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**POST HOC ERGO PROPTER HOC?
COMPARING MAUDUDI'S JAMAAT-E ISLAMI
AND AL-NABHANI'S HIZB UT-TAHRIR AL-ISLAMI**

Key words: Hizb ut-Tahrir, political Islam, Jamaat-e Islami, Maududi, al-Nabhani.

The relationship between Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami (HTI), founded in Jerusalem in 1952–1953, and other Islamist groups, such as the Society of the Muslim Brothers (SMB) and al-Qaida, has been a subject of scrutiny in numerous publications. In particular, it is commonly assumed that the founder of HTI Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani and the cohort of his closest followers were at some point affiliated with the SMB in Palestine. Likewise, scholars have routinely tried to place these two groups vis-à-vis each other on the spectrum of Islamism and compare their ideological agendas in what concerns their central goal of establishing a truly Islamic political order. In this light, it is rather puzzling that analysis of similarities and differences between HTI and another quintessential Islamist movement, *Jamaat-e Islami*, founded by one of the forefathers of modern political Islam Abu Ala Maududi (d. 1979), remain virtually overlooked in academic literature. While direct influence or borrowing of ideas cannot be demonstrated with certainty at this stage of analysis, it is plausible to argue that there is clear affinity between the two groups which may shed more light on the origins and nature of HTI as a political organization.

While his first significant work, *Jihad in Islam* (“Jihad fi al-Islam”) appeared already in 1927, Maududi started profusely writing on various issues concerning contemporary Islam around 1932. Likewise, his *Jamaat-e Islami*, an Islamic movement that eventually transformed into a political party, was founded in 1941. In other words, Maududi’s organizational and discursive activities long preceded the emergence of HTI and thus could become a source of inspiration for al-Nabhani in his search for an alternative for the SMB’s type of political activism. It should be acknowledged, however, that, given the current state of research, it is difficult to ascertain to which degree al-Nabhani was familiar with the activities and published works of Maududi. On the one hand, Maududi wrote in Urdu and was mostly active in the Indian subcontinent, i.e. in a very different

cultural milieu to that of the Near East. On the other hand, it is a fact that in the wake of the violent crackdown on the SMB in Egypt in the late 1940s, a small group of its young members in Cairo formed a publishing committee and opened a small bookstore that started distributing some of Maududi's writings translated into Arabic (such as *Nazariyyat al-Islam al-Siyasiyyah* (Political Theory of Islam) and *Minhaj al-Inqilab al-Islami* (The Process of Islamic Revolution)). In this respect, some scholar argued that attention to Maududi's ideas in the Arab world grew significantly in the wake of the assassination of the SMB's leader Hasan al-Banna in 1949.

Thus, it is possible that al-Nabhani could be very well familiar with the fundamental elements of Maududi's ideology and the nature of his political vehicle, *Jamaat-e Islami*, long before 1952 and in fact used it as a basic model for founding HTI itself. In this respect, it is highly noteworthy that *Jamaat-e Islami* was conceived of by Maududi as a *vanguard* entity – both a special holy community and a political party – in a revolutionary struggle that would eventually result in the emergence of an Islamic order. A major task of this “vanguardist” party was paving the way to the establishment of an Islamic state by building cadres and educating political elites in the spirit of Islam. Even a brief survey of relevant literature demonstrates that HTI is described by scholars and analysts in very similar terms. As is the case for HTI, the use of the vanguard concept by Maududi is usually attributed to his familiarity with Leninist Bolshevism and Marxism as well as their organizational strategies of political activism both in Russia and in the Indian subcontinent.

There are other highly pronounced similarities between the goals, strategies and general discursive representations employed by the ideologues of these two groups. For one thing, although Maududi wrote an apologetic work on the concept of *jihad* and recognized the necessity of toppling non-Islamic governments, in his view, revolutionary changes leading to the establishment of an Islamic state should be essentially nonviolent, i.e. the summit of a gradual process of transforming society and its elites followed by a peaceful transfer of power. This is clearly reminiscent of the signature strategy of HTI whose representatives claim to foster a nonviolent “intellectual revolution” or a bloodless military coup. It is also of note that in the early 1950s, *Jamaat-e Islami* actively involved itself in the negotiation of a new constitution for Pakistan and proposed its own draft based on Islamic principles. Likewise, a proposal of the Constitution for the future Islamic state became one of the most distinctive features of HTI compared to the SMB and other Islamist movements whose political ideas remained rather vague. It is of great interest for the purposes of comparison that Maududi, just like al-Nabhani, put a premium on studying the Prophet Muhammad's biography and emulating his example as a blueprint model for resurrecting the greatness of Muslim societies in the present day contexts. In the same vein, it is noteworthy for future analysis that in elaborating

on his paradigm of Islamic history as a part of his ideological system, Maududi also utilized the prophetic hadith from the collection of Ibn Hanbal which predicted the re-emergence of the caliphate '*ala manhāj al-nubuwwa* (according to the Prophet's way). The same tradition is a major cornerstone of the agenda upheld by HTI whose activities are premised on the idea that the restoration of the caliphate as the true form of Islamic government is not just a religious obligation of every Muslim, but also an inescapable future reality predicted by the Prophet himself.

Of course, despite these and other significant similarities, there are also issues where al-Nabhani and his HTI took things into a different – sometimes much more radical – direction. For example, although there were periodical debates on this issue, Jamaat-e Islami generally remained within the legal political field and participated, albeit without much success, in the electoral processes of Pakistan and other countries in the region. For its part, apart from a brief spell of semi-legal activities in the 1950s, HTI was swiftly forced to operate underground and develop a modus operandi of a clandestine conspiratorial group whose goal is to come to power through a coup d'état. Moreover, while HTI gradually transformed into a transnational, de-territorialized entity with global ambitions, Jamaat-e Islami focused its primary political activities on the national states in the Indian subcontinent. On an ideological note, it is evident that Maududi much more freely "islamicized" western political concepts and theories by introducing such notions as *theodemocracy*. For HTI, such borrowing or hybridization in general and the idea of democracy in particular were completely unacceptable in constructing the model for the future caliphate as an essentially authoritarian state.

Thus, given the absence of solid evidence to the contrary, one can, of course, argue that Maududi and al-Nabhani merely independently drew on the same pool of religious and political paradigms which circulated in the Muslim world in their time, such as Salafism, secular nationalism, socialism, etc. While more research is still needed in this area, it is evident, however, that at the time of its emergence HTI was not the first one to adopt the image of a vanguard Islamic political party spearheading the umma in its quest for the resurrection of the original caliphate. However, different public profiles of their charismatic founders, as well as the fundamental differences in the local socio-political and cultural contexts where the two groups had to operate, inescapably informed the diverging trajectories of HTI and Jamaat-e Islami's development in the second half of the 20th century and up to the present day.