wa-hijrah* differs from that of an earlier article and you solicit readers' comments. Here is mine.

I have devoted much of the last 17 years of my life to the study of Islamic religion, including considerable study of the Arabic language, and on the basis of everything I have learned I say that Yvonne Haddad is absolutely right. I am overjoyed to see someone finally set matters straight on this issue.

It has, in fact, been a matter of some amazement to me to see the way the word *takfir* in this context has been translated by journalists and scholars writing in English. I imagine it will prove to be a classic example of those cases in which a scholar makes a mistake and others then follow him uncritically. So far as I can tell, the initial mistake was made two or three years ago in an otherwise excellent article published by Saad Eddin Ibrahim in the December, 1980, issue of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (pp. 423–453). He translated *takfir* as "repentance" (p. 424 *et seq*), clearly an error, and this usage was immediately picked up by journalists. Since then I have also seen it in at least one or two articles by scholars (e.g. John Merriam, "Egypt after Sadat", *Current History*, January, 1982, p. 5). The translation, "penance", used in the earlier article in your journal, does reflect one possible meaning of *takfir*, viz., "expiation", "atonement" or "penance". The alternative meaning, however, "to charge someone with

being a *kāfir* (infidel)", fits the context so much better that I should think that anyone with even a moderate knowledge of the Arabic language and the history of Islamic thought would recognize that it is the correct meaning here. This should be so obvious that no discussion would be necessary.

I shall, therefore, attempt no such discussion here except to make two brief points. One is that the French writer, Olivier Carré, assumes the same meaning for *takfir* as does Mrs. Haddad (*Futuribles* no. 18, Nov.–Dec. 1978, p. 756). The other is that I was in Egypt in late 1977 and had several occasions to discuss the "*takfir wa-hijrah*" group with Egyptians and also to follow the reports of the trial of some of its members in the Egyptian press. In all cases, as I remember, it was taken for granted that *takfir* meant "to charge someone with being a *kāfir*". In fact, the impression I gained was that the opponents of the movement had invented the label *takfir wa-hijrah* to associate it with an early Islamic sectarian movement known as the *khawarij* (or Kharijites, "seceders" or "rebels"), one of whose principles was *takfir*, in the sense which Mrs. Haddad gives.

I do not consider this a minor matter, since only with a proper translation of *takfir* can the "*takfir wa-hijrah*" group's protest against contemporary Egyptian society and that society's reaction to the protest be fully understood. I therefore hope that this matter will receive sufficient publicity so that all future writers, whether journalistic or scholarly, will translate the word correctly. We will, of course, all be indebted to Mrs. Haddad.

If one wishes an alliterative translation that at least approaches accuracy, my tentative suggestion would be "Excommunication and Emigration".

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