



ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES TRIPOS PART II

Middle Eastern Studies

Tuesday 5 June 2012

13.30 – 16.30

MES. 38 HISTORY OF THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST

Answer **three** questions.

All questions carry equal marks.

Answer **each** question in a **separate** answer booklet.

*Write your number **not** your name on the cover sheet of **each** answer booklet.*

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS

8 Page Answer Book x 3

Rough Work Pad

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

None

**You may not start to read the questions
printed on the subsequent pages of this
question paper until instructed that you may
do so by the Invigilator.**

Answer *three* of the following questions:

- 1) **Either (i)** In what ways was Muhammad Abduh's "modernism" a break from the past?

Or (ii) Why do you think AD Gordon's notion of "culture" was considered to be so revolutionary in contemporary Zionist thought?

- 2) **Either (i)** "The idea of 'progress' is central to Rashid Rida's salafism." Discuss.

Or (ii) Comment on the passage below, with particular reference to the relationship between the renaissance of Hebrew literature and the rise of Jewish nationalism.

Yes, our environment is crumbling. This is nothing new, for this environment has never been stable; it has always lacked a firm foundation. We never had workers, never a real proletariat. What we had and have are idle poor. Basically nothing has changed, but now the very forms of life have dissolved.

We live now without an environment, utterly outside any environment. We have to start all over again, to lay down a new cornerstone. But who will do that? Can we do it, with our sick character? This is the question.

This is the question: In order that our character be changed as much as possible, we need our own environment; in order to create such an environment ourselves – our character must be radically changed.

We are at an impasse, but the pen is still in hand. Our literature lives with Mendele and with all who have succeeded him, and it continues to seek the way, with true self-criticism for a guide.

Y.H. Brenner, 'Self-Criticism' (1914), in A. Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, Harper and Row, New York, 1966, p. 311.

- 3) **Either (i)** Discuss Muhammad Talbi's concept of history. How does it inform his thought?

Or (ii) Comment on the text below, with particular reference to significant themes and use of language:

الحياة في ظلال القرآن نعمة. نعمة لا يعرفها إلا من ذاقها. نعمة ترفع العمر وتباركه وتزيه. والحمد لله . . لقد منَّ عليَّ بالحياة في ظلال القرآن فترة من الزمان، ذقت فيها من نعمته ما لم أذق قط في حياتي. ذقت فيها هذه النعمة التي ترفع العمر وتباركه وتزيه.

لقد عشت أسمع الله - سبحانه - يتحدث إلي هذا القرآن. أنا العبد القليل الصغير. أي تكريم للإنسان هذا التكريم العلوي الجليل؟ أي رفعة للعمر يرفعها هذا التنزيل؟ أي مقام كريم يتفضل به على الإنسان خالقه الكريم؟

وعشت - في ظلال القرآن - أنظر من علو إلى الجاهلية التي تموج في الأرض، وإلى اهتمامات أهلها الصغيرة الهزيلة. . أنظر إلى تعجب أهل هذه الجاهلية بما لديهم من معرفة الأطفال، وتصورات الأطفال، واهتمامات الأطفال. . كما ينظر الكبير إلى عبث الأطفال، ومحاولات الأطفال. ولثغة الأطفال. . وأعجب. . ما بال هذا الناس؟

Sayyid Qutb, *Tafsīr fī zilāl al-qur'ān*, Dār al-Shurūq, Cairo, 1985, p.11.

- Or (iii)** Assess Fackenheim's understanding of the Holocaust, exemplified in the passage below, within the wider context of post-Holocaust Jewish theology.

Catastrophe

The Holocaust is unique in history, and therefore in Jewish history. Previously, genocide has been a means to such human (if evil) ends as power, greed, an extreme of nationalist or imperialist self-assertion, and at times this means may even have become, demonically, an end *beside* these others. In the Holocaust Kingdom genocide showed itself gradually to be *the sole ultimate end* to which all else - power, greed, and even 'Aryan' self-assertion - were sacrificed, for 'Aryan' had no other clear meaning than 'not-non-Aryan'. And since the Nazis were not anti-Semites because they were 'racists' but rather racists because they were antisemites, the 'non-Aryan' was, paradigmatically, the Jew. Thus the event belongs to Jewish and world history alike.

Nor is 'genocide' adequate to describe the Holocaust Kingdom. Torquemada burned Jewish bodies to save Jewish souls. Eichmann created a system which, by torturing with terror and hope, by assailing all human dignity and self-

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respect, was designed to destroy the souls of all available Jewish men, women, and children before consigning their bodies to the gas chambers. The Holocaust Kingdom was a celebration of degradation as much as of death, and of death as much as of degradation. The celebrants willingly or even enthusiastically descended into hell themselves, even as they created hell for their victims. As for the world – it tolerated the criminals and abandoned the innocents. Thus the Holocaust is not only a unique event: it is epoch-making. The world, just as the Jewish world, can never again be the same.

The event therefore resists explanation – the historical kind that seeks causes, and the theological kind that seeks meaning and purpose. More precisely, the better the mind succeeds with the necessary task of explaining what can be explained, the more it is shattered by its ultimate failure. What holds true of the Holocaust holds true also of its connection with the state of Israel. Here, too, the explaining mind suffers ultimate failure. *Yet it is necessary, not only to perceive a bond between the two events but also so to act as to make it unbreakable.*

Emil Fackenheim, 'The Holocaust and the State of Israel: Their Relation', in *The Jewish Thought of Emil Fackenheim: a Reader*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1987, p.286.

- 4) **Either (i)** How does the concept of “tradition” help make sense of Rashid Rida’s thought?

Or (ii) Comment on the text below, with particular reference to significant themes and use of language:

كان أرقى حكام الروم والفرس وغيرهم علما وفنا وأدبا وسياسة يفسد في الأرض، ويعيث بالمال والعرض، أو كما قال الله تعالى: (وإذا تولى سعى في الأرض ليفسد فيها ويهلك الحرث والنسل والله لا يحب الفساد ٢: ٢٠٥) وكان المسلم العربي يتولى حكم بلد أو ولاية، وهو لا علم عنده بشئ من فنون الدولة، ولا من قوانين الحكومة، ولم يمارس أساليب السياسة، ولا طرق الإدارة، وإنما كل ما عنده من العلم بعض سور من القرآن، فيصلح من تلك الولاية فسادها، ويحفظ أنفُسها وأموالها وأعراضها، ولا يستأثر بشئ من حقوقها، هذا وهو في حال حرب، وسياسة فتح، مضطر لمراعاة تأمين المواصلات مع جيوش أمته وحكومتها، وسد الذرائع لانتقاض أهلها. وإذا صلحت النفس البشرية أصلحت كل شئ تأخذ به...

Abduh-Rida, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Al-Hay’a al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma li’l-Kuttāb, Cairo, 1990, p.7.

Or (iii) Critically evaluate Hess's bringing together of religion and nationalism, as exemplified in the passage below.

In those countries which form the dividing line between the Occident and the Orient, namely, Russia, Poland, Prussia, Austria, and Turkey, there live millions of our brethren who pray fervently every day to the God of their fathers for the restoration of the Jewish kingdom. These Jews have preserved the living kernel of Judaism, the sense of Jewish nationality, more faithfully than our occidental brethren. The western Jews would breathe new life into the whole of our religion, but they ignore the great hope which created our faith and has preserved it through all the tempests of history – the hope of the restoration of the Jewish nation. I turn to the faithful millions of my brethren and exclaim: 'Carry thy standard high, my people! It is in you that the living kernel is preserved, which, like the grains of corn found in the graves of Egyptian mummies, retains its reproductive power after thousands of years of suspended animation. As soon as the rigid encasing form is shattered, the seed, placed in the fertile soil of the present and given air and light and rain, will strike root and bring forth life!'

The rigid forms of orthodoxy, which were entirely justified before this century of rebirth, can relax and become creative again. To be valid, such creativity must come from within, from the seminal power of the living idea of the Jewish nationality and of our historical religion. Only a national renaissance can endow the religious genius of the Jews, like the legendary giant when he touches mother earth, with new strength, and raise its soul once again to the level of prophetic inspiration. The "enlighteners" have attempted to open the Jewish scene to the light of modern culture by piercing the hard shell with which rabbinism had armoured Judaism. None of them, not even the great Mendelssohn, could succeed in doing this without inevitably destroying the innermost essence of Judaism, its historical national religion, and thus doing a sacred life to death.

Moses Hess, 'The Reawakening of the Nations' (1862), in A. Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, Harper and Row, New York, 1966, p.123.

- 5) "Islamism is incoherent because the political discourse of any Islamist group is inevitably inconsistent over time." Discuss with reference to either Hamas, or Hizbullah, or the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.
- 6) Compare and contrast two Islamist groups, in terms of the role of domestic and international factors behind their emergence.

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- 7) “Salafi Islamism is a spectrum of groups, practices and perceptions rather than a well-defined term that depicts a monolithic body of ideas or politics.” Discuss.
- 8) Discuss the impact of the Arab Spring on Islamist movements and their policies in at least one of the following countries: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya.

END OF PAPER