

An ‘official’ Islamic response to the Egyptian al-jihād movement

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ABSTRACT *This essay explores the debate about the role of Islam in political and social life by looking at the arguments that were used to defend and to prosecute the assassins of Anwar Sadat. It focuses on two texts: The Neglected Duty, which was the political treatise of the Islamist group which assassinated Sadat; and the Egyptian religious establishment’s response to it. The essay examines what the two texts say about such concepts as unbelief, an Islamic state, jihād, and revolt. While the two texts differ on many points, there are also some similarities. This essay seeks to examine what this tells us about official Islam itself and how it has responded to the challenge of competing religious groups.*

When Khaled al-Islambouli, a young lieutenant in the Egyptian army, assassinated President Anwar Sadat on 6 October 1981, he said: ‘I have killed Pharaoh’. By calling Sadat Pharaoh, the assassin claimed that Sadat was not a Muslim but an apostate, and therefore, deserved to be killed. Khaled was a member of the radical Islamist group, *al-jihād*, led by Abdel Salam Faraj. Shortly before the assassination, Faraj issued a political treatise, *The Neglected Duty (al-farāda al-ghā’iba)*, which urged the necessity of waging a holy war against both Muslims and non-Muslims, with the aim of establishing an Islamic state.

Two months after Sadat’s assassination, the Mufti of al-Azhar (the second highest religious authority of Egypt), Jad al-Haq, issued a *fatwā* in response to *The Neglected Duty* and refuted many of the ideas that formed the ideology of *al-jihād*. This article focuses on these two texts: *The Neglected Duty*, and the *fatwā* of Jad al-Haq. It seeks to show how they agree or disagree on the fundamental issues associated with the assassination, such as what makes a Muslim a Muslim and whether it is justified to revolt against a Muslim ruler.

The two texts have far-reaching significance. While it is true that *The Neglected Duty* is the manifesto of a radical Islamist group, many of the ideas expressed in it have a broader importance. They are derived from a large body of Islamist ideas about the relationship between Muslims and the state. In

addition, the *fatwā* is more than a response to *al-jihād*: it also gives an insight into al-Azhar's view on many of the issues raised by political Islam:

The discussion reveals the nature of the debate about the role of Islam in political and social life as it is carried on among the Egyptians themselves ... [and] ... sets into relief the issues that preoccupy religiously inclined Egyptians and separate them from one another.¹

1. Al-Azhar, the state, and political Islam

Al-Azhar, the institution that represents 'official Islam', is the highest religious authority for Sunni Islam not only in Egypt, but also throughout the Middle East. Since the time of its foundation in 969, al-Azhar has been extremely influential, both religiously and politically. However, by the end of the Nasserist period, al-Azhar had undergone immense structural change, and had effectively become an 'organ of the state'.² This meant that al-Azhar was perceived as ineffective, thereby undermining its role as the guardian of Islam and leader of the people.³ However, al-Azhar was still necessary for the regime since the latter needed to legitimize itself by appealing to official Islam. In turn, the '*ulamā*', while depending on the state for their survival, had to be careful how much support they gave to a bad ruler.⁴ The growth of Islamic opposition groups reinforced al-Azhar's and the state's interdependence. The state increasingly needed to appeal to the religious establishment for legitimacy, and al-Azhar, undermined by these groups claiming to offer the answer of a true Islamic order, needed the state's support.

The Islamist movement, which begun with the foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928, had by Nasser's time grown into a formidable opposition force. Following two assassination attempts on Nasser in 1954 and 1965, the Brotherhood was dissolved, many of its members imprisoned, and a nucleus went underground. In prison, members of the movement were subjected to 'torture and degradation beyond imagination'.⁵ This caused a split within the Islamists. Some, like the neo-Muslim Brethren, turned to education to achieve their aims.⁶ Their ideology focused around the idea of four external main enemies: Jewry, the continuing Western Crusade, communism and secularism. There was no question of trying to overthrow the regime.⁷ However, more developed radical ideas and focused on the notion of an internal enemy, maintaining that the rulers who had inflicted such torture on other Muslims could not be real Muslims.⁸ The country's military defeat of 1967 strongly enhanced the support that the Egyptian population gave to political Islam. The region entered a kind of 'breakdown' or identity crisis,⁹ and many Egyptians turned to Islam for the answer. Islamist groups argued that the Arabs had been defeated because they had lost their faith.¹⁰

After Nasser's death, Sadat's rise to power brought controversial and unpopular policies. Sadat's policy of economic liberalization (*infitāh*) widened the gap between rich and poor.¹¹ His policy of quasi-democratization was never intended to achieve genuine pluralism.¹² The Camp David accords of 1978 meant that

many Egyptians felt that Sadat, by putting Egypt's national interest before that of its Arab brothers, had betrayed both Egypt and the Arab world.¹³ Under Nasser, the state and political Islam had occupied two opposite poles of the religious and political spectrum with al-Azhar in the middle. This changed under Sadat, who, by encouraging the growth of religious forces, supported both the political Islamists and al-Azhar to make Egypt more Islamic.¹⁴ Sadat projected himself in the media as the 'believing' President, going to the mosque with a prayer mark on his forehead. The constitution of 1971 declared the *shari'a* (Islamic law) the principal source of all legislation.

Al-Azhar responded zealously to the new religious drive by the regime. In 1973, it presented a draft law to parliament calling for the execution of apostates and enforcing the *hudūd* (punishment in Islamic law) system. However, this was unconvincing since the religious establishment had often been used for political ends.¹⁵ The Sheikh of al-Azhar, Abd al-Halim Mahmud, was obliged to issue a *fatwā* approving the Camp David agreement,¹⁶ an embarrassing reversal of previous Azharite sentiment.¹⁷ Al-Azhar's reluctant sanction of Sadat's personal status law of 1979, which deviated from the *shari'a*, was a strong reminder of the limits to al-Azhar's power against the state.

Al-Azhar's attitude towards the Islamists was ambiguous. Some Azharites saw the radical Islamists as Kharijites, i.e. motivated by politics rather than religion. At the same time, al-Azhar's statements that Egypt's rulers were not religious enough showed that they had sympathy with their aims.¹⁸ There was also a sense both on behalf of the state and the Islamists that al-Azhar was 'not a reliable institution capable of playing the role expected of it'.¹⁹ The state accused al-Azhar of being deficient in its duty²⁰ and the Islamists criticized al-Azhar for issuing *fatwās* that suited the state.²¹

By 1979, Islamic militancy had become a widespread phenomenon within Egypt, encouraged by the freedom that Sadat gave it. Not only did it provide consolation in the aftermath of the 1967 defeat,²² but it also promised to sweep away injustice and to erect a more caring order. It raised the cause of brotherhood at a time when the gap between rich and poor was increasing due to Sadat's *infitāh* policy. Many Islamist groups, previously cautious in their attacks on the regime, launched vehement attacks on Sadat's peace treaty with Israel.²³ The peace initiative soured the good relationship between the regime and the conciliatory wing of the Islamist movement,²⁴ whose attitudes towards it had hardened.²⁵ Sadat jailed many of his critics in the famous arrest wave of September 1981. Sadat, isolated and out of touch with his country,²⁶ had been unaware of the true strength of the Islamist opposition groups.²⁷ When he finally realized their potential danger in mid-1981, it was too late.²⁸ By that time they had become extremely powerful, possessing organizational infrastructures and support bases.

Khaled al-Islambouli was a member of the radical Islamist group *al-jihād*. Khaled assassinated Sadat, having thought of the plan only a few days earlier.²⁹ The group's plan for an Islamic revolution was unsuccessful. Thousands of *al-jihād* backers were arrested following the assassination. On 15 April 1982, the

five men directly responsible for the assassination were executed. It is arguably difficult to understand why the Islamists hated Sadat so deeply. The dominant explanation is that he did not pursue policies that either reflected the Egyptian religio-cultural value system or were responsive to popular socioeconomic needs.³⁰ The Egyptian population was not sad at his death. There were no lamenting throngs in the streets as there were when Nasser died.³¹

Under Sadat, relations between the state, al-Azhar and the Islamists did not conform to any fixed pattern. Al-Azhar had been undermined by both the Islamists and the state. The Islamists were firm in their belief that the *'ulamā'* were not playing the role that they should,³² a view shared by the state, which was increasingly dependent upon the support of al-Azhar for Islamic legitimacy. However, the very fact that the state had tied al-Azhar so closely to it had stopped it from playing this role, thereby undermining the institution's authority. The Islamists attributed much of what they found objectionable about al-Azhar to its lack of independence from the state.³³ Between the state and al-Azhar, there was an understanding that they were both vulnerable amid the growth of non-official Islamic groups. Al-Azhar's attitude towards political Islam was ambivalent: there were signs of sympathy and condemnation.

II. Political Islam

Sadat's assassins came from a broad-based popular and intellectual movement called political Islam, which seeks to institute Islamic rule. Political Islam is one of the most important strands of modern Islamic thought. It has become the standard by which many modern Islamic thinkers measure their ideas. The men behind the ideas of political Islam are not graduates from al-Azhar, but educated laymen outside its authority.

Hassan al-Banna (1906–1949) was the principal founder of political Islam. Al-Banna saw Islam as a polity: it constituted an all-embracing ideology for the individual, state and society.³⁴ He thought that religion and state should not be separate and wanted to restore the Muslim Community to its former greatness.³⁵ He stressed social justice and public morality³⁶ and called for a revival of the Islamic Caliphate and for the unity of the Islamic *umma*. For Banna, the principal enemy was political and cultural imperialism.³⁷ He worked to develop a populist movement and called for *da'wa* (missionary activity)³⁸ to re-appropriate Islam in its fullness, not by violence, but by peaceful political activism.

Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) is considered the most influential theoretician of political Islam, particularly in the Arab world but also elsewhere.³⁹ Qutb took Hassan al-Banna's thought onto a far more sophisticated, ideological, intolerant and exclusivist plane; the assassins of Sadat are his ideological heirs.⁴⁰ One of Qutb's main ideas that represents a significant departure from his predecessors, was the concept of *al-jāhiliyya*. *Al-jāhiliyya* stood for the immoral, polytheist society of pre-Islamic Arabia. Qutb used the concept of *al-jāhiliyya* to describe a state of being.⁴¹ Any individual, group or society that did not live according to Qutb's conception of Islam based on the

shari'a was part of *al-jāhiliyya*. This included those members of the Muslim world who did not live according to the *shari'a*.⁴² He argued that *al-jāhiliyya* was 'a destructive and corruptive force intent on eradicating the true Islamic path'.⁴³

Qutb polarized the world into *dār al-harb* (house of war), which was every system on earth, and *dār al-Islām* (house of Islam), which was Qutb and his followers. *Dār al-harb* was to be fought and destroyed, and a Muslim state based on the *shari'a* would be established in its place.⁴⁴ In his notions of *al-jāhiliyya* and *dār al-harb*, Qutb advocated the universalism of Islam: all other societies and systems would be taken over. For Qutb, Islam was a complete system.⁴⁵ The main purpose and message of the Koran was political and social, not just spiritual. This political and social order would liberate humanity from the yoke of secular statehood.⁴⁶ However, he had no clear vision or details about the true nature of this Islamic state. While Qutb did not openly say that Egypt's secular regime should be overthrown, his concept of *al-jāhiliyya* implied militancy. Qutb's vision of Islam was narrow and did not allow for the existence of competing visions.⁴⁷ His ideas were radical, and appealing, since they provided ideological tools for analysing the new regime.⁴⁸

Jihād

The concept of *jihād* is a complex one and often misunderstood. Linguistically *jihād* means 'to strive'. Some classical jurists saw *jihād* as a spiritual struggle to attain moral and religious perfection. This was the Sufi notion of a 'greater *jihād*' as spiritual warfare for the attainment of moral and religious perfection as opposed to the 'lesser (military) *jihād*'.⁴⁹ This interpretation has since then been widely adopted. However, the majority of classical jurists understood the obligation of *jihād* in a military sense.⁵⁰ It was expected that the Islamic state (*dār al-Islām*) would wage military *jihād* against the external non-Islamic communities (*dār al-harb*) so that the former would eventually embrace the whole universe.⁵¹ Since Islamic jurists condemned all non-*jihād* warfare (i.e. warfare among Muslims), Muslim jurists avoided the issue of intra-Muslim warfare, and thus Islamic law failed to address this topic.⁵²

Since the mid-nineteenth century, in response to political circumstances, a number of thinkers have sought to reconcile Islam with Western ways and find a defensive vision of *jihād*.⁵³ *Jihād* became a divine means to achieve liberation from colonial oppression.⁵⁴ The majority of the '*ulamā*' during the twentieth century adopted this defensive notion of *jihād*.⁵⁵ In recent times, a number of thinkers such as Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb have developed the notion of *jihād* as a means to spread their form of Islam within the Muslim world.⁵⁶ Since the majority of Muslims do not accept their brand of Islam, according to the arguments of Qutb, they constitute part of *al-jāhiliyya*. They are thus the internal enemy against which *jihād* must be fought.

Takfīr

Modern advocates of an internal military *jihād* face a doctrinal impediment, since fighting against other Muslims was traditionally considered forbidden. However, the notion of *takfīr*, which means to declare a Muslim a non-Muslim, and had not existed within previous thinking, began to be used among Islamists. Those deemed unbelievers are not only non-Muslims, but they are also apostates⁵⁷ and therefore deserve to be killed. Thus fighting them—and in the case of the ruler, rebelling against him—is allowed.

The notion of *takfīr* had sometimes been used to justify struggle against other Muslim principalities in classical Islam,⁵⁸ although in general it was disapproved of as a force for creating civil dissent. The Kharijites had first introduced the notion of *takfīr* into Islamic thought during the civil war of the seventh century. Pronouncing *takfīr* on rulers was rare since jurists argued that tyranny was preferable to anarchy.⁵⁹ The fourteenth-century Islamic jurist, Ibn Taymiyya, revived the notion of *takfīr*. The Mongols claimed themselves to be Muslims, but Ibn Taymiyya declared them non-Muslims because of their irreligious behaviour and their failure to enforce the *shari'a*, enabling him to declare *jihād* against them. He professed that a Sunni Muslim ceases to be one when he fails to keep—or in the case of a Muslim ruler apply—the *shari'a*.⁶⁰ While his ideas were potentially very radical, he was extremely reluctant to pronounce *takfīr* and would prescribe it only as a last resort.⁶¹ Ibn Taymiyya never challenged the legitimacy of any particular sultan.⁶²

In recent times, the concept of *takfīr* has been revived in theological and political debate in modern Islam in the Arab world. The origins of this development lie in Qutb's concept of *al-jāhiliyya*, in which he pronounced *takfīr* on Egyptian society. Influenced by Ibn Taymiyya,⁶³ he effectively stated that a ruler should not be obeyed unless he fully implements Islamic law. The concept of *takfīr* has become central to the ideology of a number of militant groups. Different Islamist groups apply *takfīr* to different groups of people: some to rulers and others to society at large. Not all Islamist groups advocate *takfīr*: some oppose it as a 'doctrinal deviation'.⁶⁴

The image of Pharaoh has become a means through which the Islamists pronounce *takfīr* on rulers. In the Koran, Pharaoh is a tyrant, the prototype of an unjust ruler who disregarded the commands of God. Qutb made Pharaonic rule the template for tyranny and implied that a courageous confrontation with tyrants was needed today.⁶⁵

The importance of *takfīr* in the ideology of these groups is linked to the fragmentation of religious authority, caused by the growth of competing groups claiming to speak for Islam.⁶⁶ This has in turn been caused by the growth of mass education in the Arab world, which has given Muslims direct access to religious texts.⁶⁷ *Takfīr* was also influenced by the treatment many Islamists received at the hands of their jailers. They became convinced that the society in which they lived had turned its back on Islamic beliefs.⁶⁸ The notion of *takfīr* is politically and psychologically important for these groups. It is useful for

sanctioning violence against other Muslims and state leaders.⁶⁹ Creating a simple and dichotomous world, it is extremely appealing for alienated followers. It enables them to de-legitimize others, thereby engendering in themselves a feeling of superiority.⁷⁰

Revolt against a ruler

The concept of *takfīr* has strong implications for revolt against a ruler. It marks a considerable break with classical Sunni political theory, which emphasized the importance of submission to the ruler.⁷¹ The '*ulamā*' generally accepted any Sunni political authority as long as it did not openly renege on the faith. This was because they feared the trauma of civil war of the type that tore the Islamic community apart in the seventh century. This does not mean that the '*ulamā*' failed to admonish rulers on specific deviations, but criticism stopped short of de-legitimization.

III. Al-jihād and *The Neglected Duty*

Al-jihād

The student Islamist Associations (*al-jamā'āt al-islāmiyya*), from which *al-jihād* evolved, grew and flourished in Egyptian university campuses during Sadat's rule. The *jamā'āt*'s ideas were anti-Western and anti-secular, and they were committed to the establishment of an Islamic state and the re-establishment of the Caliphate. Before 1977, the *jamā'āt* generally cooperated with the regime and presented a moderate exterior in appreciation for the freedom they had.⁷² Many of the members of the *jamā'āt* gave priority to *jihād* against external enemies.⁷³ However, within the *jamā'āt*, there were radical tendencies, which were influenced by the ideas of Qutb, especially his notion of *al-jāhiliyya*.⁷⁴ They stated that Islam was a complete and perfect system and that the right to legislate (*hākimiyya*) belongs only to God.⁷⁵ Governments that infringed this were illegitimate and undeserving of allegiance.⁷⁶ Some went so far as to proclaim Egypt the land of unbelief and legitimized *jihād* against those rulers of Muslim countries who abstained from applying the *shari'a*.⁷⁷

The *jamā'āt* became radicalized after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. They openly criticized peace with Israel.⁷⁸ They implied that Sadat had violated the *shari'a* and pictured him as the unbelieving tyrant, Pharaoh.⁷⁹ Opposition to Sadat and his peace with Israel spread among the people of Egypt. Mosque preachers criticized the regime⁸⁰ and the practice of denouncing unbelief on Muslims became increasingly common.⁸¹ The conclusion could be made that Sadat was an unbeliever and, therefore no longer a legitimate ruler, which arguably made an event like his assassination more probable. That there were few Egyptian mourners at Sadat's funeral is taken by some to mean that his death was endorsed by many of those within Egypt.⁸²

Despite the fact that the *jamā'āt* stepped up their verbal assault on the regime

after Camp David, no real action was proposed.⁸³ Subsequently, a number of militants split away from the *jamā'āt*. In 1979, *al-jihād* was formed under the leadership of Muhammad Abd al-Salam Faraj. It offered the prospect of rapid and violent action. *Al-jihād* was a medium-sized organization with a collective leadership.⁸⁴ Many of *al-jihād*'s recruits were students from the *jamā'āt*. They were predominantly from the lower middle classes, holding low-income jobs.⁸⁵ Most members were well educated,⁸⁶ and would normally be considered as ideal or model young Egyptians.⁸⁷ Abdel-Salam Faraj was the main ideologue of *al-jihād* and author of *The Neglected Duty*. Faraj was not an *'alim* but an electrician.

Twenty-four-year-old Khaled al-Islambouli had originally been a member of *al-jamā'āt al-islāmiyya* and later joined *al-jihād*. Khaled was a member of the Egyptian middle class. Khaled gave three reasons for killing Sadat: the existing laws in the country were not consistent with Islamic law, peace had been made with the Jews, and Muslim leaders had been arrested and persecuted.⁸⁸ While Khaled came up with the idea to kill the president, he would not have taken the initiative without the approval of the group's ideologue, Faraj, 'because he is more knowledgeable in matters of Islamic law than I am'.⁸⁹ The grievances of *al-jihād* as a whole were similar to Khaled's.⁹⁰ The group also expressed disappointment with al-Azhar. It was viewed as ineffective in dealing with the application of the *shari'a* and other issues because it was government controlled.⁹¹

The major objective of *al-jihād* was to overthrow the President and establish an Islamic state based on the *shari'a* by means of violent agitation and popular revolution. It had worked to infiltrate the military, security services and other government institutions in order to bring about this popular revolution,⁹² but there was no general plan for a seizure of the state.⁹³ While the external enemies were important,⁹⁴ *al-jihād* gave priority to the struggle against Muslim rulers. Only when the infidel regimes of Muslim countries were overthrown and replaced by 'true' Islamic states could *shari'a* rule be established.⁹⁵ The omnipotence of the state and the weakness of civil society meant that any action from within was impossible.⁹⁶ The source of *al-jihād*'s appeal seems to have been two-fold: ideological and socioeconomic. Its ideology 'was perceived by a segment of society to be explanatory of its own private suffering Hope was infused through a proposed course of action, the "*jihād*."⁹⁷ The group also provided its members with a number of services, such as finding jobs and lending money, which functioned as an 'effective control mechanism'.⁹⁸

The Neglected Duty (al-farīda al-ghā'iba)

The Neglected Duty was considered to be the group's manifesto. Before the assassination, the text was unknown outside *al-jihād*. When Faraj and the assassins were on trial, the text was produced in their defence, rendering it necessary for al-Azhar to refute it publicly. It was published in *al-ahrār* along with the Mufti of al-Azhar, Jad al-Haq's refutation of the text. This implied that

there was a 'large and widespread sympathy for the opinions expressed in *The Neglected Duty*'.⁹⁹

The Neglected Duty represents the most comprehensive exposition of the rationale for the idea that *jihād* should be waged against the internal enemy.¹⁰⁰ Its significance extends far beyond this one small radical group and Sadat's assassination.¹⁰¹ Its contents 'can provide a unique source for our knowledge of what many Muslims today really think and believe'.¹⁰² The text is also of great value since it is the only extended statement of the radical Muslim resurgence of the 1970s (since Qutb's work in the 1960s). How seriously the government took the role played by this work in the formation of *al-jihād* is illustrated by the fact that Faraj was put on trial with the assassins and was executed on 15 April 1982.¹⁰³

Establishment of an Islamic state and reintroduction of the Caliphate

The Neglected Duty calls for the establishment of an Islamic state based on the *shari'a*. All Muslims are obliged to exert themselves in order to achieve this aim, if necessary, by war. The establishment of the Islamic state will provide a 'territorial nucleus' from which the Caliphate will be re-established.¹⁰⁴ This will then lead to the expansion of the Islamic state, which will one day conquer 'all corners of the earth'.¹⁰⁵ The implication is that *dār al-Islām* (this new Islamic state) will wage war on *dār al-harb* (the rest of the world), echoing the expansionist ideas of the medieval Islamic community. Like most Islamists, Faraj does not specify what kind of Islamic state is to be established or what kind of system of government it is to have.

What is 'unbelief'?

Faraj focuses on defining who and who is not a Muslim in order to establish *al-jihād's* justification for assassination and armed uprising. Faraj states that unbelievers are not only non-Muslims but also those Muslims who do not adhere to the *shari'a*. Referring to the ideas of Ibn Taymiyya, Faraj states that an unbeliever is someone who disbelieves or does not adhere to any of the precepts of Islam even if he pronounces the Islamic confession of faith. This applies to all and any of the laws of Islam, including refusal to pay the *zakat*, adultery, gambling, or drinking wine.¹⁰⁶ For Faraj, the *Shari'a* is an indivisible whole.¹⁰⁷ By establishing what constitutes unbelief, Faraj is effectively pronouncing *takfīr* on fellow Muslims who do not adhere to the *Shari'a* and on Muslim rulers who do not apply it.

Unbelief in Egypt

Faraj alleges that unbelief has pervaded Egypt and that infidel rulers have made the laws there. However, Faraj does not classify all of Egypt as *dār al-harb*, but his criticism focuses on the rulers of Egypt.¹⁰⁸ He quotes the

following Koranic verse: 'Whosoever does not rule by what God sent down, those, they are the unbelievers' (5: 44).¹⁰⁹ He also refers to the famous jurist, Ibn Taymiyya, who declared the Mongols infidels because they ruled by a system of law other than Islamic law. According to Faraj, the rulers of this age, such as Sadat, are like the Mongols.¹¹⁰ These rulers, due to their violation of God's law, are in apostasy from Islam.¹¹¹ Faraj personally applies *takfir* to the ruler of Egypt, Sadat, by referring to him as Pharaoh.¹¹²

Unbelievers should be fought

Faraj argues that unbelievers have to be fought.¹¹³ He claims that the following Koranic verse, 'Then when the sacred months have slipped away, slay the polytheists wherever ye find them, seize them, beset them, lie in ambush for them everywhere' (9: 5), abrogates one hundred and forty previous verses that stressed making peace with unbelievers and 'enduring harm from them'.¹¹⁴ He states that all earlier verses did not command Muslims to fight non-believers because the community was not strong enough at that time.¹¹⁵ Faraj is thus advocating the practice of violence not only against non-Muslims, but against other Muslims who do not keep the *shari'a*. Qutb had stated that the world of *al-jāhiliyya* must be fought, but his advocacy of violence was more implicit than explicit. Faraj's ideas mark a radical departure from traditional Islamic doctrine, which was critical of the killing of fellow Muslims.¹¹⁶

Ibn Taymiyya analogy

As has been seen above, Faraj uses the works of Ibn Taymiyya to claim that the current rulers of Egypt are unbelievers. These works enabled Faraj to define the 'specific conditions under which rebellion could be justified in the framework of Sunni political theory'.¹¹⁷ However, Faraj's analogy between the Mongols and Sadat is arguably far-fetched due to the former's extreme irreligious behaviour. Ibn Taymiyya was probably ruling only on a special case and that ideas were not intended to have a universal application.¹¹⁸ However, the very fact that Ibn Taymiyya did not clearly state the boundaries of belief and unbelief provides the modern day Islamists with a very powerful legitimizing tool. The way in which Faraj used the writings of Ibn Taymiyya seems to have deeply impressed many Egyptian Muslims.¹¹⁹ Egyptian youth learned that: 'violence and seizure of power are justified by Islamic law and tradition'.¹²⁰

Revolt against a ruler

Calling Egypt's rulers unbelievers and stating that unbelievers should be fought implies military revolt against the state. Quoting the famous jurist Qadi Ayyad, Faraj states that a ruler who has been proved to be an unbeliever is not qualified to rule, and must be fought.¹²¹ Faraj also quotes Ibn Taymiyya referring to the Mongol rulers: 'any group that rebels against any single prescript of the clear

and reliably transmitted prescripts of Islam has to be fought'.¹²² This applies even to those who have pronounced the Islamic confession of faith. The implication is that Sadat has to be removed from power.

Military jihād

For Faraj, military *jihād* is the means by which the non-believing world will be fought and the Islamic state will be established. The true nature of *jihād* is militant and violent.¹²³ The Koran legitimizes and gives priority to this fighting form of *jihād*. Faraj turns the notion of military *jihād* against the external enemy to justify military *jihād* against the internal enemy.¹²⁴ Faraj specifically advocates the individual duty to wage military *jihād* against unbelieving rulers.¹²⁵ *Jihād* is presented as similar to other individual duties such as prayer and fasting,¹²⁶ in effect a sixth pillar. Faraj dismisses the idea that the battlefield of *jihād* today is the liberation of Jerusalem, stating that priority should be given to the enemy who is near over the enemy who is far. Fighting for the liberation of the holy land must be done under Islamic leadership since a victory without Islamic leadership would not benefit the interests of the Islamic state.¹²⁷

Faraj states that the '*ulamā*' have neglected the true *jihād*¹²⁸ since they have emphasized that *jihād* is spiritual and educational. He argues that military *jihād* was regarded during the time of the Prophet as far more important than the quest of knowledge since it produced success for the community and enabled it to grow and expand.¹²⁹ By advocating *jihād* as the primary means to establish an Islamic state, Faraj criticizes other methods such as forming political parties, propaganda and infiltrating the state to change it from within, since they involve subjugation to the state and could actually aid the state itself.¹³⁰ The overall substance of his message to other Islamist groups is that 'one cannot participate with impunity in a system controlled and manipulated by infidels'.¹³¹

Conclusion

Faraj's text is simplistic, populist and appealing and provided the justification for military action: the end (an Islamic state) justified the means (murder). Khaled al-Islambouli was directly drawing on the text when he made the decision to assassinate Sadat. The text is a powerful exposition of the modern development of the concept of *takfīr* giving primacy to the enemy within the Islamic state. *Takfīr* and *jihād*, strong ideological concepts in the current age,¹³² help create a dichotomous world, consisting of a mass of non-Muslims and a small community of 'true' Muslims. This created security and a sense of superiority among the group's followers. Faraj emphasized the more militant aspects of Qutb and departed from them by presenting a concrete solution. He examined what had been the weak point of Islamist thought since the time of Hassan al-Banna, the strategy for the seizure of power.¹³³ Faraj openly advocates violence to achieve

his aims, showing that there had been a shift within political Islam since the publication of Qutb's work.¹³⁴

Al-jihād, while extremist, was not tangential, and continued to maintain firm links with the *jamā'āt* after the assassination.¹³⁵ The *jamā'āt* represented a far greater body of followers, possibly reaching tens of thousands.¹³⁶ Jansen states that *The Neglected Duty* is the portrait of a mentality that exists and probably has existed for a long time in Egyptian society.¹³⁷ The very fact that the Sheikh of al-Azhar saw it necessary to produce a response to this is an indication of the potency of these ideas.

IV. Al-Azhar and its response to *The Neglected Duty*

Jad al-Haq and al-Azhar

Jad al-Haq was appointed Mufti (the highest religious dignitary) of Egypt in August 1978. The Mufti is responsible for issuing *fatwās*, or legal opinions, on a point of religious law. A *fatwā* is no more than an authoritative statement or form of guidance and is therefore non-binding and has no enforcement mechanism. Publishing a formal legal opinion in the shape of a *fatwā* is 'the method chosen to make al-Azhar's views known to the Muslim masses'.¹³⁸ The *fatwās* of the Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar resonate far beyond Egypt.

Subsequent to the writing of this *fatwā*, Haq was given the lifetime appointment of Sheikh of al-Azhar (Islam's highest authority in Egypt) in 1982, by implication an endorsement of his service to the state. This appointment gave him greater freedom and enabled him to establish a reputation for being ultra-conservative. He began to voice independent opinions, reflecting his desire to apply Islamic law, thereby causing some controversy between the Islamic establishment and the state leadership. Haq's conservatism by no means represents the whole of al-Azhar opinion. His *fatwā*, while representing the opinion of al-Azhar at that particular time, does not represent it definitively.

Fatwā of Jad al-Haq

Jad al-Haq's *fatwā* refuting the text of *The Neglected Duty* was published on 3 January 1982. The text had appeared in *al-ahrām* previous to this date. The early text was commissioned to aid the military court in its prosecution of *al-jihād*. This was because the court assumed that Faraj's thought summed up the creed of the assassins and that it required an answer in terms of Muslim law.¹³⁹ The *fatwā* included a text of *The Neglected Duty*, which was somewhat unusual, showing that from al-Azhar's perspective, the pamphlet required special refutation. The *fatwā* is one of the most significant statements of al-Azhar's stance on the key issues about the nature of belief and what it means to be a Muslim in modern society.

Islamic Law and the Caliphate

Haq supports the establishment of Islamic law, quoting the following Koranic verse: 'And whoever does not judge by what Allah revealed, they are the wrongdoers' (5:45).¹⁴⁰ He states that the Koran and the Sunna are the only authority for Islamic legislation and implies that they constitute a whole system.¹⁴¹ He also states that the law of Islam is 'worthier of being followed' than other law.¹⁴² However, Haq does not explicitly state that an Islamic state should be established. He also does not suggest any practical measures for how to apply Islamic law except 'to demand the application of the rules of God without omission by providing a good example and clear proof'.¹⁴³ While the Mufti implies that he sympathizes with the desire to make Egypt more Islamic, he states that man-made law, required by circumstances, must be tolerated for the present.¹⁴⁴

Haq disagrees with the re-establishment of the Caliphate, claiming that the Caliphate was not a religiously-stipulated institution, but a political and administrative construction of the early Islamic community.¹⁴⁵ While this may imply that he accepts the nation state, there are also indications that Haq supports some form of pan-Islamic system where Muslims form one political unity by stating that when Muslims are unified again 'it is their duty to have one ruler'.¹⁴⁶

What is 'unbelief'?

Haq rejects Faraj's arguments about unbelief since what constitutes unbelief is an essential determination of the unity of the community. He states that belief is giving 'heart-felt credence' to God, the Prophet and his revelation.¹⁴⁷ A person who gives witness that there is no God but God and believes in the Prophet and in his revelation is a Muslim.¹⁴⁸ A Muslim does not become an unbeliever on account of any sin apart from not believing in God. When a Muslim commits a crime that is contrary to a text in the Koran or the Sunna, he is 'only rebellious and sinful'.¹⁴⁹ Haq states that Muslims should not call others unbelievers since they are unable to judge: 'And who has the right to judge about that even though he is a legal man?'.¹⁵⁰ Haq denigrates *al-jihād* by comparing its members to the Kharijites.¹⁵¹ The latter also regarded every Muslim who ever committed a sin not only as an unbeliever, but also as an apostate who had to be killed.

Although Haq seems to oppose Faraj's ideas on unbelief, there is some ambiguity in Haq's arguments. Haq states that unbelief is 'rejecting' the Prophet and his revelation. However, the distinction between 'rejection' and 'non-adherence to' is an extremely fine one. In addition, having claimed that belief only involves giving credence to God, his Prophet and the revelation, and that other deeds are only sins, he goes on to state that 'hypocrisy' and 'resistance' are also forms of unbelief.¹⁵² Again the definition of 'resistance to' and 'hypocrisy' is unclear. Where does the line between them and rejection lie? The Mufti also states that Islam is a religion of action, implying that saying that you believe is not enough: 'Islam is doing and saying and not just saying'.¹⁵³

This leaves it unclear as to where those, who declare that they believe in God and his Prophet but do not actually live according to Islamic law, stand. While he criticizes the Islamists for judging about unbelief, he implies that the '*ulamā*', due to their knowledge of the religious texts, are able to judge whether a Muslim is an unbeliever or not.¹⁵⁴ This in itself implies that the decision is more complex.

Haq's reasoning about the subject of unbelief may appear extremely ambiguous and unclear. However, Haq's writing on these issues is in the mainstream of tradition. Islamic jurists have always debated these issues, which remain unresolved to this day. Haq is probably aware he is not totally logical, but is concerned to refute *The Neglected Duty*'s use of *takfīr* in order to preserve the unity of the Muslim community.

Unbelief in Egypt

Haq denies that unbelief has pervaded Egypt. Egypt is an Islamic country: people pray and mosques are open. Although not all the laws of Islam are adhered to, it is still a Muslim state full of Muslim people.¹⁵⁵ All people would admit that the rule of God is worthier of being followed than other law.¹⁵⁶ Haq shows that *The Neglected Duty*'s analogy between the Mongols and the ruling classes of Egypt is far-fetched: the behaviour of the Mongols was so irreligious as to render any comparison absurd. They did not carry out any religious obligations and, therefore, it is clear that they were unbelievers and not Muslims.¹⁵⁷

Haq's argument is arguably confusing. He claims that no man can judge disbelief in another, and yet he judges the Mongols to be unbelievers. In addition, he claims that disbelief is simply denying God and his revelation. However, by calling the Mongols unbelievers, he implies that there are certain acts beyond believing in God and his revelation by which a Muslim renders himself an unbeliever. More importantly, he does not address Ibn Taymiyya's claim that a professed Sunni Muslim ceases to be one when he fails to keep the *shari'a*. However, by presenting his answer in such a way, Haq is upholding the temporal authority of the '*ulamā*'. The implication is that although only God can know what is in a Muslim's heart, the '*ulamā*' still have a responsibility to provide direction and guidance. This affirmation of the authority of the '*ulamā*' is a repudiation of the Islamists' self-ascribed authority.

Should unbelievers be fought?

The Neglected Duty justified the use of violence against non-believers, including Muslims denounced as un-believers, using a Koranic verse; 'Then when the sacred months have slipped away, slay the polytheists wherever ye find them, seize them, beset them, lie in ambush for them everywhere' (9: 5). Haq uses the context of the verse to invalidate this interpretation. Haq states that rather than

referring to unbelievers in general, the verse concerns only the Arab polytheists who had broken a treaty they had made with the Prophet.¹⁵⁸ By historically contextualizing the verse, Haq suggests that it cannot be used in a general sense to apply to all non-Muslims.

Haq quotes the Koran¹⁵⁹ to argue that peaceful cooperation with non-Muslims is completely legal and is a fundamental principle in Islam.¹⁶⁰ Haq thus shows that Faraj's interpretation of the verse is a radical distortion of the true nature of the Koran,¹⁶¹ while he argues that his own contextual interpretation is one that corresponds with the spirit of the Koran. In addition, he shows that distorting the verse further to apply to Muslims is even more absurd: 'So how, with this, is it permissible to kill a Muslim who prays, gives to charity and recites the Koran in the name of the verse of the sword?'.¹⁶²

Revolt against a ruler

According to Faraj, a ruler who does not rule by the Koranic precepts is an unbeliever and must be fought and deposed: 'Whoever does not judge by what Allah revealed, they are the unbelievers' (5: 44).¹⁶³ Haq turns to linguistics to prove that Faraj has misinterpreted the verse. He states that, according to linguists, the 'what' in 'by what God revealed' does not mean 'everything' but means 'one thing'. Thus, the verse implies that it is only a ruler who does not rule according to *anything at all* that God revealed who is an unbeliever¹⁶⁴ and only in this case is he not worthy of obedience.¹⁶⁵ Haq then offers an alternative explanation for this verse, which weakens his previous argument. He tries to explain the verse contextually by stating that the phrase 'what God sent down', means the Torah and not the Koran, thus concluding that the verses 'were intended for the Jews' and therefore, are not applicable to Muslims.¹⁶⁶

Haq proceeds to show that Faraj's interpretation of the verse contradicts the Koran and the Sunna. He uses *hadiths* to show that Islam does not allow a Muslim to expel a ruler and kill him as long as he is a Muslim, even if he undertakes prayer only.¹⁶⁷ Formal acceptance of prayer is sufficient to render a Muslim ruler legitimate. Although Haq states that it is wrong to declare a ruler an unbeliever on account of not applying the *shari'a*, he does not advocate total submission to a wrongdoing ruler:

He installed Princes among you and you will have experience [of their evil] and there will be some whom you will reject. Whosoever does not like [them] he is innocent and whosoever rejects [them] he will be saved, but whosoever is content to follow [them is in deep trouble].¹⁶⁸

When a ruler contradicts Islam, it is the duty of Muslims to take charge of him and give him advice and 'true and straight exhortation'.¹⁶⁹ Haq does not define the grounds upon which Muslims should go further than exhortation and make a stand against the ruler.

Nature of jihād

Having disagreed with *The Neglected Duty*'s use of *takfīr* on other Muslims and thus his notion of internal *jihād*, Haq refutes *The Neglected Duty*'s claim that the primary *jihād* is the fighting form of *jihād*. He does this by trying to disprove the commonly held notion that Islam was spread through military *jihād*. Haq states that the conclusion that Islam was spread by the sword contradicts the true nature of the Koran. Haq defines this true nature of the Koran as being expressed in such Koranic verses as: 'Wilt thou compel mankind against their will to believe?'¹⁷⁰ (10: 99) and 'There is no compulsion in religion' (2: 256).¹⁷¹ He states that Muhammad could not possibly have differed with the Koran, and therefore, could not have impelled anyone through military *jihād*.¹⁷²

Haq does acknowledge that military *jihād* was waged during the time of the Prophet, but states that it was only waged against those polytheists who wanted to destroy the Prophet,¹⁷³ thereby showing that *jihād* was primarily defensive. However, he weakens this claim by acknowledging that *jihād* by fighting was an individual obligation (*fard 'ayn*) on every Muslim during the time of the Prophet in order to promote Islam.¹⁷⁴ The doctrine of *jihād* as an individual duty is common to the Islamist radical agenda, since individual duties prevail over collective duties. Classical scholars generally agreed that *jihād* was a collective duty except when Muslim lands were attacked in which case it became an individual duty.

According to Haq, the only viable form of military *jihād* today is defensive. Military *jihād* in modern times is solely the duty of the army to defend the territorial integrity of the state against outside enemies.¹⁷⁵ Military *jihād* should only be directed against those who are aggressive and it becomes an individual duty on every Muslim only when a country of Muslims is occupied by another state.¹⁷⁶ However, he does not proceed to discuss the issue of defensive *jihād* with reference to present conditions. He does not refer to peace with Israel, which was one of the reasons why Sadat was assassinated. Al-Azhar and the Egyptian population found the subject of Israel very difficult. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, the '*ulamā*' were firmly opposed to any agreement with Israel.¹⁷⁷ However, Haq's predecessor, Abdul Halim Mahmud, declared his support for the Camp David accords, arguing that peace was legitimate if it was in the interests of Muslims.¹⁷⁸ The tension within al-Azhar concerning the subject of Israel reflects a conflict between al-Azhar's sense of loyalty to the interests of the nation state and to those of the Muslim community. Haq's failure to mention Israel indicates that he might have disagreed with Mahmud's opinion.¹⁷⁹

Having limited the use of the fighting form of *jihād* to defensive purposes, Haq emphasizes the importance of peaceful *jihād*. Quoting a *hadīth*, Haq tries to prove that *jihād* as learning is superior to *jihād* as fighting.¹⁸⁰ He claims that, in the early days of Islam, the Prophet remained in Medina for many years teaching those around him before he went on to fight and conquer.¹⁸¹

This argument is very weak, since the Muslim community did not fight at that time because it was not strong enough.

The motivations and methods of al-jihād

By comparing *al-jihād* to the Kharijites, Haq accuses *The Neglected Duty* of being motivated by political rather than religious concerns. He states that the Kharijites interpreted Koranic verses 'according to what suited their purposes and desires with the aim of causing civil war'.¹⁸² Haq also implies that the followers of *al-jihād* are not part of Islam and that their ideas are alien to it, because 'religion cannot be distorted, only someone can deviate from it, and whoever is a religious radical, he has deviated from the religion'. He shows that extremism is not part of Islam by quoting the Prophet, who chastised those who are extreme in their piety.¹⁸³

Throughout the *fatwā*, Haq makes constant references to his knowledge and to Faraj's lack of knowledge.¹⁸⁴ The implication is that Faraj's deficiency in classical Arabic makes him ill equipped to interpret the Koran. Lack of religious knowledge has made people such as Faraj impose distorting meanings on the text of the Koran and the Sunna.¹⁸⁵ Haq claims that the Islamists disregard knowledge, and that by inciting youth to abstain from their studies, they are encouraging 'illiteracy and primitiveness'.¹⁸⁶

Haq proceeds to criticize *The Neglected Duty's* methods of textual analysis. Haq criticizes Faraj for examining specific parts of the Koran, rather than examining it as a whole.¹⁸⁷ He states that every verse occurs in a context, and criticizes Faraj for ignoring the context of certain verses and *hadīths*.¹⁸⁸ He thus dismisses the interpretations of Faraj as too narrow and literal for a correct understanding of the deeper meanings of the traditional texts.¹⁸⁹ Haq criticizes Faraj for making judgements about unbelief when he does not even know what it is. The '*ulamā*', who have sufficient religious knowledge, have the right to determine unbelief: 'for piety is for Muslims as a whole, but the religion and decreeing its precepts and what is lawful and what is forbidden are for the people who are specialized in it'.¹⁹⁰

V. Conclusion

The *fatwā* of the Grand Mufti of al-Azhar is a public statement that shows support for the government and criticizes the assassination of Sadat. However, it goes beyond that and marks the point at which the '*ulamā*' decided to give up 'a long standing policy of ignoring the militants'.¹⁹¹ Previous to this *fatwā*, no serious effort had been made by al-Azhar to tackle such issues as *takfīr* and *jihād*.¹⁹²

On one level, the *fatwā* is a clear attempt to support the state and condemn the ideas of *al-jihād*. Haq's rejection of *takfīr* and of internal violent *jihād* shows that he, like his predecessors, was concerned with preserving the unity of the Muslim community. Haq's condemnation of revolt against a ruler who has

nominally performed the prayer ceremonies shows his support for the state and his concern for political stability. Haq's opinion corresponds with traditional Sunni political theory, which did not readily accept the right to revolt.

However, Haq also shows that he sympathizes with some of the aims of the Islamists since he eventually wants Islamic law to be applied. In addition, while Haq does not agree with the Islamists' conception of *takfīr*, he does not completely condemn it. Departing from classical Islam, Haq implies that experts in Islamic law can make judgements about a Muslim's belief. There are also further indications that he sympathizes with the Islamists: Haq fails to make specific reference to Sadat himself. While Haq might have disapproved of revolt and assassination, it is likely that he sympathized with the Islamists' dislike of the ruler. Immediately after the assassination, al-Azhar did not respond with any formal announcement of the event or any condolences.¹⁹³ Haq also does not advocate total submission to a ruler, but a kind of contract in which the ruled should advise rulers and should take a stand against them if they are immoral. In addition, Haq fails to use the opportunity given by this *fatwā* to make a broader, more direct criticism of political Islam. He does not argue against the whole phenomenon, but concentrates on *al-jihād* and on the issue of revolt and assassination, issues that are easier for him to refute.

While Haq's lack of a broader reaction to political Islam could result from his sympathy for the phenomenon, it could also show that he feels threatened by it and feels unable to confront it. Haq is defensive on the issue of religious knowledge and is keen to prove his own, showing that the '*ulamā*' are afraid of losing their authority to independent grassroots religious groups. Haq's *fatwā* is, therefore, both a statement that shows support for the state, and one that shows possible sympathies with the Islamists. Beyond this, there is a great deal of ambiguity in the text and a number of issues are left unexplored. Haq gives no concrete suggestions for how the *shari'a* should be applied. While he implies that citizens should advise and take a stand against bad rulers, he is vague as to what form this should take. In addition, from the perspective of a Western scholar, some of Haq's analysis and arguments are not clear and contain inconsistencies.

Al-Azhar's ideological response to *al-jihād* might well be seen as confusing. It indicates the complexity of the problem that al-Azhar faces in formulating this response. There is an inherent difficulty in answering a political tract with the finer points of philosophy and in reconciling Islamic law with the modern day nation state. However, Haq's response is more a sign of his flexibility and pragmatism than it is of confusion. As regards *jihād* and unbelief, Haq knows that there is an intractable and continuing problem. By not making any concrete suggestions, Haq is advising Muslims to avoid the political implications that arise from too logical an interpretation of these issues. He implies that an Islamic state will one day be created, but for the present Muslims have to be patient.

Understanding the formulation of an ideologically multi-layered response lies in looking at al-Azhar's structural role as the interpretative class. Al-Azhar has a heritage as the representative of official Islam that goes back centuries.

It sees itself as the guardian of traditional doctrine and of the traditional way of studying texts and approaching theological and political issues. Al-Azhar's role as custodian of this heritage and tradition is central to its vision of itself. This role as the representative of official Islam goes together with its continued close and inter-dependent relationship with the state. Al-Azhar, while being dependent upon the state, is also depended upon by the state. The *'ulamā'* were extremely important for the Sadat/Mubarak regime due to the latter's lack of popularity and legitimacy. This vulnerability meant that it needed to rely on the Islamic scholars to de-legitimize its Muslim opponents.

This underlines the inherent strengths and weaknesses in al-Azhar's role as official ideological mediator. From one perspective, al-Azhar's dependence on the state made it difficult for it to suggest any action that might be taken as inciting change. It meant al-Azhar has had to combine the practical needs of the Egyptian state, which is based mainly on secular law, with its own desire to apply Islamic law. In this situation, pragmatism and compromise is necessary. Striking the balance between al-Azhar's two roles—that of the guardian of Islam and that of a state institution—was not easy and has led to some incongruity in its response. At the same time however, the state's reliance on al-Azhar for legitimizing purposes has given the *'ulamā'* a stake in this system, which was enhanced by an understanding of Islamist concerns. Thus al-Azhar's flexible ideological response works to its advantage by perpetuating its position as official ideological mediator.

Having said that, it is clear that al-Azhar faces a dilemma and is torn between its own conservatism and the secular direction of the state. This dilemma is enhanced by the demands of the Islamists whose competing religious discourse has grown to challenge al-Azhar's legitimacy as the representative of official Islam. The Islamists offer motivating political ideologies and advocate simplistic answers to political situations and dilemmas. Being opposition groups, they can afford to communicate on such a level. They advocate a blueprint for action in order to establish an Islamic state, seen as a solution to the ills of society. Al-Azhar and the Islamists are functioning and communicating on different levels, both claiming to speak for Islam. While it would be a mistake to underestimate al-Azhar's continued authority,¹⁹⁴ there is no doubt that Islamist groups pose a significant threat to the power, authority and legitimacy of official Islam.

The dilemma al-Azhar is facing is relatively new and it has only just begun to respond. While the *fatwā* is difficult and unclear, it does go some way towards stating al-Azhar's position on the central subject of unbelief and what makes a Muslim a Muslim. The *fatwā* tries to strike a difficult balance between two extremes: a politically dangerous situation in which any Muslim can judge and, therefore, de-legitimize another and a situation in which disrespect for Islamic law is tolerated. In trying to strike this balance, Haq advocates individual *jihād* for Muslims to advise their rulers and improve themselves, while the *'ulamā'* still retain for themselves the right to make judgements about unbelief and sin. Haq's *fatwā* marked the beginning of al-Azhar's response

to the phenomenon of political Islam. Its response is incomplete and raises many questions as to what al-Azhar's role is and will continue to be in the modern Egyptian state.

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