

The Dual Nature of Islamic Fundamentalism

Johannes Jansen

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JOHANNES J. G. JANSEN THE DUAL NATURE OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM



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Johannes Jansen : The Dual Nature of Islamic Fundamentalism before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Dual Nature of Islamic Fundamentalism:

20 of 26 people found the following review helpful. The Dual Nature of Islamic Fundamentalism By Daniel Pipes, Middle East Forum, Philadelphia Jansen, a professor at Leiden University in Holland, is one of the most astute and daring writers on fundamentalist Islam. His title points to the rather pedestrian fact that fundamentalist Islam is both fully politics and fully religion, but the book offers the authors deep understanding of this phenomenon, which he characterizes as an unusual combination of logic, religion, politics and violence. Jansen shows how fundamentalist

Islam is religion narrowed down to an ideology but is still a religion, albeit one concerned with earthly power. He establishes that it is not a protest against being poor but an invariably successful form of propaganda because the public to whom it is addressed love to hear it. The two chapters on fundamentalist attitudes toward Jews and women are among the most incisive anywhere. But the most interesting chapter may be the failure of the liberal alternative, in which Jansen establishes that the anti-fundamentalists have no weapons other than words and so are steadily losing to the fundamentalists, who have large masses of followers. Jansen's book is not so much a systematic study as a series of musings by a original and daring mind, primarily concentrating on Egypt. He reads the writers others only cite, such as Faraj Fuda and Shukri Mustafa. He chides not just fundamentalists, but also the ulema and fellow orientalists for absurdities and errors in logic. Islam, he says, obviously must be tolerated in an open society, but does this tolerance extend to Islamic fundamentalism too? Yes, he replies, if it is a legitimate form of Islam; but not if it is a political ideology. *Middle East Quarterly*, December 1997

Fundamentalism fuses religion and politics, and in this compelling book Johannes J. G. Jansen describes and analyzes from original Arabic sources the Islamic incarnation of such a fusion. He offers comparisons with millenarian and revivalist movements in other religious traditions to suggest a basic structural similarity in fundamentalism of different creeds. Fundamentalism rejects a core belief of modernity--the separation of religion and politics--and so, according to Jansen, always has an antimodern or reactionary basis. To explore the logic of contemporary fundamentalist ideology, Jansen draws on the work of the two dominant Islamic commentators on religion and politics, Al-Afghani from the nineteenth century and Ibn Taymiyya from the fourteenth. He examines the theological bases of Muslim militancy, and in particular the justification of violent political action, in the more recent writings of Sayyid Qutb. Further chapters discuss the execution of Shukri Mustafa in Cairo in 1978, in an unsuccessful attempt by the Egyptian authorities to intimidate the fundamentalists; inventory antifundamentalist arguments within contemporary Islam; and examine fundamentalist attitudes toward other Peoples of the Book, particularly Jews, and toward women as political agents. Jansen concludes with an analysis of various attempts within Arab political culture to deal with Islamic fundamentalism.

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