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## Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb and Wahhābism

The state of Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb [Sa‘ūdī Arabia] arose only by *jihād*. The state of the Ṭālibān in Afghanistan arose only by *jihād*. The Islamic state in Chechnya arose only by *jihād*. It is true that these attempts were not perfect and did not fill the full role required, but incremental progress is a known universal principle. Yesterday, we did not dream of a state; today we established states and they fall. Tomorrow, Allāh willing, a state will arise and will not fall...

Abū ‘Abdallah Al-Sa’dī, al-Qaeda’s *Voice of Jihād* Magazine, Issue No. 9: Memri Special Dispatch 650, 27 January 2004

Few figures in the history of Islām have attracted such controversy as Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (c. 1115/1703–1206/1791).<sup>1</sup> For some American authors, particularly those writing in the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001, the legacy of Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb is entirely negative. The majority of the suicide bombers involved in the attack on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon were of Sa‘ūdī origin. The Sa‘ūdī state is inextricably linked with Wahhābism. Therefore the evil of 11 September 2001 is attributed to the Wahhābī tradition and even to the views of Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb himself (though there is no necessary congruence between the ideas of the founder of a movement and his successors). For Stephen Schwarz, himself a Ṣūfī, anything of Ṣūfī origin is automatically acceptable (even though historically Ṣūfīs, too, have led ‘*jihāds* of the sword’: see Chapter 7). He talks of ‘Wahhābī obscurantism and its totalitarian state’, ‘fundamentalist fanaticism’ as well as describing it as ‘Islamofascism’.<sup>2</sup> Muslims from other traditions denounce Wahhābīs because they call themselves ‘the asserters of the divine unity’, thus laying exclusive claim to the principle of monotheism (*tawḥīd*) which is the foundation of Islām itself. This implies a dismissal of all other Muslims as tainted by polytheism (*shirk*). Thus Hamid

Algar, Khomeini’s official biographer, argues that Wahhābism is ‘intellectually marginal’, with ‘no genetic connection’ with movements that subsequently arose in the Muslim world. In his judgement, it should be viewed as ‘an exception, an aberration or at best an anomaly’.<sup>3</sup>

In the most recent discussion of Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s views, and the first full analysis of his writings which have not received scholarly analysis to date, Natana DeLong Bas takes a more measured view. In her judgement, Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ‘taught a more balanced perspective involving the need for the Muslim to express both correct belief (orthodoxy) and correct practice (orthopraxy)’. He defined *tawḥīd* ‘as a broad concept encompassing the requirement of recognizing God alone as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and recognizing God’s uniqueness’. *Shirk* comprised ‘any word or deed that would violate either monotheism or God’s uniqueness’. It is true that he thought that the practices of Shī‘a and Ṣūfīs constituted *shirk* ‘and thus could not be considered true Islamic practices’, but he ‘did not exclude such people as unbelievers (*kuffār*) who were outside Islām, although he did consider them in error and in need of correction’. According to Natana DeLong Bas, Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb emphasized educational means (dialogue, discussion and debate) rather than ‘conversions of the sword’ as the means of spreading the faith. *Jihād*, in his view, was defensive in nature and did not glorify martyrdom. He did not consider that it should be allowed to descend into a tool for state consolidation (a criticism of the Ottoman use of *jihād*). Its main aim was to win adherents to the faith,<sup>4</sup> not to be a tool for aggression. Thus, his teachings stand in marked contrast to contemporary radical Islamists, most notably Osama bin Laden. If bin Laden is considered a Wahhābī, then ‘at the dawn of the twenty-first century, it is clear that there is more than one type of Wahhābī Islām’.<sup>5</sup>

### **Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s teaching and the practice of *jihād* in his lifetime**

Natana DeLong Bas does not deny Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s ‘puritan’ tendencies, therefore, or the fact that he considered his version of Islām as the only one that was ‘true’; what is at issue is whether he espoused violence to achieve his objectives in his lifetime. (If his followers chose to espouse violence after his death, this is another matter. It might be considered that they had misinterpreted the teachings of the father figure of the tradition.)<sup>6</sup> Since Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s teaching was concerned with eradicating polytheism (*shirk*), it might have been expected that he would lay heavy emphasis in his writings on forbidding wrong. Surprisingly, according to Michael Cook, he did not. The two most prominent occasions when he referred to this duty were in a letter to his followers at Sudayr and in a discussion of the duties of scholars. To his followers he said that it was important to perform the duty with tact. If the offender was a ruler (*amīr*), it was

important not to criticize him in public. Minimizing the demands of the duty did not, in Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s view, damage the integrity of the mission. In the second case, in earlier times scholars had carried out their duty of commanding right and forbidding wrong, pitting themselves against heresy. The struggle against polytheism was of a different, and more fundamental kind.<sup>7</sup>

Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb made it clear that it was the responsibility of every individual to engage in direct, personal, study of the Qur’ān and the *ḥadīth*. He cautioned against using unclear Qur’ānic passages to justify conflict with other Muslims, as the Khārijīs<sup>8</sup> and Mu’tazilites had done. True authority over the community, in his view, was based on a shared faith in God and a brotherhood of all believers. He eschewed the cult of the personality: education was to be progressive, with violence a means of last resort.<sup>9</sup> Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb was heavily influenced by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), founder of the Ḥanbalī school of law, as reinterpreted by Ibn Taymīyah (661/1268–728/1328). From Ibn Taymīyah he gained the view that it was polytheism (*shirk*) to introduce the name of a prophet, saint or angel into a prayer (indeed, it was *shirk* to seek intercession from any but Allāh); but Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb seems to have been unaware of the dialogue between Ibn Taymīyah and a prominent Ṣūfī of his time on this issue:<sup>10</sup>

*Ibn ‘Ata’ Allāh:* Surely, my dear colleague, you know that *istighāthah* or calling for help is the same as *tawassul* or seeking a means and asking for intercession (*shafā‘ah*); and that the Messenger, on him be peace, is the one whose help is sought since he is our means and he the one whose intercession we seek.

*Ibn Taymīyah:* In this matter, I follow what the Prophet’s *Sunnah* has laid down in the *Shari‘ah*. For it has been transmitted in a sound *ḥadīth*: ‘I have been granted the power of intercession’ [al-Bukhārī and Muslim, *ḥadīth* of Jābir: ‘I have been given five things which no prophet was given before me...’] I have also collected the sayings on the Qur’ānic verse: ‘It may be that thy Lord will raise thee (O Prophet) to a praised estate’ (Q.17:79) to the effect that the ‘praised estate’ is intercession... As for seeking the help of someone other than Allāh, it smacks of idolatry.

*Ibn ‘Ata’ Allāh:* With regard to your understanding of *istighāthah* as... seeking the aid of someone other than Allāh which is idolatry, I ask you: is there any Muslim possessed of real faith and believing in Allāh and His Prophet who thinks there is someone other than Allāh who has autonomous power over events and who is able to carry out what He has willed with regard to them? Is there any true believer who believes that there is someone who can reward him for his good deeds and punish him for his bad ones other than Allāh? Besides this, we must consider that there are expressions which should not be taken just in their literal sense. This is not because of fear of associating a partner with Allāh and in order to block the means to idolatry. For whoever

seeks help from the Prophet only seeks his power of intercession with Allāh as when you yourself say: 'this food satisfies my appetite'. Does the food itself satisfy your appetite? Or is it the case that it is Allāh who satisfies your appetite through the food?

As for your statement that Allāh has forbidden Muslims to call upon anyone other than Himself in seeking help, have you actually seen any Muslim calling on someone other than Allāh? The verse you cite from the Qur'ān was revealed concerning the idolaters and those who used to call on their false gods and ignore Allāh. Whereas, the only way Muslims seek the help of the Prophet is in the sense of *tawassul* or seeking a means, by virtue of the privilege he has received from Allāh... or seeking intercession, by virtue of the power of intercession which Allāh has bestowed on him.

As for your pronouncement that *istiḡāthah* or seeking help is forbidden in the *Shari'ah* because it can lead to idolatry, if this is the case, then we ought also to prohibit grapes because they are means to making wine, and to castrate unmarried men because not to do so leaves in the world a means to commit fornication and adultery...<sup>11</sup>

Apart from intercessory prayer, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's main doctrinal differences with other Muslims were to assert that all objects of worship other than Allāh were false, and that those who worshipped such were deserving of death; the bulk of mankind were not monotheists, since they sought to win God's favour by visiting the tombs of saints; it was *shirk* to make vows to any other being; it involved unbelief (*kufr*) to profess knowledge not based on the Qur'ān, the *Sunnah* or the necessary inferences of reason; it involved unbelief and heresy (*ilhād*) to deny the Divine initiative (*qadar*: 'due measure and proportion': Q.54:49) in all acts; finally that it was unbelief to interpret the Qur'ān in the light of hermeneutics (*ta'wīl*). Additionally, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's system is said to have departed from that of Ibn Ḥanbal in making attendance at public prayers (*ṣalāt*) obligatory; in forbidding the smoking of tobacco, the shaving of the beard and the use of abusive language; in making alms (*zakāt*) payable on secret profits; and in stressing that the mere utterance of the Islamic creed was insufficient to make a man a true believer.<sup>12</sup>

Three points are worthy of comment here. The first is that the utterance of the creed had always previously been taken as evidence of conversion in *jihād*, except, that is, by Ibn Taymīyah. The second is with regard to Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's rejection of interpretation and heremeneutics. Hamid Algar argues<sup>13</sup>

...to imagine that the meanings and applications of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* are accessible, in any substantial and usable fashion, by disregarding the virtual entirety of post-revelatory Islamic tradition, is unrealistic. It is equally illusory to suppose that either individual or society is a blank space on which the

Qur'ān and *Sunnah* can be authentically imprinted without admixture from either historical or contemporary circumstance.

This is precisely the clash of views, in contemporary Christianity, between the established churches and the independent (or so-called 'free') evangelical churches, with their primacy on the Word and their rejection of tradition and interpretation.

The third point concerns the visiting of tombs of saints and intercession using the name of a prophet, saint or angel. Here there was a danger that Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's viewpoint not only ignored practices which were enshrined in tradition, consensus and *ḥadīth* but also confused means and ends: it is not the case that what is sought from God through the intercession or by means of a person, living or dead, is actually sought from that person, to the exclusion of the divine will, mercy and generosity.<sup>14</sup> Here, perhaps, a comparison between the Catholic tradition in Christianity and the viewpoint of the Protestant reformers, who were virulently opposed to intercession by the saints, is instructive. Notwithstanding the very great divisions with Christianity over the last 500 years or so, a diversity or plurality of traditions is now recognized as the consequence of different types of spirituality and different theological emphases – though Protestant iconoclasm brought about permanent and damaging change to many churches and religious monuments, much as Wahhābī influence has done.<sup>15</sup>

It became increasingly clear to Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb that, in spite of his clear preference for missionary work (*da'wah*) as the means of gaining adherents, 'mere persuasion unaided by political power might prove effective in the case of an individual, but it was difficult to bring about any radical change in a people's outlook without the backing of a political force'.<sup>16</sup> He therefore looked to an alliance with Muḥammad Ibn Sa'ūd (d. 1179/1765), the chief of Dir'iyya, one of the larger Najdī<sup>17</sup> oases. This agreement was struck in 1157/1744: 'you (Ibn Sa'ūd) will perform *jihād* against the unbelievers. In return you will be *imām*, leader of the Muslim community and I [Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb] will be leader in religious matters.'<sup>18</sup> 'The alliance was based, as it still is,' wrote Ameen Rihani in 1346/1928, 'upon the sword of Ibn Sa'ūd and the faith of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb.' In the same year (1157/1744) as the treaty,<sup>19</sup> or perhaps somewhat later,<sup>20</sup> the alliance declared *jihād* against polytheism, that is against all who did not share its understanding of *tawḥīd*; the movement was also directed politically against the control of the shaykh of Riyāḍ, Dahhām bin Dawwās.

The *jihād* was to last 30 years<sup>21</sup> until 1187/1773, when Riyāḍ was captured. The essence of Wahhābism, Michael Cook writes,<sup>22</sup>

was to pit against polytheism a political dominance created by military force. In principle this... could be seen as an instance of forbidding wrong... [but] it was simpler and more effective to identify the militant monotheism of the Wahhābīs

as holy war against the infidel. It was by bringing the frontier between Islām and polytheism back into the centre of the supposedly Muslim world that Wahhābism contrived to be a doctrine of state-formation and conquest.

There seems to have been a contradiction between theory and practice during the *jihād* of the first Wahhābī state. Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s depiction of *jihād* was intended to set it apart from pre-Islamic practices, especially raiding.<sup>23</sup> Intent was to be the critical motivating factor in undertaking *jihād*: piety and devotion to God ensured that the ultimate purpose of *jihād* was not to eliminate the enemy by the sword, but to persuade him to submit to Islām. Those captured had the choice of submitting to the Muslim authority and paying the *jizya* or death.<sup>24</sup> Following Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb considered it preferable to keep women and children captive so that they became Muslims themselves, rather than to ransom them to the enemy. While the *amīr* was the political and military leader of the *jihād* expedition, the *imām* was responsible for issuing the call to *jihād*, ensuring the spiritual guidance to Muslims during the campaign, and also the preservation of life and property. (Thus, for example, the beheading of enemies or the amputation of hands and feet were prohibited.)<sup>25</sup>

According to a letter from Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb to the people of Qaṣīm, in effect an early Wahhābī creed, he asserted:<sup>26</sup>

...I am a *Walī* of the Prophet’s companions: I mention their good qualities, seek [Allāh’s] forgiveness for them, refrain from mentioning their shortcomings, stay idle regarding what happened between them and believe in their virtues...

I assert that *jihād* will always be valid under the *Imām*’s leadership, whether [he is] righteous or sinner; praying behind [sinner] *imāms* is also permissible.

As for *jihād*, it will always be performed and valid from the time that Allāh sent Muḥammad... until the last of this *ummaḥ* fights the [false Messiah (*Dajjāl*)].

*Jihād* cannot be stopped by the injustice of the unjust or even the fairness of those who are just.

I believe that hearing and obeying Muslim rulers is [mandatory (*wājib*)], whether they are righteous or sinners, as long as they do not enjoin Allāh’s disobedience.

And he who becomes the Caliph and the people take him as such and agree to his leadership, or if he overpowers them by the word to capture the *Khilāfah* [until he captures it], then obedience to him becomes a necessity and rising against him becomes *ḥarām*.

I believe that people of *bid‘ah* should be boycotted and shunned until they repent.

I judge people of *bid'ah* according to their outward conduct and refer knowledge of their inward [state of faith] to Allāh...

Widespread killing prevented the ultimate purpose of *jihād* – conversion, according to Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb,<sup>27</sup> unlike most previous commentators and jurists – from being accomplished. Nor was there licence to take whatever property was seized or to engage in the deliberate destruction of property, the killing of animals or the razing of crops. Minerals or treasure found buried in the earth – the current Sa‘ūdī regime of petrodollars, beware! – were, according to Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, to become the collective property of Muslims.<sup>28</sup> He argued that the spoils of war were also collective property and, affirming the preservation of human life as the guiding principle, prohibited any ‘cult of martyrdom’. Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb denied any requirement for a period of migration or exile in the wilderness (*hijrah*) as a precondition for adherence to the movement: what was needed was an end to disbelief and the cessation of fighting against the forces of monotheism.<sup>29</sup>

Though influenced by Ibn Taymīyah, Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb differed from him in two important respects. The first was in the extent to which non-combatants might be drawn into the violence of *jihād*: unlike his predecessor, he stressed that monks should be called to Islām rather than killed. He did not call for the annihilation of Jews or Christians, but wished them to have a *dhimmī* relationship with the Muslim state.<sup>30</sup> Secondly, unlike Ibn Taymīyah, he did not regard anyone who did not adhere to his teachings to be an unbeliever (*kāfir*) who had to be fought. Instead, basing his view on Q.9:66, he argued that only an apostate was truly a *kāfir*. Apostasy could only reasonably be said to have taken place if there had been prior instruction in the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth*, followed by a rejection of the faith on the part of believer. Even so, the prophetic example made fighting against the apostate permissible but not an immediate or absolute requirement.<sup>31</sup> However, the entire Muslim population, with the exception of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s own followers, were guilty of ‘associationism’ and thus potentially fell under the term of ‘unbelief’.<sup>32</sup>

The emphasis of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s theory was that *jihād* was not an offensive activity, but a method of last resort to defend the Muslim community from aggression and to allow for proselytism to take place.<sup>33</sup> There seems to have been a difference between the practice of *jihād* before 1201/1787 and afterwards. Three previous British attempts to seize Kuwait had met with failure because of stout resistance. In 1202/1788, the British joined forces with the Wahhābīs in the occupation of Kuwait and received it as their reward for joining the alliance and supplying them with weapons and money:<sup>34</sup>

It was a well known fact that this Wahhābī campaign was instigated by the British, for [the] Al Sa‘ūd were British agents. They exploited the Wahhābī

[school (*madhhab*)], which was Islamic and whose founder was a *mujtāhid*, in political activities with the aim of fighting the Islamic State and clashing with the other [law schools (*madhāhib*)], in order to incite sectarian wars with the Ottoman state. The followers of this *madhhab* were unaware of this, but the Sa‘ūdī *Amīr* and the Sa‘ūdīs were fully aware. This is because the relationship was not between the British and... Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, but between the British and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz... and then with his son Sa‘ūd...

Even if this significant difference in the practice of *jihād* after 1201/1787 is minimized, however, there remain problems with this theory when applied to the formative period of the Wahhābī state. Jerzy Zdanowski argues that the first Wahhābī state was established and expanded as a tool for looting, which became ‘both the basis and prerequisite for its existence’. Ecological conditions, together with a minimal potential for productive development and the relatively small volume of expendable produce, especially in the case of nomads, made looting the surest and most effective means for the acquisition of assets. Another source of income was the ransom that was imposed on all settlements and tribes which were subdued by force. Some communities, in realizing that they had no chance to preserve their independence, proposed to pay the ransom out of their own accord. In doing so, they hoped that ransom payments would at least be spread over future years; other cases involved paying contributions in order to buy exemptions from military service. Ransom, whether paid in money or kind, did not differ from the tribute paid by weaker tribes to the stronger ones in pre-Islamic Arabia. When ransom was imposed after conquering an enemy settlement and requisitioning the inhabitants’ weapons, armour and horses, ransom did not differ from ordinary looting. The conquering of settlements and adjoining palm groves was often connected to the appropriation of homesteads and land, thereby enabling the Wahhābīs to make trading profits by selling dates and other agricultural produce. After conquering Riyāḍ in 1187/1773, numerous homesteads and palm groves of the inhabitants who escaped from the Wahhābīs passed into the hands of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Sa‘ūd. An especially precious item was the estate of the conquered *amīr*, Dahhām bin Dawwās.<sup>35</sup> There is evidence that Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb had been personally involved in the destruction of a celebrated tomb at Jubaila before 1156/1744.<sup>36</sup>

One day the Shaykh told the Prince [‘Uthmān bin Muḥammad bin Muammar]: ‘let us demolish the dome at the grave of Zaid bin al-Khaṭṭāb... It is erected on deviation. Allāh would not [i.e. does not?] accept it. And the Prophet... had forbidden building domes or mosques on the graves. Moreover, this dome has enthralled the people and replaced their creed with polytheism. So it must be demolished.’ The Prince acceded to his suggestion. Then the Shaykh remarked that he was afraid that the people of al-Jubaila would revolt against this action.



Al-Jubaila was a village close to the grave. ‘Uthmān then mobilized an army of six hundred soldiers and marched towards the grave in order to destroy the dome. The army was accompanied by the Shaykh...

The Shaykh thus strove in his preaching and *jihād* for fifty years from [1157/1744] until he died in 1206[1791]. He resorted to all the methods in his mission – *jihād*, preaching, resistance, debates and arguments, elucidation of the Qur’ān and *Sunnah* and guidance towards the legal ways shown by the Prophet... until people adhered to obedience, entered the Religion of Allāh, demolished the domes and mosques built by them on the graves and agreed to run their affairs in accordance with Islamic Law, discarding all rules and laws which had been applied by their fathers and forefathers...

It would be incorrect to assume that Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb was other than a controversial figure in his own lifetime. Muhammad ibn Sulaymān al-Madanī ash-Shāfi‘ī (d. 1194/1780), concluded that

this man is leading the ignoramuses of the present age to a heretical path. He is extinguishing Allāh’s light. But Allāh... will not let His light be extinguished in spite of the opposition of polytheists, and He will enlighten everywhere with the light of the ‘*ulamā*’ of *Ahl as-Sunnah*.

In his *Book of Monotheism*, Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb wrote:<sup>37</sup>

Pronouncement alone [that ‘there is no God but Allāh; Muḥammad is his messenger’] does not ensure immunity of life and property, nor does the understanding of the meaning of the evidence, nor the pronouncing and acknowledgement of it, nor appealing in prayers (*namazes*) to the one and only Allāh, who has no companions. The property and life of a man are immune only when everything mentioned above is complemented by a complete rejection of all objects of worship except Allāh. Any doubt or hesitation deprives a man of immunity of his property and his life.

On this issue, and the related one of calling Muslims heretics, Ibn Sulaymān al-Madanī argued that ‘if a person calls a Muslim an “unbeliever”, one of the two becomes an unbeliever. If the accused is a Muslim, the one who accuses [him] becomes an unbeliever.’ Against the presumption that a believer was a true Muslim, Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb stated: ‘we do not care about the words. We look for the intentions and meanings.’ He thus contradicted or opposed two *aḥādīth*, one of which declared ‘we judge according to the appearance we see. Allāh... knows the secret’, while in the other the Prophet refuted the assertion that a dead individual was not a true Muslim and instead asked the question: ‘did you dissect his heart?’ Ibn Sulaymān al-Madanī repudiated another of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s

arguments by concluding that ‘it is certainly permissible to have recourse to the mediation of pious men while it is permissible to make so of good deeds’. ‘It should not be forgotten that the wolf will devour the lamb out of the flock’, he concluded, with Hell as the punishment for those who reject the Prophet’s teaching after right guidance (Q.4:115).<sup>38</sup>

Muslims are divided on how to regard Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb and his achievement. ‘Shall we deny him the title of reformer?’, asked Ameen Rihani in 1346/1928:<sup>39</sup>

He wrought of a certainty a great reform in Najd; but he did not in a higher sense even point the way to a Reformation in al-Islām. He harks back with a vengeance to the days of the Prophet; destroys the superstitions, that is true, under which succumbed the vital truth of the oneness of God, but rakes up in the process all the old inhibitions which make Wahhābīsm insufferable. Shall we then call him a teacher? He was more than that; for, in addition to teaching the people of Najd a religion which they had forgotten, he infused into them a spirit which, locked as they are in the heart of Arabia, gave them the power to expand and to express their superiority with the austerity, the confidence, and the arrogance of the followers of the Prophet. And he could do this only by sticking to the Qur’ān, cleaving often to the surface meaning of its word...

But how shall we know the real polytheist (*mushrikūn*) from those who have but half-way strayed from orthodoxy? For non-orthodoxy in supplication, for instance, is according to Ibn Taymīyah, of three degrees... in the first degree only, according to Ibn Taymīyah and Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, are the blood and the property of a man forfeit; while in the other two degrees, the guilt might be denoted as a misdemeanour or what is called, in Roman Catholic theology, a venial sin. Now, how are the [Wahhābī agents of enforcement (*Ikhwān*)], in battle with those whom they consider *mushrikūn*, to distinguish the one from the other? This question did not seem to occur to either Ibn Taymīyah or Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb...

### **Wahhābī *jihād* after Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s death: three Sa‘ūdī regimes**

The first Sa‘ūdī regime was of relatively short duration after the death of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb in 1206/1791. It was brought to crushing defeat by the forces of Muhammad ‘Alī (r. 1220/1805–1264/1848), ruler of Egypt, who was encouraged by the Ottomans in 1226/1811 to take direct action against the Sa‘ūdīs. Before then, the regime had declared its true colours of anti-Shī‘ism in its sack of Karbalā’ in 1216/1802 (an attack that was recalled in the aftermath of the Karbalā’ bombings of March 2004)<sup>40</sup> and puritanical iconoclasm in its first occupation of Mecca in 1217/1803. The Muftī of Mecca, Aḥmad Zaynī Daḥlān al-Makkī ash-Shāfi‘ī wrote:<sup>41</sup>

In 1217/1802 they [the Wahnābīs] marched with big armies to the area of at-Tayf. In Dhu-l-Qa'dah of the same year, they laid siege to the area [where] the Muslims were, subdued them, and killed the people: men, women, and children. They also looted the Muslims' belongings and possessions. Only a few people escaped their barbarism.

They [the Wahnābīs] plundered what was in the room of the Prophet..., took all the money that was there, and did some disgraceful acts.

In 1220/1805 they [the Wahnābīs] laid siege to Mecca and then surrounded it from all directions to tighten this siege. They blocked the routes to the city and prevented supplies from reaching there. It was a great hardship on the people of Mecca. Food became exorbitantly expensive and then unavailable. They resorted to eating dogs...

Mecca capitulated a second time in 1220/February 1806 and the Wahnābī regime set about the destruction of the ornamental embellishments of the tombs of all the great Muslim leaders, including that of the Prophet himself.<sup>42</sup> Moral 'reform', or the public censure of error, followed in the wake of the Wahnābī takeover. To ensure that the community of the faithful would 'enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong', enforcers of public morality known as *muṭawwi'īn* (literally, 'those who volunteer or obey') were integral to the Wahnābī movement from its inception. *Muṭawwi'īn* served as missionaries, as enforcers of public morals, and as 'public ministers of the religion' who preached in the Friday mosque. Pursuing their duties in Jedda in 1220/1806, the *muṭawwi'īn* were observed to be 'constables for the punctuality of prayers... [who,] with an enormous staff in their hand, were ordered to shout, to scold and to drag people by the shoulders to force them to take part in public prayers, five times a day'. In addition to enforcing male attendance at public prayer, the *muṭawwi'īn* were also responsible for supervising the closing of shops at prayer time, for looking out for infractions of public morality such as playing music, smoking, drinking alcohol, having hair that was too long [men] or uncovered [women], and dressing immodestly.<sup>43</sup>

Michael Cook's contrast between the first and second (1238/1823–1305/1887) Sa'ūdī states, the second being much more concerned with forbidding wrong in Wahnābī society because the opportunities for an offensive *jihād* were significantly reduced, may thus be somewhat overdrawn. The first Sa'ūdī state had already shown some of this preoccupation with what Michael Cook calls 'turning righteousness inwards'.<sup>44</sup> In reality, considering that it lasted over 60 years, the second Sa'ūdī state deserves fuller attention than it has received. Stephen Schwarz notes that the second state was 'unstable', but adds little to our understanding of its structure.<sup>45</sup> Madawi al-Rasheed talks of a 'fragile Sa'ūdī revival' in this period.<sup>46</sup>

The third Sa‘ūdī state was created after 1319/1902, when ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Sa‘ūd (r. 1319/1902–1373/1952) captured Riyāḍ. By 1327/1910 ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Sa‘ūd was using the traditional method of sending out *muṭawwi‘īn* to the desert tribes ‘to kindle in them a zeal for *jihād*’.<sup>47</sup> In 1330/1912, the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwān*) was formed.<sup>48</sup> Agricultural communities called *hujra* were settled by Beduin who came to believe that in settling on the land they were fulfilling the prerequisite for leading Muslim lives; they were making a *hijrah*, ‘the journey from the land of unbelief to the land of belief’. It is still unclear whether the *Ikhwān* settlements were initiated by ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Sa‘ūd or whether he co-opted the movement once it had begun, but the settlements became military cantonments in the service of his consolidation of power. Ameen Rihani reported about 70 of them, each with a population from 2000 to 10,000, which had sprung up in ten years. He also noted that flogging was common in Riyāḍ for those who smoked, for non-attendance at prayer and other offences against the Wahnābī code.<sup>49</sup> He described the *muṭawwi‘īn* as ‘fired with the militancy’ of the unitarian faith: ‘every one... is a Peter the Hermit... these recent recruits to Wahnābīsm, the emigrants of Allāh, are the material of which the *Ikhwān* are made’.<sup>50</sup> It was the duty of every Wahnābī to wage *jihād* against the *mushrikūn* (‘polytheists’, in this context all non-Wahnābī Muslims).<sup>51</sup> As newly converted Wahnābī Muslims, the *Ikhwān* were fanatical in imposing their zeal for correct behaviour on others: for Rihani, they were ‘the roving, ravening Bedu of yesterday, the militant Wahnābīs of today... the white terror of Arabia’.<sup>52</sup> They enforced rigid separation of the sexes in their villages, for example, and strict attention to prayers, and used violence in attempting to impose Wahnābī restrictions on others. Their fanaticism forged them into a formidable fighting force, driven by a strict discipline in the distribution of booty;<sup>53</sup> with *Ikhwān* assistance, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Sa‘ūd extended the borders of his kingdom into the Eastern Province and the Ḥijāz. Ultimately, the fanaticism of the *Ikhwān* undermined their usefulness; the failure of the *Ikhwān* rebellion (1346/1928–1348/1930) led to their eclipse.<sup>54</sup>

Had Britain defended the Hashemites in the Two Holy Places, Stephen Schwarz argues that Wahnābīsm might have ‘remained an obscure, deviant cult, and the Peninsula would very likely have developed modern political institutions’.<sup>55</sup> In 1343/October 1924, Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Sa‘ūd’s forces occupied Mecca, and in December the following year they took Medina and Jedda. The possession of the Ḥijāz offered the Sa‘ūdī state a lucrative source of income from the pilgrim traffic; but this financial consideration did not stop the Wahnābī-influenced destruction of tombs at Mecca and Medina.

The best source for this is Eldon Rutter’s account, since he visited the area in 1344/1925 shortly after the Sa‘ūdī takeover.<sup>56</sup> He noted that ‘in their hearts all the town-dwellers and most of the Ḥijāzī Beduin hated the Wahnābīs’ because of what had happened.<sup>57</sup> One of the reasons why the Meccans did not worship in the Ḥaram more often, he claimed ‘was their hatred of the Wahnābīs, whom

they accused of altering the form of the service'.<sup>58</sup> At the Prophet's birthplace, Mawlid al-Nabī in Mecca, the Wahhābīs, 'true to their principles, demolished the dome and minaret of the building and removed draperies and other ornaments from it...'. When the place was mentioned in a gathering of Meccans, 'faces grew grave, and here and there among the company a bitter curse would be uttered against the Najdīs'.<sup>59</sup> At Fāṭima's birthplace (Mūlid Sitna Fāṭima), both the Prophet's praying place and the birthplace of Fāṭima itself had been covered by small domes before the occupation but these were demolished and lay in ruins. Important stones such as the one which it was claimed had spoken to the Prophet were 'indistinguishable from the other stones composing the wall, as the whole had been whitened by the obliterating hands of the Wahhābīs'.<sup>60</sup> A number of birthplaces of Companions of the Prophets had had small mosques built over them, but 'nearly all had been partially destroyed'. The cemetery of El Maala had formerly had many tombs 'crowned by small but handsome domes, but these, without exception' had been demolished, 'together with most of the tombstones'. Eldon Rutter concluded that 'no dome which has the faintest connection with any dead person may continue to exist under the stern Wahhābīte order'.<sup>61</sup> He also visited the Baqī' cemetery of the Prophet's Companions near Medina.<sup>62</sup>

It was like the broken remains of a town which had been demolished by an earthquake... All was a wilderness of ruined building material and tombstones... Demolished and gone were the great white domes which formerly marked the graves of Muḥammad's family, of the third *Khaliḥah*, 'Uthmān, of Imām Mālik, and of others. Lesser monuments had suffered a like fate...

Eldon Rutter provides compelling evidence of the intolerance of the Wahhābī *jihād* against perceived manifestations of polytheism in Islamic traditions other than their own. He called them 'intolerant Puritans'<sup>63</sup> and noted also their intolerance towards others in practice. 'The only point in which the Najdīs do not follow the Prophet', he contended, 'is in their hatred of nearly all modern Muslims save their own community. On account of this one matter it may truly be said that the Wahhābīs do constitute a new sect.' Their dictum with regard to opponents within Islām was, he contended: 'if they be strong, shun them; or if they be weak annihilate them'. Rutter, who could scarcely conceal his loathing for the ideology, accused the Wahhābīs in general, and the *Ikhwān* in particular, of ignorance.<sup>64</sup> Yet while there may have been many ignorant Wahhābīs at the time, Rutter's own discussion shows that in matters of dispute with the remainder of the Islamic world, 'in every instance the verdict of the conference [of the '*ulamā*'] agreed with Wahhābī practice'.<sup>65</sup> The only difference was in the hatred of practices which the Wahhābīs claimed were contrary to Islām. The key point was that they refused to accept the diversity of the Islamic tradition. Hence their refusal to mix with other Muslims 'in prayer or in social intercourse'.<sup>66</sup>

The iconoclasm and puritanical zeal of the new regime lost the Sa‘ūdīs friends in the Muslim world. The Indian Khilafatists divided into pro- and anti-Sa‘ūdī camps as the news percolated through to the subcontinent.<sup>67</sup> Promoting Wahhābīsm was an asset to ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Sa‘ūd in forging cohesion among the tribal peoples and districts of the peninsula. By reviving the notion of a community of believers, united by their submission to God, Wahhābīsm helped to forge a sense of common identity that superseded pre-existing or parochial loyalties. By abolishing the tribute paid by inferior tribes to militarily superior tribes, Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Sa‘ūd undercut the traditional hierarchy of power and made devotion to Islām and to himself as the ‘rightly guided’ Islamic ruler the cement that would hold his kingdom together. The unity of the Muslim *ummah* under al-Sa‘ūd leadership was the basis for the legitimacy of the Sa‘ūdī state, although this presupposed acceptance of the Wahhābī doctrinal interpretation. Acceptance was to be enforced by a new institution in Mecca in 1345/1926, the Committee for Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong, which was designed initially to check the aggressive behaviour of the *Ikhwān* towards the local population and foreign pilgrims. A similar committee was set up in Jeddah in the same year, and the pattern was followed elsewhere in the Sa‘ūdī state. Within four or five years, these committees were taking a strong line, for example in the enforcement of prayer discipline, backed up by groups of Najdī soldiers.<sup>68</sup>

Madawī al-Rasheed argues that Sa‘ūdī state was ‘imposed’ on a people without an ‘historical memory of unity or [a] national heritage that would justify their inclusion in a single entity’.<sup>69</sup> The population was divided by tribal, regional and sectarian (that is, Sunnī–Shī‘a) differences. (Rihani stated in 1346/1928 that there were about 30,000 Shī‘a in al-Hasa alone.)<sup>70</sup> Essentially this population was conquered by an indigenous Najdī leadership allied with Wahhābī religious proselytizers and sanctioned by a colonial power (Britain). Tribal and regional histories and cultural traditions that did not conform to the image of the inevitable rise of the Wahhābī movement and of al-Sa‘ūd ascendancy were suppressed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Sa‘ūd’s virulent hatred of Shī‘ism, however, was revealed by his discreet British alter ego, Philby:<sup>71</sup>

A suggestion had been put forward at Bahrain that Ibn Sa‘ūd was interested in the question of reopening the ‘Irāq shrines to Shī‘a pilgrimage on account of his Shī‘a subjects in the Hasa. His answer to my very tentative question on the subject was decisive: ‘I would raise no objection’, he replied, ‘if you demolished the lot of them, and I would demolish them myself if I had the chance’... The straight-spoken iconoclast of [1336/1918] was yet to experience the limitations imposed on him by his growing strength and by his sense of responsibility towards the great world of Islām, of which the Wahhābī sect might perhaps be regarded as the kernel or, at most, as a leaven destined to leaven the whole lump...

## **‘Petrodollar puritanism’ and the issue of tolerance of diversity in Islām**

Wahhābism did not gain its present significant position with Islām because of its inherent strength as a tradition within the faith. It gained its position because of the wealth of the Sa‘ūdī monarchy. In 1340/1922, Philby noted that Kuwait and Baḥrayn were the only important commercial outlets of the Wahhābī territories, neither of which was under Wahhābī control. To remedy this unsatisfactory state of affairs was, he thought, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Sa‘ūd’s ‘main preoccupation’.<sup>72</sup> If petroleum deposits were confirmed in the state, Philby recognized that this would make the regime incalculably rich. Standard Oil (now Chevron) struck oil in Bahrein in 1350/1932 and hired Philby to negotiate an arrangement with the Sa‘ūdī regime.<sup>73</sup> By 1352/mid-1933 a deal for a 60-year oil concession was reached. The consortium, enlarged by the addition of the Texas Oil Company (now Texaco) in 1354/1936 changed its name to Aramco (Arabian American Oil Company) in 1363/1944. Following the substantial increase in oil prices in 1392/1973, the Sa‘ūdī government acquired a 25 per cent interest in the company, rising to 100 per cent in 1400/1980.<sup>74</sup> Without doubt, Sa‘ūdī oil revenues have paid for the spread and dissemination of Wahhābism. Loretta Napoleoni goes so far as to term the process ‘the financing of Sa‘ūdī Arabia’s religious imperialism’.<sup>75</sup> With a quarter of the world’s proven oil reserves (261.8 thousand million barrels in 2002), Sa‘ūdī Arabia is likely to remain the world’s largest oil producer for the foreseeable future.<sup>76</sup> In principle, therefore, the dissemination of Wahhābism by means of Sa‘ūdī resources, or what we would call the process of ‘petrodollar Puritanism’, seems set to continue, subject to the survival of the regime itself.<sup>77</sup>

The perception of Wahhābism among others, within Islām and outside, is that of intolerance. Some Muslims, indeed, are among the sternest critics of the sect.<sup>78</sup> In Chapter 1, it was noted that the Prophet had feared sectarianism in Islām after his death: there would be 73 sects, he is thought to have said, 72 destined for Hell, with only those determined to maintain the unity of Islām destined for Heaven. Intolerance of others is not a Wahhābī monopoly; many other groups share this characteristic, though perhaps not to the same degree. On 4 March 2004, in the aftermath of the bomb attacks on Shī‘a worshippers on the day of Ashura at ‘Karbālā in ‘Irāq and Quetta in Pakistan, Yoginder Sikand noted the use made of this *ḥadīth* by those seeking to emphasize their group’s claims to represent the ‘authentic’ Islamic tradition against others. A prominent Barelwi scholar argued to Sikand that ‘if we try [to] promote unity between the sects that would be going against the saying of the Prophet himself. And that would be a very grave crime indeed!’ On another occasion, Sikand was told by a teacher associated with a different group: ‘Islām says that our sole purpose must pronounce the truth (*ḥaqīqah*), no matter what the cost.’ ‘And the truth’, he added, ‘is what I have

written in these books about the other groups that call themselves Muslims. They have actually wilfully or otherwise distorted Islām and are far from the path of the Prophet.' He continued: 'we have to speak out against them, no matter what the consequences. The truth must be clearly distinguished from error.'

Yoginder Sikand correctly concludes:

every Muslim group claims to be the one saved sect, and implicitly or directly argues that the other groups are, by definition, aberrant, not really Muslim, and hence destined to doom in hell. This firm conviction of having a monopoly over religious truth inculcates an unshakable self-righteousness that dismisses all other truth claims, whether of non-Muslim religious communities or of other Muslim groups.

While noting that there is 'no Islamic counterpart of the Christian ecumenical movement that in recent years has made bold moves to promote understanding and cooperation among different Christian groups',<sup>79</sup> Sikand argued the urgency of 'the need for Muslim ecumenism'. 'The much bandied-about slogan of Islamic brotherhood based on the notion of the pan-Islamic *ummah* falls flat in the face of continued Muslim sectarian rivalry', he concluded.<sup>80</sup>

The problem is more serious than this. The inherent diversity within the Islamic tradition has been denied by Wahhābism, although there may be signs of a change of attitudes among younger scholars.<sup>81</sup> A prominent Wahhābī scholar of the old school comments that there is only one true Islām, the rest being false paths:<sup>82</sup>

This religion has one path, one direction and is based on one methodology – that which the Prophet of Islām... followed along with his comrades. This religion which Allāh has chosen for mankind is not subdivided into different sects nor does it divert into different paths. However, a number of people have gone astray and corrupted the religion, forming many different groups that bear no relation to Islām... (cf. Q.6:153: 'and [know] that this is the way leading straight unto Me: follow it, then, and follow not other ways, lest they cause you to deviate [literally, 'become scattered'] from His way').

While refutation has always been part of religious education in Islām, it is only relatively recently that it has been recognized that *madrasah* education has, in some areas such as Pakistan, become a source of hate-filled propaganda against other sects and a potent mechanism widening the sectarian divide.<sup>83</sup> By far the greatest increase in the numbers of *madrasahs* in Pakistan (from 1779 out of a total of 2801 in 1988 to 7000 out of a total of 9880 in 2002) has occurred within the Deobandi tradition, which though arising quite separately, has been heavily influenced by Wahhābism in recent times. Of the Deobandi students interviewed, 46 per cent favoured the Ṭālibān as their model. Prominent among the views



taught, and among the ideas received by students, are militant views of *jihād* as well as intolerance of others.<sup>84</sup> In the words of another report, ‘sectarian tensions are... bound to increase so long as the *jihādī madrasah* is allowed to preach religious intolerance’. The report adds that, ‘for the students of these schools, *jihād* against members of other sects is as much a religious duty as *jihād* against non-Muslims’.<sup>85</sup>

Given the imperative of bridging doctrinal and interpretative differences among Muslims so as to encourage mutual accommodation and intra-Muslim dialogue, it is necessary to find a role model from within Muslim tradition itself. Once more, the pre-eminent al-Ghazālī (see Chapter 3) comes to our rescue, since in *The Decisive Criterion for Distinguishing Islām from Masked Infidelity*<sup>86</sup> he provided a compelling defence of the centrality of intellectual freedom, dialogue, and reasoned discourse to the construction of religious knowledge. In this work, al-Ghazālī contended that ‘not everyone who embraces senseless hallucinations must be branded an unbeliever, even if his doctrines are clearly absurd’, a view that exemplified his belief that no-one can monopolize the truth.<sup>87</sup> Who, he asked, could lay claim to ‘this monopoly over the truth... Why should one of these parties enjoy a monopoly over the truth to the exclusion of the other?’<sup>88</sup> Al-Ghazālī argued that those who claimed such a monopoly were merely conflating their own ‘interpretation with revelation’. They failed to recognize that their doctrines were grounded in interpretative presuppositions that were historically-determined.

Al-Ghazālī maintained that the only way to decide between the legitimacy of different readings of the Qur’ān, and to reduce interpretative conflict, was through the adoption of an appropriate methodology. He questioned whether consensus (*ijmā’*) could be used as the yardstick for judging what is acceptable or not, given the difficulties of defining consensus consensually. He argued that the task for theologians was to

establish among themselves a mutually agreed-upon criterion for determining the validity of logical proofs that enjoys the recognition of them all. For if they do not agree on the scale by which a thing is to be measured, they will not be able to terminate disputes over its weight.<sup>89</sup>

Tradition could not merely be imitation: al-Ghazālī pronounced himself thankful not to have been ‘afflicted by that blindness that condemns people to being led around by others (*taqlīd*)’.<sup>90</sup>

Finally, he questioned the authority of religious scholars and jurists to pass judgements about who was, and who was not, *kufr*:<sup>91</sup>

Those who rush to condemn people who go against... any [particular]... school as unbelievers are reckless ignoramuses. For, how [can] the jurist, purely on the basis of his mastery of Islamic law (*fiqh*), assume this enormous task? In

what branch of the law does he encounter [the necessary] skills and sciences? So when you see the jurist who knows nothing but law plunging into matters of branding people unbelievers or condemning them as misguided, turn away from him and occupy neither your heart nor your tongue with him. For, challenging others with one's knowledge is a deeply ingrained human instinct over which the ignorant are able to exercise no control.

As al-Ghazālī put it, 'you must impose restraint on your tongue in regard to the people who turn towards the *qibla* [that is, the direction of the Ka'ba at Mecca]'.<sup>92</sup> Even Ibn Taymīyah, who spent a great deal of effort combating al-Ghazālī's views, came close to this idea when, in his commentary on the 112th *sūrah* of the Qur'ān, he stated that Mu'tazilites, Khārijīs, Murji'tes as well as moderate Shī'a were not to be regarded as infidels. They were in error in their interpretation, but they did not threaten the principle of the law. He was not prepared to be so lenient to the Jahmīya, because they rejected all the names and attributes of God, or to the Ismā'īlīs because they denied the value of ritual law.<sup>93</sup> For Ibn Taymīyah, divergence (*khilāf*) within the community was inevitable, but was minimal among the traditionalists and became greater only as one moved further away from orthodoxy. The main point is that the Muslim community was, and remains, in agreement on the primacy of the *sunnah* and of the *ḥadīth*. The consensus of scholars on this point is reaffirmed at the very moment they are in disagreement on other matters: to settle the question, they all appeal to these sources. Islamic theology is about faithfulness to origins and defending formulations against doubters and detractors. Like jurisprudence, theology is the study or foundations of religion, based on the *sunnah* and the *ḥadīth*, as against *kalām*, which is viewed as a theology of rationalist inspiration.<sup>94</sup>

Wahhābism is here to stay and cannot be wished away by those traditions within Islām which disagree with its interpretation. There has to be an accommodation; and, however difficult it may be to implement or to accept the accommodation, its form has to include the acceptance of diversity within the mainstream traditions, a diversity which, as we have seen, even Ibn Taymīyah accepted. Wahhābīs are entitled to their 'puritan' views, but they are not entitled to impose their views on others, or to destroy sites which are the memorials or places held in spiritual importance by other faiths or by other traditions within Islām. The extreme Deobandi (and perhaps Wahhābī-inspired) destruction of the giant Buddhist statues at Bāmiān by the Ṭālibān in Afghanistan in March 2001 was a religious disaster for the Hazara people and for Buddhism<sup>95</sup> but also for the Islamic tradition of tolerance;<sup>96</sup> it was in addition a cultural heritage disaster for the world at large, though there are hopes that they may be rebuilt.<sup>97</sup> There can be no place in the future mainstream of Islām for such intolerance or for a *jihādī* world view which seeks to impose its views by force and greatly enlarges the scope of *jihād* propounded in the writings of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb himself.<sup>98</sup>

# 7

## *Jihād* in the Period of the Colonial Powers: Islamic Revivalism and Politicization of the Masses?

Allāh prescribed the *jihād* upon us in order to remove us... from the harm which arises from leaning towards this impure world and clinging to its things which actually [amount to] nothing and [from which] the only benefit one can obtain is regret. Thus, my beloved ones, support Islām by your souls in order to gain his acceptance... (Muḥammad Aḥmad known as the Mahdī).<sup>1</sup>

‘God will send to this *ummah* [that is, the Muslim community] at the head of each century those who will renew its faith for it.’ The idea of revival (*tajdid*) expressed in this *ḥadīth* was, in John O. Voll’s expression, ‘a longstanding and continuing dimension of Islamic history’. This campaign for revival (*iḥyā’*) or reform (*iṣlah*) was ‘an effort of socio-moral construction or re-construction’ of the values of both religious and also socio-political life based on the Qur’ān and the *Sunnah*.<sup>2</sup> Karpat notes that in the nineteenth century there were some 24 or 26 revivalist movements which<sup>3</sup>

started as local or regional movements seeking a return to the basic foundations of Islām – the Qur’ān and the *Sunnah* – and gradually, or in some cases simultaneously, became militant movements of resistance against Russian, Dutch, French, English, and Italian occupation of Central Asia and the Caucasus, the East Indies, North Africa, and Egypt...

Most of the revivalist movements were led by a new brand of Ṣūfīs, whose militancy contrasted sharply with the peaceful, pious, and socially reclusive attitude of classical Ṣūfīsm. The transformation of the Ṣūfīs into guerilla fighters, army commanders, and even state leaders resulted from their belief that *jihād* was not only an effort at personal spiritual enhancement but also a

struggle against *fitnah*, the lapse and degradation of the faith and, ultimately, against those who caused it, be they foreign occupiers or Muslim rulers. The Ṣūfīs believed that in order to achieve self-transcendence the soul must be eternally free and independent of any oppression, limitation, and encroachment – all likely burdens under foreign rule and emulation of Europe. Because any individual Muslim is free to call the *jihād*, the Ṣūfīs did exactly that in order to achieve the ‘re-Islamization’ of society...

Clearly, we cannot encompass all the revivalist movements of the period up to and including the nineteenth century but only some of the more important ones.<sup>4</sup> Before we do so, however, we need to place these revivalist concerns against a longer perspective.

### ***Jihād* movements in pre-colonial Africa**

As far as is known, the earliest *jihād* in Africa south of the Maghrib was that of Askia Muḥammad I, the ruler of Songhay (897/1492–934/1528). His predecessor, Sunnī ‘Alī Ber, had captured Timbuktu and other territories along the River Niger. In spite of his name, he was not, however, a strict Muslim. Askia, in contrast, performed the pilgrimage (*Hajj*) to Mecca in 902/1496–97. There, he received a green turban cap (*qalansuwa*), a white turban and a sword and was appointed the *sharīf* of Mecca’s deputy *Khalīfah* over Takrur (Western Sudan). (He formally handed over these symbols of authority to his son in 943/1537.)<sup>5</sup> He also received the blessing (*barakah*) of the pilgrim, which gave him the spiritual power, on his return, to declare *jihād* against the Mossi in 903/1498: they were considered both a political and religious threat, even though Sunnī Alī Ber had defeated them 15 years earlier. Al-Sa’dī chronicles that ‘there had been no other *jihād* in this region except this expedition’ in 903/1498. ‘The *jihād* was conducted according to Islamic law’, Nehemia Levtzion comments. ‘Askia had first sent an ultimatum to the Mossi king, calling him to accept Islām. After consulting his ancestors’ in accordance with tribal practice, ‘the Mossi king rejected the ultimatum. Askia Muḥammad invaded Mossi country, destroyed towns, and took prisoners (who became Muslims).’ Mossi had not been subjugated, however, for three later expeditions took place between 955/1549 and 985/1578.<sup>6</sup> Finally, in 999/1591, the Moroccans invaded with about 4000 troops, mostly musketeers,<sup>7</sup> and destroyed ‘the already crumbling political structure of the Songhay empire and... what religious equilibrium there was. Islām was then to become identified, at least in the early years of Moroccan rule, with a tyrannical alien ruling group.’<sup>8</sup>

A second example of *jihād* in Africa took place in Ethiopia after 937/1531. This movement is better known than many, since it had its contemporary Yemeni historian, Shīhāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad bin ‘Abd al-Qādir (known as ‘Arab Faqīh), whose *History of the Conquest of Abyssinia*, was written in c. 947/1541, that is,

while the *jihād* was still in progress.<sup>9</sup> The origins of the movement are to be found in the arrival of a Portuguese ambassador, Dom Rodrigo de Lima, at the court of Emperor Lebna Dengal (Dawit II) of Abyssinia in 926/1520 and the attempt of Portugal to establish an alliance with the ruling Christian dynasty. Such an alliance would have potentially outflanked the Ottomans, who had only recently extended their rule to Syria and Egypt. The Ottoman governor of Zabīd in the Yemen undertook to supply a Muslim *jihād* against the Christian alliance with the necessary firearms and support, including troops from the Ottoman army.<sup>10</sup>

The leader who was found for the *jihād* was Imām Aḥmad Grāñ ('the left-handed': Aḥmad Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ghāzī, c. 911/1506–949/1543), an Adal of Somali origin – not an Ethiopian – who had secured power in Adal and converted it into an Ottoman satellite state. He carried out a series of successful raids and forays into Abyssinia on an ever-increasing scale, until in 933/1527, when only 21 years old, he won a really substantial victory at Eddir over the Emperor's brother-in-law, Degalhan. Guns had not yet reached Abyssinia (two were first brought in by Arabs in 936/1530), and consequently the relative fighting strength of the Muslims was much greater than that of their Abyssinian adversaries, a disproportion which was further increased by Grāñ's real skill as a general and by the indomitable fighting spirit of the *jihādīs* of which 'Arab Faqīh provides eloquent testimony.<sup>11</sup> Emperor Lebna Dengal gained a preliminary victory at Samarna, but in 935/March 1529, the Abyssinians suffered a crushing defeat at Shembera-Kourey, when thousands of their best men were slain, and an enormous amount of booty fell into the hands of Grāñ.

The effects of this battle were decisive; for over a decade the Muslim army pillaged and ravaged the kingdom from end to end. By 941/1535 *imām* Grāñ had conquered the southern and central areas of the state and had even invaded the northern highlands, leaving a trail of devastation behind him. Emperor Lebna Dengal's first son, Prince Fiqtor, was killed in battle against the Muslims at Dewaro in Showa in 942/1536, and three years later a further disaster occurred: the royal Amba of Geshen, in which all the royal princes were held except Lebna Dengal's immediate family, and the vast accumulated treasures of generations of kings, was captured by treachery; the entire population was massacred, and the incalculable wealth stored therein was carried off. At least 50 of the principal churches and monasteries were sacked in the course of the *jihād*. At Mekana Salassie, the church was decorated with sheets of gold and silver, on which there were incrustations of pearls and there were gold statues. Grāñ permitted his troops to set to work with a thousand axes, the chronicler tells us, from mid-afternoon to night. Each man took as much gold as he wanted and was rich forever. The church of Atronsa Maryam was pillaged from midday until the following morning. The *jihādīs* tore out rich brocaded velvets and silks, gold and silver in heaps, gold cups, dishes and censers, a *tābūt* (ark of the covenant) of gold on four feet, weighing more than 1000 ounces, an illuminated Bible bound in sheets of gold,

and countless other riches, until they were tired of carrying their loot and loading it up. Much still remained, so they set fire to the church and the store-houses and burned everything.

In 944/1538, Grāñ proposed a marriage alliance with the ruling dynasty to help consolidate his power, but this was refused by the Emperor Lebna Dengal, on religious grounds:

I will not give [my daughter] to you, for you are an infidel: it is better to fall into the Lord's hands than into yours, for his power is as great as his pity. It is he who makes the weak strong and the strong weak.

The Emperor had placed his trust in the Portuguese alliance to restore his fortunes, but died in 947/1540 before assistance arrived. Instead, it was his son, Emperor Galawdewos (Atnaf Sagad) who benefited from this alliance with the arrival of 400 Portuguese musketeers. The combined force succeeded in defeating and killing Grāñ at Fogera in 949/February 1543. Galawdewos was able to regain his kingdom, though the conversion of most of his subjects to Islām and their reversion to Christianity may have made the effectiveness of his rule problematic at first. In the longer term, the failure of the *jihād* led 'to a great efflorescence of Abyssinian and Christian influence... and to a tradition of religious antagonism between the Christian peoples of the highlands and the Muslims of the lowlands and coast'.<sup>12</sup>

Less is known about some of the later *jihāds*, notably that of Nāṣir al-Dīn, a *marabout* (a member of a brotherhood or teacher),<sup>13</sup> c. 1070/1660. It is thought that his followers were mostly Berbers from present-day southern Mauritania, who sought converts to Islām and also to take control of the slave trade. He was killed in battle in 1084/1674. Though he did not participate in Nāṣir al-Dīn's *jihād*, this example is sometimes said to have influenced Mālik Dawda Sy, who launched a *jihād* of his own in Senegambia in 1101/1690. Following the success of this campaign, he founded the dynastic state of Bundu<sup>14</sup> located on the trade route between the Niger and the Gambia, a state which he ruled until his death in 1110/1699. His influence, in turn, is often thought (incorrectly) to have contributed to the *jihād* in Futa Jalon.<sup>15</sup>

### **The five Fulānī *jihāds* of West Africa**

There were five Fulānī-dominated *jihāds* of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These may be regarded as 'religiously-inspired eruptions of reformist zeal, as secular conquests won in the name of Islām, or as Fulānī reactions to Hausa domination, or more plausibly as a mixture of these and other motives'.<sup>16</sup> The *jihād* in Futa Jalon after 1137/1725 led to the creation of an imāmate there, with its capital at Timbo. Subsequently, another imāmate was established at Futa

Toro in 1189/1775–76. There followed three further *jihāds* in the nineteenth century, those of ‘Uthmān dan Fodio in Hausaland (1218/1804–1225/1811), of Sheku Hamada in Masina (1230/1815–1236/1821), and of al-Ḥājj ‘Umar in the Bambara states of Nyoro and Segu (1268/1852–1280/1864). David Robinson calls the first four ‘revolutionary *jihāds*’ because of the ‘qualitative and permanent changes accomplished by [the] indigenous communities...’:<sup>17</sup>

a number of Fulbe clergy and laity created a self-conscious community, developed their autonomy from the local political establishment, and took up arms when that establishment began to threaten their existence. They succeeded in setting up most of the structures of an Islamic state at the national level and Islamic culture at the local level. In the process they created important new institutions... which blended their Fulbe and Islamic identities and reinforced a sense that they were chosen for holy action in the holy land of the savannah. Subsequently these Fulbe often expanded into other areas, with varying degrees of success, but their strength resided in the core areas where they had reversed the political and social equation...

Karamoko Alfa (Alfa Ibrāhīm Sambegu) returned from a pilgrimage to Mecca inspired with religious zeal. Travelling across the desert, suffering terrible thirst and in danger of losing his life to brigands, he promised Allāh that if He permitted him to return to his home in safety, he would undertake to convert all the infidels in the Futa Jalon to Islām. The first Fulānī *jihād* of 1137/1725 was the fulfilment of his promise. The instrument he chose was his cousin, Ibrāhīm Suri, who had already proved himself a capable general. United by their faith, the Fulānī forces overcame resistance to them and established a theocratic state from 1139/1727, which Karamoko Alfa ruled as *imām* until his death in 1163/1750. The Guinea theocratic state survived until the nineteenth century.

Another imāmate was established at Futa Toro in 1189/1775–76, following seven years of *jihād*. In the Senegalese Futa, a struggle for power arose between Torodbe Muslims and their pagan Fulānī rulers, creating unrest, which was compounded by the raiding of aggressive Moors from the north side of the Senegal River. Under Sulaymān Bal, the Torodbe began a *jihād* which unseated the Fulānī Denyanke dynasty and installed the Torodbe as the new aristocracy with ‘Abd al-Qādir as leader. The imāmate continued until the French occupation in the later nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup>

The most significant of the Fulānī *jihāds* was that under the leadership of Shehu ‘Uthmān dan Fodio (Shaykh ‘Uthmān ibn Fūdīr, 1168/1754–1232/1817), which was launched against the Hausa state of Gobir in 1218/1804.<sup>19</sup> The Shehu had begun to preach as early as 1187/1774,<sup>20</sup> so it was 30 years before the acculturation of ostensibly Muslim rulers with the idolatrous rites of animism forced him to declare *jihād*.<sup>21</sup> These included sacrifices and libations to objects

of worship; the failure to observe the Islamic food provisions and prohibited degrees of marriage; the survival of inheritance through the female line in defiance of Islamic law; bawdy songs and an addiction to dance and traditional music; and praise to the rulers drawn from non-Fulānī (or Habe) dynasties which was idolatrous and vainglorious.<sup>22</sup>

The Shehu later recalled that, when he was aged 40 years and 5 months (1208/1794), he met the Prophet in a vision, was turbaned by him, addressed by him as ‘*imām* of the saints’ and commanded to ‘do what is approved of’ and ‘forbidden to do what is disapproved of’; he was also girded with the Sword of Truth (or Sword of God, *sayfal-ḥaqq*).<sup>23</sup> He always denied that he was the Awaited One (*Mahdī*), ‘but I am the one who comes to give tidings of the *Mahdī*’.<sup>24</sup> The decision to apply a ‘*jihād* of the sword’ was made more urgent by the decision of the chief of Gobir, Nafata, to proclaim in c. 1216/1802 that no one could be a Muslim unless his father had been one; and that without permission no man could wear a turban nor any woman a veil. His successor, Yunfa, continued this anti-Muslim policy so that, in 1218/February 1804, Shehu ‘Uthmān proclaimed the ‘essential duty’ of withdrawal (*hijrah*) from the lands of the heathen (he had already written a tract on this subject some two years earlier).<sup>25</sup> The Hausa rulers who claimed to be Muslims in reality were polytheists and heathen. That the call to *jihād* was based on the Shehu’s understanding of the consensus of the community is evident from a selection of arguments drawn from the 27-point manifesto of the movement:<sup>26</sup>

- 1) That the commanding of righteousness is obligatory by consensus (*ijmā’*);
- 2) And that the prohibition of evil is obligatory by consensus;
- 3) And that flight (*al-Hijrah*) from the land of the heathen is obligatory by consensus;
- 4) And that the befriending of the Faithful is obligatory by consensus;
- 5) And that the appointment of Commander of the Faithful is obligatory by consensus;
- 6) And that obedience to him and to all his deputies is obligatory by consensus;
- 7) And that the waging of... *al-Jihād* is obligatory by consensus;
- 8) And that the appointment of *amīrs* in the states is obligatory by consensus;
- 9) And that the appointment of judges is obligatory by consensus;
- 10) And that their enforcement of the divine laws... is obligatory by consensus;
- 11) And that by consensus the status of a town is the status of its ruler; if he be Muslim, the town belongs to Islām, but if he be heathen the town is a town of heathendom from which flight is obligatory;



12) And that to make war upon the heathen king who will not say ‘there is no God but Allāh’ is obligatory by consensus, and that to take the government from him is obligatory by consensus;

13) And that to make war upon the heathen king who does not say ‘there is no God but Allāh’ on account of the custom of his town..., and who makes no profession of Islām, is [also] obligatory by consensus, and that to take the government from him is obligatory by consensus;

14) And that to make war upon the king who... has abandoned the religion of Islām for the religion of heathendom is obligatory by consensus, and that to take the government from him is obligatory by consensus;

15) And that to make war against the king who is an apostate – who has not abandoned the religion of Islām as far as the profession of it is concerned, but who mingles the observances of Islām with the observances of heathendom, like the kings of Hausaland for the most part – is [also] obligatory by consensus, and that to take the government from him is obligatory by consensus;

16) And that to make war upon backsliding Muslims... who do not own allegiance to any of the emirs of the faithful is obligatory by consensus, if they be summoned to give allegiance and they refuse, until they enter into allegiance...

The *jihādīs* claimed to be fighting ‘in the way of God’ and to possess superior motivation than their enemies,<sup>27</sup> one element of this being the propagation of what we consider to have been the false *ḥadīth* about the 72 black-eyed virgins as the reward for a martyr in Paradise.<sup>28</sup> Equally important as the ability to recruit support was the ability to win battles: Muḥammad Bello, the Shehu’s son and chief commander, had an unrivalled mastery of cavalry tactics,<sup>29</sup> which gave the Muslim army the edge over its opponents. In 1219/June 1804, ‘the prince of Gobir [with Tuareg allies] came out against us and met us in a place called [Tabkin] Kwotto, and God routed them’.<sup>30</sup> Not all the campaigns went as well as this one, however, but gradually the Shehu’s authority was no longer confined to the areas his armies had conquered but was accepted by Muslim communities throughout Hausaland. In Hiskett’s judgement, ‘the main elements of an Islamic state, owing allegiance to an imāmate centred at Gwandu, were already in being several years before the founding of Sokoto, which later became the capital of the Fulānī empire’ in 1223/1809–1226/1812.<sup>31</sup>

In the last years before his death, after 1223/1809, Shehu ‘Uthmān dan Fodio began to reflect and write on the ideology of the *jihād*. He asserted its moral purpose as combating ‘every cause of corruption’ and forbidding ‘every disapproved thing’. He denied categorically that the campaign was fought for temporal reasons (‘I swear by God, I did not accept temporal office in any way’). The Muslim rebels had to be treated as apostates, that is, renegade Muslims who must be slain and buried without washing or prayer in unhallowed graves. The

Shehu seems to have been ‘a zealous but wholly orthodox Mālikī theologian’ of limited originality,<sup>32</sup> a Ṣūfī in the Qādiriyyah order, who was concerned to defend Ṣūfī practices such as the acceptance of miracles attributed to holy men (*walīs*). Qādirī ideology ‘became both the motive force and the rationale that induced’ a militant attitude in reformers such as the Shehu.<sup>33</sup> Because of the great distance involved in taking directions from Constantinople, the Shehu backed the idea of an independent caliphate. He emphasized the need for the appointment of good rulers (men of ‘outstanding learning, keen insight and extensive study’) who would be influenced by the learned. The *imām* exercised essentially a moral authority over the *amīrs*, with whom political and military power remained, though some of the emirates were more closely supervised by Sokoto than others. There were eventually some 15 emirates owing allegiance to Sokoto.<sup>34</sup> When Muḥammad Bello, the Shehu’s son and eventual successor died in 1254/1837, he left an empire ‘defended by its fortress cities, united, and at the highest peak of power it was ever to attain’.<sup>35</sup>

Even in the lifetime of Shehu ‘Uthmān dan Fodio three future trends of great importance were discernible. The community created by his *jihād* began to see itself as a distinct sub-division of the Qādiriyyah order. It had a distinct esoteric litany (*wird*), revealed by God to the Shehu in 1204/1789–90, which ‘became the community’s sacred patrimony’.<sup>36</sup> In this, the Shehu recalled that, when he was 36 years of age

God removed the veil from my sight, and the dullness from my hearing and my smell, and the thickness from my taste, and the cramp from my two hands, and the restraint from my two feet, and the heaviness from my body. And I was able to see the near like the far, and hear the far like the near, and smell the scent of him who worshipped God, sweeter than any sweetness; and the stink of the sinner, more foul than any stench... Then I found written upon my fifth rib, on the right side, by the Pen of Power, ‘Praise be to God, Lord of the Created Worlds’, ten times; and ‘O God, bless our Lord Muḥammad, and the family of Muḥammad, and give them peace’ ten times; and ‘I beg forgiveness from the Glorious God’ ten times; and I marvelled greatly at that.

Finally, after his death in 1232/1817, a shrine was built to act as a religious focus for the community, and miracles began to occur, demonstrating in death that the Shehu was indeed a *walī* or holy man and retrospectively justifying the *jihād*.<sup>37</sup> Historians nevertheless stress the ambiguity of his *jihād*. For Mervyn Hiskett, ‘the Islamic *shar‘ah* is an ideal. When men try to realize an ideal, it is always possible to cry failure.’<sup>38</sup> The most effective resistance against the Fulānī came from Bornu under the leadership of Shaykh Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Kanimī, who was himself a Muslim reformer (and unlike the Shehu had performed the

*Hajj* to Mecca), but he could see no justification for the Fulānī *jihād* besides political ambition.<sup>39</sup> For his part, M. G. Smith comments that<sup>40</sup>

no one who has studied the Shehu's writings or life can doubt his primary religious commitment. His *jihād* was successful through a skilful combination of religious and political factors; yet it is precisely this combination which lends it an ambiguous character... This pattern is a general characteristic of Islām, enshrined in the doctrine of *ijma'*, by which consensus legitimates necessary changes... The ambiguous character of Shehu dan Fodio's *jihād* derives from the ambiguous character of *jihād* itself.

The *jihād* of al-Ḥajj 'Umar in the Bambara states of Nyoro and Segu of Western Sudan (1268/1852–1280/1864), the fifth in the series of Fulānī *jihāds*, was of a quite different character from its predecessors: it was in essence an imperial war. As a theologian, 'Umar had only slender claims to originality;<sup>41</sup> moreover, the relationship between theory and practice in his *jihād* was much looser than in the earlier campaigns. David Robinson writes:<sup>42</sup>

The '*jihād* against paganism' was an imperial war, an extension of the Fulbe *Dār al-Islām* into new areas. It was a [campaign]<sup>43</sup> not to liberate a Jerusalem or protect persecuted minorities, but to destroy the offensive temples of 'infidelity'. It was an outlet for frustration at societies that could not fulfil the spiritual and material goals of their founders and an opportunity for the truly faithful to start afresh, with a new community, land, slaves, and position. The *talibés*, the 'disciples' and soldiers of the new movement, joined the Tijāniyya, the new order which 'Umar propagated. They fought against notorious warriors and watched many of their own die. They reigned over strange lands and people whom they did not understand and could barely control. Their success and their predicament intensified their consciousness as a chosen people...

For about two decades al-Ḥajj 'Umar received some 1500 to 1800 small arms every year through Bakel and Medine, and this enabled him to maintain a weapons differential over most of his foes. But only the loyalty of a surviving core of *talibés* and other supporters explains the endurance of his garrison state until the French conquest. The *jihād* was constructed around 'Umar's leadership, Fulbe consciousness, and strong religious conviction and managed to survive twelve years of offensive and three decades of defensive warfare. More than any other African *jihād* leader, 'Umar had a broad and long political apprenticeship extending over some 30 years and thousands of miles.

For the Senegalese, 'Umar and his *talibés* were heroes in the cause of Islām against the infidels. Conversely, the Malians regard their ancestors as defenders against invaders who used Islām as a cloak for their imperialism and personal

greed. There were accusations that the movement had lost its focus on eliminating idolatry and was instead becoming an occasion for settling scores, waging civil war, and grabbing booty. This argument of *fitnah*, ‘trouble’ or ‘sedition’, was invoked by Amadu III and the Kunta. The Kunta, in the person of al-Bekkay, carried this position to its logical extreme by declaring ‘Umar an impostor and evil-doer in 1269/1863 in a counter-*jihad* launched against what they called the ‘false’ *jihad*.

It is true that ‘Umar did not mobilize the indigenous inhabitants; nor did he extend commands to local supporters. Rather, he recruited thousands of outsiders, like himself, to conquer and colonize. They concentrated on the destruction of the most visible aspects of ‘pagan’ religion, not on the administration or education of non-Muslim subjects. They did not stop to consolidate gains, train successors, or reflect on their experience. Thus, in David Robinson’s judgement,<sup>44</sup>

the imperial *jihad*, however necessary in the minds of a generation determined to extend the *Dār al-Islām*, was decidedly less successful in the spread of the faith than its revolutionary predecessor [that of Shehu ‘Uthmān dan Fodio]... The defenders clung to their traditional allegiance. Only where colonization and the absorption of women and children were massive did Islām advance...

In so far as an ‘Umarian model of state formation existed, it was based on colonization from west to east: an immigrant group settled on the land, administered the state, waged war, brought in new slaves, and exploited the productive capacities of the indigenous inhabitants. While the new ruling class might express themselves in the language of Islamic law, they did not operate in ways qualitatively different from the warrior elites which preceded them. They had the additional stigma of being perceived as foreign... the ‘Umarian conquest probably delayed the expansion of Islām because it temporarily associated the Muslim faith with an imperial thrust and intensified loyalty to indigenous institutions.

Robinson considers that al-Ḥajj ‘Umar’s most lasting contribution to Muslims in Senegal and West Africa was his call to *hijrah* during a recruitment crisis of 1275/1858–59.<sup>45</sup> By attaching the Islamic conception of emigration to the ‘pollution’ brought on by French expansion, the Shaykh articulated a response to European intrusion that fell between the futility of fighting and the humiliation of surrender. It was used time and time again during the period of the Western nations’ ‘Scramble for Africa’. *Hijrah* was refusal, non-cooperation, not resistance as such. It assumed an independent if beleaguered Muslim authority to which ‘true’ Muslims could migrate. The pressure to accomplish *hijrah* was acutely felt by Muslim rulers: Albury emigrated from Senegal in 1307/1890, Amadu from Bandiagara in 1310/1893, and, following the victory of the British at Burmi, so too did Caliph Attahiru from Sokoto in 1320/1903. For many Fulānī, the last of

these events is spoken of as a *jihād*, *ṣultān* Attahiru as a martyr (*shāhid*), and the exodus as a *hijrah*.<sup>46</sup>

### **The prototype of the anti-colonial *jihād*: the *jihād* of ‘Abd al-Qādir in Algeria**

The French invaded Algeria in 1245/June 1830 but met stiff resistance from the outset led by ‘Abd al-Qādir (1222/1808–1300/1883) as *amīr* and coordinated by the Ṣūfī Qādirīyyah order. From his capital in Tlemcen, ‘Abd al-Qādir set about building a territorial Muslim state based on the communities of the interior but drawing its strength from the tribes and religious brotherhoods. In 1249/1834, his authority was recognized by the French in Western Algeria; but two years later his forces were defeated by the French under the command of Thomas Robert Bugeaud de la Piconnerie. In 1253/June 1837, however, Bugeaud entered into a treaty with ‘Abd al-Qādir (the treaty of Tafna), for which he was criticized in France, since it recognized two-thirds of Algeria as remaining under the *amīr*’s control. The *jihād* was resumed two years later in what was in effect a territorial dispute between the colonial and anti-colonial states in Algeria. As a result of the French adopting a ruthless scorched earth policy, ‘Abd al-Qādir was obliged in 1259/May 1843 to seek refuge with the Moroccan *ṣultān*.

The exile to another state, one which he did not control, altered the nature of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s *jihād*. Prior to this, the main focus of the *jihād* was on the primary duty of exile to *Dār al-Islām*, the requirement that Muslims should not collaborate with the colonial regime but oppose it in all respects. The ‘*ulamā*’ in the Algerian colonial state appear not to have considered emigration obligatory for Muslims; but ‘Abd al-Qādir obtained a *fatwā* from an Egyptian scholar to the effect that it was, while he himself wrote a treatise in his year of exile to Morocco affirming that the obligation to emigrate from *Dār al-Kufr* to *Dār al-Islām* ‘will remain in force until the sun rises from the West’.<sup>47</sup> However, he gained no satisfactory answer as to whether Muslim collaborators with the French could be considered ‘apostates’, so lacked any really decisive coercive principle against the defection of tribes in Algeria to the service of the colonial master.

Once ‘Abd al-Qādir was installed in Morocco, the French launched a war against *ṣultān* ‘Abd al-Rahmān, to force him to renounce support for the *jihād* and to hand over the *amīr*. After a campaign lasting just over a month, the French secured his compliance by the treaty of Tangiers of 1260/September 1844. ‘Abd al-Qādir could not conceal his bitterness and sought (to no avail) a *fatwā* against the ‘legally abominable deeds’ of the Moroccan *ṣultān*, which had ‘caused us great damage’.<sup>48</sup> Notwithstanding this ultimately fatal setback to the *jihād*, ‘Abd al-Qādir won a significant victory at Sidi Brahim near Oran in 1261/September 1845, which required the return of Marshal Bugeaud to command the French forces. In the event, the Moroccan defection and the ruthless French

offensive proved decisive: ‘Abd al-Qādir surrendered to General Lamorcière and the duc d’Aumale in 1264/December 1847. Thus ended the French conquest of Algeria. ‘Abd al-Qādir was treated with respect by the French and released in 1269/1852 by Louis-Napoléon, the president of the Second Republic, with a pension of 150,000 francs. His victory against the odds at Sidi Brahim remains commemorated by a monument in Oran.

### **The *jihād* of the Mahdī in the Sudan**

When God wanted to make the people of the thirteenth century<sup>49</sup> blissful and to link it with the [first] century [of the *hijrī* calendar] which was honoured by the existence of the Prophet, he caused the Mahdī to be manifest in spirit and in body from the world of concealment. Through him, he revived Islām after it had become merely a trace, nay, a name. God singled out the Sudan for the manifestation of the Mahdī so as to strengthen its people who are, spiritually the weakest people of all the countries...

Thus wrote Ismā‘īl bin ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Kurdufanī, the Mahdī’s biographer, in 1305/1888.<sup>50</sup> It can hardly have been a coincidence that it was on a significant date in the Muslim calendar – the year 1300/1882 – that a new call to *jihād* was issued, this time by Muḥammad Aḥmad bin ‘Abd Allāh, known as al-Mahdī (1260/1844–1302/1885), the second son of a ship’s carpenter. He declared himself to be of the Prophet’s family and issued his manifesto in the following terms:<sup>51</sup>

The eminent lord [the Prophet Muḥammad], on whom be blessing and peace, several times informed me that I am the *Mahdī*, the expected one, and [appointed] me [as] successor to himself, on whom be blessing and peace, to sit on the throne, and [as successors] to their excellencies the four [rightly-guided caliphs (*Khilāfah*’)] and Princes [of the Faith]... And he gave me the sword of victory of His Excellency [the Prophet Muḥammad] on whom be blessing and peace; and it was made known to me that none of either race, human or *jinn*, can conquer him who has it... He ordered me [to take my exile (*Hijrah*)] to Jebel Kadeer close by Masat, and he commanded me to write thence to all entrusted with public offices. I wrote thus to the Emirs and Sheikhs of religion, and the wicked denied [my mission], but the righteous believed... this is what the eminent Lord [the Prophet Muḥammad] on whom be blessing and peace, said to me, ‘He who doubts that thou art the *Mahdī* has blasphemed God and His Prophet’... If you have understood this, we order all the chosen ones to [make their *Hijrah*] unto us for the *jihād*... in the cause of God, to the nearest town, because God Most High has said, ‘slay the infidels who are nearest to you’... Fear God and join the righteous, and help one another in righteousness, and in the fear of God and in the *jihād*... in the cause of God, and stand firm

within the boundaries of God, for he who transgresses those boundaries will injure himself. Know that all things are in the hand of God. Leave all to Him and rely on him. He who makes God his support has been guided into the straight way. Peace [be with you].

Strictly speaking, the idea of the Awaited Divinely-Guided One (*Mahdī*) is uncanonical, since there is no justification for it in either the Qur'ān or in the collections of *aḥādīth* of al-Bukhārī or Muslim;<sup>52</sup> nor can the Mahdī's *jihād* be regarded as truly Islamic because, in order to support the dogma that loyalty to him was essential to true belief, he was prepared to modify Islām's five pillars and also the declaration of faith (the *shahādah*). In the case of the *shahādah*, the Mahdī added the declaration 'and Muḥammad Aḥmad is the Madhī of God and the representative of His Prophet'. In terms of the five pillars of faith, *jihād* replaced the *Ḥajj* or pilgrimage to Mecca as a duty incumbent on the faithful. Almsgiving (*zakāt*) was transformed into a tax paid to the Mahdīya, the Mahdī's state.<sup>53</sup> Orthodox Muslims condemned the Mahdist movement and sought to refute the Mahdī's claims. The Mahdists were rebels against the legitimate authority of the Ottoman caliph and fighting against them was allowed: 'in order to protect your religion and safeguard your wealth, you must fight these rebellious charlatans and slay them wherever ye find them (cf. Q.9:5).'<sup>54</sup>

Yet the technical issues of legitimacy and canonicity were of no interest to 'the masses (*al-kāffa*) of the people of Islām' who, as Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) had affirmed more than four centuries earlier, 'commonly accepted... that there must needs appear in the End of Time a man of the family of Muḥammad who will aid the Faith and make justice triumph; [and] that the Muslims will follow him and that he will reign over the Muslim kingdoms and be called al-Mahdī'.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, such expectations had been heightened by the propaganda and preaching in the Sokoto *jihād*. Though Shehu dan Fodio had disclaimed that he was the 'awaited deliverer', the preaching he authorized by his second son Muḥammad Bello quite clearly heightened popular anticipation of the advent:<sup>56</sup>

The Shehu sent me to all his followers in the east among the people of Zanfara, Katsina, Kano and Daura... I conveyed to them his good tidings about the approaching appearance of the Mahdī, that the Shehu's followers are his vanguard, and that this *jihād* will not end, by God's permission, until it gets to the Mahdī. They listened and welcomed the good news.

In addition, there was considerable migration from the Sokoto empire to the Sudan and Nile valley, probably as a result of the military disturbances but also on the part of people seeking the 'expected Mahdī'.<sup>57</sup> Muḥammad Bello's grandson affirmed that allegiance had been sworn to the Mahdī even before his 'manifestation was perceived'. Shehu dan Fodio 'recommended us to emigrate to you, to assist you and to help you when you were made manifest'.<sup>58</sup> There

was thus likely to be an enthusiastic response among a hardcore of refugees who had chosen the Sudan as their place of refuge in anticipation of the advent. One such migrant was ‘Abdullāhi bin Muḥammad, who became the Mahdī’s chief lieutenant and successor. He came originally from the Niger–Chad region and had been seeking to transfer his loyalty to an expected Mahdī as early as 1289/1873. Significantly, Muḥammad Aḥmad did not proclaim that he was the Mahdī until ‘Abdullāhi ‘twice [fainted] at the sight of [him and] greeted [him] as the expected Mahdī’.<sup>59</sup>

Muḥammad Aḥmad was a prominent Ṣūfī, who was appointed *shaykh* of the Sammānīyah order (*tariqah*) around 1284/1868. He began to gather supporters, bound by oaths of fealty (*bay‘ah*), who were committed to ‘purify the world from wantonness and corruption’ as well as to fight ‘the infidel Turks’. The hill of Gadīr in Dār Nūba became the central location for his secret propaganda before, in 1298/July 1881, he made his first public appearance as Mahdī. Once the *jihād* was proclaimed in 1300/1882, it was accompanied by military success, and thus the campaign became endorsed by victory and support grew rapidly. The *jihād* culminated in 1301/1884, when the Mahdī’s forces (the *ansār*) reached Khartoum. The city fell in 1302/January 1885 and Gordon, the commander of the defensive forces, was killed (possibly against the Mahdī’s orders).<sup>60</sup>

We cannot know for certain what objectives the Mahdī would have pursued, for within six months he was dead, probably from typhus. Perhaps the conquest of Sudan was to have been attempted, followed by that of Egypt, Mecca, Syria and Constantinople.<sup>61</sup> ‘Abdullāhi bin Muḥammad took command of the reins of power, and between 1303/1886 and 1306/1889 the *jihād* was conducted along three frontiers – against Abyssinia, Darfur in the west, and along the Egyptian frontier. In August 1889, the long-awaited invasion of Egypt by the *ansār* was crushed at the battle of Ṭūshkī (Toski).<sup>62</sup> Thus the Mahdist state failed to expand as expected and instead became preoccupied with its own problems of internal disorder. Eventually it went down to bloody defeat to Kitchener’s forces at the battle of Karārī near Omdurman (1316/September 1898), a battle in which the young Winston Churchill participated and which he wrote up as *The River War: An Historical Account of The Reconquest of the Soudan*, a work published the following year. The Mahdist state (Mahdiyya) had thus survived 13 years without the Mahdī, in spite of the dire predictions of what would follow his death. Even then, the problems were not over for the Anglo–Egyptian condominium. Hardly a year passed during the first generation of the new regime without a Mahdist rising, invariably spearheaded by an individual who claimed to be ‘the Prophet Jesus’ (*Nabī ‘Isā*), whose role was to kill Dajjāl, the Antichrist – taken to mean the British – and rule according to the law (*shar‘ah*) of Muḥammad.<sup>63</sup> Though none of them commanded overwhelming following, these ‘neo-Mahdist’ risings continued to harass the ‘infidel’ colonial government for more than two decades.

Three final comments about the Mahdiyya will suffice. The first concerns a phenomenon which we have already encountered, which is that the *jihād* was



not only about securing a territorial state: it was about securing conversions, if necessary by force. The Mahdī proclaimed its moral purpose, but maintained that his movement was not a religious order that could be accepted or rejected at will; instead, it was a universal regime, which challenged man to join it or else to be destroyed. The movement was therefore profoundly sectarian: those who denied his Madhīship were unbelievers (*kuffār*).<sup>64</sup> Defeat by the Mahdist forces meant certain death unless conversion was immediate: among the forced conversions or conversions under duress in the aftermath of the massacre of Hicks' forces (1301/November 1883) were those of Rudolf Von Salatin, an Austrian officer and governor of Darfur province and Lupton, a British officer who had been the governor of Baḥr al-Ghazal province.<sup>65</sup> The Mahdī therefore subscribed to the classical formulation that for polytheistic prisoners 'nothing is accepted from them except Islām or the sword'.<sup>66</sup>

A second issue concerns the Mahdī's philistinism, which was on a scale greater even than that of the Ṭālibān in recent times.<sup>67</sup> He alienated the four law schools by ordering the burning of all books on law (*fiqh*) in addition to the *sunnah* and books of Qur'ānic interpretation (*tafsīr*). Apart from the Qur'ān and the Madhī's own proclamations only two works (his own collection of prayers, the *Rātīb*, and an incomplete selection of *aḥādīth* of his own) were allowed to remain in circulation. There were a number of regulations which prohibited adornment, music, extravagance at weddings, and tobacco and wine. There were also regulations against the worship of saints and sorcery.

Thirdly, and finally, there was the Mahdī's attitude towards his religious tradition of origin: Ṣūfīsm. Once he had established a broad base of support, the Mahdī outlawed all the Ṣūfī orders, no doubt seeing them as a potential rival power base.<sup>68</sup> There was thus a contradiction between the early and later development, between Muḥammad Aḥmad the Ṣūfī and Muḥammad Aḥmad the Mahdī. The justification for the change was divine revelation. The Prophet had told him three times at the moment of his appointment: 'who does not believe in his Madhīship does not believe in Allāh and his Prophet'.<sup>69</sup> This was tantamount to conferring absolute power on Muḥammad Aḥmad, an attribution of exclusive authority which he sought to implement in his lifetime, regardless of the opposition it aroused. It was diametrically opposed to the principle of consensus<sup>70</sup> on which Shehu dan Fodio had tried to build his *jihād*. Autocracy in the application of the *shari'ah* typified the Mahdī's Islamization programme and foreshadows the sort of Islamic state envisaged by contemporary extreme Islamists.

### **The *jihād* of Imām Shāmīl in Russia**

The sustained *jihād* against the colonial policies of nineteenth-century Russia was also closely linked with the phenomenon of Ṣūfīsm or neo-Ṣūfīsm.<sup>71</sup> The Chechen term for sanctified violence is *gazavāt*, and the Russian invasion of

Chechnya and other Muslim-held lands launched a full century of *gazavāts*, in which the resistance struggle was led by Şūfī religious leaders, shaykhs and *imāms*, whose warrior troops were called *murīds* (that is, Şūfī disciples). The first significant *murīd* leader was Shaykh Maṣṣūr (1144/1732–1208/1794), who was chosen by the elders in 1199/1785 to be the first *imām* of the North Caucasians. Karpat notes that

the oppressed peasantry and the tribes responded enthusiastically to... Mansur's call to *gazavāt*..., to fight against the surviving elements of paganism and animism, against social inequalities, and against the Russians and, especially, their local followers, who were regarded as the source of evil.<sup>72</sup>

After some striking military success, Maṣṣūr was captured by the Russians in 1205/June 1791 and executed four years later.

General Aleksey Ermolov, supreme commander in the Caucasus region in the years 1232/1817–1242/1827, developed a plan for the 'total subjugation of the Caucasians', which was to be implemented first in Chechnya; it included the construction of fortresses, destruction of rebel villages by 'fire and sword' campaigns and the elimination of their inhabitants. After Ermolov was recalled in 1242/1827, the policy of 'elimination' continued to be implemented. As a result of this onslaught, the various tribes of Circassians, Avars, Lezgis and so on began to act together as a Daghestani–Caucasian entity under Ġhāzī Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Gimrāwī ('Gazimulla'), who was recognized as *imām* in 1244/1829. Once more the *gazavāt* was declared, this time to convert pagan tribes such as the Galgan, Kists and Ingush. Gazimulla was killed in battle against the Russians in 1247/1832. After a short period of rule as *imām* by Hamzad Beg, who was assassinated two years later, leadership of the movement fell to the most famous of the *murīd* warriors, Shāmīl (1211/1797–1287/1871).

Shāmīl was no stranger to war with Europeans. While performing the *Hajj* in 1243/1828, he had met *amīr* 'Abd al-Qādir, the leader of Algerian resistance against the French, who shared with him his views on guerrilla warfare. For 25 years of continuous fighting, from 1249/1834 until his capitulation in 1275/1859, he led the struggle of the mountain people, building on the ideological, psychological and organizational foundations laid by the Şūfī Naqshbandī Order in the Eastern Caucasus several decades before.<sup>73</sup> The British traveller John Baddeley, writing in 1325/1908, talked of Imām Shāmīl as the indirect 'protector of the British empire and India' because of his role in having kept tied down significant numbers of Russian troops – some 350,000 men – over such a long period.<sup>74</sup> Shāmīl succeeded in establishing an independent theocratic state, with a centralized structure, in his domain which covered a large part of Daghestan and the whole Chechen region. His imāmate was grounded in the basic principles of the *tariqah* of late Şūfīsm: on the hierarchical structure and cohesiveness of the

brotherhoods; on the cult of the leader and the unconditional obedience of the *murīds*.<sup>75</sup> Public life in Shāmil's domain was governed by an extreme form of puritanism, essentially alien to the people of the Caucasus; yet it proved to be a necessity for the guerrilla army, for it was a system which could concentrate all forces in defence and bring about the discipline of the people that was required for war. One of the reasons Murīdism appealed so broadly to people was that it preached the need not only for deepened faith, the *sharī'ah* and *gazavāt*, but for social justice as well.<sup>76</sup>

Shāmil learnt from a significant military setback at Akhoulgu in 1254/1839 to avoid sustained encounters with the Russian forces. But gradually, the Russian policy of enforced population deportation, the deliberate deforestation of the region (which removed the cover for the guerrilla fighters) and military exhaustion on the part of the Murīdists wore down the resistance. When the Crimean War broke out in 1269/1853, Shāmil was unable to assist the Ottoman cause; the Murīdists were almost totally isolated from the Ottomans and left to fight on their own resources. The end of the Crimean War in 1272/1856 allowed the Russians to concentrate their forces and, three years later, Shāmil made his last stand at Gunib. Shāmil was captured and eventually, in 1286/1870, permitted to leave for Constantinople and then to proceed on pilgrimage to the Holy Places. He died at Medina in 1287/February 1871. His compatriots were less fortunate: Karpát estimates that a million Caucasians were forced to migrate to the Ottoman lands in 1278/1862–1281/1865,<sup>77</sup> a brutal example of ethnic cleansing *avant le nom*.

The Qādirī order, with its origins in twelfth-century Baghdād, first appeared in the Caucasus in 1277/1861 headed by a Daghestani shepherd named Kunta Ḥājī Kishiev. Based in Chechnya, Kunta Ḥājī taught a mystical practice that, unlike the Naqshbandīs, allowed vocal *dhikr*, ecstatic music and dancing. At first, he counselled peace with the Russians.<sup>78</sup> His popularity surged but soon his following, swelled by many *murīd* fighters from Shāmil's former army, so alarmed the Russians that he was arrested and exiled in 1280/1864. In 1280/January 1864 at Shali in Chechnya, Russian troops fired on over 4,000 Qādirī *murīds* ('the dagger fight of Shali' has remained in the memory of the Chechen people ever since), killing scores and igniting a fresh wave of violence. Kunta Ḥājī died in enforced exile in the province of Novgorod in 1284/May 1867.

The brotherhood, whose remaining leaders all claimed spiritual descent from Kunta Ḥājī, became implacable Russian foes and struck deep roots in the Chechen countryside. Together with the rejuvenated Naqshbandīs, the Qādirīs rose up against the Romanovs in 1281/1865, 1293/1877, 1296/1879 and the last decade of the nineteenth century and plagued Tsarist rule in the Caucasus through the Bolshevik Revolution. The revolutionary years were especially bloody in Daghestan and Chechnya. The Qādirīs, and a Naqshbandī movement led by Shaykh Uzun Ḥājī, battled for eight years against the White and the Red armies to create a 'North Caucasian Emirate'. The pious, uncompromising Uzun Ḥājī

– whose tomb remains an important pilgrimage site for Chechen Muslims – saw little difference between the Tsarist Russians and the atheist Communists. His uprising in Daghestan was finally suppressed in 1338/February 1920, when he was killed, although the struggle was continued by Avars and Chechens under Sheikh Najmuddin Gotsinski for another five years and even longer on a more intermittent basis.<sup>79</sup>

In 1346/1928 a new civil war in the Caucasus was precipitated by the Bolsheviks, which lasted until 1354/1936. A further Şūfī-led revolt<sup>80</sup> began in 1359/1941 and lasted until 1366/1947. After the mass deportation of the Chechens to Siberia ordered by Stalin in 1363/1944, the Kunta-Ĥājī brotherhood regained strength. Far from destroying the Şūfī brotherhoods, the deportations actually promoted their expansion. For the deported mountain people the Şūfī orders became a symbol of their nationhood in the lands to which they were exiled. Moreover, these orders proved efficient organizers, thus ensuring the community's survival.

### **The *jihād* of Amīr Ya‘qūb Beg in Chinese Central Asia**

Mountain ranges, rivers and deserts divide East Turkestan, now known as the Xinjiang Uīghur Autonomous Region, into three distinct regions – northern (*shimaliy*), eastern (*ghārbiy*), and southern (*janubiy*) – and shape the ecological areas within these regions. The political subdivisions of modern Xinjiang are more complex and fragmented than these basic regions: nominally autonomous districts and counties are associated with the Qazaq, Qirghiz, Hui, Mongol, Tajik and Xibo nationalities.<sup>81</sup> By 1170/1757, China under the Manchu Qing Emperor Qian Long had invaded Zungharia and East Turkestan and established indirect political and military control. Many exiles and refugees from the Qing conquest settled in the Khoqand Khanate of the Ferghana region west across the Pamirs from Kashghar. These exiles supported frequent rebellions against the Qing Empire during the nineteenth century, when East Turkestan became the object of power struggles between Khoqand, China, Russia, and Britain.

The *jihād* in Xinjiang, which began in 1280/June 1864, shows some of the characteristics of Islām in India and the opposition it could arouse. As had the Mughals in India, the Chinese had sought to bring about cross-religious alliances under an ‘obligation of salt’ (*tūz*), the ritual eating of which served to bind people of unequal socio-political rank to mutual obligations. Chinese rule thus could be said to have led to a degeneration of the Muslim spirit.<sup>82</sup> Chinese rule had been linked to a grouping of Naqshbandī Şūfīs known as Ishāqīs (followers of Muḥammad Ishāq Walī [d. 1007/1599], or *Qara Taghliqs*, ‘Black Mountaineers’).<sup>83</sup> For the Āfāqīs, another group of Naqshbandī Şūfīs (they were followers of Kwāja Āfāq [d. 1104/1693 or 1105/1694], and were known as *Aq Taghliqs*, or ‘White Mountaineers’), zealous Muslims in exile in Khoqand, such

cross-cultural political alliances smacked of religious syncretism, which was to be opposed at all costs by *jihād* or *ghazawāt*.<sup>84</sup>

The Muslims of Xinjiang had suffered from alien domination for over a century<sup>85</sup> and rebellion was likely to take an anti-Qing dynasty and anti-Chinese form. An earlier invasion in 1241/1826 led by Jahāngīr, an anti-Qing Muslim leader (*khwāja*) based in Khoqand, had required troop reinforcements of 36,000 men from China.<sup>86</sup> In spite of the importance of this precedent, the underlying grievance of Xinjiang 40 years later was less religious than fiscal. As a result of the Taiping rebellion in the Shanxi and Gansu provinces of China, the Xing could no longer send subsidies to Xinjiang to defray its military costs: the result was an increase in the tax burden on the local people.<sup>87</sup>

The precipitant in the revolt was the rumour of a massacre of Tungan (Hui or Chinese-speaking) Muslims; from this moment on, it was likely that the unifying factor in the resulting revolt would become Islām itself. Most of the Muslim population of Xinjiang, regardless of their ethnic and social background, participated in the rebellions, which were organized initially by Tungan minority in the cities throughout Kashgharia and Ili.<sup>88</sup>

In 1282/1865 ‘Ālim Quli, the Khān of Khoqand, sent Ya‘qūb Beg (who was probably an Uzbek in origin) at the head of a small army to install a new leader in Yarkand as a puppet governor for Khoqand.<sup>89</sup> In the next two years Ya‘qūb Beg managed to wrest control of the cities of Kashgharia from the Qing, Tungan and Turki Muslim forces. Divisions within the short-lived regime of the Kuchean *khwājas* made it relatively easy for Ya‘qūb Beg to impose his will.<sup>90</sup> Under his rule east Turkestan was held fairly securely, but when he attempted to extend his rule north into the Ili and Jungarian regions, and east to Turfan and Urumchi,<sup>91</sup> he was far less successful, and the resulting wars devastated these regions. There is no doubt that Ya‘qūb Beg slaughtered more Muslims than he did infidels, but in each case the violence was excessive.<sup>92</sup> A few of the Muslims were heretics or quasi-heretics, such as two *shaykhs* from Badakhshan, one of whom claimed to be the ‘Mahdī of the Last Day’, who were placed in a pit and stoned to death;<sup>93</sup> most were not, but simply opponents of Ya‘qūb Beg’s puritanical theocratic state and extensive territorial ambitions. A. N. Kuropatkin, the leader of a Russian mission to the area, commented that the *jihād* had been launched on a declining revenue base, which inevitably resulted in increased taxation:<sup>94</sup>

He has acted as though he would turn the country into one vast monastery, in which the new monks must, whilst cultivating the soil with the sweat of their brow, give as much as possible – nay, the greater part of their earnings – into the hands of the Government, to devote to warlike impulse.

Ya‘qūb Beg’s self-proclaimed title of *amīr* (one of several designations he used, including *ataliq ḡhāzī* or ‘fatherly warrior for God’) was confirmed by the

Ottoman caliph in 1290/June 1873: Abdulazīz also referred to him as governor (*ḥākīm*) of Kashghar and expressed the pious hope that he should not enter into unnecessary conflict with neighbouring countries.<sup>95</sup>

Closer relations with the Ottomans brought some much-needed additional armaments, but Ya'qūb Beg's need for armaments and military training for his forces of some 40,000 men was so pressing that relations with other powers were needed too. Treaties were entered into with Russia in 1289/June 1872 and with Britain in 1291/April 1874.<sup>96</sup> When Afghanistan failed to provide rifles in sufficient quantities, the British stepped in and appear also to have provided workmen for an armaments factory of sorts in Kashgharia. Officers from the Ottoman army were not employed as extensively as might have been expected, reflecting the limits on Ya'qūb Beg's capacity to implement military reforms. How much time and effort had been spent by the Ottoman sultans to discard the Janissaries and build a new army?, he mused. He was able to make a start with reforming the infantry; but the cavalry was left unreformed, dominated as it was by the Khoqandians, the mainstay of the regime, from whom he had most to fear.<sup>97</sup>

When the end came to the independent *jihād* state in Chinese Central Asia, it came as a damp squib. Ya'qūb Beg died suddenly and unexpectedly in 1294/May 1877; by 1294/early January 1878 the Chinese conquest was complete. This contrasts markedly with the Chinese experience in conquering the Muslim rebellion of Shanxi, Xining and Suzhou which took Zuo Zongtang some seven years from 1284/1867 to 1290/1873.<sup>98</sup> The collapse of the *jihād* state also confounded speculation abroad, which had assumed that Ya'qūb Beg's state was secure and that a Chinese military assault was unlikely to meet with success. Foreign observers had underestimated Zuo Zongtang's belief that Xinjiang was essential to the security of Mongolia, which in turn was essential to the security of Peking; this 'domino theory' left no choice but to campaign for the recovery of Xinjiang.<sup>99</sup> For his part, Ya'qūb Beg had sought a negotiated settlement with the Qing court which would have left him in overall control of his state, while recognizing Chinese suzerainty. This may account for the otherwise extraordinary last order Ya'qūb Beg issued to his troops that they were not to fire upon the advancing Chinese forces.<sup>100</sup>

The Chinese success owed more to the disarray of the enemy than to the strength of its army or the triumph of its military strategy. The origins of rebellion lay in fiscal pressure resulting from the inability of the Qing to transfer subsidies on the scale required for its military establishment; but the fiscal pressure had grown, and not diminished, in a period of 13 years of continuous warfare. Moreover, for all the willingness of many Muslims to be mobilized by the *ghazawāt* and to submit to the rules of *shari'ah*, the abuses of power by the Khoqandians and the fact that they were, in essence, a foreign elite (one moreover which even Ya'qūb Beg had been unable to control), posed the question as to whether Xinjiang had

not been better off under Chinese rather than Khoqandian rule.<sup>101</sup> The succession dispute following the death of Ya'qūb Beg evolved rapidly into civil war and a tripartite partition of east Turkestan. Divided and fatally inactive in the face of the Chinese advance, Xinjiang was incorporated into the system of Qing provincial administration, which was followed by the extensive immigration of Han Chinese. At the time of writing, the Uyghurs are still numerically ascendant over the Han, but it is likely that the demographic balance will shift before long in favour of the Han in what has now become a permanent part of Chinese Central Asia.

### ***Jihād* in the era of the Indian Mutiny**

The reassertion of the idea of *jihād* in the context of an anti-colonial struggle in India was begun by the *ṣultān* of Mysore, Haidar 'Alī, and continued by his son, Feth 'Alī, known as Tīpū (1163/1750–1213/1799).<sup>102</sup> They claimed to be of Qurayshī descent and sought the status of *pādshāh* of India. Tīpū entered into alliances with Afghanistan and France but was defeated by the British and killed in battle at Seringapatam in 1213/May 1799. He had proposed that the Ottoman caliphate should become the real political centre of Islām, and be mobilized to oppose European encroachment.<sup>103</sup> Tīpū's defeat brought an end to an independent Mysore sultanate. Karpat notes that the British concluded from this incident that the caliphate 'could be used to tame the Muslims under its rule and to establish an Islamic front directed against its enemies, Russia in particular'.<sup>104</sup> Thereafter, the British tried to use the Ottoman caliph to tame the Sepoy rebels in 1273/1857 and to persuade the *amīr* of Afghanistan in 1294/1878 to cease his opposition to the British and to help mobilize the Muslims of Central Asia against the Russians.<sup>105</sup>

After the elimination of Mysore, the propagation of *jihād* in India is associated with the life, writings and campaigns of Sayyid Aḥmad Barelvī (1201/1786–1246/1831), known as *shahīd* after his death, who was a disciple of Shāh Walī Allāh (see Chapter 3). For Sayyid, the British were, quite simply, treacherous (*daghābāz*)<sup>106</sup> and to be opposed by the faithful who should proceed into exile and establish a *Dār al-Islām* within the subcontinent, which would oppose colonialism and religious syncreticism alike.

Sayyid Aḥmad's *hijrah* began in 1241/January 1826. Following the battles of Akora and Hazru, where the *mujāhidīn* acted 'like a leaderless band', it was decided that 'the successful establishment of *jihād* and the dispelling of disbelief and disorder could not be achieved without the election of an *imām*'. Sayyid Aḥmad's conception of the *jihād* state was a combination of the secular authority of the *ṣultān* with the religious authority of the *imām*, the latter having a general supervisory role over the former.<sup>107</sup> Sayyid Aḥmad's power in the tribal area of what would become the North-West Frontier Province fluctuated wildly, and his forces were finally defeated at Balakote by the Sikh army of Kunwar Sher

Singh in 1246/May 1831. Sayyid Aḥmad's body was identified and burnt by the Sikhs.<sup>108</sup>

The doctrine of *hijrat* continued to predominate in *jihādī* thinking in the years before the great Sepoy rising or 'mutiny' of 1273/1857. The establishment of an independent imāmate beyond the borders of British-controlled India enabled the proclamation of *jihād* against it as a *Dār al-Ḥarb*, a 'land of war' against which the struggle could be carried on as between two states, backed up by the existence of district centres inside British India.<sup>109</sup> The *jihādīs* had been fighting the British continuously since 1268/1852 and had already conceived of the strategy of seeking to 'tamper with the allegiance of the army'.<sup>110</sup> Though the rising of 1273/1857 presented them with opportunities for continuing their campaign and gaining further support, the rising was not a pre-planned movement and lacked any unity of purpose or coordinated plan of action.<sup>111</sup> An invasion from the north-west would have enhanced the chances of success of the Sepoy rising,<sup>112</sup> but the movement lacked the material resources to go on the offensive.<sup>113</sup>

The nearest to coordination during the rebellion came from the activities of Azimullah Khan, the Muslim secretary of Nana Sahib (Dhundu Pant), leader of the rebellion at Kanpur, where the British garrison and colony was massacred. Azimullah printed pamphlets that called for a *jihād* against the infidel and gathered together disaffected Indian officers, whether Hindu or Muslim, and presented seditious ideas to them. Azimullah expressed the extent of his intrigues and seditious plans to the Turkish general Umar Pasha in 1272/1856, in an attempt to gather Ottoman support. It was Azimullah who formed an infrastructure of Indian agents to distribute seditious anti-British propaganda and not Russian agents, as the British believed. But it was not enough; and events moved too rapidly for the Sepoy rebellion to produce distinctive but unified political ideas of resistance which could bridge differences between the various religious communities. It is true that Bahādur Shāh, the last Moghul ruler, was encouraged to assert his claim to sovereignty in 1273/May 1857; but the rebel council established at Delhi ignored the Mughal emperor, and he was deposed and prosecuted by the British the following year. It is true that an independent sovereign could have declared a legitimate *jihād*, which might have gone some way towards bringing to pass the Muslim prophecy that foreign rule would last a hundred years (the rising was timed to coincide with the centenary of the victory at Pīnipat in the Hijrī calendar, 1174/1273 ME); but none of this would have resolved the longer-term problem of sustaining an alliance with the Hindus and Sikhs in order to oust the British.<sup>114</sup>

The majority of the Indian '*ulamā*' contested the idea of a *jihad* against British rule in the decade or so following the failure of Sepoy rebellion in 1273/1857.<sup>115</sup>



the supreme tribunals of Islām have unanimously and solemnly declared that India under its present tolerant and equal government is certainly not *Dār al-Ḥarb* ('the country of the enemy'), upon whose rulers war should be waged by the faithful; and consequently, no Indian Wahhābī who has not utterly broken with the orthodox portion of his Church [*sic*] can be disloyal on merely religious grounds...

[Quoting Hunter:]<sup>116</sup> the Mussulmans here are protected by Christians, and there is no *jihād* in a country where protection is afforded, as the absence of protection and liberty between Mussulmans and infidels is essential in a religious war, and that condition does not exist here. Besides, it is necessary that there should be a probability of victory to Mussulmans and glory to Islām. If there be no such possibility, the *jihād* is unlawful...

Notwithstanding this distancing of the Indian 'ulamā' from the *jihādī* position, the tribal alliances of the north-west frontier secured the position of the rebels even against British campaigns on an increasing scale in 1274/1858 and 1279/1863, the first of which saw the deployment of Lee Enfield rifles which gave the British greatly increased firepower over their opponents.<sup>117</sup>

In the second campaign in 1279/1863, the tribes in that most volatile of regions initially showed concerted support. It seemed that the British had

underrated the hold which the Fanatical Colony had acquired over the Frontier tribes.<sup>118</sup> Those who had joined them for the sake of Faith were burning with hopes of plunder or of martyrdom, while the less bigoted clans were worked upon by the fear of their territory being invaded by the British.<sup>119</sup>

It was only when tribal dissensions, coupled with financial inducements, began to work their effect that this apparent unity collapsed. The British succeeded in restoring order only by co-opting sub-tribes such as the Bonairs, Amzais and Khudikhels who, 'having once committed themselves openly against the fanatics' were certain not to realign with them.<sup>120</sup> Nevertheless, further British expeditions were required in 1284/1868, 1305/1888 and 1308/1891. The period of Abdullāh's *imārat* spanned four decades from the battle of Ambeyla in 1279/1863 until his death in 1318/1901.<sup>121</sup>

## **The development of modernist arguments in opposition to Muslim revivalism**

The classic *jihād* declarations against foreign invasion were those of Egypt against the British in 1299/July 1882<sup>122</sup> and of Libya against the Italians in 1330/January 1912.<sup>123</sup> However, such resistance was rarely successful. Muslim intellectuals such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1254/1839–1314/1897) and the

young Muḥammad ‘Abduh (1264/1848–1322/1905) were, in contrast, impressed by the unorthodox but relatively successful Mahdist movement in resisting the semi-colonial Anglo-Egyptian condominium.<sup>124</sup> Both Muḥammad ‘Abduh and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (1281/1865–1354/1935) conceived of *jihād* as essentially defensive in nature, or in Riḍā’s words, ‘defence against enemies that fight the Muslims because of their religion’: it could be used as an instrument against colonialism.<sup>125</sup> In al-Afghānī’s view, the Ottoman caliph should become more aware of his moral authority and use it ‘in an intelligent manner’ on issues such as the Egyptian question ‘which is actually an Ottoman or Islamic question’.<sup>126</sup> In reality, as has been seen in Chapter 5, Abdūlhamid II certainly sought to initiate a pan-Islamic policy where it was both possible and prudent to do so.

Yet politics is the art of the possible. Other Muslim intellectuals, notably the Indian educational reformer Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (later Sir Sayyid, 1232/1817–1315/1898) deduced, in the aftermath of what came to be known as the Indian Mutiny, that resistance to overwhelming military power was impossible and might in certain circumstances be undesirable.<sup>127</sup> He wrote in 1287/1871:<sup>128</sup>

First, what is *jihād*? It is war in defence of the faith *fī sabīl Allāh*. But it has conditions, and except under these it is unlawful. It must be against those who are not only [unbelievers (*kuffār*)] but also ‘obstruct the exercise of the faith’ (Q.47:1)... there must be *positive* oppression or obstruction to the [Muslims] in the exercise of their faith; not merely want of countenance, negative withholding of support, or absence of profession of the faith; and further, this obstruction and oppression which justifies *jihād* must be, not in civil, but in religious matters; it must impair the foundation of some of the ‘pillars of Islām’... positive oppression (*ẓulm*) and obstruction of the exercise of the faith (*ṣadd*) can alone justify *jihād*.

Cherāgh ‘Alī adopted a similar approach in his treatise on *jihād* discussed in Chapter 1, and the view was shared by many contemporaries. As Rudolph Peters argues, these modernists ‘introduced a separation between the religious and political spheres, an obvious innovation with regard to a religion which claims to dominate all domains of human activity’.<sup>129</sup> It is thus ironic that the revivalist movements up to and including the nineteenth century not only failed to achieve their purpose in many respects but that in their very failure they stimulated a modernist discourse – even if this was a discourse which opponents such as al-Afghānī characterized as divisive and likely to lead, within their definition, to the abandonment of a truly Islamic position. This debate remains ongoing in contemporary Islām.