

strated that the PLO had lost control of the uprising. The conditions appeared to be in place for Islamists to oust nationalists in Palestine, just as they had elsewhere. The jihad in the occupied territories now replaced the holy war in Afghanistan, which was gradually winding down, as the major focus and symbol of Islamist militancy.

At the moment of the Gulf crisis in 1990, Palestinian Islamism was able to take advantage of the intifada to mobilize the devout middle class side by side with the young urban poor and thereby challenge the PLO's dominance. The last Arab nationalist cause looked ready to enter the Islamist zone of influence, in the wake of Afghanistan but ahead of Algeria and Bosnia. But because of Yasir Arafat's uncanny ability to rebound and seize control of events, even after two decades of adversity and trial, things would fall out differently.

Islamization in Algeria and the Sudan

Less than a year after the outbreak of the intifada, Algeria—another country that had once embodied Arabism, Third Worldism, and anti-imperialism—slipped into the sphere of political Islam. In October 1988, Algeria experienced its most serious riots since independence in 1962. The young urban poor, who had been marginalized by the military hierarchy ruling through the apparatus of the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), took decisive control of the streets and showed that they were now a major independent force. As in Egypt and Palestine, this event involved the first generation to reach maturity without having known any regime other than the one against which they were protesting. Again, a population explosion had thrust the children of the *fellahs* (farmers) into the cities and their outskirts, where conditions were precarious; and again, this mass of young people had had access to education for the first time in the country's history. Education had raised great hopes among these youth—hopes that were mostly drowned in a welter of frustration when hard-won degrees turned out to be worthless on the job market. In 1989, 40 percent of Algeria's population of 24 million were under 15 years of age; the urban population was in excess of 50 percent of the total population; the birthrate was 3.1 percent per year; and 61 percent of adolescents were attending secondary school. The official unemployment rate was 18.1 percent of the working population, though in reality joblessness was much higher; in 1995 it rose—again officially—to 28 percent.¹

The young urban poor of Algeria were mocked as *hiristes*—from the

Arab word *his*, "wall." This jibe derived from the image of jobless young men with nothing to do all day but lean against a wall. The joke was that, in a socialist country where in theory everyone was supposed to have a job, the profession of a hittiste consisted in propping up walls that would otherwise collapse. The hittistes were assumed to be passive—unlike the Iranian disinherited ones, who were glorified by religious movements and hailed as the messengers of history and the Revolution.

At the time of the October 1988 riots, oil and gas represented 95 percent of the nation's exports and supplied more than 60 percent of the government's yearly budget. Under Presidents Ahmed Ben Bella (1962–1965) and Houari Boumediene (1965–1978), the Algerian state was a kind of popular democracy cum oil. The state used its oil revenues to buy social pacification by subsidizing imported consumer goods. Taking the Soviet Union as its model, the regime banned all opposition to the FLN, whose legitimacy was rooted in its successful war of independence against France (1954–1962). In reality, under the veneer of socialism and the unity of the revolutionary family around the FLN, most of the actual holders of power (the military top brass and the party *nomenklatura*) came from the Arabic-speaking east side of the country. Excluded were the people of central and western Algeria, as well as Kabylia, despite the fact that they too had paid dearly in blood during the war of independence.

This balance of power, maintained by subsidies, socialism, repression, and official ideology, was ultimately dependent on the fragile economic equilibrium created by the high price of oil. In 1986, when oil prices collapsed, half of Algeria's budget was wiped out and the whole structure fell down in ruins. Worse, the population explosion had created a demand for food, urban infrastructure, housing, and employment that continued to increase. The malfunctioning of the planned economy was accompanied by corruption on a grand scale; and the expansion of an informal commercial sector, the *trabendo*, in which prices were wildly speculative, just added to the hardships.² The construction industry in particular had failed spectacularly to keep pace with the housing demand; the result was the kind of slums and overcrowded urban conditions that invariably lead to social eruption.

It was in this deteriorating climate, punctuated by continual strikes, that riots broke out on October 4, 1988. Mobs of impoverished Alger-

rian youths attacked such symbols of the state as buses, road signs, and Air Algeria agencies, along with any automobile that looked expensive. The focus of the rioting was the Riad al Fath (Victory Gardens) shopping mall on the heights overlooking the capital, a symbol of untrammeled consumerism and the meeting-place of the *ichi-ichi*, Algeria's "golden youth." The police, taunted as Jews by the young demonstrators, who had seen nightly TV reports of the Israeli armed forces repressing the intifada, counterattacked ruthlessly, and hundreds of demonstrators were killed. The Algerian regime could hardly have foreseen that its ritual anti-Zionist rhetoric would be turned against it in this way. The October uprising was mostly spontaneous, rich in signs of social fury and decision of the ideology in power. Near Riadh el-Fath, the Algerian national flag was torn down and an empty couscous sack was hoisted in its place. But these days were much more than a "couscous riot" or a "student rampage that turned ugly," as commentators and government representatives described them. They marked the emergence of the young urban poor as a force to be reckoned with. The once ridiculed hittistes had shown that they could seize and hold power in the streets, shaking to its foundations a regime that had excluded them and whose legitimacy they scorned.

Nevertheless, the revolt was never transformed into a structured political movement. Left to themselves, the urban poor proved incapable of pressing home their demands. The vocabulary of socialism had been largely discredited by the Algerian government's use of it, so the left was no more capable of giving direction to the uprising than any other political faction. The Islamist movement instantly understood that this impasse represented a golden opportunity.

The salafist faction had preserved its grassroots support in Algeria for many years. The Association of Muslim Ulemas, founded at Constantine, Algeria, in 1931 by Abdel Fiamid Ben Badis, three years after the founding of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, shared the same strict attitude that made religion the absolute focus of private life and society. But it had never pushed the idea of an Islamic state and even less the theory of nationalist struggle. Like the Deobandis of British India or the Palestinian Muslim Brothers under the pre-intifada Israeli occupation, Ben Badis and his companions thought it both dangerous and futile to confront the overwhelmingly powerful colonial occupant: just a year before the founding of their association, the French had cel-

brated the centenary of the conquest of Algeria amid scenes of great pomp and circumstance. On the other hand, Ben Badis fought resolutely against any attempt to assimilate Algerians and French, a move that would blur Islamic identity, of which he and his friends were the guarantors and defenders. They considered their principal enemies to be secularization and the "superstitions" propounded by the marabouts. They were also deeply suspicious of the nationalists, who were influenced by socialism and European ideas, with the result that when the FLN started its insurrection in 1954, they held back for two years before deciding to join it.

The FLN, like most of the other nationalist parties in the Muslim world, was split over what attitude it should adopt toward Islam. Led by Western-educated elites, the FLN viewed religion as a means of uniting a population that had little understanding of modern trends—especially in the countryside—and of clearly demarcating their difference from the Christian colonists. Thus, the November 1954 uprising was proclaimed "in the name of Allah," without making the FLN a religious movement. When independence finally came eight years later, Islam was sidelined by Ben Bella's regime, which at the time was more engaged with Moscow and Havana than with Mecca. The marabouts and their brotherhoods (the *zawajid*), who owned large tracts of land, had to surrender their property to the nation as part of agrarian reform and in reprisal for their complaisant attitude toward the colonists. The ulemas were treated slightly more leniently, on account of their (late) participation in the war; but any attempt at independent expression brought an immediate clampdown from the Marxists in power. In 1964 the ulemas were stigmatized by one newspaper as "les ulemas du mal" (ulemas of evil). In 1963, a group of religious intellectuals and party members founded the *Al-Qiyam al-islamiya* (Islamic Values) association, to fight against Westernization and champion the idea of an Islamic state as the necessary outcome of the war of independence. In this they were close to the ideas of Sayyid Qutb; indeed they sent a letter to Nasser in August 1966 asking for Qutb's pardon, just a few days before he was executed. The association was later dissolved, but its influence persisted even within the otherwise sealed circle of power.

The eviction of Ben Bella by Boumediene in June 1965 was followed by a campaign of Arabization and Islamization that allowed its advocates to exercise wide control over Algerian education and culture.

Among the Egyptians who were recruited at this time to Arabize and de-Frenchify the school system was a substantial contingent of Muslim Brothers on the run from Nasser's repression. The Egyptian contingent trained a whole generation of strictly Arabophone teachers who agreed with their ideas and later formed the basis for the broadly Islamist intelligentsia who made up the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS), of which Ali Benhadj, also a teacher and the "number 2 of the FIS," would one day become the symbol.

Officially proscribed as a political party, Algerian Islamism remained one of the components of government power, although its influence was confined to the cultural domain, with no direct bearing on political decisions. It was only in 1982, a decade after the emergence of Islamism in the Middle East, that Algerian Islamists began to express genuine opposition to the regime.³ Right away, two major factions became apparent: an extremist group that opted for armed struggle and soon went underground, and a reformist group that sought to influence the regime's decisions without upsetting the status quo of society. The radicals were led by Mustafa Bouyali, a veteran of the war of independence who was born in 1940. Bouyali broke violently with the regime, which he declared impious.⁴ A gifted, inflammatory preacher, he called for the application of the sharia and the setting up of an Islamic state by jihad. In the mid-1970s he gathered around him a small cadre of determined partisans, all of whom were avid readers of Qutb and behaved very much like his Egyptian disciples at the time. Bouyali was relentlessly harassed by the Security Services and was eventually forced to go into hiding in April 1982 before founding the *Mouvement Islamique Armé* (MIA), a loose association of tiny groups of which he was proclaimed the amir. Among his followers, most of whom joined the FIS and the armed Islamist movement after 1992, was Ali Benhadj himself.

By carrying out a series of bold attacks, the MIA established itself as the first serious challenger to the power of the FLN. It conducted an underground resistance for five years, until Bouyali himself was killed in February 1987. The MIA was a melting pot for a number of experiments, fusing several components of the international Islamist imagination of the time as well as that of modern Algeria. When it launched its jihad in the Mitidja (the plains surrounding Algiers), the Saudi-sponsored Afghan mujahideen had already been fighting the

Red Army for two years and had become the heroes of the Islamic world. Because the Soviet Union was a close ally of the Algerian regime and supplied most of its military equipment, for the radical Algerian Islamists the struggle against the former was a prelude for the struggle against the latter. Several hundred of them made the pilgrimage to the camps of Peshawar, and one, Abdallah Anas, became the son-in-law of the Islamist theorist Abdallah Azzam and then his successor, after the older man was murdered in November 1989.

By fighting out of the same areas held by the FLN during the war of independence, the MIA laid claim to its legacy, symbolically perpetuating the original conflict and demonstrating that in the eyes of its militants those currently holding power in Algeria were no better than the departed French colonialists. At the time, this attitude seemed barely relevant; but with the hindsight of the civil war of the 1990s, when the much more significant resistance forces of the Armée Islamique du Salut and the Groupe Islamique Armé entered the field, the actions of Bouyali and his followers may be seen for what they were: a link between the two Algerian wars, illustrating a clear continuity of method, along with an ideological shift from nationalism to Islamism.

The year in which Bouyali took the resistance underground also saw the appearance of militants seeking to put pressure on the regime to increase the pace of Islamization without recourse to armed struggle. In November 1982, incidents between francophone Marxist students and arabophone Islamists at the University of Algiers led to the death of a Marxist. The fighting began with a strike staged by the Arab-speaking clique to protest their slim prospects of entering any professional career, despite the regime's propaganda and authoritarian measures of Arabization. This they contrasted with the rich openings available to their French-speaking fellow students, who monopolized all the best-paid jobs because they were conditional on a knowledge of French. At the end of a prayer meeting involving several thousand people, Abassi Madani, a teacher at the faculty and a former member of the FLN who had broken with the party, presented a fourteen-point list of complaints. Specifically, he demanded "respect for the sharia in government legislation and a purging of elements hostile to our religion," along with a separation of the sexes in the educational system. This was the first organized public demonstration by the nonviolent Islamist opposition to break out of the framework authorized by the single-party

regime. It was instantly repressed: Madani served two years in prison, and most of the known figures in a movement that was still confined to a few university professors and preachers were arrested.³ These men formed a kernel of the intelligentsia around which the young urban poor and the devout middle class gathered after 1988.

To eradicate this religion-based challenge, the Algerian regime set about constructing an Islamic legitimacy of its own. In 1984, the National Assembly of the People (the "parliament" controlled by the FLN) voted in favor of a family code inspired by the strictest Islamic ideals, by which women's rights were heavily curtailed. A policy of state-financed mosque construction was inaugurated, and the preachers appointed to them were controlled by the Ministry of Religious Affairs; these were meant to counter the proliferation of small, unofficial prayer rooms in the poor areas of the cities, in which unlicensed preachers held sway. Finally, in 1985, the Amir Abd el-Kader Islamic University was inaugurated at Constantine, with its own cathedral-mosque, the plan being to provide Algeria with a training center for distinguished imams.⁴ In the absence of local ulemas of any repute who could give their blessing to the regime, the Algerian government (headed since 1979 by Boumedienne's successor, Chadli Benjedid) imported from Egypt two of the most revered sheikhs in the Muslim world, Muhammad al-Chazali and Yusuf al-Qaradawi. Both were fellow-travelers of the Muslim Brothers and very much in favor with the oil monarchies of the Arabian peninsula.⁵ Although their recruitment was an implicit admission of the moribund scene among Algerian ulemas, the importation of two imams belonging to this school of thought showed the regime's desire to strengthen the religious dimension of the FLN's nationalist ideology, which was making no headway with either the younger generation or anyone else whose interests were not served by the status quo. The two imported preachers gave only lip service to the government while encouraging the "Islamic awakening" at work in society.

Thus, at the moment when the riots broke out in October 1988, there existed in Algeria an Islamist intelligentsia made up of teachers and students who were actively preaching in working-class areas and against whom the state was unable to bring forward any credible ulemas to express its own side of the argument. The contrast with Egypt was all too obvious: after all, President Mubarak had managed to

enlist all the principal dignitaries of Al Azhar against the assassins of Sadat, thereby heading off the expansion of radical Islamism. He was able to do this because ordinary people revered the doctors of the law who represented this thousand-year-old institution and held their opinions in high esteem.

As a result, by the end of the 1980s the Algerian Islamist militants had swept all their religious rivals off the beach. The bigoted faction within the single party (called Barâ'efelâne, the bearded FLN, by local ways) had much in common with the Islamists, and many of them rallied to the FIS or sympathized strongly with it from 1989 onward. The world of the brotherhoods had been dismantled at independence, and now there were no ulemas worthy of the name for the state to use against the Islamist activists. As soon as the riots began, the militants set about building bridges to the young urban poor, and within a few months the small circles of believers that had formerly gathered round a few scattered preachers had been transformed into a movement with the force of an earthquake.

Exactly how the "days of October" started remains a mystery. Rumors circulated in Algiers that power struggles within the government apparatus were to blame, along with provocateurs sent to destabilize President Chadli, whose political and economic decisions in the face of Algeria's crisis were hotly contested.⁶ Whatever the initial spark may have been, the blaze roared through the gangs of hitistes and other young people with extraordinary speed. Confronted with widespread looting in the capital, the Islamist preachers called a crisis meeting. Sheik Mohamed Sahnoun, an 81-year-old cleric, a former member of the Ulemas' Association, and a figure renowned for his intransigence toward the regime, made an appeal for calm on the evening of October 6. This had no effect other than to position the Islamist intelligentsia as the obligatory intermediary between the government and a society up in arms against it. On October 10, following a demonstration orchestrated by Ali Benhadj from the Kaboul Mosque (built by veterans of the Afghanistan jihad in the Belcourt quarter of Algiers), a gunshot caused panic in the huge crowd, and several dozen people were trampled to death. Benhadj immediately issued an appeal in which he framed the people's demands in the terminology of political Islamism, effectively setting up the Islamist intellectuals as spokesmen for Algeria's impoverished urban youth. This alliance was sealed with the creation of the FIS in March 1989.⁷

On the evening of October 10, President Chadli announced a series of reforms and met with Sahnoun, Benhadj, and Mahfoud Nahnab, the Algerian representative of the Muslim Brothers, thereby legitimizing them as interlocutors.¹⁰ The uprising petered out. After sacking a few subordinates, Chadli was re-elected as head of state in December, and in February 1989 he imposed a constitution that ended the era of the single party in Algeria. He hoped to avail himself of a much stronger presidential institution that would allow him to put together coalitions of the various parties as he saw fit (nationalists, Islamists, Marxists, and Berberists) while preserving the main characteristics of the system that had been in place since 1962. In short, he underestimated the strength of the dynamic that the Islamists had set in motion in October, a miscalculation which soon pushed his regime into crisis and the country into full-scale civil war.

On March 10, 1989, the birth of the FIS was proclaimed at the Ben Badis Mosque in Algiers. Its fifteen founders represented a number of different approaches, ranging from advocates of armed struggle and followers of Bouyali (such as Ali Benhadj) to FLN veterans (such as Abassi Madani) whose aim was to Islamize the regime without altering society's basic fabric. The movement was not fully represented: personal animosities and rivalries over precedence ruled out figures like the Muslim Brother Nahnab, the Constantine Islamist Abdallah Jaballah, the elderly Sheik Sahnoun, and Muhammad Said, the head of the *djazaris*.¹¹ The government was later able to use some of these men to obstruct the FIS, but in the first year of its existence it made spectacular progress in binding together the disparate social groups of Algeria, in a way that bore a close similarity to the events of 1978 in Teheran.

As in Iran, a steady proliferation of demonstrations launched by the Islamists enabled them to maintain a climate of permanent mobilization. For the first time the unemployed young were able to express their resentment against the regime and their support for a revolutionary blueprint for society, which, after twenty-five years of inertia, now seemed within their grasp. From 1989 onward this project took the form of the *stouta islamiya* (Islamic state), for which the intellectuals of the FIS clamored in their harangues. The new multiparty system made possible the emergence of about fifty different political formations, but of these only the FIS had a coherent network of preachers already in place. This network allowed it to give structure to a mass movement

that lambasted the state and the FLN. Indeed, the former single party was able to survive only because of its massive apparatus and the vested interest of its cadres, though it went through a period of acute moral crisis. As to the democratic parties that advocated a non-religious approach to politics while also rejecting the FLN, these were confined to ethnic and regional bases (such as Kabylia for Hocine Ait-Adumed's Front des Forces Socialistes) or to a restricted sector of the francophone middle class (such as Saïd Saadi's Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie, RCD).

The power of the FIS was demonstrated by its victories in the first free elections since Algerian independence, in June 1990 and December 1991. These successes were due to the party's Khomeini-like ability to unite the poor urban youth and devout middle class through the intermediary of a dynamic Islamist intelligentsia. The intellectuals knew how to produce an ideology of mobilization in which everyone had something to gain: they even managed to annex a part of the nationalist discourse and detach it from the FLN. This strength—as long as the movement was still being carried forward by its initial spirit and the government was still being found wanting (that is, until the “insurrection strike” of June 1991)—was well served by the two heads of the party.

The first head, Ali Benhadj, the lowly schoolteacher and former companion of Bouyali, now the prophet of jihad, was only 33 years old in 1989. He rode a lightweight motorcycle, and he was an incomparable speaker in the mosques, using classical Arabic or Algerian dialect to enthral the tens of thousands of hittistes who hung on his words, making them laugh or weep at will, one moment whipping them into a frenzy of fanaticism and the next reining them in.¹² The other head was Abassi Madani, a 58-year-old war veteran, university professor, and academic, who went about in a luxurious Mercedes (supposedly given to him by an Arab monarch) and knew how to talk to the shopkeepers and traders, as well as to the “military suppliers.”¹³ All these he weaned away from the regime by arguing that investment in the FIS would deliver a guarantee for the future of their businesses.

The inroads made by Benhadj and Madani were reversed as soon as the regime began repressing the party after the failure of the June 1991 strike. First, the traders and entrepreneurs who had earlier been attracted by the FIS's promised reforms began to have second thoughts

about the movement's real intentions and about the balance of power within it. They were also frightened by the growing radicalism of Benhadj's associates and the threat of a savage hittiste backlash against them. At this juncture the dual nature of the FIS leadership became a weakness. In Iran, Khomeini had remained to the end the sole and unique figure who could exalt the disinherited on the one hand while reassuring the bazaar on the other. The Algerian Islamist movement, with its two leaders, was incapable of sustaining unity between the poor urban youth and the devout middle class as Khomeini had done. During the civil war, Algerian Islamism split completely into two opposing factions: the Groupe Islamique Armé (urban poor) and the Armée Islamique du Salut (middle class).

In the first months of its legal existence (which commenced in September 1989), the FIS showed its power again and again. The first edition of its weekly publication, *Al-Munqidh* (The Savior), 200,000 copies of which were distributed in October, demanded the liberation of those members of Bouyali's group still in detention by order of the regime. At the end of the month, an earthquake laid waste the Tipasa region of Algeria, and the government's callous attitude to the catastrophe contrasted starkly with the devotion and effectiveness of the FIS-inspired doctors, nurses, and rescue teams who arrived in ambulances bearing the party's insignia. One month after the FIS's creation, it was already demonstrating its readiness to take the reins of power from a corrupt and faltering regime and had showed a degree of mercifulness that won favor well beyond the movement's circle of immediate supporters. In the first six months of 1990, the party organized marches and gatherings and applied steady pressure on the state, from which it was finally able to extract the promise of early legislative elections. On June 12, the FIS triumphed on the municipal and regional ballot, winning control of a majority of the country's communes.

The young urban poor had turned out in record numbers to elect the first generation of FIS officials. These mayors and municipal councilors were of course the Islamist intellectuals who supplied the party with its cadres; many were teachers, but given the large numbers of seats to be filled, there was also a high proportion of representatives from the devout middle class. This was the first time that shopkeepers and small businessmen with local reputations had achieved any kind of access to political responsibilities, which, apart from detectors from the

ex-FLN, had hitherto been confined to lackeys of the regime co-opted by the single-party apparatus.

The victory of the FIS in the 1990 municipal elections modernized the Algerian political system and sealed the alliance between the three components of the Islamist movement. It brought better services to the deprived, thanks to the budget of the Islamic municipalities (*baladiyah islamiya*), which allowed the FIS to give the urban poor a foretaste of the coming Islamic state by deploying charitable activities on a large scale. In the euphoric climate that prevailed among the movement's sympathizers, there were abundant testimonies to the justice, equity, order, and general civic virtue of the elected FIS officials, in contrast to the corruption, waste, arbitrariness, and inefficiency that had formerly prevailed. These virtues were attributed to religious recitude founded on a strict respect for the injunctions of the sharia, as demonstrated to the world by the application of "Islamic morality."

In the following weeks and months, female municipal employees were forced to wear the veil; liquor stores, video shops, and other immoral establishments were "persuaded" to close their doors; women of easy morals (or those thought to be) were persecuted; and the coastal municipalities busied themselves organizing separate bathing for the sexes, banning indecent clothing on beaches, and so on. As in other countries where the Islamist movements made inroads, the first effect of this avalanche of moral prohibitions was to point the finger at the Europeanized secular middle class whose members were more or less emancipated from traditional taboos, to deprive them of all legitimacy as proponents of the values of modernity, and to hand over their elite positions to the devout bourgeoisie. At the same time, it allowed impoverished young men, humiliated and forced into abstinence or sexual misery by the crowded family conditions in which they lived, to become heroes of chastity who sternly condemned the pleasures of which they had been so wretchedly deprived.

In the context of Algeria, this translation of social and political conflicts into the moral sphere was accompanied by a linguistic dimension that was specific to the Maghreb. The struggle to eliminate the French language attained jihad proportions: in the most trivial Islamist propaganda, French was perceived as the vector of the West's most pernicious aspects, especially nationalism and secularism. Thus, Ali Benhadj declared his intention "to ban France from Algeria intellectually and

ideologically, and be done, once and for all, with those whom France has nursed with her poisoned milk."¹³ Notions like this, voiced after the victory of the FIS in the municipal elections, were music to the ears of the hittites and the Arab-speaking graduates of the secondary and higher-education establishments, who were sick of being beaten in the job market by their French-speaking contemporaries. On the other hand, these sentiments were alarming to the urban middle class, whose members had supported the FIS in the elections of June 1990 out of disgust with the FLN but were still eager to watch the 8 o'clock news on French television, which they received through what the Islamist militants called "paradiabolic" dishes. At first the Islamists tried to destroy all satellite dishes in Algeria, but when this proved impractical they reverted to training them on the Arabsat satellite, which broadcast various Saudi programs.

In Iran the secularized petite bourgeoisie had backed Khomeini because he professed openness and the inclusion of every element of society in his revolutionary project. Also, during the early days of the revolution he concentrated his attacks on a single enemy, the shah. In Algeria, by contrast, as soon as the FIS was in control of local power following its success in the municipal elections, the preachers who harangued the young urban poor took issue not only with the regime but with a whole sector of society for its "francization." This imprecise notion, with which the FIS exposed a substantial sector of the urban middle class to the wrath of the hittites, was—not unreasonably—construed as a threat.

As it turned out, in electoral terms the high point of Islamist influence was reached at the June 1990 municipal elections. In the first round of the December 1991 legislative ballot a year later, the party lost nearly a million votes (though it still won comfortably) because the possibility that it might win power had begun to frighten a substantial segment of Algerian society. Khomeini, faced with the same dilemma, had taken great care not to scare any social group unduly before the shah was deposed and he himself was well established in Teheran. Moreover, the ayatollah had focused his attacks on the monarchy, from which he offered a radical break, and this exacerbated the shah's isolation. In Algeria, the heads of the FIS did not make such a clean break with FLN ideology. Instead, they claimed to be partisans of the FLN's "true" line and denounced the perversion of FLN ideals by the "sons of

France" who had diverted the movement from its original course.¹⁵ In its publications, the Islamist party presented itself as the legitimate heir of the 1954 War of Independence, which it described (retrospectively) as a jihad to install the Islamic state but which had been betrayed by the "French-speaking communists" who usurped power in 1962.¹⁶

A similar view of history allowed more socially conservative leaders like Madani to maintain close links with the bigoted, Arab-speaking faction of the former single party, just as it allowed President Chadli to stay in touch with the leaders of the FIS, whom he still hoped one day to include in a government coalition. Thus, in contrast to the Iranian situation whereby the Islamist movement had seized power because of its ability to unite society and isolate the regime, after mid-1990 the Algerian FIS began yielding to pressure from its most radical fringe, and in doing so alienated a significant proportion of the urban middle class. Its leaders, represented by Madani, were further hamstrung by their attempt to find a compromise with the FLN, whose politics they wished to correct and whose legitimacy they craved for themselves. This desire to effect a hasty purge coupled with an inability to make a clean break with the old regime was largely responsible for the FIS's ultimate political failure.

In the year that followed the June 1990 victory in the municipal elections, the Algerian government gave the impression of gradually losing control of events and of merely reacting to the Islamist party's initiatives. The FIS monopolized attention with its marches, rallies, and barrage of new projects in the communes it controlled. The state of dual power that seems to characterize all revolutionary periods had arrived in Algeria. The outbreak of the Gulf War in January 1991, with the offensive against Iraq by an international coalition led by the United States and supported by Saudi Arabia, was the pretext for giant demonstrations in support of Baghdad. These in turn supplied an opportunity for the FIS to take to the streets and outflank the regime.

At the end of one of these demonstrations, which had been headed by a detachment of Afghan-garbed jihadists fresh from Peshawar, a uniformed Ali Benhadj delivered a harangue in front of the Ministry of Defense in which he demanded the formation of a corps of volunteers to join the forces of Saddam Hussein. The symbolism of this demand was twofold. For one thing, such an intrusion onto the army's turf was a direct affront to the military hierarchy and a danger signal for the co-

hesion of the armed forces, whose chiefs concluded that the Islamist mobilization had to be stopped forthwith. For another, the Iraqi affair exposed the hidden fault lines within the FIS itself. Madani, who owed a debt of gratitude to the oil monarchies for their earlier financial support, adopted a pro-Saudi stance. But he had to defer to Benhadj, who supported Iraq and rode the popular enthusiasm for Saddam. The young urban poor were in a position to impose their views and passions on the party, and the party's leaders were unable to channel those views and passions. For the middle classes living in dread of hittite vengeance, this moment was a turning point.

The tension between the regime and the FIS, and the contradictions within the FIS itself, began to peak in late May, when a project surfaced for the realignment of electoral districts in the election at the end of the next month. The effect would have been to reduce the party's majority by judicious gerrymandering. Madani, concluding that he had been betrayed, called for a general strike. The ensuing demonstrations quickly degenerated into violence, with the young urban poor heavily engaged. The government was obliged to surrender one of the largest squares in Algiers to the FIS, which proceeded to hold mass sit-ins there for a full week. At this point the army intervened to put an end to the situation, which could at any moment turn into a general uprising.

On the evening of June 3 a state of emergency was declared, the demonstrators were dispersed by tanks, and the army nominated a new prime minister, Sid Ahmed Chozali, who promptly postponed elections until December. The army then turned its attention toward the local FIS bosses, removing the "Islamic municipality" signs on the town halls won by the movement in the previous year. Benhadj called for a general uprising, and Madani threatened to unleash jihad if the soldiers did not return to their barracks. It was too late: the army was already deployed, and popular support for the FIS had been sapped by its hesitations during the month of June. In short, the FIS had lost the initiative to the generals, who now took over the day-to-day running of Algeria. On June 30, Benhadj and Madani were arrested for sedition and thrown into prison, where they remained for the duration of the upcoming civil war.

This unexpected debacle widened divisions within the Islamist movement. The working partnership of Benhadj and Madani was supplanted by a gaggle of lesser characters who fought each other for pri-

inacy. Those in favor of armed struggle coalesced around the residue of Bouyali's followers and the Afghanistan veterans. These now began to go into hiding; they were prepared for direct military action, scorning the electoral process, which they viewed as a fraud. Their first spectacular operation was a bloody assault on a frontier post, in the course of which a group of "Afghan" veterans cut off the heads of some wretched army conscripts at Guezmair on November 28, 1991. The date was carefully chosen to celebrate within four days the second anniversary of the martyrdom of Abdallah Azzam in Peshawar. It marked the beginning of a jihad on Algerian soil. The Afghan experience—and reference—furnished a complete vocabulary to go with methods and traditions resurrected from the War of Independence, itself made topical by the popular legend of Mustafa Bouyali.

The party, which had little control over this crowd of armed bandits, began to see defections among its most radical founding members, who criticized Madani's "politician's" approach. At the same time, the party won new adherents among djazarist technocrats who saw in this new weakness an opportunity to take control of its structure. A conference called at Batna on July 25–26, 1991, allowed a young engineer, Abdelkader Flachani, who followed Maïlani's line, to seize control of the party apparatus and strike a compromise between the different factions, giving the djazarists the lion's share of influence. Although the leaders arrested in June were still in jail, and in spite of the pressure exerted by the army, which, having won the political initiative, first imprisoned then released Flachani and his companions, Flachani decided to participate in the legislative elections, the first round of which took place on December 26. The FIS opposed two other Islamist parties then in contact with the regime, Abdallah Jaballah's Nahda and above all Mahfoud Nabrak's Hamas party. These siphoned off a number of electors from the devout middle class, which was now seriously worried about the direction in which Algeria seemed to be going. And a large number of younger radicals who no longer believed in the electoral option did not vote at all. The net result was that the FIS lost over a million votes (25 percent of its support) by comparison with the municipal elections of June 1990.¹⁸ Nevertheless, it still won handsily, with 118 deputies elected in the first round against 16 for the FLN and over 47 percent of the popular vote.

This victory completely killed off President Chadli's project to en-

rice a part of the Islamist elite into a manageable coalition, while the forecasts for the second round of elections suggested that the FIS would win an absolute majority in the Parliament. The army promptly "resigned" Chadli on January 11, 1992, called off the elections scheduled for January 13, and dissolved the FIS itself on March 4. The entire FIS apparatus was dismantled, thousands of militants and locally elected FIS officials were interned in camps in the Sahara, and Algeria's mosques were placed under tight surveillance.

A civil war ensued that would drag on for the rest of the decade. The net result was that the Front Islamique du Salut was annihilated as a mass party: its organization was smashed by the coup d'état of January, to which it was unable to devise any riposte. The alliance it had managed to forge between the young urban poor and the devout middle class, at the instigation of the Islamist intelligentsia, had proved incapable of taking power. Again, the contrast with Iran is telling. There, a single charismatic figure, Khomeini, enabled the Islamist movement to overcome the social divisions of its base and attract the whole of society, in a process that completely isolated the shah's regime. Even though the FIS was by far the strongest electoral force in the country at the moment of its dissolution, it had already passed its peak—which, in hindsight, was the triumph in the June 1990 municipal elections. Electoral success merely caused it to strengthen its grip on its natural support within society, while alienating the secular middle classes. This class, whom the FIS had branded "sons of France," was convinced thereafter that it would be the first victim of the hitlistes.

In Iran, the middle classes and even the Communist party rallied wholeheartedly around Khomeini, and a strike organized by the oil industry workers—not otherwise known for their interest in religious ideology—dealt the final blow to the imperial regime. In Algeria, the government succeeded in retaining the backing of minority social groups, whose resistance to the FIS eventually proved crucial. It also kept control of the army, whose top brass had everything to fear from an Islamist movement whose leaders had given them no guarantee of survival. Nor did the armed forces' tank-and-file go over to the FIS, as the Iranian soldiery went over to Khomeini, despite Benhadj's appeal for a general mutiny in 1991. The Algerian regime also held its traditional support within the "revolutionary family" (the veterans of the War of Independence who had taken over the property of the colonial

French in 1962) and who, having used violence as a means to enrich themselves, were afraid that similar violence would deprive them of the spoils they had seized. The Iran of the shah did not possess any social group whose privileges were directly linked to the perpetuation of the monarchy. Finally, and above all, members of the secularized urban middle class in Algeria, who had received few benefits from the system, who had suffered from its corruption and nepotism, and whose condition was dismal to say the least, nevertheless grew apprehensive that they too would be targeted on account of the clothes they wore, the food they ate, or the lives they led. The consequence was that all of these groups, who were in a minority but who nonetheless held positions of responsibility within the social and administrative framework of Algeria, threw their support behind the coup d'état. In Iran, of course, their counterparts had gone the other way, into the arms of Khomeini.

Confronted by a coalition united in its fear of them, the Islamists were suffering on account of the very thing that had made them so successful in the first place: the fact that their young preachers had met with no effective opposition in the religious field. In Egypt, their counterparts had collided head-on with the ulemas of Al-Azhar after Sadat's assassination, while in Iran the Shiite clerics had been rewarded for embracing the ideas of Shari'ati. In Algeria, by contrast, the Islamists entirely controlled the direction of Islam between 1988 and 1992 and set the tone for all FIS propaganda. Nevertheless, their youth, their ardor, their virulence, and their political immaturity prevented them from winning secular middle-class support to go along with that of the hitistes and the devout bourgeoisie. The civil war would accentuate this flaw in the Islamist alliance, when the devout notables of the ex-FIS would themselves become the prey of gangs of young proletarianized jihad partisans.

The Military Coup of the Sudanese Islamists

In 1989, a crucial year for the worldwide expansion of the Islamist movement, a durable regime built on Islamist foundations failed to materialize in Algeria despite the FIS's initial triumph. Paradoxically, the most significant victory occurred not in Algeria but in the Sudan, under the aegis of Hassan al-Turabi. Turabi's success resulted from a military coup d'état and had no popular dynamic whatsoever. Instead,

it was the consequence of a long process of infiltration by the Islamist intelligentsia of the Sudan's state apparatus, army, and financial system, with the cooperation of an emerging devout bourgeoisie.

In the Sudan, the Muslim Brothers appeared on the scene in 1944, fifteen years or more after the creation of the organization in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna.²⁰ Banna's group was quick to gain a foothold among the Egyptian middle classes, but his Sudanese followers were confined to educated and intellectual circles until the mid-1960s. As in other countries of Black Africa, in the Sudan the Muslim religion was tightly controlled by mystical brotherhoods, which gave short shrift to the rigorous, city-oriented approach of Banna's disciples and their plans to Islamize a state and social structure from which they felt excluded.²¹ The Sudanese brotherhoods were basically divided into two branches, represented by two separate political parties. The Ansars claimed the inheritance of the Mahdi or Messiah, who led the jihad of 1881 against the British; after independence in 1956, they became the Umma party.²² Their rivals, the Khatmiya, were traditionally closer to Egypt and were represented politically by the Democratic Unionist party.

Both favored a traditional approach to politics: the allegiance of their militants to individual leaders was similar to the devotion of Sufi disciples to their master, who in return distributed his baraka to them and gave them his protection. The Ansars were led by the al-Mahdi family, and their strength was in the rural areas, with overall control over the country's agricultural economy. The Khatmiya, under the aegis of the al-Mirghani family, were especially influential in the south, and in Sudanese commercial networks. Among educated urban people, who were very sparse during the 1960s, the Islamist movement had to compete with the largest Communist party in the Arab world. The Communists were strongly entrenched in the university and had great influence among railway workers, in a country that depended on an extensive railway system bequeathed by the British. Arab nationalism also had its proponents, as it did elsewhere in the region. But the Sudan was only partly Arab in its makeup.²³ The south, which was mostly animist and Christian and scarcely Arabized at all, was firmly opposed to any national project associated with Arabism—meaning, with an Islamic ulterior motive—because it feared that its Black African identity would be swiftly annihilated by any such development.

In this highly circumscribed context, a charismatic leader emerged

who was eventually to lead the Sudanese Islamists to victory in the putsch of 1989. Hassan al-Turabi was born in 1932 into a family of religious dignitaries claiming to descend from a minor mahdi and who also had the gift of baraka. He received a traditional Koranic education before studying law at the University of Khartoum, from which he emerged with a law degree. He then went to London, where he earned a master's degree in 1957, followed by a doctorate in Paris in 1964. In the same year, on his return to Khartoum, he became the head of the capital's law faculty. In October of that year the military dictatorship that had run the country since 1958 was overturned and replaced by a civil government with strongly socialist leanings.

At the age of 32, Turabi was a polyglot intellectual with a double claim to legitimacy, both traditional and modern. He played his role with gusto, utilizing his Western training to build an original Islamist political movement named the Islamic Charter Front (ICF) from the matrix provided by the Muslim Brothers. He copied his organization from that of its main rival, the Sudanese Communist Party, while at the same time breaking with the logic of the Muslim Brothers, who confined themselves to preaching pure religion. At the legislative elections of April 1965, the ICF won only seven seats (two of which were in constituencies reserved for candidates with diplomas, the left taking the remaining eleven seats).²⁵ At the student elections in the same year, the ICF reaped the fruits of its careful proselytism at the university, taking 40 percent of the votes and coming in a close second to the left, which won 45 percent.²⁶ In the assembly, the domination of the Umma party, with sixty-six seats, demonstrated the pre-eminence of politicians from the milieus of the brotherhood, in a country that was still over 80 percent rural.

Its leader, Sadiq al-Mahdi, was named prime minister. Turabi, who became Sadiq's brother-in-law, allied the ICF with the Umma; in this way his movement obtained access to the constitutional committee, which went on to propose that Islam become the state religion, with the sharia as its source of law. This was a golden opportunity for a minority party of intellectuals to graft itself onto the leading brotherhood, whose principal characteristic was its reference to the mahdi, and to bring it up to date by demanding the contemporary implementation of the sharia just as it had been applied by the late nineteenth-century Mahdist state. This tactic made it possible for the Islamist

movement to install its supporters at the heart of the Sudanese political establishment. But by giving the sharia a central position in the Sudanese identity, it alienated non-Muslims, who constituted 30 percent of the population, mostly in the south. This led to extreme tension and eventually to civil warfare in the south. Against this background, General Djafer Nimayri seized power with the support of the Communists, Nasser's Egypt, and the Khamiyya brotherhood. The ICF was promptly dissolved, and Turabi spent seven years in prison.

With no real hold on the bulk of the population, whose allegiance was shared between the two main brotherhoods and their political arms, the Sudanese Islamists fell back on a patient strategy of winning over students—who constituted the intellectual breeding ground for a new generation of the devout middle class. From prison, Turabi wrote a book entitled *The Place of Women in Islam*, which, although it insisted on the wearing of the veil, also encouraged women to take part in public life. This angered traditionalists but allowed Turabi's movement to recruit large numbers of female students; previously, the leftist parties (secular and communist) had been the only ones offering a vision of the future that took account of women's dreams of emancipation. At the same time, the Communist party—on which Nimayri had depended heavily at the time of his coup—fell out of favor with the dictator and was dismantled. This was a blow from which it never recovered, and one which greatly facilitated the Islamist penetration of the academic elite, whom the Communists had dominated.

By 1977, the regime's support had eroded dangerously on account of its economic failures and the army's lack of progress in its southern offensive. Nimayri's solution was to launch an initiative of "national reconciliation," freeing opposition leaders from jail and allowing political exiles to return home. Turabi and his people now began to play a major role, infiltrating the top echelons of the government where their education, frequently acquired in the West, made them indispensable in putting the state back on track. This pragmatic approach was described by Turabi himself as the "jurisprudence of necessity." It consisted in placing Islamist supporters in every available position of power, and it was a direct consequence of the restricted, elitist nature of the organization. Unlike the Egyptian Muslim Brothers or the Algerian, Palestinian, and Iranian Islamists who began by preaching to the masses, Turabi and his friends were adept at Islamizing society from the top down, in

the mold of Mawdudi and the Jamaat-e-Islami of Pakistan, or Anwar Ibrahim's ABIM in Malaysia. In other words, the conquest of the state by an "enlightened elite" eventually made it possible for Turabi to bring his Islamist project to fruition.

The Islamists were able to serve as intermediaries between the Sudan and its Red Sea neighbor Saudi Arabia, which, by reason of its newfound financial muscle following the war of October 1973, was eager for a rapprochement with a country capable of exporting large numbers of immigrant workers.²³ At the same time, the Saudis were concerned to prevent the Sudan from drifting into the Communist camp, while the Sudanese themselves, like any other poor Muslim country in Africa, were eager to attract Arab funds from the Gulf. In the fall of 1977, the Faisal Islamic Bank opened a branch in the Sudan. For Nimayri's government, this offered an opportunity to attract Saudi Funds, which comprised some 60 percent of the bank's startup capital.²⁴ So popular was this novelty that by the mid-1980s the Faisal Bank was the second richest concern in the country, in terms of the money it held on deposit. The bank was run by Islamists, some of whom had been received by Prince Faisal in Saudi Arabia during Nimayri's persecution in the early 1970s; one of its directors was later to become an important figure in Turabi's regime.²⁵ Like the Al Baraka Bank founded shortly afterward, it not only provided jobs for young militant graduates, allowing them to raise their social status through its network, but also attracted deposits from bazaar merchants and Sudanese citizens based abroad.

These banks were considered to be among the strongholds of the local Islamist movement, which, unlike its Egyptian and Algerian counterparts, had little or no popular base but recruited most of its people from the younger, educated cities. They would play a key role in structuring a devout lower middle class that would ally itself with the Islamist intellectuals and army officers to seize power in 1989 by a coup d'état. Turabi's associates naturally monopolized most of the jobs made available by the banks, reaping employment and wealth as a reward for their activism as students—a development comparable to that which occurred in the Malaysian banking sector. In addition, the banks provided low-interest loans to investors and businessmen linked to the movement, and this in turn encouraged the emergence of a devout middle class directly dependent for its economic success on political

contacts and ideological inspiration. Finally, the banks were successful in funding new depositors, notably among local traders deprived of access to conventional institutions that were entirely focused on foreign business—and these became commercial as well as political clients.

Thanks to the Saudis' support for their Sudanese fellow-Islamists, the latter were able to transcend their original bases in intellectual and university circles. They now became the spokesmen for an emerging, newly educated devout middle class that had escaped the influence of the non-religious parties (nationalist or communist) as well as the traditional brotherhoods. The Saudi-Sudanese connection, with Turabi's National Islamic Front (NIF) as its intermediary, was also expressed through the African Islamic Center, which was richly endowed by the Gulf states and headed by a party member from 1979 onward. The center's function was to train preachers and young elites from French- and English-speaking African countries, to imbue them with the salafist view of Islam, to provide them with the means to compete effectively with Christian missionaries, and in general to usurp the role formerly played by the brotherhoods.²⁶

The final eight years of Nimayri's regime were marked by a growth in the influence of Turabi's adherents, who were given a free hand to set up cells within the state apparatus on condition that they did not challenge the dictator himself. Nimayri saw their enthusiasm for Islamizing the law as an opportunity to tighten his own control over a population that had grown tired of the regime's corruption and inertia, and in doing so to shift the emphasis of social conflict to the religious plane. With this prospect in mind, in September 1983 Nimayri issued a decree to make the sharia the law of the country. Thieves' hands were cut off, adulterous couples were stoned, alcohol was banned, and the Islamization of the banking system was officially inaugurated. In January 1985, Mahmud Muhammad Taha, an intellectual who wanted to revise certain items of Islamic dogma, was publicly hanged.²⁷ In March, Nimayri suddenly became alarmed by the extent of the influence wielded by Turabi and his entourage, whom he called the "Satanic Brothers." It was too late. Turabi had to wait only a month in prison before Nimayri's regime collapsed entirely.

During the four-year democratic interlude between the fall of Nimayri and the coup d'état of June 1989, the Sudanese Islamic movement consolidated its positions, creating in 1985 the National Islamic

Front. The NIF won 51 seats out of 264 at the parliamentary elections of April 1986, and 21 out of the 28 seats reserved for graduates with diplomas. By comparison with the elections of 1965, it had obtained a clear mandate from electors of the educated middle class, even though the results as a whole showed that it had failed to impress the masses (unlike its Algerian counterpart). On the other hand, these years were used to infiltrate the military hierarchy, which the Algerian Islamists had never managed to do. Crucially, the NIF gave an ideological justification for the war being waged against the animists and Christians in the south, which they depicted as a jihad. The reverses sustained in this war had forced the government to negotiate with the southern rebels, and on June 30, 1989, it suspended the Islamic laws as a preliminary to a campaign for national reconciliation.³⁹

A successful coup d'état was mounted on the same day by General Omar Hassan al-Bashir, supported by Islamist officers, and this put an end to the reconciliation project. It quickly became clear that Turabi, although he was placed under house arrest for a while along with other political leaders, was the real power behind the new regime. As in Pakistan in 1977 when General Zia ul-Haq brought down Ali Bhutto prior to proclaiming the birth of an Islamic state based on the ideas of Mawdudi, the Islamic intellectuals and the devout bourgeoisie influenced by them won power in the Sudan without having to mobilize the people on their behalf. In both cases, a section of the military hierarchy had embraced Islamist ideology.⁴⁰ There was no need to appeal for the help of the young urban poor, whose social demands might have uncontrollable consequences for the establishment. In both cases, Islamist ideology found more receptive ears among army officers because the *Jamaat-e-Islami* in Pakistan, like the NIF in the Sudan, was able to supply a full religious justification for unsuccessful wars like Pakistan's Bangladesh debacle of 1971 or Nimayri's campaign against the southern Sudanese animists and Christians.

Finally, setting up an Islamist military dictatorship involved several years of savage repression against the secular middle class, a repression symbolized in Pakistan by the hanging of Ali Bhutto in 1979. In the Sudan, where political customs were traditionally much less harsh and where marriages and tribal alliances between the ruling elites had always given physical protection to politicians who might find themselves temporarily disgraced, the 1989 regime provided a rude awaken-

ing. Purges and executions were immediately carried out in the upper ranks of the army, while civil and military officials were subjected to "reeducation" to make them adopt the Islamist view of the world. People were routinely interrogated and tortured in "ghost houses"—anonymous villas used by the security services. This was denounced by international organizations, but Turabi dismissed the abuses as minimal, attributing them to the "extreme sensitivity" of his compatriots.⁴¹ Newspapers, associations, political parties, and independent newspapers were all banned, and their leading figures were imprisoned.

The brutality of the first years of the NIF's regime enabled it to consolidate its control of the state by filling government positions with its own men, whose origins were in the Islamist intelligentsia or the devout middle class. The long-term objective was to destroy the power of the traditionally dominant political parties, which had close ties to the brotherhoods, and to replace them with a new, modern elite.⁴² At the same time, the NIF came down even harder on intellectuals or members of the non-Islamist middle class, forcing many of them into exile to prevent them from constructing any kind of alternative. Finally, the NIF compensated for its lack of mass support by heavily favoring the Fallata, a hitherto marginal group of tribesmen from West Africa whose loyalty and willingness to do the government's dirty work were all the more fervent because they risked forfeiting everything should the NIF lose its grip on power.⁴³

This policy enabled Turabi and his friends to remain firmly in control for a decade. Turabi was greatly admired by most other comparable movements in the Arab world, particularly by the leaders of the Tunisian Mouvement de la Tendance Islamique (MTI) and the Palestinian Hamas, which held the Sudan up as a worthy example.⁴⁴ The Sudan also won the sympathy of nationalists and leftist militants in the region, who applauded the anti-imperialism of Turabi's speeches and turned a blind eye to the repression of their comrades in Khartoum. In contrast to General Zia's pro-Islamist government in Pakistan, which also took power through a military coup but which then received massive American support in its battle against the Soviets in Afghanistan, the regime in the Sudan had attracted, then cultivated, the displeasure of the United States. Among other things, the exactions of the army and militia during the unending war in the south had aroused the opposition of many Protestant and Catholic organizations, which had

clout in both Washington and the capitals of Europe. This closed off any access the Sudanese leaders might have had to the various forums of Islamic-Christian dialogue, through which the Islamist movements in many other countries had managed to establish contacts with those in power in the West.

In this sense, the NIF, although it had come into being through a coup and was led by elites trained in Great Britain and the United States, was as unpopular with the Americans as Khomeini's regime before it, being classed as a rogue state that actively supported terrorism. Like the Iranians, the Sudanese contrived to parlay Western sanctions and hostility into a kind of legitimacy, seizing on them to blame America for the economic disasters of the preceding decade and to call for a sacred union.³⁵ Turabi himself—who had supported Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War of 1990–1991, temporarily cutting his country off from Saudi aid—used the situation to rally international support beyond the Islamist movement, portraying his country, one of the poorest nations on the planet, as a symbol of resistance to imperialism.

In April 1991, an Arab and Islamic conference in Khartoum brought together all the leading Islamists from the Arab Middle East, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, as well as Yasir Arafat and the Egyptian Nasserists. All reiterated their solidarity with Iraq and proclaimed themselves an alternative to the Saudi-dominated Organization of the Islamic Conference, though they had nothing like its financial means. This gathering was followed by a second conference with the same objective, in December 1993, and then a third, in March–April 1995.³⁶ These gave Turabi a forum with which to establish his own presence on the international scene through the media, which he handled with consummate skill, and to strengthen his hold on his own country.³⁷ In this way his regime was able to mask its own narrow origins and its lack of mass support among the people, while projecting the image of a revolutionary state willing and able to represent the progressive Muslim masses of the world. It could do this because, after 1989, the NIF was not only the sole Sunni Islamist movement to have taken control of a legitimate state but also the only one ready to fill the vacuum left by Khomeini's death, which took place in the same month as the Kharطوم coup d'état.

The Fatwa and the Veil in Europe

Khomeini died on June 3, 1989, less than four months after enjoining the world's Muslims to execute Salman Rushdie, the author of *The Satanic Verses*. This stunning fatwa was the true political legacy of the ayatollah, and it brought to a close the decade-long ascendancy of Islamic movements which began with the mullahs' seizure of power in Tehran in 1979.

Iran had been forced to abandon its long war against Iraq, which had been dragging on since 1980, and to relinquish its hope of bringing down Saddam Hussein. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia still maintained its grip on the direction of Islam worldwide, despite Tehran's attempts to destabilize the Saudi regime. The fatwa was above all a move to regain the initiative. With it, Khomeini gave expression to the deep outrage of many Muslims over a book that they viewed as an affront to their honor, religion, and culture. His bold action contrasted strongly with the powerlessness of Riyadh and its international networks to prevent the book's publication. A further effect of the fatwa of February 14 was to shift the focus of Islamic opposition away from southwest Asia and into the heart of Western Europe—which was outside the traditional borders of the faith—where Salman Rushdie lived as a British subject. At a stroke, dar el-Islam was made universal, and its politics was expanded to include Muslim immigrants to the West, who became first the hostages and then the actors in a worldwide struggle for control of Islam. In the decade that followed, the West was to become a new battlefield for these contending forces.