

Kalim Siddiqui

Towards a New Destiny

*[Kalim Siddiqui, *Towards a New Destiny*, Slough: the Open Press, 1974. This book was written in July-August 1973, immediately after Dr Siddiqui's return from the conference it discusses. It was reprinted in Zafar Bangash (ed), In Pursuit of the Power of Islam, London and Toronto: The Open Press, 1996. The original volume included the Recommendations and Resolutions of the International Islamic Youth Conference, Tripoli, as an appendix. These have not been included in subsequent reprints.]*

Preface

Muslims the world over are impatient with their present condition; they are in a ponderous and defiant mood. They want to stop and reverse the process of continuous economic, social, political, cultural and intellectual stagnation and humiliation that has been their lot for at least three hundred years. They are disillusioned with the traditional leadership which has reduced Islam to the level of any other religion, concerned merely with personal piety and the Hereafter; they are equally disillusioned with the 'nationalist' leadership of the post-colonial era. They are in search of a new sense of direction—in short, a new destiny.

Milestones and turning points in history usually exist only in the imagination of the historian. In contemporary history milestones are even more subjective to the participants' biases. But occasionally there occurs a rare event not of the participants' making. Such events often make history precisely because participants have no idea that they are caught in the making of history. The International Islamic Youth Conference which met in Tripoli from Jumada al-Akhira 2-12, 1393 (July 2-12, 1973) was such an event.

In Tripoli they did not find the destiny, but they positively rejected the destiny offered them by Colonel Qaddafi and his ideologues. But in

the process of rejecting what was on offer the Muslim youth of the world clearly indicated the direction in which they believe their destiny lies. This book seeks to identify the area of agreement, common attitudes and shared assumptions most generally found among the Muslims who attended the Tripoli conference. The hope is that if this common ground is defined and generally agreed a major first step towards shaping the new destiny will have been taken. And, as the Chinese proverb goes, a journey of a thousand years begins with a single step. That first step, I believe, was taken at Tripoli.

There is another important aspect which concerns all Muslim or 'Islamic' conferences. In recent years many such conferences have met in various Muslim countries. These have led to the creation of a number of secretariats and international Muslim organizations. Notable among these are (a) the conference of about 500 scholars which met in Makkah in 1962 and set up the Muslim World League and the Islamic University at Madinah; (b) the Heads of State and Foreign Ministers' conferences which have led to the establishment of the Islamic Secretariat; and (c) the Islamic Youth Conference which met at Riyadh in December 1972. A great deal of very useful work is thus already underway.

But similar international conferences since the Second World War have often met with insufficient preparation and an almost total lack of detailed background research and planning. The results have been twofold: first, the conferences have often spent valuable time in going over the familiar ground again and again; second, the conferences have made decisions and passed resolutions without regard to resources and clearly defined objectives. One of the unfortunate consequences has been that a section of Muslim opinion displays a general lack of confidence in such conferences and many are openly cynical. If this book serves its purpose, Muslim conferences of the future, or even face-to-face discussions among Muslims, may no longer have to begin at the beginning, thus saving time and offering the opportunity for a gradual expansion of the area of agreement to cover the whole range of Muslim thought and consequent social, economic and political behaviour.

There is strong evidence that the diversity of Muslim thought is beginning to narrow and converge on a core area. This is a slow and gradual process with a momentum of its own. This book seeks to make a small contribution to this process.

Introduction

The International Islamic Youth Conference (Tripoli, Jumada al-Akhir 2-12, 1393/July 2-12, 1973) was convened by the Call of Islam Society of Libya which is headed by the eminent scholar, Shaikh Mahmoud Subhi. The Call of Islam Society was formed in 1970 by the Government of Colonel Mu'ammarr al-Qaddafi. Throughout history, Muslims have always carried on the work of inviting mankind to Islam and organizations such as the Call of Islam Society have always existed in most parts of the world. In its mission, therefore, the Call of Islam Society is not unique. What is unique in contemporary history is that the initiative for the establishment of a society to deliver the message of Islam has come from the Government of a Muslim State. In an age when Muslim countries are mostly governed by post-colonial elites, secularized by Western education and alienated from Islam, the initiative of the Libyan Government in establishing the Call of Islam Society with the full backing of its State apparatus and public funds is also a unique event in history.

This is an event in which Muslims everywhere must rejoice and pray to Allah Almighty that the work started by the Libyan Government through the Call of Islam Society leads to the restoration of the broken links between Islam and the Muslims of the twentieth century, and between man and his destiny as ordained by his Creator. Muslims are a community living in every corner of the world. Let every Muslim become a transmitter for the Call of Islam. We must also pray and hope that the example set by Libya is followed by every other Muslim government and eventually the Call of Islam comes through as a clear, confident, unified and resounding voice from all Muslim capitals and from all the Muslim communities scattered throughout the world.

One must, of course, pray and hope, but one must also recognize that the Call of Islam is likely to remain feeble, indistinct and even discordant perhaps a little longer. A voice that has been silent, muted, muzzled and stifled for so many centuries will take time to recapture its former resonance and captivating quality.

The Muslim caravan has been blown off course and dispersed by the ravages of history. But the remnants of the old caravan that first the Prophet and then the early Caliphs of Islam sent out into the world are still intact. In appearance, many of the descendants of the original carriers of the Call of Islam have acquired a veneer of alien civilizations. And some have even developed a form of tribalism, often expressed as

nationalism. Their conceptual frameworks and behaviour patterns, too, have become entangled in a cobweb of positivism, rationalism, scientism, pragmatism and the vicissitudes of expediency. The distance from the destiny they once sought together has increased in space and time.

When the dispersed remnants of an old caravan meet again it is only natural that brothers should embrace their lost brothers and then argue over what went wrong, where they got lost, and where do they go from here. This unravelling of the lost centuries is a longer process than a ten-day conference of 350 delegates can achieve. The next topic of discussion is, of course, the redefinition of the destiny that was once pursued with such vigour. This is an even longer process. The conference, however, succeeded in indicating the guidelines along which the work of defining and pursuing the destiny must now proceed. The conference also identified the issues that must be thrashed out in the search for a general outline of a new *ijma* among the Muslim *Ummah*.

These achievements of the conferences however, are only partly found in the formal resolutions that were passed. Indeed, as is always the case, the bulk of the work of the conference was done in committees and in small informal groups that met throughout the ten days and twelve nights that we were there in Tripoli. It was, therefore, physically impossible for anyone to be everywhere and even to meet everyone. This report, therefore, can only be a partial one. It is not only likely but certain that many of the issues that were raised and discussed have been missed. Nor can one hope to do justice to all the contributions made by individuals in formal, committee and informal discussions. My hope is that after this preliminary report has been published, the conference participants will provide me with further details of their impressions and experiences at the conference. This will enable me to prepare a comprehensive book-length report for subsequent publication. This report concentrates on only one of the seven topics that were formally discussed. The debate on the 'Third International Theory' occupied the bulk of the conference time and is of crucial importance. This debate is reported at length in Chapter 3.

In the preparation of this report, I have received valuable advice and encouragement from Mr M. H. Faruqi, Editor of *Impact*, and Mr Abu Bakr Mahomed, President of the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa. My friends Ziauddin Sardar and Ajmal Ahmad read the entire draft and helped to make valuable improvements.

This report, however, has no ‘official’ status. Its shortcomings and mistakes are all mine and mine alone.

Kalim Siddiqui

Slough,
August 1973.

1. The Conference

The Conference was convened by the Libyan Government which chose and invited the delegates and met the entire bill. The hospitality of the Libyan Government, the Call of Islam Society and its Secretary-General, Shaikh Mahmoud Subhi was, however, exceeded only by the hospitality extended by the common people of Libya. Everywhere the delegates went wearing their distinctive badges they were greeted as ‘brother’ and embraced by the common man in the streets and the bazaars of Tripoli. The waiters and other staff in Hotel Mediterranean, where all the delegates were housed in a single seven-story building, served us with a diligence and enthusiasm which touched us all deeply. The memory of these two weeks in Libya will remain for ever with those who were fortunate enough to experience it.

It was, of course, a *youth* conference. The term *youth* was, and quite rightly, liberally defined. The age spread of the delegates ranged from the early twenties to perhaps late sixties. The vast majority of the delegates, however, were in the 25-40 age group. This is significant for an understanding of the mood and the attitudes of the conference participants.

The 25-40 age group of Muslims is entirely a post-colonial generation. Those around 40 were still at school when their countries became ‘independent.’ The last years of colonialism and the entire post-colonial period is part of their personal experience. As schoolboys and college and university students they were the followers of their ‘national leaders’ or ‘fathers of the nation’. They threw themselves wholeheartedly behind their national movements and many joined government service or served their country as professionals, teachers and businessmen. But half-way in their careers they now find that the ‘national’ independence they fought for was a myth. The Islam their

‘national’ leaders preached has also proved to have been little more than a slogan. The destiny they pursued with such zest has already receded further beyond the horizon. The people of their countries, almost without exception, have become poorer; the socio-economic and political systems have proved to be a form of continued colonialism from within and without; the elites have often behaved in a more parasitical manner than did the European colonialists. In short, none of the problems with which their States began the era of ‘independence’ has been solved. Many new problems, some even more intractable, have been added with no solutions in sight. This generation, then, is one that has already failed and knows it. Yet this generation is still young enough to do something about it. But what? Most Muslims who are around forty today are disillusioned, confused and yet determined not to go down without another assault on the forces of evil that pervade their society. Perhaps 40 percent of the delegates in Tripoli were of this generation—half-spent but with plenty of fight and fire still left in them!

Those in their twenties were either very young or not yet born when the post-colonial era began. They were born ‘free’ men and women. They are less inhibited by the half-baked ideas of their ‘fathers of the nation’ or the so-called ‘leaders of the revolution.’ They feel little personal commitment to the old order that has failed and is now in the process of decay. They only know that the generation before them has badly let them down. They know that their fathers and grandfathers were products of a colonial system. They are grateful to their elders for having brought them up as Muslims, but little more. This generation knows also that the message of Islam is something more profound and practical than they have learned in their homes and schools.

This generation of Muslims is highly motivated and highly articulate. This youth has of course been put through the educational systems set up by the colonial powers. But here lies the secret of being a Muslim. No matter how secular the education or how Westernized the society and its environment, a group of Muslims always retains a total commitment to Islam.

This generation of Muslim youth realizes that it has been deceived—deceived by its elders who were in turn victims of foreign influences. It wants to know what Islam is. It wants Islam in its entirety and nothing less. No longer would the Muslim youth tolerate hybrid philosophies carrying the label of ‘Islam’. Armed with Islam alone they

want to go ahead and rebuild their entire social orders from scratch. What, then, is the truth?

The Muslim youth may not know the answer, but it knows what is NOT the answer, which is the first step towards the discovery of the truth.

The third group at the Tripoli conference was that of scholars. These, too, came from all parts of the world. But the most significant group of scholars was that of Muslim academics now holding fairly senior positions in the universities of Western Europe and North America. Also well represented was a group of research students now finishing doctorates in Western universities. Many of them were past and present members of such organizations as the Muslim Students' Association of the United States and Canada and the Federation of Students' Islamic Societies in the United Kingdom and Eire. In this third group there was a pleasant mix of the traditional and modern scholarship.

The social scientists among these scholars deserve special attention. They, as Muslims trained in Western social sciences, face formidable problems of methodology, the scientific revolution in the behavioural sciences, and the theory of knowledge itself. Can they follow the assumptions and suppositions about man, his origin, and his relationship with the universe that are implicit in Western tradition of the social sciences? If not, why not? If as Muslims they cannot be social scientists in the Western meaning, what is the social science of Islam? It is, in short, a question of identity of the entire Muslim *Ummah*. This crisis of identity is confronting all Muslim societies everywhere. But the Muslim social scientist is in the forefront and his crisis is more acute because he is more aware of it. He is a Muslim but his social science, so to speak, is non-Muslim.

Yet the Muslim social scientist is expected to know the answers to the grave social, economic and political problems that today confront all Muslims and Muslim societies throughout the world. In Tripoli the Muslim social scientist was most often in demand for advice and consultation. During each 'consultation' or debate with fellow delegates, the social scientist, finding himself cornered, had no option but to plead ignorance. But his ignorance was a curiously informed ignorance. He knew what he was ignorant of. He answered questions by raising more questions. But he is no longer without hypotheses, and although he does not know the answers—he is bold enough to admit as much—he does indicate the direction and approach which might yield the answers. And

though his social science is non-Muslim, his approach at least is now Muslim. He now rejects the premises of Western economics, political science and sociology and he is beginning to formulate his own assumptions. This at least is a beginning towards the founding of a tradition of Muslim social sciences. No one, not even the most exalted professor, pretends that this is anything more than a beginning.

Thus the conference at Tripoli was a perfectly balanced amalgam of exuberant Muslim youth, experienced middle age, and scholarly wisdom and even ignorance. They all had one thing in common: an intense and total commitment to Islam.

Their total commitment to Islam, however, was also of a special variety. This commitment was not to Islam as a religion of personal piety concerned only with the individual soul's desire to get into Paradise ahead of everybody else. The Muslims assembled in Tripoli were committed to seeking salvation through *social action* rather than a surfeit of individual prayers.

The coming together of such highly motivated and committed Muslims from all parts of the world is a tribute to the organizing skills and similar motivations and commitments of the conference conveners—the Libyan Government and the Call of Islam Society. The Libyan diplomatic missions throughout the world sought out such committed Muslims and invited them to the conference. For bringing such an assembly of Muslims together the Libyans deserve the gratitude of us all.

The scene was thus set for an outstanding and inspiring conference.

3. The Third International Theory

The conference was due to be opened by Colonel Mu‘ammar al-Qaddafi, chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council. But, to the great disappointment of the entire conference, Colonel Qaddafi had gone to Cairo in search of *wahdah*—the union of Egypt and Libya in a single State.

In his place, the opening speech was delivered by Major Bashir Hawadi, member of the Revolutionary Council and Secretary-General of the Arab Socialist Union. At the closed business session on the first day, Major Hawadi had also been elected President of the conference. The Libyans' choice of Hawadi as President of the conference is significant

in the understanding of their possible motives in calling the conference and what they expected from it. The conference had been formally called by the Call of Islam Society and its Secretary-General, Shaikh Mahmoud Subhi, was the official host. If this had been the true position, then the obvious choice for President of the conference should have been Shaikh Mahmoud Subhi. The choice of Hawadi for the Presidentship of the conference was a clear indication that the conference was in fact to be run and managed by the Arab Socialist Union on behalf of the regime and not by the Call of Islam Society. The label of the Call of Society was a mere 'flag of convenience' perhaps because non-Arab and non-socialist Muslims may not have responded to a call coming from the Arab Socialist Union. The meaning and significance of Hawadi's Presidentship and the relegation of Subhi to the role of a vice-president among seven other vice-presidents was not lost on the delegates.

The seven subjects for discussion at the conference, in order of appearance in the official programme, were:

1. The Third International Theory;
2. Revision of Educational Systems in Muslim countries;
3. Palestine, Eritrea, the Philippines and Zanzibar;
4. Dangers of Orientalism;
5. The need to safeguard the Arabic language and means to teach Arabic to non-Arabic speaking Muslims;
6. Propagation of Islam among Pagans; and
7. Conditions of Muslims in the Soviet Union, Thailand and Bulgaria.

In addition, the two-hour pre-Maghrib or late afternoon session each day was allocated to the presentation of conditions of Muslims in various parts of the world. From the conference programme it was clear that the organizers and hosts expected the main business of the conference to be the Third International Theory. No less than three clear days were allocated for discussion of the theory. Bashir Hawadi, in his inaugural address, did not mention any of the other subjects for discussion. After a brief review of the teachings of Islam and the causes of the decline of the Muslims, he said:

Dear Brothers; Today we have no alternative but to adhere to our religion and our Qur'an. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says 'I have left you two things, adherence to which will guard you against going astray; namely Allah's Book,

and my tradition (*Sunnah*).’ Let us therefore adhere to the Book, to the *Sunnah*. Let us propagate the message of Islam in order to save humanity from dereliction. Here, on the soil of this country, we uphold the Qur’an in order to build up a true Islamic society. We present Qur’an to all peoples wherever they are and whatever their creeds, just to show them the truth, the truth of the Lord: ‘Verily, we have revealed it (the Qur’an) in truth.’ Hence, our call for the Third International Theory, if we may use the word *theory*, for it is neither human thinking, nor philosophical speculation. But it is more profound and more inclusive. It is the Qur’an, Almighty’s Book, to which we call and whose laws and instructions we apply in compliance to Allah’s orders. ‘If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah has revealed, they are (no better than) unbelievers.’ We apply the Qur’an as a legislation and a system of government on the basis of counsel. This is our purpose and our wish, for through Islam we are guided to the straight path and in default of Islam we perish and disappear.

We are traversing an ordeal. Our sanctities are violated and our enemy scores victories on us mainly because we have failed to adhere to our religion. ‘If you will aid (the cause of) Allah, He will aid you to win victory.’ The enemy’s power is growing. In collusion with colonialists, our enemy invades Islamic territories, sets up temples in place of mosques in an attempt to make falsehood predominate over truth. All this takes place while the Muslims are heedless or unvigilant. What is more hideous is that some Islamic States have recognized the Zionist entity and its occupation of Islamic territories. Does that behaviour emanate from Islam?

Brother Muslims, the enemies of Islam have never ceased to launch their campaigns against it. This has taken the form of successive wars known throughout history. It has taken the form of colonialism and religious persecution from which Muslims in some parts of the world suffer, as is the case in the Philippines. This requires a unified stand in compliance with Allah’s words.

Hawadi had thus set the standard by which the conference was to judge the Third International Theory. It was a high, indeed the highest, standard that could be set. In the words of Hawadi, once again, the theory *'is neither human thinking, nor philosophical speculation. But it is more profound and more inclusive. It is the Qur'an, Almighty's Book, to which we call and whose laws and instructions we apply in compliance to Allah's orders.'* The conference, not surprisingly, proceeded to judge the theory by the Qur'an and by the *Sunnah*.

The theory's only written version available to delegates was a speech by Colonel Qaddafi delivered to the Arab Socialist Union in October 1972. The English version, perhaps due to bad translation and even worse printing, is so poor that it does not bear comprehension by anyone with even the most rudimentary knowledge of history, economics, politics and Islam. It deals with all these and fails to command respect or even attention.

The theory's oral presentation to the conference was therefore eagerly awaited. It came on the second day, July 3, from Ibrahim al-Ghwail, an aspiring intellectual of the Arab Socialist Union. The choice of al-Ghwail of the ASU to present the Third International Theory suffered from all the same implications as the choice of Hawadi for conference Presidentship. If the theory is nothing but Islam, as claimed by Hawadi, then why was it not presented by a scholar chosen from the Call of Islam Society rather than by an ASU intellectual?

Be that as it may, al-Ghwail addressed the conference in the manner of an oracle oozing with confidence in what he had to say. His style was that of a man presenting a major breakthrough in an otherwise stagnant Muslim intellectual tradition. Much of what he had to say was relevant but hardly original. He asked some basic questions: What is the criterion for the 'eligibility' of Islam? What is the nature of the age we are living in? What is the methodology of scientific inquiry? Al-Ghwail dealt with these questions competently enough. There was general agreement on some of his assertions: that there must be an emphasis on a rational approach to our problems; that the Western civilization has created more problems than it has solved; that the contradictions inherent in Western philosophies and operational systems are bound to destroy them; that when this happens, there will be a vacuum to be filled; that the Islam of personal piety will neither attract a following nor solve the problems of mankind; that the main dialogue in the future is going to be between Marxism and Islam.

Dealing with economic issues, al-Ghwail's mind seemed to be moving in the same direction as the rest of the assembled youth. Some of the hypotheses that were discernable from his treatment of economic problems are:

1. Capital should not cause injustice in society.
2. Certain types of private property is 'theft'—stolen from the society as a whole or from God, such as private property in land and large-scale capital.
3. There can be no labour without payment and no capital without labour.
4. Idle money must not be allowed to appreciate.
5. The institution of *zakah* is an effective answer to the problem of inflation.¹

These assumptions on Islam's answer to contemporary economic problems are fairly radical. A few years ago such ideas would have caused great controversy and many Muslim scholars would have denounced them as 'leftist' if not positively communist. That they caused hardly a ripple in Tripoli is indicative of the fact that contemporary Muslim thought has already moved in that direction. It is significant that such radical ideas failed to raise any eyebrows in such an assembly of Muslims from such diverse backgrounds. Less than 20 years ago the dominant paradigm of Islam was that if usury and bank interest were taken out of the capitalist system, the system would become 'Islamic'. This was the typical bourgeois reformist Islam of the nationalist leaders and 'fathers of the nation' and their middle-class political parties. They also believed bourgeois democracy to be 'Islamic'.

This failure to critically examine al-Ghwail's economic formulations was in a sense unfortunate. These issues, which undoubtedly are the critical issues which must be settled by *ijtihad* and *ijma*, ought to have been debated by the conference. But perhaps an unconscious *ijma* on these issues has already been reached. If so, the emergence of such a consensus in Muslim thought on a world scale is a

1. Al-Ghwail was talking in Arabic. The author took shorthand notes from the simultaneous translation system which was of indifferent quality. In this report, my shorthand notes have been relied upon. The full transcript of the conference and official translation will take some time to become available.

major event and should have been explicitly formulated in precise terms by the Tripoli conference. This opportunity was lost. These economic issues are, however, so important that an international conference to consider and state them in explicit terms is now overdue. Once the task of stating Islam's economic propositions has been accomplished, the drift of some sections of the Muslim intelligentsia towards Marxism will be stopped and perhaps reversed. This will also have a profound impact on political and social movements in most Muslim countries. This task awaits our urgent attention.

The attention of the Tripoli conference, however, was entirely taken up by the political aspects of the Third International Theory and its terminology. According to al-Ghwail, the theory's political philosophy relied on three concepts: religion, nationalism and socialism—'the three forces that have moved history'. This phrase was to be repeated by the Libyan delegation throughout the conference and it also appears in Colonel Qaddafi's speeches.

No sooner had al-Ghwail finished his pontifical performance than the theory was immediately challenged first from the platform by Dr Muhammad Bissar of al-Azhar, a vice-president of the conference. Bissar made some telling points. He roundly condemned the modern intellectual's habit of comparing Islam with capitalism or communism. He pointed out that Islam predates both these 'isms' and, therefore, cannot be called 'third' after them. Islam is either first or not in the same league. He rightly suspected that the 'third' in the title of the theory had been used in the same sense as the 'third' in the 'Third World'. If the theory is Islam, as claimed first by Hawadi and then by al-Ghwail, then Islam is for the entire mankind and not for the Third World alone.

Bissar then turned to the word 'theory'. He pointed out that *theory* is a term of scientific methodology and is arrived at by way of hypotheses drawn from human observation and deduction. Such hypotheses are subject to experimentation, validation and subsequent refutation. Besides, said Bissar, a theory is always related to a given historical situation. Islam, Bissar pointed out, is a Divine message for all time and lays down the relationship between man and man and between man and God. He then asked: Can we put Islam in this scientific context? The answer from the entire conference was a resounding 'No'. Bissar proposed that the theory, if it is Islam, ought to carry some other appellation. The response from the conference was a unanimous 'Yes'.

In the following two days the political philosophy of the Third International Theory was subjected to a thorough examination on the floor of the conference and in committee.

In the meantime, a four-member sub-committee had been appointed to examine the appropriateness of the theory's title and, if necessary, to suggest another name for it. The sub-committee consisted of one Libyan, two Egyptians, and Dr Subhi al-Saleh of Lebanon. The Libyans perhaps hoped that at least the two Egyptians would support them and they would be able to get the title of the theory approved by the sub-committee.

The most lively debates centred on nationalism and socialism, and by implication on Nasserism, which is also part of the Qaddafi framework. It is worth trying to summarize some of the arguments the assembled Muslim scholars put forward on these two issues.

First, some of the arguments against nationalism:

1. Nationalism demands and secures, if necessary by force, the total and supreme loyalty of the people to a nation. It recognizes no superior to the national unit. Islam, on the other hand, demands loyalty, submission and dedication to the one and only God and recognizes no other loyalty.
2. Nationalism is a form of glorified tribalism, and Islam abolished tribalism. Indeed, the entire lifelong struggle of the Prophet Muhammad was waged against tribalism that flourished in Arabia of his day.
3. Nationalism has given rise to the structure of the modern nation-State which demands the promotion of its own interests in preference and at the cost of all others. It is the primary cause of all modern conflicts and wars and the condition of mutual terror that exists between nation and nation and man and man.
4. Nationalism thrives on such diverse factors as territory, language, culture and racial superiority. Islam, on the other hand, recognizes no geographical, linguistic, cultural or racial barriers.
5. Nationalism is a peculiar product of the history of Christendom, of Europe and of Western civilization. Christendom had overcome tribalism and unified Europe under the Church. The transition from the Middle Ages to modern times is marked by the Renaissance and the Reformation, in the wake of which emerged nationalism, secular and parochial, to install a number of emperors in place of the

one Pope. Thus the historical role of nationalism was to destroy the universal ideas of the Church.

6. Once nationalism and the nation-States had become consolidated in Europe, the idea of nationalism reached the Muslim areas of North Africa, the Middle and Near East. There the rise of nationalism signalled the final dismemberment of the world of Islam into nation-States.
7. It is a fact of history that the originators and early leaders of Arab nationalism were Christian and Jewish Arabs in whose interest it was to keep the world of Islam divided and at loggerheads with one another. This sums up the modern and contemporary history of the Arab world. Arab nationalism has kept Arabs alienated from Islam and other parochial nationalisms such as those of Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and Indonesia, have kept Muslims as a whole from coming together on the basis of Islam.
8. Nationalism in the Muslim world has kept the House of Islam divided, weak and at the mercy of imperial-capitalism, zionism and communism.

In addition to these arguments, scholars learned in the Qur'an produced verse after verse to prove that nationalism runs counter to the message of Islam and the mission of the Prophet.

Now let us turn to the arguments produced against socialism:

1. Socialism is a term used in Marxist philosophy which is as alien to Islam as the philosophy of capitalism.
2. Islam waged war against capitalism and feudalism *before* socialism which claims to do the same.
3. The socialist philosophy merely replaces tribalism with economic classes and is based on the assumption that man acts in his class interests. Islam, on the other hand, creates an economic and social order in which classes identified by their economic roles do not exist.
4. The socialist philosophy is based on a continuing conflict between classes in which classes continuously change their dominant positions. Socialism implicitly acknowledges the philosophical view of man which regards man as by nature bad, cunning and selfish. This philosophical bias of socialism is derived from the

Christian and Jewish influences in which Marxist thought is deeply rooted. This, too, runs counter to the teachings of Islam.

5. Historically, socialism is a reaction against the harshnesses of the capitalist system, whereas Islam is a positive force which pre-empted the growth of capitalism.
6. Both capitalism and socialism have to be imposed and maintained by coercive power organized as State dictatorship of either the bourgeoisie, or after the so-called revolution, by the proletariat. In practice, socialism merely leads to State capitalism.
7. There is no qualitative difference between private capitalism under the bourgeois State or State capitalism under the so-called socialist State. Both systems are exploitative and coercive to an equal degree.
8. Islam, on the other hand, motivates man's social and economic conduct in such a way that no one pursues greed and acquisitiveness which characterize the capitalist system; Islam enjoins the pursuit of collective good in a collective framework in which the individual goals are attained without incurring social costs. Islam unifies the social order in a brotherhood of man which ensures more than any welfare State or socialist system that the weakest members of the society, if any, are fully protected.

Such arguments against nationalism and socialism left the intellectuals of the Arab Socialist Union of Libya bewildered. Their expectations that the conference would acclaim and applaud their theory were not met. They were further discomfited by the announcement by Dr al-Saleh of Lebanon that the four man sub-committee had decided to change the name of the Third International Theory and that a new name would be proposed. This plunged the Arab Socialist Union and the entire fabric of the Libyan regime's ideological pretensions into a crisis of major proportions. The conference had taken them as seriously as they wished to be taken. Even more disconcerting for the Libyan Arab Socialists was the fact that they were opposed by other Arab delegates from the Middle East. A succession of Arab delegates stood up to denounce Arab nationalism. They were forthright in admitting that for over 30 years Arab nationalism had been a divisive force in the Arab world and had kept the Arabs fragmented and weak. These Arab delegates, many of them former Nasserites and Arab nationalists, now regarded Islam as the only platform which could halt and reverse the inexorable course of recent history.

The Libyan delegation responded by bringing forward yet another ideologue of the Arab Socialist Union, Ahmed Shahati, at the morning session of the conference on July 6.

Shahati began by telling the conference that President Qaddafi had been working on the Third International Theory since the early 1950s. A theory that had taken so long to develop could not be explained and clarified in one conference. He insisted that it was not possible to change the name of the theory. If the four-man committee wanted to change the name of the theory, it would have to study the theory as a whole and discuss it with President Qaddafi himself. 'We have to be patient,' Shahati said and repeated the phrase several times. He then launched a bitter attack on Saudi Arabia and the Saudi delegation. 'Saudi Arabia is subordinated to zionism and the United States. Saudi Arabia has American bases and American soldiers on its soil,' said Shahati. He added: 'We are independent in Libya. We are not subordinated to Saudi Arabia or any other country.'

Shahati said that Libyan policy was conducted at four levels: (1) national, (2) Islamic world, (3) Third World, and (4) international. He then proceeded to explain Libyan policy at each of these levels. At the national level he said:

Libya is part of the great Arab nation. Therefore we work for Arab unity. This is based on nationalism. If Arabs are united Islam will be united. We work for global Arab unity. There is no contradiction here between nationalism and Islam. Our nationalism is not aggressive like other nationalisms. Arab nationalism is human in nature. Islam is one of the fundamentals of Arab nationalism.

At the Islamic world level, Shahati said:

We belong to the great Islamic world as well. We support our Muslim brothers everywhere in the world. We offer concrete support to Muslim minorities in difficulties. We supported Pakistan in its recent crisis.

At the Third World level, Shahati said:

We also belong to the Third World which is fighting against imperialism and for national independence and sovereignty. Therefore, we find ourselves in the position in which we have to close our ranks and to co-operate with the Third World countries. The Third World needs an

ideological theory which is neither communism nor capitalism. We should offer this ideological strategy to the Third World. Therefore, when we speak of the Third Theory we are doing a great service to humanity. In fact our line is socialist. We have also to revise the doctrine of non-alignment. We now have reactionary regimes closely linked with the United States calling themselves non-aligned. There must be a more qualitative difference between aligned and non-aligned. Haile Selassie has no business to belong to the non-aligned. We ask our Muslim brothers to sever all links with imperialist countries.

At the international level, Shahati said:

There are two super-powers, the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union. NATO is an aggressive alliance. Warsaw Pact is an aggressive alliance. The Third World has no role in international relations. In fact we are a bone of contention. This is due to the fact that we are divided and have no influence in the world. We have to work out an Islamic strategy. We need a long-term strategy and a short-term strategy. I think that the Third International Theory adequately covers the political, economic and other aspects. This theory is based on religion and nationalism. This theory is all inclusive. This theory is a way of life. We consider religion and nationalism as fundamental factors in the movement of history. It is the right theory committed to moral values and God.

This is a brief outline of the theory. Muslim thinkers should enrich it in its application. There is a conspiracy of the East and West against the Muslim countries. There is an alliance between Washington and Moscow, NATO and Warsaw Pact in the Mediterranean. We offer our Third International Theory which should be applied to all the countries of the world which are suppressed by capitalism and communism. Our Libyan delegation is working here (in the conference) to produce a resolution (in support of the Third Theory). It will be our starting point and our line of action.

Shahati was given a patient hearing, though his headmasterly manner offended many delegates. His restatement of propositions concerning nationalism and socialism as sanctioned by Islam was given

a polite but cool reception. It was clear that the Arab Socialist Union intellectuals were not supposed to have minds of their own. They had a brief to present and to defend but not to listen or to accept sound advice. It was also clear that as far as the Arab Socialist Union was concerned the conference's business was to 'learn' the theory and approve it and that the conference was exceeding its authority in trying to critically examine the package. Shahati had hardly sat down when Shaikh Mahmoud Subhi, the Libyan scholar of Islam and Secretary-General of the Call of Islam Society, took the microphone. In an emotionally charged, even angry, voice, Subhi demolished the Arab Socialist case. He told the conference:

This conference is an Islamic conference. You (the delegates) are invited to express your views with sincerity and faith without inhibitions and in conformity with the teachings of the Qur'an. This is an Islamic conference [he repeated]. This conference will discuss the Third Theory in the light of the Qur'an and nothing else. Brother Ahmed Shahati is right to explain *his* Third Theory but there is no need to attack others. We do not need to attack any other Arab Government that participates. The Third Theory is quite well known. It is based on Islam. But in spite of this explanation [by Shahati] I cannot accept this title of Third Theory. We must keep Islam itself. Why should we speak of the Third Theory? The conference should accept no intellectual terrorism from any quarter.

This was a clear, even bold, stand by Shaikh Subhi. The conference applaud for him was loud and long—a clear indication that Shahati had made no impact on the delegates. There was, however, another and deeper significance in Subhi's stand. It meant that the confrontation was not only between the overseas delegates and the Libyans, but also between the conference, including the Call of Islam Society of Libya, and the Arab Socialist Union, including Qaddafi himself.

The Saudi Arabian delegate, in spite of Shahati's attack on him, returned to the subject of nationalism:

Arab nationalism is an American and British invention. They introduced nationalism when they wanted to divide the Arabs and Turks. Arab nationalism does not meet the standards of Islam which is for all Muslims all over the world. We reject the racial overtones of nationalism in the name of Islam.

The Saudi delegate then turned to socialism and said: ‘Socialism is only a feature of communism. Islam is called Islam and nothing but Islam.’

Shahati once again intervened to defend the Arab Socialist position. He said: ‘Delegates should judge Islam on its application in Libya. Nationalism is part of religion—nationalism not of the West, atheistic and aggressive. Arabs are the fundamental material of Islam. The Third Theory is merely a strategy. It is Islam that directs Libya on all fronts.’ Shahati denied any attempt at ‘intellectual terrorism’. He then proceeded to launch another bitter attack on Saudi Arabia. ‘Are there no Americans in Saudi Arabia?’ he demanded. ‘Are there no American bases in Saudi Arabia?’ he asked. ‘Are there not Jews in Saudi Arabia? Does Saudi Arabia not permit the signing of accords (alliances) with the USA?’ Shahati then charged Saudi Arabia of increasing its oil production when Libya reduced oil output as a form of political pressure on the West. He also accused Saudi Arabia of keeping enormous funds invested in the USA—funds that were then used by the zionists to fight Arabs. ‘The philosophy of Libyan Islam is different from that of Saudi Arabia,’ said Shahati.

Fortunately, this was Friday and the conference had to adjourn to the Moulay Muhammad Mosque in Tripoli. It is a magnificent mosque and the world of Islam—the scattered remnants of the old caravan—assembled in a single congregation was a most moving spiritual experience. And, also fortunately, there were no afternoon or evening sessions of the conference scheduled for that day. That evening and late into the night the delegates, assembled in small groups and in their hotel bedrooms, continued the debate on the Third Theory. That evening another important meeting took place—a private meeting of the large Libyan delegation. A Libyan delegate later revealed that half the Libyan delegation had accepted the arguments against nationalism and socialism and the Third Theory syndrome as a whole. But in the Libyan delegation the Arab Socialist Union carried the night-long argument. The Arab Socialists were to try to sell the theory once again. This, however, was not known to the delegates and the conference assembled on Saturday July 7 for, in the language of the official programme, a ‘Free Discussion about the Third International Theory’. In fact what followed was far from ‘free’.

The conference was called to order and then suddenly ‘adjourned for five minutes’. When the conference resumed, a long five minutes later, the chair was occupied by Major Bashir Hawadi. Hawadi,

Secretary-General of the Arab Socialist Union, had been elected President of the conference on the first day. But in the subsequent sessions Hawadi had not appeared, leaving the conference to be chaired in turn by the seven vice-presidents.

Hawadi explained his absence and reappearance thus: 'I have not attended this conference because of my political preoccupations and because I wanted my learned vice-presidents to administer and guide the debates of this conference. I would like to explain why we insist on the Third Theory.' So, obviously, the crisis for the Libyans, particularly the Arab Socialist Union, was serious. They had apparently decided that the mind of the conference was made up and that they had little chance of changing it. Hawadi came, as it turned out, to have the last word and then prevent any further debate on the theory.

Hawadi began by restating his faith in Islam.

Islam is our religion. It is our road to sound and correct action. Islam is not contradictory. We see in the Qur'an the ideal solution to all the causes of humanity. What does it mean? What we call the Third Theory we are obliged to call it that because we are obliged to find a third alternative to the other two theories—capitalism and communism.

He then returned to the argument repeatedly put forth by the Libyan Arab Socialists before and repeatedly refuted by the conference:

This does not mean that nationalism should be eliminated. Our Prophet came to a people. He came to the Arabs. The Qur'an does not eliminate nationalism. It eliminated racialism. The Arabs would remain Arabs, other nations would remain as they are. What we say is that nations form the personality of the people. Before religion there was hatred.

The Third International Theory deals with the thoughts of man and his material and spiritual needs. We insist on this title. Islam is not a reactionary religion. We are not fanatic about it. Islam is a link of love between nationalities. The theory has its philosophical, social and economic aspects. For its philosophical aspects, we depend on the Qur'an. For its social and economic aspects, we depend on nationalism and socialism. We reject communism. We accept socialism

as economic justice as found in the Qur'an. How to distribute wealth? This is socialism.

Hawadi ended his speech with the declaration that 'there is no disagreement between us'. It is not clear what Hawadi meant by this last statement. Did he mean that there was no difference among the Libyans? Or did he mean there was no difference between the Arab Socialist position and that of the conference? In either case he was indulging in wishful thinking. The differences in the Libyan delegation existed and there had been a complete and total opposition in the conference to the title and content of the so-called Third International Theory.

Immediately after he had spoken delegate after delegate refuted his claim that nationalism was sanctioned by the Qur'an or that socialism could be deduced from the Holy Book. The Saudi Arabian delegate remained calm. In a short speech he again demolished the case for nationalism and socialism.

The link of nationalism and Islam is a contradiction. Nationalism, whether Arab or Iranian or any other, has a dozen ethnocentric, geographical, cultural and linguistic overtones. Our Prophet never accepted and/or agreed to launch Arabism. Islam creates a universal brotherhood of man while nationalism divides mankind. This is not and cannot be Islam.

He dealt a similar blow to socialism: 'Socialism is a concept which has its own history and philosophy and has nothing in common with Islam. If you use the word *socialism* no one will think of socialism as coming from the Qur'an.'

Another delegate called the Third Theory 'well intentioned'. He pointed out, however, that the Muslim masses will not understand a theory whereas they understand Islam. He appealed to the political leadership to use terms understood by the masses to close the gap between them and the Muslims at large.

Bashir Hawadi, who now controlled the stage and had the microphone, spoke again and again repeating what he had said earlier in defence of nationalism and socialism. A few new sentences he spoke stand out among the author's notes and are worth recording. He said:

Arabism is the body and Islam is the spirit... Socialism is an Arabic word which means social justice of the Qur'an...
The leadership of Libya differs from leadership in other

countries. It is a popular revolution. It sprang out of the masses. Libyan revolution does not belong to any political party. There are no classes in Libya. Our roots are Islamic. We apply *shari'ah*... Our final aim is Arab unity... We do not insist on our own ideas. We are ready to discuss all issues and all ideas... I tried to read Marx's *Das Capital*. I do not understand it... Arab nationalism is not an alternative for religion. We do not distinguish between Muslims and Arabs... We have to have a certain climate and framework of action. This is the Third International Theory.

One delegate summed up the views of the conference when he called the Third Theory 'a delicious food without taste!'

At this point Hawadi lost patience. He abruptly adjourned the meeting an hour before the scheduled adjournment for lunch.

For all practical purposes the debate on the Third International Theory ended on that day. Thereafter Hawadi did not allow his 'learned vice-presidents' to 'administer and guide the debates of this conference.' He was there in the chair at every session, despite his 'political preoccupations'. He was brusque with delegates and interrupted speeches at will. Several attempts, including a speech by Prof. Ghulam Azam of East Pakistan, to revive the Third Theory debate were thwarted from the chair by Hawadi. No more was heard of the four-man subcommittee or the new name for the Third Theory it was going to propose. Dr Subhi al-Saleh of Lebanon, who had announced that the committee had decided to change the name of the theory, left Tripoli before the end of the conference.

In the background, however, Hawadi and the other intellectuals of the Arab Socialist Union remained active to have a resolution supporting the Third International Theory written by the drafting committee. The resolution on the Third Theory that finally emerged contained the following passage which drew sustained and prolonged applause at the final session of the conference:

The conference thinks that the Islamic terminology, especially as used in al-Qur'an, the *Sunnah* and the *fiqh* is the best to express the implications of Islamic solutions in the fields of politics, economics, sociology and education so that it may be distinguished from the other terminologies of the other theories and dogmas which are contaminated

by many of the strange meanings about Islam by the lapse of time.

The full text of the conference resolution on the Third International Theory is as follows:²

The Third Theory: According to what had been submitted by the Revolutionary Council under the name ‘Third Theory’, the conference confirmed: Its confidence in the leadership of the Libyan Revolution and its good Islamic will in presenting Islam as a third alternative to the two contemporary systems; its great sympathy with the pioneer Libyan experiment under the leadership of Brother Mu‘ammar al-Qaddafi to adopt the Islamic way to the solutions, and hoped that the governments of the Islamic world take, as an example, the spirit of this experiment in adopting the Islamic *shari’ah* comprehensively as the only basis of social and economic systems and of international relations. Its deep belief that the Islamic solution, based on the Qur’an and *Sunnah* is the only effective way for the Muslims to obey God and build up a civilization that would reform their condition.

The conference expressed the belief that the Islamic terminology, especially that mentioned in the Qur’an, the *Sunnah* and the *fiqh*, is most suited to express the implication of Islamic solutions in the fields of politics, economy, social relations and education and distinguished it from the other terminologies of other theories and dogmas.

The conference believed that Islam is the only hope for humanity capable of giving it a real peace, prosperity and justice, and eliminating all forms of tyranny and exploitation between nations and individuals. This conference urged the Muslim countries, and the Libyan

2. The conference resolutions were in Arabic. An English translation was provided to non-Arabic speaking delegates. It is obviously a ‘free’ translation and not an ‘authorised’ one. The author has, therefore, edited it slightly to bring its language in line with current English usage. The meaning has, of course, not been interfered with. This version is, therefore, no less authentic than the translation done by conference staff in Libya. Of course, the only entirely satisfactory version is the original in Arabic.

Arab Republic in particular, to establish Islamic research centres to advise on the application of Islam in all departments of life.

The conference expressed its belief that the differences in colour and language etc., were a means of identification and co-operation, and not of division and conflict. The conference supported the efforts of the Libyan Arab Republic in realizing the honour and dignity of the Muslims and in liberating their lands; and expressed its total accord with the Libyan leadership in its great consciousness that Islam presented a satisfactory answer to all the problems of the contemporary world.

The conference had rightly judged the Third International Theory by the highest standards of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* as demanded by Hawadi and found it wanting.

4. The Minorities

The Muslims are a world community. This means, above all, that Muslims are to be found as minorities in most countries. There can hardly be a country without some followers of Islam. These Muslim communities are perhaps the smallest remnants of the old caravan.

For a Muslim, living in a non-Muslim environment is particularly hard. A Muslim out of a Muslim environment is like a fish out of water, or at best like a big sea fish confined to a small tank. Muslim minorities have always looked towards the fact that there are so many Muslim countries with pride and hope. Such minorities, while facing enormous problems of their own under unsympathetic if not always oppressive governments, have often given enormous support to Muslim causes even in Muslim countries. They remain part and parcel of the Muslim *Ummah*. Their feelings for fellow Muslims and for Islam are often deeper, more acute and sensitive than even the feelings of Muslims in Muslim majority countries.

Thus, it was inevitable that at Tripoli the minority delegates should look up to the Muslim countries with hope and expectation. It must have been a disconcerting experience for them to have to defend Islam in a Muslim country! There they were in a Muslim State and at a world Islamic conference having to argue the elementary point that Islam is exclusively Islam and admits of no other philosophy!

Such, however, is the state of the Muslim world and of the Muslim mind as it has emerged from the era of colonialism. In many ways the Muslim who has been used to living in a non-Muslim society has kept his Muslim soul better protected. Because he faced immediate dangers he took local protective precautions such as early and intensive religious education of his children, regular attendance at mosques and a strict adherence to social norms, such as in marriage and in matters regulated by Muslim personal law. Indeed, in many respects the Muslim minority communities—these forgotten remnants of the old caravan—have retained more of Islam in practice than their more fortunate if also more lackadaisical and more self-righteous brothers in Muslim countries.

From some of the early speeches by minority delegates it appeared that they still had great hopes from Muslim countries, many of them overflowing with oil revenues. One delegate from Kenya hoped that Muslim countries would provide funds for setting up mosques and *madrassahs* for Muslims in Kenya and other minority areas. He, of course, did not know that many contemporary Muslim governments, with some notable exceptions, do not spend money on mosques and *madrassahs* in their own countries.

Some perceptive minds at Tripoli realized fairly early that unless something was done the minority delegates would go away from the conference feeling dejected, if not demoralized. They got together and decided to do something about it. Fortunately, there was a conference committee on minorities. But there also emerged a very active informal group of delegates from minority countries. It began with a first meeting attended by 13 delegates. At its final meeting there were 52 people present in one of the hotel bedrooms! It was put to them that while as minorities they had obvious limitations, they also had many advantages, not the least of these advantages being that they were free from all Muslim governments! While many Muslim governments, because of the class structure of post-colonial Muslim societies, were often afraid of the revival of Islam, some of the Muslim minorities were at least free to present Islam in its purest form uncontaminated by local influences.

Another point put to them was that in most Muslim countries, though the era of direct colonialism had ended, the years of decline may not yet be over. In fact it is obvious that political, economic, social, cultural and intellectual decline has continued in most Muslim countries in the years since independence. It may well be that this is likely to continue for perhaps another generation or more. It may even come to

pass that many of the Muslim countries of the Middle East will have to endure another period of colonial rule under zionism supported by both the United States of America and the Soviet Union. If this happens in the Middle East, with Iran under the Shah, Pakistan under the virtual hegemony of India, and Indonesia and the so-called Bangladesh having already gone 'secular', there will hardly be an 'independent' Muslim world left. This awesome scenario, God forbid, is too frightening even to contemplate. But surely it is not wise to read the writing on the walls of contemporary history.

The minority delegates were quick to realize that they may yet be left alone to hold the banner of Islam aloft from the so-called non-Islamic parts of the world. This realization of the awesome responsibility for Islam that may yet fall on their shoulders made the minority delegates forget their half-built mosques and *madrassahs*. They also realized that they had a role in the world of Islam far greater and nobler than the mere business of survival in non-Muslim environments.

From then on the small, compact and informal minorities' group acquired a new confidence and an entirely new perspective. Their decisions were clear, sharp and purposeful. They will better organize themselves in their own countries and establish direct and indirect communication links right across the world through a number of local co-ordinators. The details of these will reach all minority communities through those who were at Tripoli.

The formal minorities' committee of the conference heard reports on conditions of Muslims in 52 countries. Six basic problems which are common to most Muslim minority communities were identified. These are:

1. The physical oppression, suppression and genocide of Muslims in specific countries, e.g. the Philippines, Yemen, India, East Pakistan under Bengali nationalists, Bulgaria, Thailand, Albania, Red China, Kashmir and the Soviet Union.
2. The lack of education in Islam and the consequent problems of discipline and upbringing of Muslim youth in predominant Western environments, e.g. in the US, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Scandinavia, Germany, France, Spain and South Africa.
3. The growing influence and increased activities of Christian missionaries, the Ahmadiyyah and Black Muslim movements,

zionist propaganda and communist influence, e.g. in the countries of Asia, Africa and America.

4. The total lack of communication between (a) Muslim minorities *inter-parties*, and (b) Muslim minorities and the Muslim world.
5. Failure to co-operate and personal rivalries among and between Muslim organizations within Muslim minorities.
6. The insensitivity of embassies from Muslim countries located in non-Muslim States.

5. An Assessment: Forward from Tripoli

The spectrum of Muslim thought on Islam is quite clearly very wide. The habit of adjectivizing the word Islam into 'Islamic' and then putting it in front of one's preferred noun is too deeply ingrained and not easy to shift. Thus, in the last 25 years the paradigm of Islam that has been the framework of Muslim nationalist leaders and parties may be called 'Islamic capitalisms'. Though this phrase has not been used, in practice capitalism without interest and usury has been generally regarded as, by and large, 'Islamic'. And democracy of the Western European type, particularly the British parliamentary variety, has been openly called 'Islamic democracy'. Now, a quarter century later, when 'Islamic capitalism' has proved to be just as vicious as only capitalism can be, and when 'Islamic democracies' have dissolved into dictatorships, the cry is heard of 'Islamic socialism'.

The problem basically remains the same. Muslims of this century have been brought up and educated in non-Muslim environments under political and economic systems introduced by European political, intellectual and cultural dominance. As such, the framework of the majority of the elite is capitalist and democratic; a few who have retained some social conscience have turned to Marxist socialism.

The real problem is that 'educated' Muslims of this age have two types of knowledge. These may be called *operational knowledge* and *non-operational knowledge*. Their *operational knowledge* is one of the Western sciences—social, physical and technological—acquired either in the West or in Western type educational establishments in their own countries. This Western knowledge makes sense to them because the socio-economic and political orders in which they live are products of Western influence. The economic theory they read is part of their daily

experience because they can see it at work. Others—those with some social conscience—may not actually live in a socialist society, but they can go and see a socialist system at work in the Soviet Union or in Communist China. In any case, Marxist socialist economics is a direct outgrowth of capitalist economics and the actual contradictions of capitalism that produced the socialist philosophy are still all too obvious in existing capitalist systems.

As Muslims, however, they also have some knowledge of Islam. This is their *non-operational knowledge*. Islam is either entirely non-operational in their daily life or Islam's operational forms with which they are familiar are confined to prayers, fasting and other rituals at birth, marriage and death! No operational and functional social order of Islam exists in entirety today or has existed in recent history. The model social, economic and political order of Islam in fact existed so long ago that, for minds immersed in modern Western disciplines and philosophies, it is difficult to comprehend how the socio-economic and political problems of today could be solved along those lines. Yet, as committed Muslims, they feel the need to assert their identity and personality different from the iconoclastic hold of the West on them. This the modern Muslim mind tries to do by identifying himself as a Muslim and by asserting the supremacy of Islam. He knows Islam is supreme, but he doesn't know why. He knows Islam can solve all his individual and collective problems but does not know how. The unpleasant fact is that while Islam can solve all problems, the modern Muslim cannot! When he tries to solve his problems he ends up with something resembling either the capitalist/democratic model, or the socialist/Marxist model, or a variable of both. He then proceeds to 'Islamize' the model of his choice by calling it 'Islamic'!

If we look at the Third International Theory in the light of the above analysis, we begin to understand why the Libyan leadership insists on calling its theory 'Islam'; that nationalism is sanctioned by Islam; that socialism is in fact in the Qur'an, or as one Libyan put it, 'The Qur'an was the first book of socialism'! Indeed, we now understand why they call it 'third': because in their own personal experience, their first contact, so far as the operational aspect goes, was with Western imperial-capitalism (which they rightly rejected) and their second contact was with Marxist-socialism (of which they rejected Marxism but accepted socialism). After these first two contacts they also wanted to remain Muslims and identify themselves with Islam. Thus, Islam was

their third alternative, hence the Third International Theory—‘a third alternative to capitalism and communism’!

Many delegates at the conference must have wondered why the Libyans would not countenance calling Islam by its proper name—Islam. The reason simply is that the term Islam no longer brings to mind the image of a living, thriving, dynamic and growing social, economic and political order because no such order actually exists or is part of contemporary experience. On the other hand, Islam today is often used to legitimize any existing stagnant and corrupt order.

The point really is that no *ijma* now exists among the Muslims of today on what should be the *operational* form of a social, economic and political order of Islam. In the absence of such *ijma* every Muslim, particularly every ruler of a Muslim country, considers it his own mission to do just what he or his party wishes so long as it is given the appellation of Islam. Most rulers of Muslim countries use this technique for domestic political convenience. Colonel Qaddafi is perhaps different in that he sincerely feels that he has got a framework ‘based on Islam’ that would or should appeal to Muslims everywhere and even to non-Muslims in the Third World. The Muslim youth, middle age and scholars assembled at Tripoli told him frankly that his framework was not good enough to pass the strict standards of conceptual purity set forth by the Qur’an and *Sunnah*. The conference was undoubtedly right.

Yet it must also be recognized that the steps Qaddafi took are the right ones—he put together a framework and then invited its approval by the best informed and most committed Muslims from all corners of the world. He did not, unlike other rulers of Muslim countries, just decide for himself. He has a broader vision and the correct approach. But, judging from the obstinate and arrogant attitude of the Arab Socialist Union ideologues at the conference, Qaddafi lacks the ability to learn from brother Muslims. This inability to learn is a sign of weakness, betrays a lack of self-confidence and makes the whole enterprise lose its wider relevance. Nonetheless, it is on experiments such as this that successful experiments of the future are launched.

Now, then, is the time to begin the preparatory work for the launching of the successful experiment of the future that would lead to the establishment of an *operational* social order of Islam. This is an enormously arduous task. Even the semantics of this operational social order of the future are likely to present difficulties. Each field of specialized learning develops its own specialized language, which

inevitably tends to acquire the flavour of the current social environment. Obvious examples are the social and natural sciences under the capitalist and communist systems. The development of Muslim thought in these fields has suffered a gap of about three hundred years while Muslims have been and still are under the dominant influences of an alien civilization. Despite this, such Muslim scholars and thinkers have emerged as Sayyid Qutb, Shah Waliullah, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Ahmad Sirhindi and Muhammad Iqbal. The Muslim intellectual tradition has nevertheless failed to develop specialized disciplines within the framework of Islam. The absence of such specialized disciplines of Islam, particularly in the fields of economics and political science, was all too obvious at the Tripoli conference. While one must regret the Libyans' failure to use the terminology of Islam, one must also recognize that the scholars of Islam who were so hard on the Libyans failed to suggest the terminology that ought to have been used. For instance, the Libyans were rightly told not to use the terms nationalism and socialism, but they were not told what terms to use in their place. It is not enough to judge by the Qur'an, even when such judgment is invited. It is not enough to tell them to go and read the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. They have, and what have they found?—nationalism and socialism in the Qur'an! They could, if they had looked, also have found capitalism (minus interest!) in the Qur'an! Just as others have found communism (plus God!) in Islam!

The problem really is twofold: (a) the Muslim scholars have failed to do their homework, and (b) the conceptual framework of Islam has for too long existed in isolation from an operational social order or a living civilization based on it. Herein lies the great contrast between Western concepts and the concepts of Islam. Whereas Western concepts have developed within, have given rise to, and are part and parcel of, a living, thriving, dynamic and growing Western civilization, no similar Muslim civilization based on the conceptual framework of Islam exists today or has existed for hundreds of years. The result is that the achievements of Western traditions of thought appear formidable whereas the concepts of Islam—Divine, true and eternal—look old-fashioned and irrelevant. For this reason the concepts of Islam fail even to attract many Muslims. Thus when Muslims try and solve their problems they end up with nationalism and socialism, like the Libyan Arab Socialists, or nationalism, bourgeois capitalism and feudalism, like the Pakistanis.

The basic function of knowledge properly so called is to solve the mundane problems of mankind. Islam is such a framework of

knowledge. Whenever this framework has been applied, either in its entirety as by the Prophet Muhammad and the early caliphs, or even partially, as in the great Muslim empires that followed, the results in terms of problem-solving have been spectacular. It is this that is called 'Islamic History' upon which we Muslims today look back in pride. This pride is quickly followed by anguish—anguish that we ever let our living, thriving, dynamic and growing civilization disintegrate, disappear and pass under the hegemony of alien influences. This anguish of the assembled Muslims in Tripoli, exceeded only by their desire somehow to recapture what has been lost, is often referred to as 'going back'. The fact, however, is that it is neither possible nor desirable to 'go back'. We must go forward—forward to where we should have been had the Muslim caravan stayed on the straight course—the *sirat al-mustaqeem*—and not got derailed, dispersed and lost in the vast span of history.

While the Muslim scholars assembled in Tripoli were right in saying that the Third International Theory came nowhere near solving the problems even of the Libyans, let alone of the entire Muslim *Ummah*, they themselves had nothing tangible to offer. This is because the so-called scholars of Islam have for hundreds of years past not been engaged in problem-solving research. The social, economic and political problems have been tackled by secular authorities under secular systems. These secular Muslim societies and their leaders have not consulted the scholars of Islam on mundane matters. The scholars of Islam in turn have busied themselves with matters largely spiritual. On the other hand, there are Muslim scholars who, like the author, have acquired problem-solving expertise in the social and physical sciences. Their problem, however, is that while they are Muslim, their social sciences, so to speak, are non-Muslim. The development of the disciplines of economics, political science, sociology, psychology and social psychology within the total framework of Islam has not kept pace with the comparable disciplines in the West.

Until such time as these disciplines emerge within the framework of Islam and are rationally satisfying, articulate and problem-solving no meaningful action to reshape Muslim societies can take place. And when such an integrated framework of operational social sciences of Islam has been shaped, it will be difficult, indeed impossible, to stop the political action necessary to reshape Muslim societies from taking place.

Such disciplines within Islam as an epistemology will, of course, not emerge without purposive action. Unfortunately, the *madrassahs* in Muslim countries are almost entirely spiritually oriented and divorced from problem-solving, operational modes of teaching and research. Equally, and perhaps more unfortunately, the universities in Muslim countries are merely extensions—and poor extensions at that—of the universities in Western Europe and North America. These universities are also sub-systems of the prevailing dominant political, economic, and social systems. Such universities are neither motivated nor equipped to undertake the kind of research that would be required to develop the disciplines and operational blueprints of an alternative order. This type of research may even offend the present generation of political leadership in many Muslim countries and their wrath may well fall on those who undertake it.

Fortunately, however, this work can be done anywhere in the world. Also fortunately a large number of Muslims now live in Western Europe, North America and as minority communities scattered all over the world. They have the manpower and the resources to set up a full-fledged research Institute to undertake the historic work of charting the course ahead— forward to *sirat al-mustaqeem* and beyond along the straight path of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*!

While still in Tripoli the author, after discussions with brother scholars from other Muslim countries, circulated a short paper setting out the assumptions on which such an Institute may be founded. These are worth stating again:

1. That there is an urgent need to revive a tradition of Muslim scholarship to produce a philosophical framework which is at least as articulate and rationally satisfying as all the other traditions of knowledge that are current today.
2. That no meaningful action to reorder Muslim societies is possible without the prior emergence of a new framework of knowledge and the adherence to it of a substantial proportion of Muslims.
3. That a prior commitment to Islam as an epistemology is a necessary starting point in the search for social, economic and political systems to be established in all Muslim societies.
4. That the theoretical and conceptual framework of social, economic and political relationships which are embodied in the systems and

structures of the contemporary ‘advanced’ civilizations are alien to the Muslim intellectual tradition and irrelevant to our needs.

5. That the Muslim intelligentsia has the potential and the motivation to commit itself to the historical role of recreating fully operational social, economic and political systems of Islam in all Muslim societies.
6. That, as a first step, the foremost duty of the Muslim intelligentsia is to produce a conceptual framework and operational blueprints and to follow them up with a programme of determined action to reshape and reconstruct the entire socio-economic and political systems in Muslim societies.

These assumptions apart, the Tripoli conference itself yielded some guidelines along which such an Institute, if and when it is set up, should direct its work of defining the destiny of the Muslim *Ummah*. These are not spelled out in the conference recommendations and resolutions but were implicit throughout. These may be stated as follows:

1. That capitalism and communism are equally and totally alien to Islam and therefore these philosophies and their operational forms must be rejected in their entirety.
2. That no new hybrid philosophy carrying the label of ‘Islam’ would be acceptable.
3. That *national* identities and political, social and economic systems arising from them have not only failed but are also no longer relevant to our needs.
4. That the design for future social, economic and political structures and institutions in Muslim societies should arise from the conceptual framework of Islam in its purest form.
5. That social justice and social harmony should be so institutionalized and established as to conform with the limits placed on private property in, for example, land and large-scale investment capital.
6. That the Call of Islam will remain feeble, indistinct and even discordant until such time as the message of Islam is once again part and parcel of a living, thriving, dynamic and growing civilization of Muslims.

After extensive discussions with delegates in Tripoli, with delegates at the tenth annual conference of the Federation of Students’ Islamic Societies in the United Kingdom and Eire held in Manchester from July

26-29, 1973, and with members of the Muslim Students' Association of the United States and Canada, the author feels certain that these assumptions and guidelines represent a general consensus of their views. To coin a phrase, these may even be called a sub-*ijma* of the Muslim intelligentsia. And there is no doubt that the area of this general agreement is certainly larger and wider than has so far been discovered. The author, for fear of overstating this point, has probably understated it.

Nonetheless, the fact remains that this area of agreement, whatever its size, is still too small. It needs to be expanded to include the entire field of social relationships through the development of autonomous Muslim social science disciplines of economics, sociology, social engineering and politics. To develop an integrated framework of such disciplines shall be the primary task of the proposed research Institute. While at one level the Institute must produce general 'theories' and frameworks, at another level the Institute must also engage and attract scholars who will produce problem-solving operational plans for specific Muslim countries. Thus the proposed Institute will also have to create specialized research 'sections' or 'cells' dealing with specific countries. In short, the Institute will have to become a powerhouse of ideas for the entire Muslim world. After a programme of intensive and extensive consultation in the next few months the author hopes to produce a detailed working paper on the proposed Institute.³

In his discussions so far, the author has found a near unanimous positive response on the *need* for such a research Institute. But the discussion has soon turned to the vital question of 'finance' or 'resources'. The moment finance is mentioned thoughts naturally turn to the oil-rich Libya, Saudi Arabia and the Shaikhs of the Persian/Arabian Gulf area. While these governments have the money and may well be persuaded to help or entirely finance the project, the habit of instinctively turning to them tends to kill initiative. It is true that these governments have large mobilized resources at their command. It may well be that it is also possible to persuade one or more of these governments to make the necessary funds available without the usual 'strings'. But, fortunately, such governments are not the only repositories of wealth. For instance, many Muslim minorities, particularly those living in relatively highly developed areas of the world, also have enormous resources at their

3. A preparatory committee has now produced *The Draft Prospectus of the Muslim Institute for Research and Planning*.

command. Their resources are somewhat diffuse and would need to be mobilized. But once such diffuse resources are mobilized they can exceed the combined wealth of King Faisal, Colonel Qaddafi, the Shah of Iran, and the Shaikhs. Besides, the very process of mobilizing diffuse resources creates a strong organization, bonds of brotherhood are made stronger, and a sense of participation is developed. Without such community-wide links, the proposed Institute may well not serve its purpose or indeed survive. The problem then is not one of resources but one of mobilizing them.

Finally, to end this report, the author is reminded of a delegate who compared the International Islamic Youth Conference in Tripoli with the World Jewish Congress of the last century. He was probably referring to the Jewish conference called by Theodor Herzl which met in Basle in 1897 and formulated the Basle Programme 'to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine.' This certainly was a flight of fancy of an unusually optimistic mind. Besides, we are Muslims and not Jews. We don't need a 'national home'. We already have as many as we are likely to need. More importantly, we do not need to follow any examples other than those of the Prophet himself. Having said that, it ought also to be said that Muslims the world over will have to have a 'Programme' and very soon. The world conference to formulate such a 'Programme' has not yet met. But one day soon, perhaps after the proposed Institute has done the preparatory work, such a World Muslim Conference shall undoubtedly meet and formulate the 'Programme' based on the *ijma* of all Muslims everywhere— *insha'Allah!*