

Barelwis

convinced that men could improve their lot through their own efforts. Banna thus thoroughly embraced 19th-century faith in self-help and moral improvement with an emphasis on individual responsibility, not individual freedom. His aim was not to foster individualism but to *form* the self and *reform* the community to render them capable of installing the “Islamic order.” His concern with discipline, self-observation, and time management may have been influenced by Ghazali’s *Ihya’ ‘Ulum al-Din* (The revival of the religious sciences), which Banna read with one of his Sufi shaykhs. The influence is there, but the differences must not be ignored: it is not introspection and self-purification that Banna sought to promote but an active involvement in the world with energies directed outward, not inward. Throughout, he espoused a decidedly masculine ethos, which he wished to instill in Muslim youths. With regard to women’s rights, he opposed female liberation or emancipation and endorsed the principle of male guardianship over women (*qiwāma*, based on Q. 4:34), denying women access to leading positions in society, as well as in the MB, as not befitting their sex and nature.

Banna’s death threw the MB into profound disarray, yet it survived and reemerged in the 1980s. Together with Sayyid Qutb, who joined the MB in the early 1950s, Banna remains one of the central figures of modern Sunni Islamism, whose legacy continues to be invoked by the MB and their critics alike.

See also Egypt; fundamentalism; jihad; Muslim Brotherhood; revival and reform

Further Reading

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GUDRUN KRÄMER



Barelwis

The Barelwi movement represents the devotional tradition of Sufi-related Sunni scholars and schools from South Asia, which has expanded to many countries hosting Muslim migrants from the region. It derived from the legacy of the religious scholar Ahmad Raza Khan Barelwi (1856–1921) in the town of Bareilly in North India. He gathered guardians of Sufi shrines (*pirs*) and Muslim theologians (*mawlānā*) of devotional Islam around the turn of the 20th century to counter the critique of their beliefs and practice by puritan reformist scholars of the Deobandi tradition, which

emanated from the Islamic school of Deoband (1866), not far from Bareilly. Their doctrinal differences were small, as both followed orthodox adherence (*taqlīd*) to the Hanafi school of law. But the Barelwis held on to Sufi-influenced rituals, such as the expression of special praise for the Prophet, public celebrations of his birthday (*mawlid*), and the worship of saints and their shrines with their associated powers of intercession, based on their reading of the Qur’an and the hadith (i.e., the prophetic traditions). The Barelwis are also linked to some of the Sufi brotherhoods (*tartqa*), mostly branches of the Qadiri and the Naqshbandi orders. Their cultural style has been exuberant, and their politics were often marked by loyalty to the ruling powers during the colonial period and afterward to the independent states of South Asia. Unlike the Deobandis, they fully supported the Pakistan movement for the partition of British India.

The Barelwi network significantly expanded and emulated the Deobandi institutions with which they saw themselves in strong competition. In 1900, they created an umbrella group of theologians, the Jama‘at-e Ahl-e Sunnat—that is, the party of the people following the traditions of the Prophet and his Companions (*sunna*), showing that they regard themselves as the only true Sunnis. From there they appropriated the label “Sunni” as their trademark designation in South Asian Islam. In 1920, they created the All-India Sunni Conference (AISC) to champion their religious and political interests during the late colonial era. The Barelwis formalized their system of religious education by establishing a large number of new madrasas and *dār-ul-‘ulams*. In Pakistan, they formed their own Board of Religious Education (Tanzim-ul-Madaris), working on parallel lines with the Deobandis. Across South Asia their relative influence among the Muslim population was estimated as being roughly on par with the Deobandis.

The Barelwis developed close links with the ruling families and political culture of Pakistan. They established their own political party, the Jam‘iat-e ‘Ulama’-e Pakistan (JUP, Party of Religious Scholars of Pakistan), which emerged in 1948 out of the AISC. Since the 1990s, Barelwi leaders in Pakistan increasingly cooperated with the Deobandis in public life. To push back sectarianism, they joined forces in 1995 in the National Reconciliation Council (Milli Yakjehti Council), led by the late Barelwi leader Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani (1926–2003). He initiated a formal alliance of religious parties in Pakistan in 2001, the Muttahida Majlis-e-‘Amal (MMA). During the Afghan war in the 1990s, the Barelwis also became part of the emerging mujahidin culture in Pakistan. Their own religious militias participated in the conflicts of Kashmir and Afghanistan. Barelwi representatives also sat on the coordinating body of the Afghan Jihad Council. Since the 1980s, militant sectarian groups confronted Deobandi radicals in deadly strife over the control of mosques and “un-Islamic” rituals and behavior. Sectarian beliefs were as influential among the Barelwis as among Deobandis. They denounced all dissenting sects as un-Islamic and joined forces against groups such as the Ahmadis, whom they saw as heretical. Arshad-ul-Qadri (1925–2002) was one of the most prominent Barelwi polemicists.

To compete with the rising influence of the Deobandi-dominated missionary movement of the Tablighi Jama'at (Preaching Movement), the Barelwis created the Da'wat-e Islami (Islamic Mission) in 1981, with affiliated groups in India under the name of the Sunni Da'wat-i Islami (Sunni Islamic Mission). The Barelwi doctrine also influenced followers of modern groups such as the political-educational movement of the Minhaj-ul-Qur'an (Quranic Path) and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM, United National Movement). The World Islamic Mission, based in Britain, is the oldest international Barelwi platform. The global Barelwi and related Sufi network serves the wider Pakistani diaspora and other South Asian migrant communities around the globe, although the Barelwi groups do not commonly attract followers beyond the limitations of their ethnic South Asian descent.

See also Deobandis; India; Pakistan

Further Reading

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DIETRICH REETZ

Ba'th Party

Hizb al-Ba'th al-'Arabi al-Ishtiraki (Party of Arab Socialist Resurrection) is a Pan-Arab nationalist party founded in the 1940s that exerted far-reaching political and cultural influence on the Arab world, particularly in Syria and Iraq. Though conceived as a secular nationalist movement, its ideology considered Islam a vital part of Arab heritage but not the basis for politics. In practice, Ba'thists have been antagonistic to members of the traditional Muslim elite as well as violent opponents of Salafism and Shi'i religious movements.

Party Origins

Upon their return to Damascus, Syria, from university studies in Europe, Michel 'Aflaq and Salah al-Din al-Bitar (1912–80) began a discussion circle among the city's educated young men that would form the nucleus of the Ba'th Party (1942). Both 'Aflaq, a Greek Orthodox Christian, and Bitar, a Sunni Muslim, were of solid middle-class origins and brought to the party their distrust of the elite and bourgeois nationalists of a previous generation who had failed to rid Syria of colonial rule. The party's ranks were swelled by the addition of the followers of an embittered 'Alawi refugee intellectual from the Sanjak of Alexandretta, Zaki al-Arsuzi (1901–68), who also brought to the party an emphasis on social justice,

the cult of personality, and Arab chauvinism. The party's socialism and secularism held little appeal for Syria's Sunni elite or its middle class. Nevertheless, the party proved particularly attractive to non-Sunni landowners and rural smallholders, Arab Christians, and junior officers.

The Ba'th Party in Syria and Iraq

The party held its first congress in 1947. Branches of the party were founded in Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon in the early 1950s. Gamal Abdel Nasser's rise to power and his advocacy of Arab unity gave a considerable boost to the party's program. In 1958, Syrian Ba'thists engineered the short-lived period of unity with Egypt (1958–61), creating the United Arab Republic (UAR). After the failure of the UAR, the center of gravity in the Syrian wing of the party shifted to military cadres dominated by 'Alawis and Sunnis of rural and peasant origin. This faction, led by Minister of Defense Hafiz al-Asad (1930–2000), took control of Syria (1970) following a bloodless coup. Asad rejected many of the more radical dimensions of Ba'thism and Pan-Arabism in favor of regionalism. An 'Alawi from the area of Latakia in northwestern Syria, Asad placed 'Alawis and Christians in positions of leadership in the state and party apparatus, further supplanting members of the Sunni middle class and elite in the process.

The Ba'th Party had a similar trajectory in Iraq. As in Syria, Ba'thism proved initially attractive to non-Sunni-Arab educated young men, in this case Shi'is. Shi'i leadership gave way in the years before the 1968 coup, which brought the Ba'thists to power, as 'Aflaq, then still party leader, appointed men from Iraq's Sunni minority, including a young Saddam Hussein (1937–2006), to key regional leadership positions. Throughout the 1970s, Hussein and his kinsmen from the city of Tikrit methodically took control of the state and the party. The régime that emerged was authoritarian in nature and sought to control all aspects of culture, religion, and thought through a vast secret police network and the party's ideological domination of education, the arts, and media. Though weakened in the period following the Gulf War (1991), the Iraqi Ba'thists under Hussein remained in tight control of the majority of Iraq until 2003 when the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq and the systematic program of de-Ba'thification eliminated the party as a viable entity.

Ba'thism and Islam

Ba'thism is an amalgamation of leftist and ultranationalist ideas from 1930s and 1940s Europe. The basic tenets of the party are embodied in its slogan, "Freedom, Unity, and Socialism." The party is secular in its view of citizenship and political participation, seeing religious distinction as antimodern and an impediment to Arab unity. However, Ba'thism does reserve a special role for Islam in the formation of the "Arab spirit" and character and considers it, with language, as the essential element of Arab heritage (*turāth*). As the party's chief ideologue, 'Aflaq developed this idea first in his essay "Valediction for the Arab Prophet" (1943), in which he identifies Muhammad as the ideal prototype of the