

# Challenging Authoritarianism, Colonialism, and Disunity: The Islamic Political Reform Movements of al-Afghani and Rida

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## **Abstract**

This paper focuses on the dilemmas that al-Afghani and Rida encountered while advocating and working for political reform: Whenever they fought the tyranny of Muslim rulers, they were targeted, and usually defeated, by colonial powers. And once they began to struggle against colonialism and call for Muslim unity, they were victimized and had their plans aborted by authoritarian Muslim rulers. This was a lesson for later Islamic political movements, as they had to identify clearly, and on solid theoretical bases, their target of reform and the real enemy, and prioritize their goals and methods of reform.

## **Introduction**

The decline of the Muslim world preceded European colonization of most Muslim lands in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century. In particular, the Ottoman Empire's power and world status had been deteriorating since the seventeenth century. But, more important for Muslim scholars, it had ceased to meet some basic requirements of its position as the caliphate, the supreme and sovereign political entity to which all Muslims should be loyal. Therefore, some of the empire's Muslim scholars and intellectuals called for political reform even before the European encroachment upon Muslim lands. The reforms that they envisaged were not only Islamic, but also *Ottomanic* – from within the Ottoman framework.

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These reformers perceived the decline of the Muslim world in general, and of the Ottoman Empire in particular, to be the result of an increasing disregard for implementing the Shari`ah (Islamic law). However, since the late eighteenth century, an increasing number of reformers, sometimes supported by the Ottoman sultans, began to call for reforming the empire along modern European lines. The empire's failure to defend its lands and to respond successfully to the West's challenges only further fueled this call for "modernizing" reform, which reached its peak in the Tanzimat movement in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Other Muslim reformers called for a middle course. On the one hand, they admitted that the caliphate should be modeled according to the Islamic sources of guidance, especially the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad's teachings (Sunnah), and that the ummah's (the world Muslim community) unity is one of Islam's political pillars. On the other hand, they realized the need to rejuvenate the empire or replace it with a more viable one. Indeed, their creative ideas on future models included, but were not limited to, the following: replacing the Turkish-led Ottoman Empire with an Arab-led caliphate, building a federal or confederate Muslim caliphate, establishing a commonwealth of Muslim or oriental nations, and strengthening solidarity and cooperation among independent Muslim countries without creating a fixed structure. These and similar ideas were later referred to as the Muslim league model, which was an umbrella thesis for the various proposals related to the future caliphate.

Two advocates of such reform were Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad `Abduh, both of whom played key roles in the modern Islamic political reform movement.<sup>1</sup> Their response to the dual challenge facing the Muslim world in the late nineteenth century – European colonization and Muslim decline – was balanced. Their ultimate goal was to revive the ummah by observing the Islamic revelation and benefiting from Europe's achievements. However, they disagreed on certain aspects and methods, as well as the immediate goals and strategies, of reform. While al-Afghani called and struggled mainly for political reform, `Abduh, once one of his close disciples, developed his own ideas, which emphasized education and undermined politics.

Rashid Rida, well known as `Abduh's devout disciple, was also an independent reformist with his own insights and contributions to the modern Islamic political reform movement. Moreover, he was inspired by al-Afghani and therefore elaborated a reform program and worked hard to implement it. Although greatly appreciated for his role in developing

and spreading `Abduh's teachings on religious and educational reform, Rida is hardly known for his role in implementing al-Afghani's political reform plan.<sup>2</sup>

## **Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's Political Reform Movement**

### *Before al-Afghani's Political Reform Movement*

By the emergence of the modern political reform movement in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, most peripheral Muslim lands had already been colonized. For instance, the Dutch had occupied the East Indies (now Indonesia) since the seventeenth century, Britain had occupied India since the eighteenth century, France had occupied Algeria, and Russia and China had occupied Central Asia since the mid-nineteenth century. In addition, Portugal, France, and Britain had long since occupied most West African coastal centers, not to mention Spain's occupation of Andalusia and incorporation of a few North African coastal towns by the end of the fifteenth century.

However, the Ottoman Empire, the Muslim world's symbolic and political focus, ruled the Muslim heartland. Most Muslims, regardless of where they lived, were theoretically loyal to the Ottoman sultan, who claimed the caliphate.<sup>3</sup> For example, leaders of the Sanusi Sufi (Islamic mystic) order declared their loyalty and allegiance to the sultan and cooperated with the Ottoman authorities in North Africa.<sup>4</sup> Also, at times of Ottoman weakness, its provincial rulers challenged it politically and sometimes militarily, but never symbolically. For instance, Muhammad Ali, the Ottoman ruler of Egypt, conquered Sudan, Syria, western Arabia, and Yemen, and even defeated the Ottoman army in 1839. However, he never challenged the Ottoman sultan's position as caliph.<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, the empire was by far the most powerful Muslim state and considered the guardian of all Muslim countries. Therefore, it is understandable that all Muslims sought its support. For example, when the French attacked the Ottoman province of Algeria, the local ruler immediately called upon the sultan to defend the province and its people,<sup>6</sup> and for the next 80 years Algerian refugees made their way east to Ottoman territories. Outside the empire, Muslims in Central Asia, Sumatra, and India declared their allegiance to the sultan as the caliph, perhaps because of, not in spite of, colonialism.

Since the empire was the most powerful Muslim state, Muslims threatened by an expanding Europe were anxious to exchange professions

of allegiance for whatever military, diplomatic, or moral aid the Ottomans could give them.<sup>7</sup> For instance, Imam Shamil, who led the uprising against the Russian invasion of Daghestan, sought Ottoman support,<sup>8</sup> and Muslim refugees within the empire called for aid against Russia.<sup>9</sup> Amir Ya`cob, leader of the movement fighting Chinese colonialism in Muslim Central Asia, declared his movement's loyalty and allegiance to the sultan as the caliph in return for military support. In India, local sultans struggling against British colonialism also sought the sultan's support.<sup>10</sup>

In all of these and other cases, the Ottomans responded positively but to different extents. However, Ottoman support usually was not enough to ward off the conquering colonial forces. This failure, along with aggravating internal crises, affected the empire's image not only in the West, but also in the Muslim world as well.

### *The Call for a Model Islamic State*

In this environment, al-Afghani began his reformist career in Afghanistan before migrating to India and finally settling in Egypt. Although he made reformist philosophical and theological contributions,<sup>11</sup> he devoted most of his life to political reform in the Muslim states.<sup>12</sup> Once settled in Egypt in 1871, al-Afghani called and worked for building a model Islamic state in that "well-qualified Muslim country."<sup>13</sup> For him, this independent state would be based on a time-sensitive interpretation of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, as well as on constitutional rule and the principle of *shura*, which literally refers to consultation but is practically comparable to modern democracy.<sup>14</sup>

The main obstacles to this goal were Khedive Ismail's authoritarian rule and the prevalent ignorance and political unawareness of the masses.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, one of his movement's major goals was to educate the masses about the corrupt ruling regime by comparing it to the Islamic and modern standards of government as reflected in the Islamic sources (basically the Qur'an and the Sunnah) and western democracies. A second step was to mobilize the masses and organize his followers to overthrow – and, if necessary, assassinate – the authoritarian khedive and establish a modern Islamic regime.<sup>16</sup>

Al-Afghani used his excellent organizational and public speaking skills to address the masses and build a strong popular base for reform. As a result, he attracted people of different cultural, social, educational, and professional backgrounds. On the grassroots level, he agitated the

masses and urged them to revolt. A significant number of the newly emerging middle class embraced his ideas and joined his reform movement. Moreover, for a while, he seemed to have influenced Prince Tawfiq. Indeed, his ideas on political reform were so well established that they convinced a growing number of both the western-educated elite and the religious-educated ulama (Muslim scholars). Furthermore, the movement was able to recruit some senior officers, including leaders of the later `Urabi revolution (1881-82). For a short time, al-Afghani even joined the Eastern Masonic Forum to advocate his ideas among foreigners and admirers of the West. As a result of these efforts, an initially secret political organization was established and eventually gave birth to Egypt's first political party – the National Liberal Party, which arguably played a role in dethroning Khedive Ismail in June 1879.<sup>17</sup>

However, when Tawfiq became khedive, he considered al-Afghani's success such a threat that he exiled him to British-ruled India, where he was placed under home arrest and forbidden to communicate with anyone. Yet, his followers in Egypt attempted to complete his mission of political reform and instigated a military uprising in 1881. The revolutionary officers, who were widely supported by the middle class and the masses, as well as modernists and traditionalists, succeeded for a short time in achieving al-Afghani's main political goal: a constitutional regime with a representative Parliament. However, the new regime was short-lived, as the British invaded Egypt in 1882 on the grounds of supporting Khedive Tawfiq.<sup>18</sup>

### *The Call for an Islamic League*

The British occupation of Egypt was a turning point in al-Afghani's life, thought, and movement, not only because he was released and allowed to leave India, but also, and more importantly, because he refined his ideas on political reform. Now, the threats that impeded political reform in the Muslim world included both tyrannical Muslim rulers and colonial European powers.<sup>19</sup> While the masses' ignorance and political unawareness continued to serve tyrannical regimes, internal divisions among Muslims and the ummah's fragmentation helped colonialism.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, al-Afghani started working for three political goals simultaneously. First, he continued his call and efforts to build model Islamic states in the remaining two major independent Muslim countries: the Ottoman and the Persian empires. Second, he called upon colonized Muslims to fight their colonizers, especially the British. Third, he urged

the leaders of the still-independent Ottoman and Persian empires and Afghanistan, to overcome their differences in order to protect their independence and help liberate the colonized Muslim countries. However, realizing the extreme difficulty of achieving such a unification, he proposed a federal state or a looser commonwealth in which each province would control its internal affairs semi-independently. If this proposal was difficult to implement, then Muslim rulers should implement the Shari`ah.<sup>21</sup> This obviously was a compromise with the legal and historical ideal of one Muslim caliphate.

The best illustration of his three goals of reform, liberation, and unity working together was the transnational movement that he established and led during his short period of European self-exile. That movement gave birth to the Paris-headquartered secret organization of *Al-Urwat al-Wuthqa* (The Firmest Bond). The limited information available about this organization reveals the following: Its major goal was to mobilize Muslims against their colonial rulers, and it consisted of a vast network of underground cells that were active mainly in Egypt and India.<sup>22</sup>

In 1884, the organization published a short-lived but highly influential Arabic journal, *Al-Urwat al-Wuthqa*, which is believed to have been widely circulated in the Muslim world in general, and in Egypt and India in particular. According to Busool:

The journal was a Pan-Islamic paper that urged Muslims all over the world to unite and restore the lost glories of Islam. It was specifically aimed at liberating Egypt from the British occupation by stirring up public opinion in Egypt and also in India. The ideas expounded in the paper may be summarized into two main themes. The first is that true Islam has become corrupted through ignorance and must therefore be reformed; otherwise the Muslims all faced extinction. The second is that the Muslim countries had been betrayed by their rulers, who, swayed by personal motives of greed and aggrandizement, gave foreigners a free hand in their countries. The consequence was that the Europeans who coveted Muslim lands took advantage of the inner discords of Islam and sought to destroy the religious unity of the Muslim nations.<sup>23</sup>

The journal was revolutionary in content and tone. Al-Afghani, head of both the organization and the journal, expressed his own ideas, as edited by `Abduh. Al-Afghani's anti-colonial efforts overwhelmingly targeted the British.<sup>24</sup> The facts that his organization was based in Paris and that his journal did not condemn the French occupation of North Africa reveal that he

might have sought to exploit the colonial conflicts between France and Britain in order to liberate Egypt and India. Moreover, he once suggested that Russia, Persia, and Afghanistan should cooperate to liberate, and then occupy parts of, Muslim India.<sup>25</sup> Eventually, when the British banned the journal in Egypt and India and severely punished those convicted of possessing it, there was little reason to continue this project. The journal was therefore suspended.<sup>26</sup>

Al-Afghani's three goals did not always work together. For instance, liberating the occupied Muslim lands and uniting the independent Muslim countries required him to mobilize the masses in the occupied territories against their foreign rulers, partly in the name of the caliph, and to cooperate with authoritarian rulers. However, reforming Muslim political regimes required him to mobilize the masses in the independent Muslim countries against the same authoritarian rulers. Therefore, many times he had to choose one of his goals and change his methods accordingly. At certain points in his reformist career, al-Afghani cooperated with Muslim rulers to encourage them to unite, build model Islamic states, and help liberate the occupied Muslim lands.

He did this first in Iran, when Shah Nasir al-Din invited him to introduce his political reform program, and then in the Ottoman Empire. While in Iran (1889-91), al-Afghani did not attempt to dethrone the shah, as he had previously sought to overthrow Khedive Ismail in Egypt. Instead, he explained to him the virtues of establishing an Islamic-based constitutional and consultative regime, and called upon the Persians to unite with their Afghani neighbors.<sup>27</sup>

However, the relations between al-Afghani and the shah eventually came to a dramatic end when al-Afghani concluded that the shah was too authoritarian to allow political reform and that he welcomed more British influence in Iran. Thus he turned against the shah, who finally expelled him in a very humiliating way.<sup>28</sup> But by that time, al-Afghani had gained the support of many religious scholars and leaders and the masses. Therefore, from his exile, he successfully appealed to Iran's Shaykh al-Ra'is to issue a *fatwa* (legal judgement) forbidding trade with the privileged British corporation monopolizing Iran's tobacco trade. The Persians' positive response was very impressive.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the shah was later assassinated by an Iranian believed to be one of al-Afghani's followers.<sup>30</sup>

Al-Afghani did not give up his attempts to cooperate with Muslim leaders to achieve his three goals all at once. Thus, after a short stay in Europe, he accepted Sultan Abdul-Hamid II's invitation to discuss his polit-

ical reform program in Istanbul. There, al-Afghani called upon the sultan, whom he considered the legitimate caliph,<sup>31</sup> to adopt the goal of establishing a Muslim league as a part of Ottoman foreign policy, and to assume his responsibility and use his influence to bring it about. He also suggested several reform policies in the empire. In fact, at that time he appreciated the caliphate, which he considered the custodian of Islam and the most powerful Muslim state, one that was able to lead the other independent Muslim states.

Al-Afghani also appreciated the sultan, whom he once considered an intelligent and clever ruler motivated to establish a league of independent Muslim states.<sup>32</sup> However, the sultan placed him under house arrest in a royal palace, lest he influence the Turks as he had influenced the Egyptians and the Persians. Disappointed with the sultan's betrayal and unwillingness to reform his regime and establish a Muslim league, al-Afghani severely attacked him and renounced his allegiance to him as caliph because, according to al-Afghani, he no longer deserved that title.<sup>33</sup>

### *Achievements*

The general outcome of al-Afghani's movement might be discouraging, as he seems to have achieved none of his three goals: no model Muslim state was built in Egypt, Iran, or the Ottoman Empire; no Muslim country was liberated from colonialism; and no Islamic league was established. Yet, his thoughts and movement did succeed in two respects. First, they awakened the Muslims by making them aware of their rights and the corruption of their existing political regimes. Second, they provided alternatives to those corrupt regimes, as well as ideals and programs for the Muslim world's political reform, liberation, and unity. Later Muslim reformists, such as Rashid Rida, benefited from al-Afghani's experience and built on his achievements.

But even if Muslim rulers were reluctant to introduce political reforms and work for Muslim unity, al-Afghani's vision provided alternative avenues to achieve this unity. One obvious way was to bridge certain gaps between Muslim groups and "nations." First, al-Afghani considered the Sunni-Shi'a split as ostensible and harmful for both groups, and gave a practical example of how to bridge it. Condemning the historically prevailing trend of blindly imitating religious leaders, al-Afghani refused to identify himself with a specific sect or imam by insisting that he was just a Muslim and a scholar with his own interpretation of Islam.

That is why, even now, it is not clear whether he was originally a Sunni or a Shi`a.<sup>34</sup> This, of course, made it easier for him to deal with each group. For him, the differences between mainstream Sunnis and mainstream Shi`as were marginal and exaggerated by tyrannical rulers in order to exploit people. Therefore, his movement emphasized rapprochement and criticized the extremists on both sides.<sup>35</sup> Among its ranks, members of both groups worked together to achieve political reform, liberation, and unity throughout the Muslim world.

Second, al-Afghani condemned the then-rising ideology of nationalism, insisting that Islam was doctrinally the only nationality for all Muslims and historically the only bond that effectively tied them all together. Muslim history shows, he emphasized, that it did not matter if Arabs were ruled by Turks, if Persians were ruled by Arabs, or if Indians were ruled by Afghans, as long as the rulers observed the Islamic teachings.<sup>36</sup> Criticizing the official Ottoman policy of “Turkifying” all Ottomans, he suggested that if one language had to prevail in the Muslim world in general, and in the empire in particular, then it must be Arabic. As he was not an Arab, al-Afghani was not an Arab nationalist; rather, he encouraged Muslims to utilize that source of unity provided by Islam, given that the Qur’an and the Sunnah are in Arabic.<sup>37</sup>

## **Rashid Rida’s Political Reform Movement**

### *Before Rida’s Political Reform Movement*

As al-Afghani’s political reform movement in the Muslim heartland was unfolding, the Muslim world’s condition was deteriorating rapidly and dramatically. The colonial encroachment upon the Muslim periphery continued: Britain occupied the Malay lands, and France, Britain, Italy, and Germany occupied more Muslim lands in East and West Africa. Furthermore, the Ottomans had to abandon the Caucasus to Russia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to Austria after Russia defeated the empire in 1877-78.

Moreover, the Ottoman heartland itself increasingly became a target of colonial adventures, as France occupied Tunisia in 1881 and Britain occupied Egypt in the following year. In 1907, Britain and Russia agreed to divide Persia into three regions: its northern territories, including Tehran, went to Russia; its southern territories went to Britain; and the central zone was allowed to remain “independent.” Even the hard-to-conquer Afghanistan, though officially independent, was subjected to British influence.<sup>38</sup>

While Muslim countries were still generally looking to the Ottoman Empire as the most powerful Muslim state and to the sultan as the caliph of all Muslims, their orientation toward the empire was increasingly waning. The empire's failure, and sometimes refusal, to protect or support Muslim peoples, including some Ottomans, against colonial powers fatally affected its status throughout the Muslim world. For instance, although the sultan had once supported `Urabi's revolutionary movement (1881-82) against the authoritarian Khedive Tawfiq and his British allies, the sultan later declared `Urabi to be a dissident and his movement to be rebellious, despite the fact that the movement had declared its loyalty and allegiance to the sultan.<sup>39</sup>

Seeking to justify his decision, the sultan claimed that if he fought the British in Egypt, he would lose some other provinces, such as Palestine or Iraq. By the same token, the sultan refused to offer militarily support to Tunisia, which was being conquered by France, claiming that if he did so, he would lose some other provinces, such as Syria.<sup>40</sup> The most challenging protest against Egypt's occupation came from Sudan, particularly its Islamic revolutionary movement led by Muhammad al-Mahdi, who claimed the caliphate and demanded the sultan's allegiance. However, that movement soon lost its followers due to its leader's sudden death before fulfilling his promises. This was followed by Britain's occupation of Sudan.<sup>41</sup>

Indeed, Sultan Abdul-Hamid II was aware of the empire's declining status among Muslims. So, in an attempt to restore it, he adopted the concept of an Islamic league as an official policy toward the Muslim world.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, he first reasserted himself as the caliph of all Muslims, included that title in the first Ottoman constitution of 1876, and used it heavily, perhaps more than any other Ottoman sultan. Then, he urged all Muslims to help the empire ward off the aspiring colonial powers and defeat its enemies. This was obvious in the Ottoman-Greek war in 1897, as the Ottomans sought the support of the British-ruled Egyptians and Indians.<sup>43</sup>

Utilizing his control over the two holy cities of Makkah and Madinah, he initiated a fund-raising campaign to build a railway connecting them with Damascus. Donating generously to that project, he urged all Muslims to contribute, as the project was very important for symbolic reasons as well as for the safety and comfort it would generate for Muslim pilgrims.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, it was the first time that an Ottoman sultan had solicited the support of non-Ottoman Muslims, instead of providing them with the support they badly needed to overcome their serious problems.<sup>45</sup>

This Islamic league policy was more successful abroad than at home. Therefore, Egypt's liberation movement, led by Mustafa Kamel, insisted

that Egypt was an Ottoman province and that its people were loyal to the sultan, and urged the sultan to reclaim Egypt.<sup>46</sup> Even Persia, the only Muslim country that rejected the Ottoman sultans' claim to the caliphate for doctrinal and sectarian reasons,<sup>47</sup> was more willing to accept the idea of an Islamic league. It is widely believed that this was the result of al-Afghani's efforts for Sunni-Shi'a rapprochement and his call for an Islamic league led by the sultan.<sup>48</sup>

Due to that success, Sultan Abdul-Hamid II was confident that he had a tremendous political influence on all Muslims, and once wrote that the colonized Muslims were ready to revolt against their rulers once he declared jihad.<sup>49</sup> However, the facts that this claim was never tested before World War I and that he refused to declare jihad, despite the colonial powers' increasing domination of Muslim lands, sheds doubts on his claim. Moreover, his Islamic league policy did not generate much support among the Ottoman-ruled Arabs. To the contrary, some Arab intellectuals argued that the sultan was no longer qualified to be the caliph, for he was authoritarian and either unable or unwilling to defend Muslims, including his own subjects. `Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, for instance, called for replacing the Ottoman caliphate with a new Arab-led caliphate based in Makkah.<sup>50</sup>

### *Introducing al-Afghani's Reform Thoughts and Movement to Rida*

Both al-Kawakibi and Rashid Rida were Syrians who fled Ottoman authoritarianism at home and went to Egypt. Although inspired by al-Afghani's ideas and movement, they were not generally identified with him, as they did not meet or work with him. Also, Rida did not consider himself al-Afghani's direct disciple, while he repeatedly said that he was the legitimate intellectual heir of al-Afghani's close Egyptian disciple Muhammad `Abduh. In his two-volume biography of `Abduh, as well as in his autobiography that he wrote shortly before he died, Rida asserted that he was a faithful follower of `Abduh.<sup>51</sup>

However, although Rida did not meet al-Afghani, long before he met `Abduh he wrote al-Afghani a letter praising his reform ideas and efforts, and asked if he could become his disciple. Al-Afghani could not respond, as he had been arrested in Istanbul and forbidden to communicate with others.<sup>52</sup> Despite this, however, Rida's admiration of al-Afghani is beyond doubt, for many times he complimented al-Afghani and called him "the wise man who woke up the Orient" and "the First Instructor," while he called `Abduh "the Second Instructor." More significantly, Rida clearly

stated that he had originally planned to join and follow al-Afghani, and that he joined `Abduh only when al-Afghani died, hoping to benefit from `Abduh's experience with al-Afghani.<sup>53</sup>

Was Rida a member of al-Afghani's secret organization, al-Urwat al-Wuthqa? There is not enough evidence to answer this question definitively, but he was surely influenced by al-Afghani's ideas, as expressed in the journal *Al-Urwat al-Wuthqa*. Rida not only read all of its issues enthusiastically, but also copied many of its articles and spread them in his Syrian hometown. He later admitted that the journal worked on him like magic<sup>54</sup> and changed his life.<sup>55</sup> Later, in his own journal *Al-Manar*, he republished many of its articles under the title of "Jamal's Articles."<sup>56</sup>

Rida was introduced to al-Afghani's reform thoughts and movement through *Al-Urwat al-Wuthqa* and such other political reform advocates as al-Kawakibi. However, the tragic fates of the journal and of al-Afghani himself might have discouraged Rida, then in the early phase of his life, from following in al-Afghani's footsteps. Moreover, Rida's attitude toward politics in general was initially negative, due to `Abduh's negative attitude toward politics and the possibility of political reform. `Abduh advised Rida to work only for religious and educational reform and to avoid politics, for this was his ideal of reform after dissociating himself from al-Afghani.

`Abduh's model of reform was quite distinct from al-Afghani's, given the former's stands on constitutional rule, colonialism, and the Ottoman empire. First, `Abduh cooperated with the leaders of the `Urabi revolution (1881-82), although his revolutionary ideas were obviously more moderate than those of the military and populist leaders.<sup>57</sup> With the collapse of the constitutional regime established by the revolution and the subsequent British occupation of Egypt, he was exiled to Beirut and then joined al-Afghani in Paris, where they issued *Al-Urwat al-Wuthqa* in hopes of achieving the type of political reform advocated by al-Afghani.<sup>58</sup> However, `Abduh gave up his revolutionary ideas shortly after the journal's suspension, claiming that the Egyptians, about whom he was basically concerned, were not educated enough to be ruled constitutionally.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, he claimed that "the Orient could not improve unless it is led by a just dictator,"<sup>60</sup> which contradicted al-Afghani's saying that "the leader should be just and powerful, not a dictator."<sup>61</sup>

Second, `Abduh's stand on colonialism was benign. Several years after the British occupied Egypt, `Abduh was allowed to return home provided that he avoid political involvement.<sup>62</sup> Thus, he never cooperated with the anti-British Egyptian nationalist movement; rather, he called its

leader, Mustafa Kamel, a rash agitator. This benign attitude was reflected in his advice to the Tunisians and Algerians: Do not get involved in politics or struggle against French colonial rule; rather, focus on educational reform.<sup>63</sup> `Abduh was convinced that the Egyptians should first work for educational reform, even if they had to wait centuries before liberating their country.<sup>64</sup> This might be one reason why he was appointed Egypt's grand mufti (deliverer of formal Islamic verdicts), a post he occupied until his death in 1905.

Third, `Abduh's stand on the empire was ambiguous and pragmatic, instead of principled. While he complimented it and its sultan when he was exiled to Ottoman-ruled Beirut and when he visited Istanbul, he later privately confessed to Rida that he hated the empire and was disappointed by the sultan's cowardice and failure.<sup>66</sup> The disagreement between al-Afghani and `Abduh on the type of reform Muslims needed became obvious when `Abduh suggested to al-Afghani in Paris that they should abandon politics and migrate to an isolated land where they could educate a group of potential Muslim leaders. Of course, al-Afghani disagreed, calling the suggestion "discouraging."

### *The Call for a Model Islamic State*

There is little doubt that `Abduh's discouraging opinions on politics initially influenced Rida's attitude toward political reform, especially when he was basically concerned with self-purification.<sup>68</sup> However, Rida's commitment to those opinions did not survive `Abduh's death, for after that event Rida attempted to combine `Abduh's and al-Afghani's visions of reform. Rida maintained two of al-Afghani's political goals: building a model Islamic state and establishing an Islamic league. Indeed, his political involvement did not start after `Abduh's death or even with his migration to Egypt in 1897. In fact, Rida's migration was partly a political action to escape Ottoman authoritarianism in Syria so that he could express his ideas openly.<sup>69</sup>

When `Abduh agreed to advise and support Rida while he was establishing *Al-Manar* (The Lighthouse) in Egypt, he laid down the following condition: The journal would not discuss political issues or take political sides.<sup>70</sup> Although Rida agreed reluctantly,<sup>71</sup> he could not help but deal with certain political issues facing the empire. For instance, some of his first articles praised the empire and criticized its enemies. Rida also published al-Kawakibi's book *Umm al-Qura* (The Mother of All Villages [Makkah]), which called for a radical reform of the caliphate. However, he did censor

those parts of it that he considered offensive to the empire.<sup>72</sup> But because he called for reforms in the Ottoman administration,<sup>73</sup> Sultan Abdul-Hamid II banned *Al-Manar* throughout the empire during his reign.<sup>74</sup>

Rida clearly stated that *Al-Manar* was established to revive and spread the message of al-Afghani's journal *Al-Urwat al-Wuthqa*, particularly its call for establishing an Islamic league.<sup>75</sup> In reality, *Al-Manar* was similar to *Al-Urwat al-Wuthqa* in several respects. First, while *Al-Urwat al-Wuthqa* expressed al-Afghani's reform thoughts as edited by `Abduh, the first volumes of *Al-Manar* were, to some extent, expressions of `Abduh's reform thoughts as edited by Rida. Second, after `Abduh's death, Rida changed *Al-Manar's* orientation to make it, like *Al-Urwat al-Wuthqa*, more political.

Third, both journals supported their arguments with authentic Islamic sources, including Qur'anic verses and the Prophet's traditions,<sup>76</sup> and unrelentingly attacked the then-dominant popular trend of blindly imitating religious leaders. They not only called for, but also practiced *ijtihad*. Fourth, the headquarters of *Al-Urwat al-Wuthqa* was beyond the reach of its major enemy, the British colonialists, whom it severely attacked, and was therefore banned in all British-occupied Muslim lands. Similarly, the headquarters of *Al-Manar* was also out of the reach of the empire, which was antagonistic to all calls for reform. Finally, and more importantly, both journals were influential in many Muslim countries and established a school of thought and a movement that struggled for political reform.<sup>77</sup>

### *The Call for Reforming the Ottoman Central Government*

Like al-Afghani, Rida called for transforming the empire into a constitutional government that would observe the Islamic principles of consultation and justice, respect freedom, and encourage political participation. The sultan should consult and be responsible to the people's leaders and representatives.<sup>78</sup>

Before the first Ottoman coup in 1908, Rida's method to achieve such reform was a mix of media usage and underground activities. On the one hand, he allocated an increasing amount of *Al-Manar's* space for discussions about political reform in the empire. On the other hand, he was a founding member and, in 1906, the president of a secret organization, the Ottoman Consultative Society, that was active in Egypt, some Ottoman Arab provinces, and western capitals.<sup>79</sup> The society, whose members were self-exiled Ottomans representing most of the empire's ethnic and religious groups, was quite similar to al-Afghani's National Liberal Party in Egypt.

But while al-Afghani's party failed to achieve its radical goals, the society's more moderate goal was ostensibly accomplished in 1908, when Sultan Abdul-Hamid II was forced to reenact the Ottoman constitution that he had suspended three decades earlier. However, it was not the Cairo-based, Islamic-oriented Ottoman Consultative Society that brought about that change;<sup>80</sup> rather, it was the Paris-based group of westernized and nationalist military officers, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), that did so. For a majority of the society's members, the differences in base and orientation were not a source of dissention, given that the goals seemed similar. Therefore, after the coup they decided to dissolve the society and join the CUP.

As for Rida, he returned to Syria for the first time since his self-imposed exile. There, he called upon his fellow Syrians to support the new Ottoman government and to participate in the ongoing political change,<sup>81</sup> and cooperated with the new government to achieve the desired reform. Unlike al-Afghani, who had to work with the conservative Sultan Abdul-Hamid II, Rida thought the new government would be more cooperative. Therefore, he spent a year (1909-10) in Istanbul discussing alternative reform programs with high officials and senior officers of the CUP and the government, including the prime minister and the grand mufti.<sup>82</sup>

But the government was too nationalist and westernized to accept his ideas of Islamic and pan-Ottoman reform. In addition, its policies were based on an ideology of Turkish pride and prejudice that glorified the Turkish race and undermined other Ottoman peoples. One of its most controversial nationalist policies was the intensive Turkification of non-Turkish Ottomans. Thus, Turkish was declared the only official language of education, the judiciary, and all official transactions in the empire. Another divisive nationalist policy was pan-Turkism, namely, official support for establishing a Turkish league encompassing all Ottoman and non-Ottoman Turks.<sup>83</sup> On the other hand, the government was so indifferent to the needs of non-Turkish Ottomans that the Ottoman military withdrew from Libya shortly after the Italian invasion during 1911, leaving its defense to fragmented local militant groups.<sup>84</sup> Similarly, when the Ottomans were defeated in the Balkan wars (1912-13), the empire abandoned its European territories, which only made its homeland vulnerable.<sup>85</sup>

Indeed, the rapid collapse of the empire and the caliphate came about as the ummah's political focus started with the overthrow of Sultan Abdul-Hamid II in 1909. Although many Ottomans and non-Ottomans were pleased with that change and the reenactment of the constitution,<sup>86</sup> the new

government's policies ended the empire's status as a model and focus for the Muslim world. First, some of its political reforms limited the sultan's authority so much that he became a merely symbolic head of state.<sup>87</sup> Second, it did not reassert Sultan Abdul-Hamid II's policy of pan-Islamism, assuming that Muslims must be "naturally" loyal to the sultan and caliph. Third, it failed to support non-Ottoman Muslims, claiming that it was too busy with internal Ottoman affairs, as well as its own territories, including Libya and the Balkans. Fourth, its policies were very divisive and controversial throughout the Muslim world, because they were based less on Islam, favored the Turks, and discriminated against the Arabs.<sup>88</sup>

### *The Call for an Islamic League*

Rida strongly opposed these new discriminatory policies and severely attacked the ruling CUP, as he rightly thought that its reform endangered the empire's multiethnic unity. He particularly condemned its anti-Arab and anti-Arabic policies, which resulted in mutual hatred and hostility between the empire's two major ethnic groups: the Arabs and the Turks.<sup>89</sup> At this moment, Rida had to choose between his two goals: building a model Islamic state by reforming the Ottoman central government or preventing the empire's predicted collapse.

Choosing the latter goal, he began to call for an Ottoman league. Historically, different Ottoman ethnic and religious groups were Ottoman merely because they were subjects of the same Ottoman rulers. Rida's idea of an Ottoman league consisted of making the empire a home country for all Ottomans, regardless of ethnic or religious loyalty, and emphasizing that it was the caliphate for all Muslims.<sup>90</sup> In other words, *Ottomanism* sought to create an Ottoman national identity based on and guided by Islamic principles, and to devise a compromise between the European ideology of nationalism and the unique Islamic relation between the ummah and the caliphate.<sup>91</sup>

But why did Rida compromise al-Afghani's idea of an Islamic league to come up with the idea of an Ottoman-only league? On the one hand, Rida always considered the Ottoman Empire as the legitimate Muslim caliphate that only needed to implement the Islamic principles of political reform.<sup>92</sup> Although he spent most of his life in Egypt, he was always a wholeheartedly Syrian-Arab Ottoman, and therefore involved in the Ottoman, Arab, and Syrian politics far more than in Egyptian politics. On the other hand, most Muslim countries were already colonized and Rida

was reluctant to attack the colonial powers, particularly the British rulers of Egypt, where he lived and published his journal.<sup>93</sup> Most likely Rida had learned a lesson from the fate of al-Afghani's *Al-Urwat al-Wuthqa* and was realistic enough to realize that the Muslim world was now in worse shape than it had been during al-Afghani's time. After all, there is a great deal of evidence that *Ottomanism* was Rida's ultimate goal; had it been fulfilled, he probably would have advocated for a more comprehensive Muslim league.

### *The Call for Restructuring the Ottoman Empire*

Like al-Afghani, Rida sought to bridge the gap between Sunnis and Shi`as, and between different schools of thought, mainly by reviving *ijtihad*.<sup>94</sup> However, his main goal was to bridge the gap between the Arabs and the Turks.<sup>95</sup> Having little hope of reforming the central government,<sup>96</sup> Rida suggested establishing an Ottoman league by decentralizing the government and administration and respecting the equal rights and responsibilities of all Ottomans, thereby encouraging non-Turkish Ottomans to rely on themselves, practice their cultures, and defend their homelands against foreign intervention. Though ostensibly fragmentizing, this proposed decentralization was designed to maintain the empire, which increasingly appeared to non-Turkish Ottomans as a more or less Turkish occupation of their lands and dominance of their cultures.<sup>97</sup>

Rida advocated this league in *Al-Manar* and was a founding member and elected president of the supreme committee of the Egypt-based, Arab-led Ottoman Party for Administrative Decentralization. This party, in effect, called for a kind of democratic federalism in the empire. Specifically, it called for limiting the central government's authority to foreign, defense, and transportation affairs, and for empowering local authorities in other affairs. It also emphasized the ummah's political role as the source of authority, and the people's rights to elect the central and provincial assemblies to which the central and provincial governments should be accountable.<sup>98</sup>

In response to the central government's indifference, the party sponsored "The First Arab Conference" in Paris, in 1913, to explain Arab demands for decentralization and to demonstrate its good organization and strong support among Ottoman Arabs.<sup>99</sup> The party and the conference succeeded in forcing the government to negotiate with their representatives, but failed to make it fulfill any of its promises. Rather, the repre-

sentatives were offered high positions in the government,<sup>100</sup> which went ahead and implemented its official policies of Turkism and discrimination against non-Turkish Ottomans.<sup>101</sup>

### *Arab Self-Reliance within the Ottoman Empire*

Concluding that the ruling CUP's policies would destroy the empire and fail to defend its Arab provinces, shortly before World War I Rida established the secret Arab League Society. He convinced many princes of Arabia to join it and encouraged them to form an alliance to defend Arabia against imminent foreign intervention.<sup>102</sup> Was Rida's Arab League Society similar to al-Afghani's al-Urwat al-Wuthqa? Both were secret and anti-colonialist, but while al-Urwat al-Wuthqa fought British rule in Egypt and India, the Arab League Society was an alliance to prevent the predicted foreign domination of Arabia.

But why did Rida, who opposed official efforts to establish a Turkish league, work for establishing an Arab league? The reasons might be understood in light of significant differences between the two leagues. First, the Turkish league called for Turkifying the multiethnic empire and consisted of Ottoman and non-Ottoman Turks; Rida's Arab league called for "patriotizing" Arabia's princes and consisted only of Ottoman Arabs – a fraction of all Arabs. Second, the Turkish league was an ultra-nationalist movement seeking to revive Turkish glory, while the Arab league's ideology was a mix of Islam and nationalism designed to defend the empire's Arab provinces.

The empire's policies during World War I further convinced Rida of the Arab league's necessity, as Ottoman tyranny in the Arab provinces reached its peak, particularly because the empire anticipated an alliance between its Arab subjects and the Allied Forces. Therefore, it summarily executed many Arab leaders, including the president of the First Arab Conference.<sup>103</sup> Indeed, the empire paid a huge price for its divisive and discriminatory war-time policies, as non-Ottoman Muslims were not enthusiastic supporters of the empire. Consequently, the sultan's declaration of jihad against the Allied Forces, supported by five *fatawa* (legal orders), failed to mobilize Muslims, particularly in Egypt, India, and North Africa, to revolt against their British and French rulers.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, this declaration did not deter several princes of Ottoman Arab provinces, including Arabia, from negotiating secretly with the British and then revolting against Ottoman rule.<sup>105</sup>

During the war, Rida's main concern was the destiny of the Arab provinces, particularly Makkah and Madinah. He reasoned that if the Allied Forces won, they would occupy the Ottoman territories, including the Arab provinces; if their enemies won, Germany, to which the empire became a periphery,<sup>106</sup> would occupy the Arab provinces; or the Ottoman government would further suppress its Arab subjects.<sup>107</sup> Therefore, Rida supported the 1916 Arab revolution led by Sharif Hussein, whom he met in Makkah during the 1916 pilgrimage season. Although Rida gave a public speech in Makkah encouraging Muslims, particularly Arabs, to provide strong support to the revolution and its leader,<sup>108</sup> he stopped short of declaring his allegiance to Sharif Hussein as caliph and refused to encourage others to do so. For Rida, the revolution was a legitimate response to Ottoman tyranny in the Arab provinces, as well as an attempt to protect the Arabs against foreign intervention and to force the empire to accept the decentralization proposal. It was by no means a challenge to the caliphate.<sup>109</sup>

However, the Arab revolution was a big disappointment for Rida, as it not only defeated and expelled the Ottoman army from western Arabia, but also fought alongside the Allied Forces in Syria, helping to destroy the empire and pave the way for colonizing its Arab provinces. Even the Arab kingdom founded by the revolution could not escape foreign intervention, as Sharif Hussein failed to protect it and ended up signing a treaty with the British government that practically made the Arab kingdom a British protectorate.<sup>110</sup>

Having little hope of establishing an Islamic league, Rida returned to his early goal of building a model Islamic state, this time in Syria.<sup>111</sup> However, that effort shortly came to a dramatic end: Syria's short-lived constitutional government collapsed under French occupation. As a result of the Ottoman defeat, the French and the British occupied most of the empire's Arab provinces (e.g., Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine), which Rida unequivocally condemned in *Al-Manar*.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, along with the Greeks and the Italians, they occupied parts of the Ottoman Turkish mainland, including Istanbul. But because the Arab revolution's leaders had already separated themselves from the empire and declared their independence, the Ottoman liberation movement, led by the remains of the Ottoman army, fought to liberate only the empire's Turkish lands.<sup>113</sup>

After accomplishing their goal, the Turkish nationalist leaders ended the caliphate in three stages: They separated the sultanate and the caliphate from each other in 1922, replaced the former with the Turkish Republic in October 1923, and finally abolished the latter in March 1924. Some argue

that this radical change merely reflected the new post-war political realities and part of the dynamics of internal Turkish politics, especially as the sultan clashed with the rising nationalist leader Mustafa Kamal (later known as Atatürk) and the new westernized Turkish elite.<sup>114</sup> However, it affected the Muslim world as a whole, because for the first time since the Mongols' occupation of Baghdad in 1258, there was no caliphate.

### *The Call for Reviving the Caliphate*

Separating the caliphate from the Turkish government inspired Rida, who was also a full-fledged Islamic scholar, to write his most scholarly thesis on reviving the caliphate in an authentic – but also modern – way, in order to address both theoretical and practical issues. Although he condemned the Turkish decision to end the caliph's authority, as he ideally must be empowered, Rida dedicated his thesis to the Turks, whom he then considered the Muslim people most capable of reviving the caliphate and Islamic civilization.

Rida called for establishing a new caliphate based on authentic and modern interpretations of the Qur'an and the Sunnah,<sup>115</sup> unlike the corrupt Ottoman caliphate, whose legitimacy was based only on the necessity of having a caliphate. Instead, he wrote that the new caliphate must be based on constitutional rule and people's participation through representation and consultation. Rida also suggested that the ummah's religious and political leaders nominate a group of potential caliphs, who would then be sent to a school designed specifically to educate and train them. These potential caliphs would elect one of their peers to be the caliph, a decision that would be approved by the ummah's leaders and then by all Muslims. In order to help the new caliph rule in a sound Islamic manner, Rida called for building political apparatuses designed specifically for that purpose.<sup>116</sup>

Apart from these suggestions of an ideal Islamic caliphate, and, more related to the specific issues of his time, Rida addressed two problems he thought that might impede the caliphate's revival: the split and hatred between the Arabs and the Turks, and the intensive westernization of the Muslim world. For the first problem, he suggested a creative but still idealistic solution: As he had little hope in Turkey's new nationalist government and the adversarial and generally colonial-friendly Arab leaders, he suggested establishing the new caliphate in a middle area between the Arab and the Turkish lands. Once Muslim leaders saw the new caliphate working well, they could ask their countries to join it.<sup>117</sup> On the other hand, while

Rida was optimistic that the West would not threaten the new caliphate, which would not mobilize the Muslims against it,<sup>118</sup> he expected the westernized political parties ruling in several Muslim countries, particularly Turkey, to become the new caliphate's most militant enemies.<sup>119</sup>

Rida's model of a revived caliphate did not come true, as the Turkish People's Assembly decided to abolish the Ottoman caliphate. Immediately afterward, some Muslim institutions, groups, and senior personalities called for restoring the caliphate, for this was not just an internal Turkish affair. Egypt's mosque-university of al-Azhar, India's Caliphate Society, and King Hussein of western Arabia were among the early advocates of reviving the caliphate. However, these and other advocates disagreed on two critical issues: who should be caliph, and whether he would have political or symbolic authority.<sup>120</sup>

While one of the Caliphate Society's two leaders argued that the Turkish decision to abolish the caliphate was null and void and that the last Ottoman caliph, Abdul-Majid II, was therefore still the legitimate caliph, al-Azhar was more realistic. Although it agreed that the Turkish decision conflicted with an Islamic political principle, it argued that the last Ottoman caliph, who was exiled and unable to protect his own rights, not to mention those of the Muslims in general, no longer met the requirements to be caliph. Al-Azhar's view finally triumphed, basically because the last Ottoman caliph did not seriously seek to reclaim the caliphate. But then who would be the caliph? A group led by the Caliphate Society's other leader called upon Turkish nationalist leader Mustafa Kamal Ataturk to assume the position, but he refused. Another group, led by Turkish Kurds, revolted in support of Saleem, the son of Abdul-Hamid II who claimed the caliphate. Ataturk suppressed them violently.

Meanwhile, King Hussein of western Arabia, supported by Arab leaders in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and Jordan, unilaterally declared himself the caliph but assured other Muslim leaders that he would not intervene in their affairs, for he considered his authority to be symbolic, not political. However, the vast majority of Muslims did not acknowledge his claim. During the pilgrimage season, King Hussein utilized his control over Makkah and Madinah to convince the pilgrims of his merits and qualifications. However, he was defeated by the efforts of scholars who lobbied against his claim. Disappointed, the king declared that a large conference would be held in Makkah during the next pilgrimage season to decide the issue. But by that time, Ibn Sa'ud had conquered and asserted his rule over western Arabia, and Sharif Hussein was in self-imposed exile on the island of Cyprus.

Rida strongly opposed King Hussein's unilateral declaration on the grounds that this issue was the concern of all Muslims, and that no ruler should be allowed to act unilaterally in this regard, especially if he were subject to foreign control.<sup>121</sup> Instead, he supported al-Azhar's call for a pan-Islamic conference to be held in Cairo on the first anniversary of Turkey's decision to abolish the caliphate, which would be attended by representatives of all Muslim countries, in order to discuss this serious issue and choose a new caliph. However, Egypt's internal political conflicts forced the organizers to postpone the conference for a year and to change its agenda – to limit discussion to whether the caliphate is an authentic Islamic institution and whether it is political or symbolic.<sup>122</sup> When that conference eventually took place, Rida refused to attend despite his efforts to prepare for it, as he became rightly convinced that most participants were serving the interests of different Muslim rulers, not the ummah.<sup>123</sup>

Indeed, the organizers faced a major difficulty: Most of the invited scholars did not respond positively, as they reasoned that the conference would be an occasion to declare King Fu'ad of Egypt the new caliph. Therefore, many participants were not representatives of their countries but just happened to be in Cairo at that time. Another difficulty was that many Egyptian politicians and religious leaders lobbied against appointing King Fu'ad. For instance, the most popular political party of that time, the Wafd, considered that such a proposal would be an obstacle to constitutional reforms in Egypt. Other leaders argued that Egypt was not the most appropriate headquarters for the new caliphate, for it was, in reality, ruled by Britain and did not implement Islamic laws. For some, a country like Afghanistan seemed to be a more suitable headquarters.<sup>124</sup>

King `Abd al-`Aziz of the newly established Saudi kingdom refused to send a delegation to the Cairo conference, because some exiled and opposition leaders of western Arabia also had been invited. Instead, he decided to hold another conference in Makkah shortly after the Cairo conference concluded. However, the Makkah conference did not discuss the caliphate, for, in reality, it was meant to secure Muslim approval of Saudi rule over Makkah and Madinah, especially since Egypt did not acknowledge the Saudis' expansion into western Arabia. King `Abd al-`Aziz, who had once declared himself and his Saudi movement's loyalty and allegiance to the Ottoman sultan,<sup>125</sup> did not claim the caliphate and reportedly said that no Muslim ruler at that time deserved the title of "caliph."<sup>126</sup>

## Conclusion

Al-Afghani's and Rida's calls for political reform generally sought to resume Islamic civilization in a modern way. Their movements' complementary goals included fulfilling the Islamic requirement of uniting all Muslims under the caliphate, fighting colonialism and the foreign domination of the Muslim world, and practicing *ijtihad*. The destiny of Rida's efforts for political reform in the Ottoman Empire, Arabia, and Syria was similar to that of al-Afghani's efforts for Islamic political reform in Egypt, Iran, and the Ottoman Empire. However, their lack of obvious success is no reason to underestimate their calls for political reform.

To the contrary, it is arguable that neither of their calls failed completely, as they succeeded among the Muslim masses more than among the Muslim rulers, and moreso in the long term than in the short term. Forty years after al-Afghani was expelled from Egypt, one of his Egyptian disciples, Sa`d Zaghlul, led the anti-British popular revolution of 1919, which Rida considered an offspring of al-Afghani's teaching.<sup>127</sup> Rida's call for reform was itself, at least partially, an offspring of al-Afghani's call for political reform, as well as the political program of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, which also might be an offspring of Rida's efforts for political reform. There is little doubt that Rida's ideas and thoughts influenced Hassan al-Banna, the Muslim Brotherhood's founder and first general guide (*murshid al-`amm*), who struggled to make *Al-Manar* survive its founder's death.<sup>128</sup>

## Notes

1. On the three reform trends in the Muslim world and Al-Afghani's and Abduh's roles in the middle-course movement see: Ahmed A. Salem, "Al-Islah as-Siyasiy al-Islami min al-Afghani ila Rashid Rida" [Islamic Political Reform from Al-Afghani to Rashid Rida], *Islamiyat al-Ma`rifah* [The Islamization of Knowledge] 7, no. 25 (summer 2001): 47-48.
2. For a critical review of dominant approaches to Rida's reform mission and movement see: Ahmed A. Salem, "Al-Islah al-Siyasi `inda al-Shaykh Rashid Rida bayn Bina' Dawlah Islamiyah Namudhajiyyah was Iqamat Jami'ah Islamiyah" [Sheikh Rashid Rida's Political Reform: Between Building a Model Islamic State and Establishing an Islamic League], *Al-Kalimah* [The Word] 6, no. 24 (summer 1999): 58-59.
3. Martin Kramer, *Islam Assembled: The Advent of the Muslim Congresses* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 3-4.
4. For details about the relations between the Sanusi Sufi order and the Ottoman sultanate, see Ahmad F. B. al-Shawabkah, *Harakat al-Jami'ah al-*

- Islamiyah* [The Islamic League Movement] (Az-Zarqa', Jordan: Maktabat al-Manar, 1984), 229-34.
5. For details about the attempts of some rulers of the Arab territories, and particularly Muhammad Ali, to challenge the Ottoman state, see Muhammad Farid, *Tarikh al-Dawlah al-'Aliyah al-'Uthmaniyah* [The History of the Supreme Ottoman State], 7th ed. (Beirut: Dar Al-Nafa'is, 1993), 448-54; Emad `Abd as-Salam Ra`uf, "Al-Jam`iyat al-'Arabiyah wa Fikruha al-Qawmi" [Arab Societies and Their Pan-Arab Nationalist Thought], *Tatawwur al-Fikr al-Qawmi al-'Arabi* [The Development of Pan-Arab Nationalist Thought] (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wihdah al-'Arabiyah, 1986), 105-08; Nadiyah Mahmoud Mustafa, "Al-'Asr al-'Uthmani" [The Ottoman Age], in *Al-'Alaqaq ad-Dawliyah fi al-Islam* [International Relations in Islam], ed. Nadiyah Mahmoud Mustafa (Cairo: The International Institute for Islamic Thought, 1996), 11:235-57.
  6. Ash-Shawabkah, *Harakat*, 246-47.
  7. Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, 4-5.
  8. For details about the relations between Imam Shamil and the Ottoman state, see ash-Shawabkah, *Harakat*, 296-302.
  9. Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, 5.
  10. For details about the relations between the Muslim leaders in India and Central Asia and the Ottoman state, see ash-Shawabkah, *Harakat*, 280-81 and 293-95.
  11. See, for instance, his Persian thesis "On the Refutation of the Naturalists" (tr. English) in Nikki Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani"* [including a translation of the "Refutation of the Materialists" from the original Persian by Nikki Keddie and Hamid Algar] (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).
  12. Though relatively recent, al-Afghani's history is widely debatable and his biography is very controversial. For his historiography, see `Ali Shalash, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani bayn Dariseeh* [Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani according to Those Who Study Him] (Beirut and Cairo: Dar ash-Shuruq, 1987).
  13. This was his judgment, as reported in Muhammad `Imarah, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani: Moqidh al-Sharq wa Faylasuf al-Islam* [Jamal al-Din al-Afghani: The Man Who Awakened the Orient, the Philosopher of Islam], 2d ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 1988), 26; Jamal al-Dn al-Afghani, *Al-A`mal al-Kamilah* [The Complete Works], introduced, and its authenticity verified, by Muhammad `Imarah, 2 vols. (Beruit: Al-Mu`assasah Al-'Arabiyyah li al-Dirasat wa al-Nashr, 1979), 2:9-20.
  14. Muhammad al-Makhzumi, *Khatirat Jamal al-Din al-Afghani al-Husayni* [The Thoughts of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani al-Husayni] (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr al-Hadith, 1965), 52-55.
  15. Muhammad `Imarah, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani*, 27-28 and 230-32.

16. For details about al-Afghani's reform goals and methods in Egypt, see Sayyar al-Jamil, "Al-Sirah al-Ukhra: Qira'ah Tahliliyah wa Hafriyat Ma'rifiyah fi al-Sayrurah at-Tarikhiah li al-Afghani" [The Other Picture: An Analytical Reading and Epistemological Fossils of the Historicity of al-Afghani], in *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani: 'Ata'uhu al-Fikri wa Manhajuhu al-Islahi* [Jamal al-Din al-Afghani: His Intellectual Contributions and Reform Philosophy], ed. Ibrahim Gharaybah (Amman, Jordan: The International Institute for Islamic Thought, 1999), 43-52.
17. For details about al-Afghani's impacts in Egypt see: Mahmoud Abu Rayyah, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1971), 32-39; Muhammad Tahir al-Jabalawi, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani: Hayatuhu wa Ara'uhu* [Jamal al-Din al-Afghani: His Life and Opinions] (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Misriyah al-'Ammah li at-Ta'lif wa an-Nashr, 1971), 12-52; 'Imarah, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani*, 57-62 and 244-45.
18. For details about al-Afghani's relations with Khedive Tawfiq on the one hand and the revolutionary leaders on the other hand, see 'Abd ar-Rahman ar-Rafi'i, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani: Bi'ith Nahdat al-Sharq* (1838-1897) [Jamal al-Din al-Afghani: The Reviver of Awakening in the East (1838-1897)] (Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi li at-Tiba'ah wa an-Nashr, 1966), 44-47.
19. On al-Afghani's criticisms of colonialism, see al-Afghani, *Al-A'mal al-Kamilah* [The Complete Works], 2:71-79.
20. *Ibid.*, 2:25-33.
21. *Ibid.*, 2:16-19, 25-29, and 265-71.
22. For details about al-Urwat al-Wuthqa, see 'Imarah, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani*, 254-62; Ahmad F. B. ash-Shawabkah, "Mashru' al-Jami'ah al-Islamiyah fi Fikr Jamal al-Din al-Afghani" [The Islamic League Project in the Thought of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani], in Ibrahim Gharaybah (ed.), *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani*, 323-24.
23. Assad Nimer Busool, "Sheikh Muhammad Rashid Rida's Political Activities: A Struggle for the Revival of an Orthodox (Salafi) Islamic State" (Ph.D. diss., University of California-Berkeley, 1974), 48.
24. For examples of his anti-British articles in *Al-'Urwat al-Wuthqa*, see Muhammad 'Abduh, *Ath-Tha'ir al-Islami Jamal al-Din al-Afghani* [The Islamic Revolutionary Jamal al-Din al-Afghani] (Cairo: Dar al-Hilal, 1973), 46-113.
25. 'Imarah, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani*, 110-11.
26. Al-Afghani, *Al-A'mal al-Kamilah*, 2:339-45. For details about the journal and the debate over its funding and closing, see Nikki Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani": A Political Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 214-28.
27. Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, *Al-A'mal al-Kamilah*, 2:265-85.
28. For details about al-Afghani's deteriorating relations with the Shah and his expulsion from Iran, see Mukhtar al-Asadi, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani*:

- Namudhaj lam Yatakarrar* (Jamal al-Din al-Afghani: A Model without Parallel] (Beirut: Dar al-Hadi, 1999), 80-83; `Imarah, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani*, 76-77.
29. For details about that *fatwa* and the people's response, see Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, op. cit., vol. 2:272-76; Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani,"* 335-72. For details about his great and long-lasting impacts on Iran, see Sadiq al-`Abbadi, "Jamal al-Din al-Afghani wa Dawruhu al-Siyasi fi Iran" [Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and His Political Role in Iran], in Ibrahim Gharaybah (ed.), *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani*, 345-68.
  30. Al-Asadi, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani*, 83-84; `Imarah, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani*, 28-29.
  31. Al-Afghani, *Al-A`mal al-Kamilah*, 1:44 and 79.
  32. Al-Shawabkah, "Mashru'," 321-22; al-Afghani, *Al-A`mal al-Kamilah*, 2:16-22; `Imarah, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani*, 80.
  33. `Imarah, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani*, 82-83.
  34. This issue regrettably surfaced decades after al-Afghani died, as researchers have been debating whether he was a Persian Shi'i or an Afghani Sunni. This debate is not only futile but also defeats al-Afghani's exact purpose of hiding his "sectarian" identity. For an example of this debate, see Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani,"* 10-36.
  35. `Imarah, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani*, 37-44.
  36. Al-Afghani, *Al-A`mal al-Kamilah*, 2:30-39.
  37. *Ibid.*, 2:13-16
  38. For details about the colonial scramble throughout the Muslim world, see Muhammad as-Sayyed Salim, *Al-`Alaqat bayn al-Duwal al-Islamiyah* [The Relations between Muslim countries] (Riyadh: King Sa`ud University, 1991), 76-82.
  39. For details about the relations between the Urabi movement and the Ottoman state, see al-Shawabkah, *Harakat*, 201-13; Mustafa, "Al-`Asr al-`Uthmani," 284-86; Salah Essa, *Al-Thawrah al-`Urabiyyah* ['Urabi's Revolution] (Beirut: al-Mu`assasah al-`Arabiyyah li al-Dirasat wa al-Nasr, 1972), 104-16.
  40. Mustafa, "Al-`Asr al-`Uthmani," 286-91; Sultan `Abd al-Hamid II, *Mudhakkirat al-Sultan `Abd al-Hamid* [Sultan Abdul-Hamid's Memoirs], 3d ed. (Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 1991), 97-98. For a different analysis of the Ottoman military inaction against the British in Egypt, see Sati' al-Husari, *Muhadadarat fi Nushu` al-Fikrah al-Qawmiyyah* [Lectures on the Origination of Nationalism] (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahdah al-`Arabiyyah, 1985), 165-67.
  41. For details on the relations between the Mahdi movement and the Ottoman state, see al-Shawabkah, *Harakat*, 18-20.
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  44. For details about that project, see al-Shawabkah, *Harakat*, 173-98; Muwaffaq Banil-Marjah, *Sahwat*, 108-18.
  45. Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, 6.
  46. Saleem, *Al-`Alaqa*, 87; `Imarah, *Al-Jami`ah al-Islamiyah*, 84-89.
  47. For details about the protracted Ottoman-Persian conflict, see Saleem, *Al-`Alaqa*, 71-75.
  48. Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, 2; Al-Shawabkah, *Harakat*, 275-80.
  49. Saleem, *Al-`Alaqa*, 85; Sultan Abdul-Hameed II, *Mudhakkirat*, 147-49.
  50. `Abd ar-Rahman al-Kawakibi, *Al-A`mal al-Kamilah li al-Kawakibi* [The Complete Works of al-Kawakibi] (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahdah al-`Arabiyyah, 1995), 393-403.
  51. Busool, “Sheikh Muhammad,” 57.
  52. Muhammad Salih al-Marakishi, *Tafkir Muhammad Rashid Rida khilal Majallat al-Manar 1898-1935* (Muhammad Rashid Rida’s Thoughts as Reflected in the Journal *al-Manar* 1898-1935) (Tunis: Ad-Dar al-Tunisiyyah li al-Nashr; Algeria: Al-Mu’assasah al-Wataniyyah li al-Kitab, 1983), 36.
  53. Muhammad Rashid Rida, “Al-Rihlah as-Suriya al-Thaniyah a Tamhid” (The Second Trip to Syria – Preface), in *Rahalat al-Imam Muhammad Rashid Rida* (Imam Muhammad Rashid Rida’s Trips), ed. Yusuf Ebash (Beirut: Al-Mu’assasah al-`Arabiya li al-Dirasat wa al-Nashr, 1979), 211.
  54. Muhammad ibn `Abd Allah as-Salman, *Rashid Rida wa Da`wat al-Shaykh Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Wahhab* (Rashid Rida and the Call of Shaykh Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Wahhab) (Kuwait: Maktabat al-Ma’alla, 1988), 202-08.
  55. Anwar al-Jindi, *Tarikh al-Sahafah al-Islamiyah* (The History of Islamic Journalism), vol. 1: Al-Manar (Cairo: Dar al-Ansar, 1983), 25-28.
  56. *Ibid.*, 215; Ahmad al-Shawabkah, *Muhammad Rashid Rida wa Dawruhu fi al-Hayah al-Fikriyah wa al-Siyasiyah* (Muhammad Rashid Rida and His Role in the Intellectual and Political Life) (Amman: Dar Ammar, 1989), 21.
  57. Muhammad `Abduh, *Al-A`mal Al-Kamilah* [The Complete Works], introduced, and its authenticity verified, by Muhammad `Imarah (Beirut: Dar-As-Shuruq, 1993), 1:55-57.
  58. For details about his role in the organization and journal of *Al-Urwat al-Wuthqa*, see *ibid.*, 1:659-712.

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61. `Imarah, *Al-Imam Muhammad `Abduh*, 87; Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, *Al-A`mal al-Kamilah*, 2:329.
62. `Abduh, *Al-A`mal al-Kamilah*, 1:32.
63. *Ibid.*, 1:91-95.
64. `Imarah, *Al-Imam Muhammad `Abduh*, 207.
65. *Ibid.*, 116-24; `Abduh, *Al-A`mal al-Kamilah*, 1:873-75.
66. `Abduh, *Al-A`mal al-Kamilah*, 1:863-64 and 871.
67. *Ibid.*, 1:73.
68. Busool, "Sheikh Muhammad," 37-39.
69. Al-Salman, *Rashid Rida*, 257-58.
70. Busool, "Sheikh Muhammad," 70; al-Shawabkah, *Muhammad*, 313.
71. Ash-Shawabkah, *Muhammad Rashid Rida*, 185.
72. Al-Marakishi, *Tafkir Muhammad*, 109-17.
73. Al-Shawabkah, *Muhammad Rashid Rida*, 187-88.
74. Ebash (ed.), *Rahalat*, 212.
75. As-Salman, *Rashid Rida*, 272.
76. *Ibid.*, 296-308; Al-Marakish, *Tafkir Muhammad*, 85-86.
77. For the influence of *Al-Manar* in Egypt, India, and Istanbul, see al-Shawabkah, *Muhammad Rashid Rida*, 157-79.
78. *Ibid.*, 188.
79. For details on the Ottoman Consultative Society, see *ibid.*, 232-34; Busool, "Sheikh Muhammad," 87-90.
80. *Ibid.*, 92-93.
81. For details on this trip, see Muhammad R. Rida, "Siyahat Sahib Al-Manar fi Suriya" (The Tour of Al-Manar's Owner in Syria), in Ebash (ed.), *Rahalat*, 9-53.
82. For details on this trip, see Muhammad R. Rida, *Rihlah ila Al-Qusantiniyah* (A Trip to Constantinople), in "Sheikh Muhammad," 55-75; Busool, "Sheikh Muhammad," 116-39.
83. Busool, "Sheikh Muhammad," 142-47.
84. Al-Marakishi, *Tafkir Muhammad*, 122-23.
85. Al-Husari, *Muhadarat*, 108-09 and 136-37.
86. For Abdul-Hamid's view of that coup, see Sultan Abdul-Hameed II, *Mudhakkirat*, 184-266.
87. For details on the Ottoman constitution, see Banil-Marjah, *Sahwat*, 447-48.
88. For details on these controversial policies, see al-Shawabkah, *Harakat*, 312-14; Mustafa, "Al-`Asr al-`Uthmani," 302-05; al-Husari, *Muhadarat*, 105-15 and 132-38.

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90. Ibid., 142.
91. Al-Salman, *Rashid Rida*, 493.
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93. For details on Rida's view of the West as a colonizer, see Emad-ud-Din Shahin, *Through Muslim Eyes: M. Rashid Rida and the West* (Herndon, VA: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1993), 75-87.
94. For his opinions and efforts in this regard, see al-Shawabkah, *Muhammad*, 48-66; Muhammad R. Rida, *Al-Wahdah al-Islamiyah wa al-Ukhuwah al-Diniyah wa Tawhid al-Madhahib* [Islamic Unity, Religious Brotherhood, and the Unification of Sects] (Beirut and Damascus: Al-Maktab al-Islami, n.d.).
95. Rida, "Rihlah," in Ebash (ed.), *Rahalat*, 57-58; Assad N. Busool, "Sheikh Muhammad," 191-21.
96. Busool, "Sheikh Muhammad," 160.
97. Ibid., 149.
98. For details on the Party's program and organization, see *ibid.*, 155-63; Al-Shawabkah, *Muhammad*, 234-37.
99. For details on the conference, see al-Shawabkah, *Muhammad*, 244-47.
100. Ibid., 247-51; Busool, "Sheikh Muhammad," 165-70.
101. Busool, "Sheikh Muhammad," 174.
102. For details on the society, see *ibid.*, 140-42; Al-Shawabkah, *Muhammad*, 251-61.
103. Muhammad R. Rida, "Al-Rahlah al-Suriya al-Thaniyah – Tamhid" [The Second Trip to Syria – Preface], in Ebash (ed.), *Rahalat*, 216-17.
104. For details about the Ottoman attempts to mobilize Muslims during the war, see Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, 55-68.
105. For details on the Arab revolt against the Ottomans, see al-Husari, *Muhadarat*, 151-62; Mustafa `Abd al-Qadir an-Najjar, "Fikr al-Thawrah al-`Arabiyyah li `Am 1961 wa Istiqlal al-`Arab" [The Thought of the 1916 Arab Revolution and the Liberation of the Arabs], in *Tatawwur al-Fikr al-Qawmi al-`Arabi*, op. cit., 141-52.
106. This fact was admitted by a senior Ottoman official during the war. See al-Husari, *Muhadarat*, 160-61.
107. Al-Salman, *Rashid Rida*, 500.
108. For details on Rida's initial support of Sharif Hussein, see Samir Abu-Hamdan, *Al-Shaykh Muhammad Rashid Rida wa al-Khitab al-Islami al-Mu`adil* [Shaykh Muhammad Rashid Rida and the Moderate Islamic Discourse] (Beirut: Al-Sharikah al-`Alamiyah li al-Kitab, 1992), 147-61.
109. Al-Marakishi, *Tafkir Muhmmad*, 157.
110. For details about that treaty and Rida's strong opposition against it, see Busool, "Sheikh Muhammad," 196-218.

111. For details about his efforts in this regard, see, for instance, Rida, *Al-Rihlah al-Suriya al-Thaniyah*, in Ebish (ed.), *Rahalat*, 211-310; al-Shawabkah, *Muhammad Rashid Rida*, 279-300.
112. Al-Marakish, *Tafkir Muhammad*, 174.
113. For details on the Ottoman national movement led by Mustafa Kamal, see Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, 73-76.
114. For details on this conflict, see *ibid.*, 76-79.
115. Muhammad Rasid Rida, *Al-Khilafah* [The Caliphate] (Cairo: Az-Zahra' li al-ʿIlam al-ʿArabi, 1994), 77.
116. *Ibid.*, 86-89.
117. *Ibid.*, 77-86.
118. *Ibid.*, 124-29.
119. *Ibid.*, 117-23.
120. For details on their disagreements, actions, and counteractions, see Saleem, *Al-ʿAlaqa*, 91-95; Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, 80-85.
121. For details on Rida's strong opposition in this regard, see Busool, "Sheikh Muhammad," 236-59.
122. For details on the Cairo conference and the positions of Al-Azhar and the domestic and foreign powers, see Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, 86-102; ʿAbdullah Al-Ahsan, *The Organization of The Islamic Conference: An Introduction to an Islamic Political Institution* (Herndon, VA: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1988), 11-12; Saleem, *Al-ʿAlaqa*, 93-96.
123. Al-Shawabkah, *Muhammad Rashid Rida*, 337-43.
124. Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, 87-90.
125. See a letter from Ibn Saʿud to the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph in al-Shawabkah, *Harakat*, 17.
126. For details on the Makkah conference and the Saudi position, see Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, 106-22; al-Ahsan, *The Organization of The Islamic Conference*, 12-13; Saleem, *Al-ʿAlaqa*, 96-97.
127. Rida, "Al-Rahlah al-Suriya al-Thaniyah - 3" (The Second Trip to Syria - 3), in Ebash (ed.), *Rahalat*, 231.
128. Emad-ud-Din Shahin, *Through Muslim Eyes*, 13. For the relation between Rida and al-Banna, see al-Shawabkah, *Harakat*, 160-64. For Rida's influence on the Muslim Brotherhood, as stated by its founder, see, for instance, Hassan al-Banna, "Fi al-Midan min Jadid" (In the Field Again), *Al-Manar* 35, no. 5 (July 1939): 3-7.