



The Dual Nature of Islamic Fundamentalism

Johannes Jansen

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

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