

THE SOCIOLOGY OF RADICAL ISLAM

BIZHAN M. NIA, (F. Sanatkar)

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INTRODUCTION:

This essay is an attempt to examine a historical discourse that affects the life and the behavior of millions of people. The discourse of radical Islam encompasses many aspects of good and evil in the socio-political life of a given society. However it seems most pathological when evaluated in the context of democracy of the West.

Western analysts see the Islamic fanaticism as a cancer to the civil society. Yet, the West can see only the impact of Enlightenment that overcame prejudice and religious dogma of the West, and believes that the western notion of civilized society is the only path.¹

The Islamists on the other hand, see “modernization” as a tool in the hand of corrupt and dictatorial regimes that produced nothing but misery for the underclass and inequality in the social and economic status of the working class and the middle class

The focus of this essay is not to say which is good or which is bad. We attempt to explain what they are. The conflicts in Iraq were a microcosm of the global events that have epitomized the arrogance and brutality of the United States and the savagery and inhuman actions of the Islamic Jihadists. Yet, no one can say one is better than the other.

We try to analyze the social discourse that has been galvanizing religious movements for political change. We look to the ideology of individuals who believe they can bring social change by killing themselves in pursuit of their goals and objectives. Yet we must also consider the adverse effect of the implementation of Israeli and American policies in the Middle East.

¹ *Lee Harris, the Suicide of Reason: Radical Islam Threat to the West. July 2007

Turning Point

Historically, the turning point in the emergence of radical Islam as a political force can be traced to the Islamic Revolution of Iran in February 1979. Moslems around the world witnessed the triumph of a peaceful social movement that overthrew the mighty regime of the Shah of Iran and established an Islamic Republic. It was also noted that the United States was so helpless in rescuing the Shah's regime, one of its best allies in the Middle East. Soon after the revolution, Ayatollah imprisoned the entire staff of the US embassy in Iran and held them hostage for nearly fifteen months without any action by the US. Meanwhile, the Middle East was echoing the Ayatollah's famous saying that "America can not do a damn thing to us".

The Iranian revolution ignited radical fervor in the Islamic community and an extreme ideology gradually stirred up unrest and opposition against existing regimes in the Middle East and Northern Africa. The most obvious injustice was Israel's occupation of Palestine and the United States support of Israel.

As the world's lone superpower, the US is bound to make some people unhappy at least some of the time. But in the Middle East, sentiments long ago surpassed mere resentment. "There is a growing anti-Americanism in the Middle East as a whole," says Edward Djerejian, a former assistant Secretary of State. (Wash Post Oct.22, 2001)

The roots of this fury were implanted as a result of US political manipulations in the region during the 1950s and 1960s, but it has grown to new heights since the break down of peace talks between Palestine and Israel in 2000, and with escalating violence in the Middle East. America's unwillingness to procure a permanent resolution in the Middle East, hinges upon two compelling elements: Oil companies and Israel.

Let us remember the CIA coup d' e-tat of 1953 that toppled the flourishing democracy in Iran and imprisoned Dr. Mohammed Mossadeq, the Western-educated charismatic leader who was heavily supported by the Iranian people. In essence, the United States destroyed the foundation of Iranian democracy by which the society has never recovered. Had Dr. Mossadeq been allowed to peacefully lead his country to

become the first truly Muslim democracy in the Middle East, the political atmosphere would have been drastically different than what it is to day.²

Let us imagine if the Mossadeq government had been allowed to assume its obligations and responsibilities of a constitutionally legitimate system, with freely elected parliament and the freedom of speech, and the freedom of political parties. Had the coup never taken place, the ayatollahs, who had supported the coup against Mossadeq, would never have gained their political clout. The Shah saw in the conservative ayatollahs the perfect partners against the radicalism of the left and the liberalism of the middle class. Had the coup never taken place, Khomeini would have remained a little-known cleric³ and Islamic radicalism would have been dissolved as a result of the political parties who were advocating freedom and justice for the democratic regime in Iran. So ultimately it was the Shah and the US who shaped Khomeinism in the Middle East.

Ben-ladanism

The Soviet's occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 was another pivotal point in the emergence of radical Islam. The United States deemed fundamentalist Islam as the best weapon against the Soviet Union's communist ideology, consequently the U.S. condoned the rise of radical Islam in the Middle East as an inhibitor to the spread of communist influence in the region. Saudi Arabia however had a different agenda within the same frame work of U.S policy in the Middle East. Saudis were concerned about the rise of the Shiite sect Islam in the form of Khomeinism that caught the attention of every corner in the Muslim world.

The war in Afghanistan and the subsequent rise of the Taliban was the best opportunity for Saudi Arabia to establish and spread the Sunni version of Islam to counteract the influence of the Shiite Muslims in Iran. As the Islamic Iran began to spread its influence and gain support in Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine, the Saudis pledge billions of dollars to establish Islamic centers around the world, with the emphasis on the spread of the Wahabi version of Islam, which was the official religion of

² . Ahmed Bouzid, Los Angeles Times, October 21 2001 (Ahmed Bouzid is president of Palestine Media Watch.)

³ ibid

Saudi Arabia. Wahabis targeted the poor and uneducated young men in the villages and the urban centers of Islamic countries. They established religious centers and schools (Madressah) with the immense budget of the Saudi government as means for the propagation of Wahabi Islam. These centers became the economic, social and political bodies in the villages and the poor sections of the cities in the Islamic world.

Jihad against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was the slogan for the ideological mobilization of the young Muslims, of which many of their families were granted financial assistance by the Saudi and CIA sources. The formation of Taliban as a political force in Afghanistan was actually the extension of the Wahabi's political work in the Madressahs inside and outside of Afghanistan. Taliban which means "students" were for the most part, students of the religious schools with their emphasis being on the fundamentalist practice of Islam. These groups were supported by the United States and Saudi Arabia to form a counterweight against the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Middle East. Their rise to the power became more significant to the West after Iraq was defeated during the Gulf war of 1991 and Iran was left without serious adversaries.

However, deeper than the Islamic ideology was another factor, an uncomfortable reality long ignored by the West. The governments of the Arab nations are among the most repressive in the world. In most of the countries, there was no free press, no freedom of associations and little human rights. Dissent was crushed, torture was common, and opposition parties were weak or ineffective. The brutality and the corruptions of the Arab governments fostered a breeding ground for Islamic militants. "The lack of democracy and support of human rights has contributed to a sense of frustration, anger and humiliation," said Judy Barsalou, "That's a direct pipeline to new terrorists."⁴

"In the Middle East, there is a long standing American tradition to look away from human rights and democracy only to protect oil and Israel," said Les Campbell, the Middle East regional director for the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs,

⁴ (Judy Barsalou is a grant director, with the United States Institute of Peace, a congressionally funded agency focused on conflict resolution.)

Historically, U.S. alliances with repressive regimes during the Cold War often wound up igniting revolutions, such as the U.S.-backed dictatorship in Nicaragua, which was ousted by the Marxist Sandinistas, or the U.S.-supported Shah of Iran, whose ouster gave rise to the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Now, at the heart of America's war on terrorism, the U.S. is bogged down with the Iraqi war and has itself entangled in a no-win war with Radical Islam that is spreading its network of Jihadists all over the world.⁵ America has been left with no choice but to repeat their past mistakes, supporting authoritarian governments such as Egypt or Saudi Arabia whose people may one day rebel and set fire to the Middle East. The dynamics are quite obvious: more you support authoritarianism less you allow people to voice their grievances. Ultimately this results in people's adherence to extreme acts whether communist uprisings or the Islamic revolts.⁶ In Egypt, many of the extremist groups, such as Egypt's Islamic Jihad and Gamaa al Islamiya, were formed after governments outlawed and imprisoned tens of thousands of members of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood, founded in the late 1920s, sought after a nonviolent path to uniting all Muslim countries into a single nation with an Islamic government. However, they were forced to go underground and later became a covert Radical Islamic organization with a terrorist agenda. Algeria is another example: the Islamist political parties participated in the 1992 general election as a peaceful political party. They gained momentum as they mobilized a majority of the voters for their candidates. The army cancelled the election in fear of an eminent victory of the Islamists. This action forced the Islamist activists to go underground; a bloody civil war emerged with tens of thousands of dying. The conflict created several Jihadist groups such as the "Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat" (*Jamaa Salafya Led-daava Val-qetal*), with a vast network of Jihadists in the North Africa.

⁵ Lee Harris, *the Suicide of Reason: Radical Islam Threat to the West*. July 2007.

⁶ Christian Miller, *LA Times* Oct 8, 2001

Social Base of Radical Islam

Western politicians tend to formulate a simplistic notion in their analysis that the fundamentalist Islam is the root of the problem. George W Bush believes that the Jihadist Moslems fight and kill themselves because they hate American freedom. Only a few scholars such as Professor Robert Pape had put forth the idea that the Jihadist goal arises from secular nationalistic political demand while religion comes into play as a secondary ideological form.⁷ The Islamic revolution of Iran was the best example of the prominence of nationalist, justice seeking and Anti American discourses in its social movement.

After the Iranian Revolution, there has emerged the rise of radical Islam as an alternative to the “secular” regimes in the Middle East. This was based on the unique socio-political realities which were for the most part, responsible for the creation of social unrest and the crisis of hegemony during the 30 years following the Islamic Revolution of Iran. These factors were:

- 1- The regimes narrow political base within the population
- 2- The impotence of the ruling governments in the Middle East to stand up to Israel,
- 3- The disharmony of social structure needed for modernization. (In the Muslim world, modernity did not bring freedom and democracy; it came in a context of political helplessness).
- 4- The massive weight of the urban youth in the political scene, therefore, anti establishment discourse being relatively an urban movement,
- 5- The actualization of group identity through the use of the religious discourse as a sacred public language, without fear of persecution by the government,
- 6- The deep rooted Jewish and Islamic conflict, aggravated by the Israel occupation of Palestine
- 7- The adherence of the Left and the secular forces to the anti Israel/ anti American sentiments.

⁷ Robert Pape, Dying To Win: The Strategic Logic Of Suicide Terrorism, pp21, June 2005

In much of the Muslim world, there are some overlaps of civil administration and Islamic institutions. Most regimes tried to use this fusion to their advantage; while fostering and supporting religious practices they attempt to subjugate religion to their politics. But on the side of subjugated religion, there grows radical Islam.

During the last three decades of twentieth century, Islam has emerged as a visible social force in many Moslem countries. This was mostly due to the absence of democracy which has caused a political vacuum that Islamic militants alone were able to fill. While governments silenced every political opposition and the freedom of speech, Islam enjoyed the use of an inviolable space (the mosque), a tribune (the preacher's pulpit) and the religious discourse as a sacred public language. Most of public discontent thus has tended to take on religious accents.⁸ Friday prayers were another forum for Radical Islam. These sermons attract huge crowd of Moslems with immunity from the government persecution for public gathering and was the best occasion to meet or to recruit the volunteers.

The alienation of the urban young, discontent of the middle class who are threatened by the political repression, economic dislocation and inequality, are all the sources of conflicts and grievances. In the Islamic countries, people's legitimate concerns were silent because of state's suppression of almost all forms of peaceful dissent. Islam thus, becomes the privileged channel of protest. Having the characteristics of justice seeking and the universal restrictions on social behavior, Islam became the medium of social identity over the national identity. In universities, Moslem men grow beards and Moslem women wore Hijabs to distinguish themselves from the "westernized" rest. Politically, they transformed the moral language from the holy notion of good and evil to the earthy arguments about the socio-political issues of the day. All this helped transform Islamic movements into vehicles of radical insurgency against Repressive regional regimes; against the American superpower that backs them.⁹

Economically, Islamic Radicalism offered a solution to the disharmonies and contradictions inherent in the development of capitalism in an underdeveloped context.

⁸ Robert Malley, Faith and Terror, Washington Post, October 11, 2001; Page A33

⁹ ibid

As such, it held enormous appeal for the urban poor as well as the university students and the intellectuals. Small and indigenous capital was favorably counter posed to monopoly and “dependent capital.” Land Distribution and small ownership were sanctioned. Foreign domination of capital was condemned, etc. The Islamic ideology found its strength in exposing the contradictions involved in the capitalist transformation of backward countries. It also echoed the people’s reaction toward rapid change.¹⁰

At this juncture, the ideological foundations of the theories of both “Left” and “Right” in the Middle East were fused at a central point. *Populist Socialism* coincided perfectly with the Islamic notion of the *culture of poverty*. Both ideologies admired poverty and repudiated wealth; abstinence and burden were considered signs of decency. The worker was praised for his hard work and his calloused hands. Social justice was seen as the equal distribution of poverty, rather than wealth.¹¹

The traditional Left as well as Seculars took part in this ideological mobilization, extending the deep rooted populism to the realm of ideology. Islam and Socialism were assumed to share fundamental goals. This was the pivotal hinge of the Islamic revolution in Iran. The intellectuals came to salvage the “progressive” part of Islam when it became horrified by the cultural changes affecting the society. Moreover, the shaky Left resented the “rich” because it was the product and the beneficiary of the new changes under the modernization efforts. The underdeveloped nature of the middle class in Islam, and the Islamic opposition to the independent and secular middleclass was the ideological ground for the undeclared unity between Moslems and the Left. Ironically, the European and American Left have made common cause with Radical

¹⁰ Moslem Brotherhood in Egypt, Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon have already offered alternative to corrupt and in effectual practice of the system. They maintained a vast network of social agencies and economic support through Islamic charities (Khoms and Zakat) where gaining the trust of the underserved is also gaining popular support.

¹¹ Islamic Social Front in Syria and People’s Mojahedin in Iran are the example of Islamic Marxist organizations. (Seyyed Ghotb took the organizational structure of the Moslem Brotherhood from Lenin’s “What is to be done”)

Islam. Their logic is quite simple: America is evil and anyone who opposes America is good.¹²

It is important to realize that it was not “Islam” that orchestrated the radical movement, but rather, Radical Islam is the product of the ideology of the people who wanted the change. For example, during the Iranian revolution, elements of social ideology and classless utopianism were represented by the five major discourses, making up the ideological mobilization. They are as follows:

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- 1- The Third Wordlist discourse;
 - 2- The anti –dictatorship discourse (discourse for unrealized democracy);
 - 3- The, anti-Israel anti-American discourse
 - 4- Islam as a sacred discourse
 - 5- The women discourse;

The development of these discourses coincided with a time when people became increasingly dissatisfied with their own government and the despotic rules.

Third-Wordlist was expressed by hatred of Western capital, Western culture, and Western power and above all, rapid modernization. Modernization was equated with the Zionist-Imperialist partnership, and must be attacked in its totality. The common ground for the Third Wordlist analysis was an eclecticism upon which all the political forces based their opposition toward changes which took place under the dictatorial regimes.

The Grievances

The grievances of radical Islam can best be summarized in the letter a Palestinian psychiatrist wrote to the BBC World News Service. In that letter, he asked why Palestinians blow themselves up in a crowded market in Israel. He believed this was an act of absolute despair. Palestinians have done everything legally to get their home back or at least to be recognized as the citizen of their country.

¹² David Horowitz, Unholy Alliance :Radical Islam and American Left. March 2006

Followings are part of the letter:

We simply became the slaves of our enemy. We are building their homes on our villages, and we clean their streets. Do you know what it does to you when you have to be the slave of your enemy in order to survive? No you will ever know how painful it is unless your country is occupied by an opposing force. Only then will you learn how to watch in silence pretending not to see the torture of your friends and the humiliation of your fathers.

Do you know what it means for a child to see his father spat at and beaten before his eyes by an Israeli soldier? Nobody knows what happened to our children. We don't know ourselves except we observe that they lose respect for their fathers. So they, our children, the children of the stone as they became known, tried the Intifada - the Uprising. Seven long years our children were throwing stones and being killed daily. Nearly all our young men were arrested, the majority was tortured. All had to confess, the result was every one suspected that all people were spies. So, we were exhausted, tormented and brutalized. What else could we do to return to our home? We had almost forgotten that and all we wanted was to be left alone.

Israeli occupation means that you are called twice a year by the intelligence department for routine interrogation and persuasion to work as an informer on your brothers and sisters. No one is spared. If you are to be a member of a political organization you will be sentenced for ten years. For a military action you will be sentenced to life.

What else could we try? Oh yes, peace. When the news came that Arafat had signed a peace treaty in Washington we were jubilant. At last we thought we were to get rid of that miserable life of military occupation, at last. So we had hope.¹³

¹³Eyad Sarraj: Why We Have All Become Suicide Bomber , MER, Middle East .org August 16, 2000 (Dr. Eyad Sarraj is a Palestinian Psychiatrist who was a Commissioner of Citizen's Rights and Awardees of Physicians for Human Rights. He was detained three times by the Palestinian Authority during 1996.)

Social Psychology of Muslim vs. Jew

“Clashes of Civilizations”, were used in American politics to emphasize the differences between the Western countries and the rest of the world. However what they advocated is the one dimensional belief that Liberal Democracy is the only way to social progress. Western Democracy relies on the theses of Enlightenment philosophers such as John Lock or Thomas Hobbes who are considered the father of Western Secular Liberalism. But, when cultural and political realities of the West are examined with greater depth; we see the Judeo-Christian philosophy as the main actor of their social theory and practice.

In America, the Christian Right has become a powerful force in American politics and culture. The Judeo-Christian tradition had the great impact on America’s self image and has influenced America’s attitude towards the Arab World. Its basic belief in Christian Zionism has resulted in a stubborn support of the state of Israel and its aggressive expansion in the region. The ‘Vision of Zion’ in American life has its roots in literature, the arts and internal politics from colonial times until today. These roots have fostered a specifically religious political culture that encourages hatred and suspicion of the Muslim World in domestic and foreign policy.¹⁴

America gives the lip service for the peace between Arabs and Israel. Each president, profess the peace effort through a half hearted political mediation such as George W Bush’s latest political display of November 2007. However, the stumbling block in the peace process in the Middle East goes beyond the traditional way of evaluating the political or territorial conflicts. For the Israelis, the religious discourse is set as such, that peace with neighboring Arabs is not possible as long as the Arabs are seeking independence and self fulfilling politics in the areas where Jews have claims of control. The Jewish and Islamic culture does not follow the exact conceptual interchange as the International politic has been doing until now. The Hebrew bible refers constantly to the internal adversaries as “Soneh: and refers to public adversaries as “Ojeb”. To understand the conflicts in the Middle East, it is useful to examine the ancient Israelites’ concept of politics. In the Hebrew bible, politics is based on religion. The concept of loving one’s neighbor is understood in light of distinction between

¹⁴ Fuad Shaban, For Zion’s Sake: The Judeo Christian Tradition, June 2005

“Soneh and Ojeb,” (Leviticus 19:18). In Hebrew bible a neighbor means a fellow Israeli. If internal antagonism among neighbors results in damages or if the Israelites committed detrimental acts against all of Israel, punishment was put forth according to their laws. But matters were different if relations between the Israelites and “others.” In Deuteronomy, the “others” are usually those people who stand in the way of God’s chosen people in the journey to the holy land. In view of the fact that the Israelites considers themselves the chosen, people, they did not accept the “others” as chosen people too, and this distinction became obvious during the Holy war that they waged with God’s blessing and direct intervention. Believing that they fought for a just cause, the Israelites, did not find it necessary to draw distinctions between combatants and non-combatants or between combat and non-combat areas. During periods of hostilities, enemies were indiscriminately put to death and properties that have not been damaged were either destroyed or confiscated.¹⁵

Muslims perhaps follow the same pattern of belief. Among Muslims, Jews are the “others.” Jews are distinctively different than the rest of the non-Muslim believers. Not only that the Muslims reject Jews as part of their community but they consider Jews as being dirty. “Najess” is a word that only refers to the “religious dirt”. The objects that are considered *najess* by Muslims are; feces, urine, dogs, pigs, and others. For example at a fruit market, if a Jew touches a fruit before buying it, no one will buy that fruit. And in recent history the Jews were hated by the Muslims because of their occupation of the holy city of Jerusalem. There are several anecdotal references to the Jews in the Muslim culture. When someone is stingy or is a penny pincher; they call him a “Jew.” Someone who malingers pain is said to be exhibiting a “Jewish act.” A child who wears shabby or bigger than his or her size clothing is known as Jewish dressing. All these concepts are imbedded in the peoples mind’s and has cultivated a prejudicial language in day to day life. The deep rooted cultural animosities make it difficult to reach an unwavering peace resolve in the Middle East. The expansionist politics of the Israel and the justice seeking and revengeful mentalities of Muslim population seems to

¹⁵ George Schwab, *Enemy for Foe*, Telos, No.72 Summer 1987 p195

be difficult to interchange the concept of friends and enemies as was done in the American politics of the Civil War. In Middle East, The war may go on until the total submission of one party towards the other.

MARTYRDOM, THE UNREALIZED DEMOCRACY

The concept of “civil society” cannot be divorced from an equally important theme in western philosophy, namely the centrality of autonomous individuals within the network of social institution. This notion of civil society carries with it the concept of individualism which ties the individual freedom to the philosophy of private ownership of property. In the Middle East, however, a distorted vision of civil society entailed the absence of autonomous individual along with the Islamic concept of life and death. These ideas influenced mass psychology, so that the awareness of social injustice would be impossible if the people were to accept all the rules of their oppressors. Radical Islam, being the religion of protest, articulated this process well and shaped social consciousness. Under this condition, the individual conscience is usually transformed in to group identity, mainly in a reverent fashion with a devalued concept of individuality. As a result, self-sacrifice and martyrdom became an expression of “Existence.” Death was considered a specific stage in the life of a devotee who, by dying, transcended human existence from a phase of “being-for-himself” to that of “being-for-others”. The martyr’s survival was meaningful only in terms of his relationship to those still living. After his death, his way of life was practiced and carried on by the survivors.

The notion of self-sacrifice, the foregoing of some valued thing for the sake of something of higher but ultimately illusory value, disrupts the dynamics of social interactions. It allows the elitist dictatorship to elevate itself to the realm of ideology. The social identity among many radical groups is such, that the individual member is transformed into an *authoritarian unit* who will view the society as being an extension of authoritarian relations. The similarity between radical Islamists and the Stalinist Left groups has its roots in this ideological unity. In both group the quest for freedom is the pivotal point of their demand. However the minute that the individual joins the group, the “Others” jump to take away his freedom and his being becomes the property of the

“Others”. The transformation of those devoted revolutionary groups into a totalitarian regime is partly due to this phenomenon. The group feels free to take away freedom of the people to safeguard the objectives of Revolution including “people’s freedom”.

Women and Radical Islam

In the eyes of Radical Islam, modern women, the “visible” women, are a symbol of hated modernity. The upsurge of female employment, the westernized appearance of women, and even the still incompatible independence of women evoked resentment and anger. The concept of modern woman had a more threatening impact than the concept of poverty or injustice. Moslem fathers and husbands were horrified by the prospect that their own familial and sexual relations might mirror the Western pattern.

There is a wide range of female restriction in Islamic culture. However the extreme form of the anti woman policies were implemented by Taliban in Afghanistan. In Iran, the Mojahedin Khalgh, put forth the idea that there was an inherent conspiracy of sexual abuse in the slogans for emancipation of women advocated in the west.¹⁶

In radical Islam, the woman behavior appears to be the main barometer of political control. For example, every time the government of Iran faces political crises, they send the Morality Police to the streets to arrest modern women and to shut down the boutiques that sell fashionable women’s attire.

Ideologically, women were thought of not only as weak, but as an obstacle to the process of manliness and self sacrifice. They were viewed as part of material life. Thus, for a man to become aware of himself as a “man,” distinct from material life, he had to oppose the natural order. In Islamic culture man is considered the protector of woman. This protective custody encompasses physical, moral, economic protection. In Islamic family the woman is consider the “Namous” of the man. Namous is the central pillar of male dignity and honor within the moral and social life of a Moslem community. For a man to protect his Namous he must control his female counterpart’s activities. Thus the civil laws in Islamic countries provide bylaws to protect men’s “dignity” and to restrict women’s freedom of action.

¹⁶ Mojahedin Khalgh,Zan Dar Massir Rahae (The Woman In the Course of Liberation) in Farsi, Teheran,1980, p38

There are also Moslem women who enjoy being protected by man. They love to cover their head with Hijab and to be segregated in public places. Many women in the Middle East say they enjoy covering themselves and they fear being looked at as a sex object less in this regard. Moslem women also use their Hijab as a political expression against western arrogance. An American house wife asked a Moslem female teacher why she had to cover her body in public. "Is there something that women had to be ashamed of? Asked the American woman, No my dear, replied the Moslem woman. Should I ask you why you have to wear a bra? There are millions of woman in Africa, in Aborigine and the Amazon who live and work with out a top and sometimes nude. They are not ashamed of their body why don't you do the same". This anecdotal exchange represents the deep rooted Western arrogance which has no respect for other cultures but set's their way as the only way.

CONCLUSION

In summery, emergence of Radical Islam is only part of the wider crisis in global politics. The "pathology" is not limited to the Middle East but it has affected the very fabric of civility in the West. Each day, people are loosing their freedom in the name of the "war against terrorism" and Western democracy is shifting towards gradual dictatorship. America in particular is at the fore-front of decadence of the Western Empire. As American writer Morris Berman wrote: For what we are now seeing, are the obvious characteristics of the West after the fall of Rome: the triumph of religion over reason; the atrophy of education and critical thinking; the integration of religion and the state, and the apparatus of torture?¹⁷

Today, the United State is sending military training teams to the corrupt regimes in Africa and Asia to combat radical Islam believing that the Islamists are the same force as the Vandals were during the collapse of Roman Empire.

In Islamic countries around the world where political repression is the foundation for the survival of the regimes, violence is the acceptable way for combating the brutality and corruption of the ruling governments. Violence is actually what the governments dictated to the radical groups. In these countries, people have no political choice but to

¹⁷ Morris Berman, DARK AGE AMERICA, THE FINAL PHASE OF EMPIRE, New York W Norton, 2006, pp2

be drawn towards Radical Islam. They may be disappearing in one area but reemerging somewhere else. Globalization has made the struggle over the identity of Islam even more acute.