Review Article

Pervez Musharraf. *In The Line of Fire* – A Memoir
London. Simen and Schuster. 2006

The biographical literature, often serving as source material, constitutes the backbone of historical writings. If such material did not exist, we would know little or nothing about the great achievements, and equally great failures of our ancestors. This is particularly true about the Muslim historiography. Their strong belief in the hear-after and the account one has to render of the deeds committed in this world after the termination of life, made history important for them. History of every individual lived in the mundane world is supposed to be recorded, or at least that is how the belief goes, and one is to be held responsible for what has been recorded.

It is very likely that over the centuries the above mentioned concept has provided impetus to the Muslim scholars to write history. One can't complain that even though the Muslims have produced very limited scientific

44. The Muslim Brotherhood's Statement on "Shura in Islam and the Multi-Party System in an Islamic Society", *Encounters*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Markfield, LE (UK). pp. 100-103.

45. See for this separate Statement op. cit. pp. 85-89.

46. Turabi, op. cit. p. 19;

47. "Women, Islam and Muslim Society", *Milestones* (London) Publishers, 1991.

48. Rashid al-Ghannouchi, "Islamic Movements: Self-criticism and Reconsideration", *Palestine Times* No. 94, April 1999, reproduced by *MSANEWS* on the *INTERNET* on 14 April 1999. Quote from p. 43.

49. Fathi Osman, *Sharia in Contemporary Society*, Los Angeles, 1994, pp. 70, 76, 82 f.; Fathi Osman, *The Children of Adam- An Islamic Perspective on Pluralism*, Washington, D.C. 1996, pp. 12, 17, 21, 43 f., 45 f., 51.

50. *Struggling to Surrender*, Beltsville, MD, 2nd ed. 1995, pp. 191-193.

51. Ghannouchi, op. cit., pp. 2-4.

52. Interview with A. Alamoudi, *Middle East Affairs Journal*, Vol 2, No 4, Annendale, VA, Summer/Fall 1996, p. 112.

53. S. Nyang, "Integrating Islam into America", *Middle East Affairs Journal*, Vol 5, No 3-4, Annendale, VA, Summer/Fall 1999, pp. 69-80, quote on p. 72.

54. Interview with Lord Ahmad, *Middle East Affairs Journal*, Vol 5, No. 3-4, Annendale, VA, Summer/Fall 1999, p. 170.

55. Ali Masrui, "North American Muslims Rising to the Challenge of a Dual Identity", *Islamic Studies*, Islamabad, Vol 34, No. 4, Winter 1995, pp. 458-460; the action program is to be found on pp. 458-460.

24. *Even Angels Ask*, Beltsville, MD, 1997, p. 229.

25. *Middle East Affairs Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 4, Summer/Fall 1996, pp. 29-38; Italics are mine.

26. *The Principles of State and Government*, University of California Press, 1961, 2nd ed. Gibraltar, 1980.

27. Ibid., p. v.

28. Ibid., p. vi.

29. Ibid., p. ix.

30. Ibid., p. 83.

31. Ibid., p. 11.

32. Ibid., p. 13.

33. Ibid., p. 22.

34. Ibid., p. 34.

35. Ibid., p. 35.

36. Ibid., p. 36.

37. Ibid., p. 40.

38. Ibid., p. 45.

39. Ibid., p. 50.

40. Ibid., p. 52.

41. Ibid., p. 61.

42. Ibid., p. 61.

43. Ibid., p. 66.

8. This is Jeffrey Lang's view as well: *Struggling to Surrender*, Beltsville, MD, 2nd ed. 1995, p. 191.

9. An example is Abdul Rashid Moten's article on Democratic and Shura-Based Systems: A comparative Analysis in *Encounters*, Vol 3, No 1, Markfield, LE, UK, March 1997, pp. 3-20. Also see Azzam Tamimi, *Democracy in Islamic Political Thought*, same issue, pp. 21-44.

10. See Azzam Tamimi, *Democracy: The Religious and the Political in Contemporary Islamic Debate, Encounters.* Vol. 4, No.1, Markfield, LE, UK, March 1998. pp. 3-64.

11. Interview with A. Alamoudi, *Middle East Affairs Journal*, Vol. 2, No 4, Annandale VA. Summer/Fall 1996, p. 117.

12. op. cit., footnote 7, p.24.

13. *Ash-Shark al-Awsat*, London, 5 February 1990.

14. Graham E. Fuller, "Political Islam and U.S. Policy". *Middle East Affairs Journal.* Vol 5, No 1-2, Winter/Spring 1999, p. 157.

15. *Milestones*, Indianapolis, 1990.

16. Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*, Berlin, 1945.

17. Ibid., p. 50.

18. Ibid., p. 61.

19. Ibid., p. 69.

20. Ibid., p. 103.

21. Ibid., p. 110.

22. Ibid., p. 115.

23. Ibid., p. 117.

Only with such a proactive, assertive program will Muslims achieve at least their minimum goals: To empower Muslims in the West with their rights as guaranteed by Occidental constitutions, and to familiarize our fellow Europeans and Americans with the Muslim communities in their midst. On this long road, Muslim consensus on their political system is of crucial importance.

Notes

1. Nizam al-Mulk, *The Book of Government*, London 1960; *Trait de gouvernment*, Paris 1984; Das Buchder Staatskunst Siyasatnama, Zurich 1987.

2. Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, Princeton 1969.

3. M.M. Sharif, ed., *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, 2 vol., Wiesbaden 1963.

4. Hassan Turabi, *Islam, Democracy, the State and the West*, Round Table, Tampa. FL 1993, p. 19.

5. See Bustami Muhammad Khir, *Concept of Sovereignty in Contemporary Islamic Movements*, Vol 1, No 1, Markfield, I.E, UK, March 1995, pp. 5 ff.

6. Abu A'la al-Maududi, "Economic and Political Teachings of the Quran", B. Political Teachings, in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, Vol. 1. Wiesbaden, 1963, pp. 192 f.

7. "Human Rights on the Eve of the 21st century", paper submitted to the conference on Islam & Modernity in London. July 6, 1996, p. 6.

elected amirs. To practice freedom of thought internally would go a long way towards reducing fear of Islam externally. Democratization would indeed be an effective contribution to Islamic *da'wah*.

Muslims share a common craving for harmony and a common fear of being split in 73 sects. But differences of opinion, also leading to different Muslim parties – as in Malaysia – are legitimate, and with Abdurrahman Alamoudi I believe that Muslims can learn to "disagree amicably".[52] Mind you, the first Islamic commonwealth, the state of Madinah, knew two political parties already. They were called *al-muhajirun* and *al-ansar*...

Prof. Sulayman S. Nyang asks Muslim political activists in America to "cut through the thick forest of political quietism" and go for a swing vote in future national elections.[53] Clearly, as suggested by Lord Nazir Ahmad, this cannot be done outside the mainstream two-party system, either of Great Britain or the United States.[54] Prof. Ali Mazru'i developed a whole action program for American Muslims to get into the political act – from voter registration via running for school boards to grooming candidates for Congress with the aim of Islamization of the souls, the *ummah*, knowledge, and – one day – much of the world.[55]

the ideas of Islamic governance laid out by Sayyid Qutb … they will have signed their own death warrant … The role I suggest for Muslim minorities is to reinforce the Islamic presence in the countries they live in ·· not to work to establish an Islamic government." He is strictly against setting up parties that carry the word "Islam" in their name; rather Muslims should participate in existing, open, national parties. "The most a minority can hope for is participation in politics."

Ghannouchi, therefore, suggests that Muslims in the West better focus on social work and institutions of civil society because, "what is achieved socially is more permanent and better than what is achieved politically."[51]

There is much wisdom in what Shaykh Ghannouchi has to say, even though the situation looks less difficult in the United States than in Europe. On the Old Continent, Muslims ·· when engaging in political competition – still risk provoking a backlash. In the United States, political and religious pluralism seems better founded. It is, however, true that the Muslims, before entering the political arena at the national level, must establish their democratic credentials among themselves. They must not only become stronger in numbers and better educated Islamically at the grass roots level but practice pluralism among themselves. All offices in Islamic centers should be up for periodic election. All Islamic movements should be led by

8. There must be a supreme judicial court to judge on the constitutionality of laws and impeachment.

9. Any citizen, Muslim or not, male or not, can be member of government.

10. Women can fill the office of prime minister, minister, member of parliament, justice, army and police officer.

11. All citizens are equal before the law. But legislation, for valid reasons and in a non-discriminatory manner, can reflect differences between Muslims and non-Muslims and between women and men.

12. Non-Muslims can hold full citizenship unless they prefer the status of *dhimmi* (protected religious minority).

13. All government is to be considered a trust of God (4: 58) with the purpose of commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong and ensuring both justice and Islamic *jihad*.

There remains the question how to proceed with the realization of these elements in the western world. Shall Muslims create political parties? Draft counter-constitutions? Run for office?

Shaykh Ghannouchi, having the European situation in mind, is rather sceptical, saying, "If Muslim minorities adopt

is the fact that modern democratic republics simply do the best job of protecting individual rights.[50]

It is now possible, and also high time, to sum up:

The Islamic political system, based on Qur'an, *Sunnah*, reason, and historical experience should include the following 13 features:

1. All Muslims should live in a world-wide, but decentralized Islamic commonwealth organized as a republic.

2. The *shari'ah* is the supreme constitution of any Islamic state. This does not exclude the adoption of a written constitution with a bill of God-given basic rights.

3. It is up to each generation of Muslims, as God's vice-regents on earth, to decide on the specific form of their State within the framework of the *shri'ah*.

4. There must be a parliament, based on universal suffrage, whose decisions are binding on the executive.

5. Legislation must be in accordance with the letter and spirit of the *shari'ah*.

6. There should be a plurality of Islamic political parties assuring rotation of power.

7. Head of state is to be a single person (male and Muslim), not a collective body, periodically elected.

principles of the *shari'ah*; but "as long as there is room for *ijtihad* there is room for legislation."

Osman is adamant that democracy does not imply either of the two extremes of the political spectrum – theocracy or secularism. He admits that majorities may not always be right. "However, the fallibility of the majority cannot ... be used as an excuse for autocracy and authoritarianism."

Osman also makes the point that according to 9:71 both men and women share the responsibility to assure what is right (*al-ma'ruf*) and prevent what is wrong (*al-munkar*); therefore Muslim women should be admitted as parliamentarians, government ministers, judges, and military and police officers.[49]

Jeffrey Lang, like all Muslims, considers secularism as irreconcilable with Islam but neatly distinguishes democracy from secularism. He asks the good question why democracy should be more of a challenge to the supreme authority of God than any other system of rule? He also makes the good point that there is not one existing model of an Islamic state – neither Saudi Arabia nor Pakistan nor Iran – that would be acceptable to a majority of Muslims. Therefore, when discussing an Islamic state, he sees Muslims usually engaged in either rejection or dreaming. What clinches the discussion for him