Making Sense of Islamic Fundamentalism

There is no doubt that what is called Islamic fundamentalism is one among many facets of the Islamic world which in itself represents a public phenomenon with many divergences and characteristics. Against this back-

ground, this religious fundamentalism does not represent a monolithic system of cultural expression. Rather it is an outcome of colonialism, as well as a nego-

tiation or rejection of both folk-religious tradition and colonialism. This recent Muslim self-concept goes back to the evolution of an Islamic ideology that was only developed in the late 19th and 20th centuries. This new Muslim identity is informed by the notion of constant decay. In closer view however, its postulates reveal nothing but a mythical, hence restorative, and hardly utopi-

an, that is social revolution. However, since the 1980s one can witness a clear change in its postulates. They are chiefly to be found in the lowest social strata than seg-

ments that manifest them-

selves, for example, in traditional and modern economic and social sectors and thus consti-
tute the problems of dethena-

tion and to reorientation. Having broken away from social ties, these identities are increa-
singly dependent on a network of social relations: they appear in the everyday citizen, who is intrin-
sect upon which what has so far been obvi-

ously the problem of identity, the greater is the ten-

dency towards modernism. If Islam serves as a frame of reference. Also, the higher the degree of social diatization and the forces that produce a religious identi-

ty, the greater is the inclination towards tradi-
tionalization and, in the medium term, even willingness for radicalism, hence isolationism.

The integrationist way is followed by leading Islamist such as Abul Ala Maududi and other func-
tionaries neglecting religious identity that originate from this field of tension between identi-
dity and alienation, traditional and modern sectors. They are generally representative of middle range professionals bound up in the postcolonial system, and relatively highly placed in society. They live largely in a tradi-
tional manner of life and thus distinguish themselves from the colonial public – for example, to the colonial public – the Islamists argue ideologically, limiting the use of Islamic symbols to the indispensable. To the insider – that is the traditional society – this is to be understood.

Aspects of their critique are systematized in different ways that manifest them-

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