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## Interview with Egyptian Islamist Scholar Abd al-Mun'im Moneep

by Nico Prucha

### *Introduction*

Abd al-Mun'im Moneep and I met for the first time in mid-2011. We took time for a long, unrestricted discussion in a public space. An open discussion on controversial issues like Islamism and Jihadism while sipping tea in a typical Cairo coffee shop felt awkward at first but it turned out that almost everyone was busy talking politics shortly after the stepping down (or ousting) of Egypt's long term president Hosni Mubarak. Abd al-Mun'im Moneep is a scholar who has dedicated much of his life to the study and documentation of Egyptian Islamist and Jihadist movements. His personal life has become entangled with these movements; he had been arrested for the first time when he was 16 years old in the wake of president Sadat's assassination in October 1981. He describes himself as a traditionalist, as a Sunni Muslim, who is devoted to the study of, and proper religious conduct according to, divine texts, avoiding the term "salafist" due to the potential misunderstanding this term is likely to evoke among Westerners. He has published four books - all of them on Islamist and Jihadist groups and movements.

Mr Moneep distinguishes three main schools of thought with regard to the manifestation of Islamic movements in contemporary times:

(i), there is a general 'Islamic movement', a kind of 'umbrella' to describe a spiritual commonality among its adherents; it is not necessarily properly organized. Rather, this is a strong identification marker and driver to for those who seek to live by Islamic social standards – values that may be in conflict with values imported from the West into Arab-Islamic societies.

(ii) the second school of thought views the historical establishing of Islamist movements – organized entities with members and active military as well as political wings – as a result of the Arab defeat (al-hazima) in the six-day war of 1967. This defeat confirmed and reaffirmed for the Islamists the failure of Arab post-revolutionary governments.

(iii) The third school of thought traces the manifestations of Islamist movements to the fall of the Islamic Caliphate in 1924 which resulted in the introduction of secular forces into the Islamic world, leading to secular republican governments.

Abd al-Mun'im Moneep describes these developments very thoroughly in his book *Guide to the Egyptian Islamist Movements* (2010). As he analyses particular groups and their personal, ideological and operational relationships, he also documents their differences and diversions. The Egyptian contribution and the role of Egypt as a major starting point for what would become known from the 1990s onwards as 'Global Jihad' is essential for an understanding of its ideology, the more so that the current leader of Al-Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, is an Egyptian whose involvement in jihadist operations forced him to flee and join international jihadists in Pakistan and Afghanistan in the 1980s.

Mr Abd al-Mu'im Moneep is a regular contributor for various Egyptian newspapers and also frequently publishes articles on his *nahu al-tajdid* blog which can be read in Arabic at: <http://>

[moneep.blogspot.com/](http://moneep.blogspot.com/). The interview was held in Arabic in the summer of 2012. What follows is an authorized translation.

NICO PRUCHA: *Your name has been associated with the Egyptian al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya. When did you join this Islamist organisation ?*

ABD AL-MUN'IM MONEEP: I have never been a member of *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya*. You probably mean when did I join the 'Islamic Movement' (*al-haraka al-Islamiyya*)? Egypt has a general Islamic Movement, a term that serves as an umbrella' for many Islamic organizations. Some of these 'organizations' are just intellectual or political trends rather than organizations in the proper sense of the word. An example is the Salafist stream, which, in turn, has multiple side-streams. Some of these groups have specific organizational and group dynamics that ought to be elaborated in more detail. These features, in addition to their specific Islamic methodology (*manhaj*), distinguish them from other groups. Such organizations (*munazzimat*) have clear and well-known names, mostly referred to as groups (*jama'a*), and include the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*)[1], *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya*, the Group for Salafist Invocation (*da'wah*) [2] or the *al-Qutbiyyun* Group.[3] These groups have existed in Egypt for a long time, some date back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Other organizations were founded after the revolution of 2011, such as the Free Islamic Coalition (*al-italaf al-Islamiyyi al-hurr*)[4] and the Salafi Front (*al-jubha al-salafi*).[5]

In my book *A Guide of Egyptian Islamic Movements* [6], I have outlined in great detail many of the Egyptian groups and organizations. As for myself, I have not joined any organization linked to these groups. Intellectually, I associate myself with the general 'Islamic Movement' as I just outlined it and adhere to the overarching Islamic idea. I call myself not a Salafist but a "Usuli", adhering to the original sources of Quran and Sunnah. There are tens of thousands like me. Even those whom we can consider independent from specific organizations can be included in the 'Islamic Movement' in a broader sense. However, I consider myself an independent Islamic writer. I have published four books; these are dealing with political matters, media-usage, missionary work (*da'wah*), and judicial (*shari'ah* law) matters of Islam. I am an Islamic writer, independent from any organizations but have specialized in the study of Islamic movements and have written extensively on the subject.

NICO PRUCHA: *Can you tell us something about your personal life history?*

ABD AL-MUN'IM MONEEP: I became committed to Islamic thought and creed (*'aqidah*) at the age of 14 when I was in secondary school. Because I had a personal relationship with one of the leaders of *Tanzim al-Jihad* (al-Jihad Organization) at the mosque where I performed my prayers, I became a political detainee following the assassination of Sadat in October 1981 at the age of 16. In 1984, after I was released from jail, I enrolled in the History Department of the Faculty of Arts of Cairo University. I graduated in 1990 and then worked as a journalist for several newspapers, the last one being the opposition newspaper *al-Sha'ab* (the People).[7] I worked there until 1993 when I was again arrested for political reasons.

During my imprisonment, I appeared twice before courts - in 1993 and 1999. In both trials, the court ordered in a final verdict that I be released. However, the authorities never fulfilled the

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court's ruling and I was not released until August 2007. Ever since, I have worked as a journalist in several newspapers, including the independent *Al-Dostor* (the constitution)[8] newspaper. I am currently studying to obtain my Masters degree in modern history from Cairo University. The working title of my thesis is *The Muslim Brotherhood and the Palestinian Cause*. While in detention, I obtained a B.A. in Islamic Studies and another B.A. in Islamic Economy. However, security authorities prevented me from pursuing my Master studies while in detention. My book outlining Islamic Movements, "*The Roadmap of Islamic Movements*" was nevertheless published in 2009.[9] My other books include the *Recantations of the jihadists – the secret story of the recantations of al-Jihad and al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya in and outside of the prisons*[10] (2010) and *Organization and Theory: Tanzim al-Jihad and the al-Qaeda Network. Past, Present, and Future*[11] (2010).

NICO PRUCHA: *What are the decision-making mechanisms within Islamic movements in general, and al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya in particular?*

ABD AL-MUN'IM MONEEP: Decision-making mechanisms within Islamic movements differ from one organization to another; each has its own procedures. As for the Muslim Brothers, decisions are taken by the Guidance Council (*Majlis al-Irshad*), which is elected by the Consultative Council (*Majlis al-Shura*). The *Majlis al-Shura* members are elected from the general members of the organization. The *Majlis al-Shura* takes the crucial decisions for the organization.

Decisions in *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya* are made by its *Majlis al-Shura*, which is the highest authority in this organization. It was an appointed body in the past, but after the 2011 Egyptian revolution and the coming into existence of new civil liberties, *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya*[12] was able to elect its *Majlis al-Shura* by means of a free secret ballot by its general membership.

Therefore, each Islamic group has its own mechanisms.

NICO PRUCHA: *When was the decision of resorting to violence taken in the 1980s and '90s? How was such a decision taken within al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya?*

ABD AL-MUN'IM MONEEP: The decision of resorting to arms against the regime of ousted president Hosni Mubarak was taken in the late 1980s and early 1990s by four Egyptian Islamic trends:

The first trend: *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya*. Decisions were made by its *Majlis al-Shura*.

Second trend: Egyptian *Tanzim al-Jihad*. The decision-making process was dominated by its leadership group, which at the time was residing in Peshawar, Pakistan.

It was a generally accepted opinion that violence was the most beneficial way to stop the repression, torture and violent means of the Egyptian regime against the Islamist movements and in particular the *Jama'a al-Jihad* and *Jama'a al-Islamiyya*.

Third trend: *Shawqis* organization, the *Shawqiyyun*. Decisions were made by the group's leadership. This group remained inside of Egypt and did not go abroad as many other groups had to do after the Sadat assassination. They were centered in the al-Fayyum province where they also originated. Armed fighting broke out with the Egyptian police, with casualties on both sides. The decision to resort to violence was, in contrast to *al-Jihad's* and *Jama'a al-Islamiyya's*

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reasoning on violence, a spirited and emotional rather than a thoughtful decision. The *Shawqiyyun* lacked the structure and the intellect of other groups.

Fourth trend: multiple small Islamic groups; here the decisions were taken by their leaders.

The reasons behind taking up arms against the regime of the ousted president Mubarak were its autocratic and violent nature, arrests, repression, torture and physical liquidations of members of these four trends by the Mubarak regime.

NICO PRUCHA: *Was there internal criticism regarding the decision to resort to violence?*

ABD AL-MUN'IM MONEEP: The four trends were convinced of their course to resort to armed actions because of the dictatorship, repression and torture systematically practiced by the Mubarak regime against all Islamic trends in Egypt.

But of course there was also criticism and there always had been an opposition to violence within of *al-Jihad* and *Jama'a al-Islamiyya*. Ayman al-Zawahiri and his supporters opposed armed operations in 1993. However, the pressure of the violent means employed by the State Security on prisoners associated with the Islamist and jihadist groups was used by the members on the outside as an excuse to exercise pressure on the regime of Mubarak by armed operations. The expectation was that the regime would stop the torture and the abuse of the prisoners and release them at one point.

NICO PRUCHA: *What do you think of the renunciation of violence, especially in reference to Jihadists' ideological revisions? How have your own views been affected by the fall of Mubarak and the establishment of new political parties?*

ABD AL-MUN'IM MONEEP: Of course, this is the result of the 2011 Egyptian revolution that has proven to the people the existence of other ways to successfully achieve political change – by popular revolution.

NICO PRUCHA: *Who were, in your opinion, the most influential intellectual and military figures during the 1970s and 1980s?*

Intellectually, Sayyid Qutb [d. 1966] and Ibn Taymiyya [d. 1328]; militarily, Saleh Sariyya and 'Issam al-Qammari [d. 1988]. Sariyya and al-Qammari are two of the most renowned symbols; they were avant-gardists in both their actions and personal commitments.

*[Note:* Saleh Sariyya was a Palestinian who fled with his family in the wake of the *al-nakbah*, the “catastrophe” of the establishing of the state of Israel in 1948 to Iraq. He was born in Haifa and later became a student of the sharia faculty in Baghdad where he joined the Muslim Brotherhood and was soon engaged in the Palestinian cause.[13] He moved to Cairo in 1971 and met with prominent Muslim Brotherhood figures, such as Zaynab al-Ghazali and Hasan al-Hudaybi.[14] He formed a jihadist group that was labelled by al-Zawahiri the “Military Technical Academy Group” since he had managed to recruit members of that academy of the Egyptian army. However, in 1974 the attempt by the “Military Technical Academy Group” to overthrow Sadat failed. Saleh was executed and the rest went underground and joined other groups.”[15] According to Moneep’s “Guide to Egyptian Islamist Movements” (pp. 82-87), Saleh Sariyya was keen to assemble around himself members of the Muslim Brotherhood and instill the idea of a military insurgency against the Egyptian regime. However, ideological differences and strategic

divisions prevented Sariyya to pursue this line of thought. Hazim al-Amin in his book *The Orphaned Salafist*[16], credits Sariyya with the idea of ousting the Egyptian regime in order to establish a true Islamic state and to liberate occupied Palestine afterwards, as Sariyya wrote in his now forgotten ideological work *al-Risala al-iman*, where he calls for “jihad to establish an Islamic state”. This idea would later be nourished and advocated by ‘Abdallah ‘Azzam in the 1980s; he used Afghanistan and Pakistan as a new rallying base for jihadists from all over the world with the ultimate aim to liberate Palestine by first removing the “near enemies” in the Islamic countries.[17]

‘Issam al-Qammari had been a personal affiliate of Ayman al-Zawahiri and part of the first generation of jihadists that sought to topple the Egyptian military regime of Anwar Sadat. After the assassination of Sadat in October 1981 and the massive reprisals by his successor Mubarak, the Egyptian *al-Jihad* movement had scores of their members flee to Pakistan and Afghanistan to evade imprisonment and torture. Prominent figures, however, had been detained in the aftermath of the assassination, among them Ayman al-Zawahiri.[18]

‘Issam al-Qammari was a decorated tank commander of the Egyptian army and was praised as such by Ayman al-Zawahiri in his book *Knights under the Banner of the Prophet*, originally published in 2001. In this work, al-Zawahiri wrote a full chapter about him. Al-Qammari was a personal companion and al-Zawahiri claims that “the most important jihad group that was discovered by the [Egyptian] security apparatus was ‘Issam al-Qammari’s group, may God have mercy with him.”[19] He used his military position to provide weapons and explosives as well as tactical maps of army locations in Cairo. His smuggling activities were discovered in February 1981 and he was forced into hiding afterwards. Al-Zawahiri recalled later: “...during the last quantity of weapons from my clinic [in Cairo’s al-Ma’adi district] to the warehouse (...) the man carrying the bag was arrested. Issam sensed the danger before being caught and escaped.” Al-Qammari planned to attack the US-President while he attended Sadat’s funeral. Al-Zawahiri recounts with pride that al-Qammari shocked his father by telling him he joined the military so he can lead a military insurgency against the regime (p. 46). In 2008, answering questions addressed to al-Zawahiri on the Internet in “an open interview” by al-Qaeda’s media department “as-Sahab”, al-Zawahiri praised al-Qammari and the Sadat assassin Khalid al-Islambuli as brave and true Muslims of the Egyptian army, stating that it was permissible to attack and kill well-chosen individuals of the Egyptian armed forces but holding that one should refrain from general attacks.[20]

NICO PRUCHA: *What were the roles of Shura Councils, Emirs and members inside prison?*

ABD AL-MUN’IM MONEEP: No one pays attention to this issue except for the remnant of the *al-Jama’a al-Islamiyya*. The role of the groups’ emirs inside the prisons did not matter much for the rest of the organizations.

NICO PRUCHA: *Can you explain in detail the process of swearing allegiance to the Emir [bay’ah] and tell us whether decisions are taken by consensus or by a majority of votes? Can an Emir take a decision unilaterally, even if it is against the opinion of the majority?*

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ABD AL-MUN'IM MONEEP: These matters differ from one group to another and from one period in history to another. Nowadays, after the Egyptian revolution and with increasing freedoms, different Islamic groups tend to rely more on councils and free voting and generally adopt the opinion of the majority.

Before the 2011 revolution, Islamic groups were trying to keep a low profile in order to keep their members safe from the oppression of the ruling regime. Therefore, it was difficult during that period of repression to hold elections and consultative (*shura*) sessions.

NICO PRUCHA: *Is it permissible for any member to leave the Islamic Movement? If so, will you describe how this was done?*

ABD AL-MUN'IM MONEEP: This is a very normal matter and an everyday occurrence. It does not have to follow a prescribed procedure. One's commitment to the Islamic Movement or any Islamic organization is just a personal and voluntarily choice or initiative, consequently, anyone can give up such a choice at any time.

NICO PRUCHA: *Is there a reorganization of al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya taking place at present? With the official political party established, would a group like al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya – in its traditional organizational form - still continue to exist? Who is the person in charge?*

ABD AL-MUN'IM MONEEP: The question is unclear. If you mean the *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya* organization, which is one of the streams that belongs to the Egyptian Islamic Movement, the answer is that this organization exists and is led by a freely elected *al-Majlis al-Shura* chaired by Mr. Essam Derballa. The group has an officially recognized party called *al-Banna' wa-l-Tanmiyya*. The party took part in the parliamentary elections in alliance with two Salafi parties: the “*al-Nur* (Light) Party”[21] and the “*al-Asala* (Authenticity) Party”.[22]

NICO PRUCHA: *Do you think that Sharia laws will be applied in the future in Egypt?*

ABD AL-MUN'IM MONEEP: I think so.

NICO PRUCHA: *If the autocratic regimes will indeed collapse in the wake of the Arab Spring, do you think the Islamic nation [ummah] will be united?*

ABD AL-MUN'IM MONEEP: This will be difficult, especially in the short term, but might be possible in the medium term.

NICO PRUCHA: *What is your understanding of Egyptian Salafism? What makes someone a 'Salafist'? From which social class do Salafists come from? Who are the Salafist mentors in Egypt?*

ABD AL-MUN'IM MONEEP: Egyptian Salafism consists of many different streams represented by a number of organizations. It is essential for all Salafist organizations to adhere to the understanding and application of Islam according to the acts, deeds and statements of early Muslims. The term “*salaf*” refers to the “ancestors”, the early Muslims, the companions of the Prophet and their followers throughout the first centuries after the *hijra* [the migration of Muhammad and his companions from Mecca to Medina in 622 C.E – the first year of the Islamic calendar]. For contemporary Salafists, to imitate and re-enact their methodology (*manhaj*) is an obligation. They consider adhering to this *manhaj* as the only reason why Islamic leaders of the early centuries were able to conquer the world. For the first Islamic leaders indeed professed

Islam in its true and righteous form and therefore had been able to craft the best civilization ever to be witnessed by mankind throughout history. It is a civilization that was founded on right and justice (*al-haqq wa-l-adl*) and on the principle of “commanding good and forbidding evil” (*al-amr bi l-ma'ruf wa-l-nahiy 'an al-munkar*).

By emulating early Muslims, contemporary Salafists aim at approximating themselves [religiously, socially, politically and traditionally] to the high status of their ancestors and their understanding of Islam as religion and civilization. That is to say, modern Salafists want to elevate themselves on a similar status [social, political and religious] as their role models. However, they do not want to go back in time and live under the historical conditions and circumstances of these early Muslims. To follow them then is to live by the values they achieved and lived for, not the circumstances of their existence. Salafism is not to seed the past in present soil, but it is rather— according to this view – following the true values of Islam, to establish and to restore the true religion and the Islamic world.

One of the most prominent foundations of the Salafists' methodology is the prioritization of [Islamic] scriptures [*Quran* and *Sunnah*] over reason. Salafists rely on the Islamic scriptures and adjust their reasoning according to their interpretations of the scriptures. Their understanding is based on the thought that Islamic *Shari'ah* approves reasoning and does not reject it. The companions of Prophet Muhammad and the followers of their methodology are, according to the Salafist view, the ones who most fully understood Islamic *Shari'ah* rules. This reflects one of the main differences between Salafists (or historically Sunni Muslims) and other Islamic schools that relied on theology for the understanding of dogma and religion. The latter believe that Islam should be interpreted to suit their views if it contradicts their logical opinions.

The Sunni Muslims who today adhere to Salafist methodology consider themselves circumventing the deviations of [modern] life by following the divine texts. This is in contrast to theologians – and those similar like the *Mu'tazilah*[23] school – who seek to interpret text to fit their desired way of living.

Salafists also think that an appeal to reason in disputed religious matters is not the right course of action. As minds vary from one person to the other, such an action can lead to bewilderment and differences in outcomes since each person would claim that his own opinion is sounder than the other.

The Salafist approach has its own conditions, advantages and traits that distinguish it from other theological or philosophical schools. Among these conditions: inference should be clear, evident and supported by verses from *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* – the tradition based on the conveyed acts and deeds of the Prophet. Salafists do not believe in reason because, in their opinion, it may be misleading. Instead, Salafists believe in divine texts and actions as suggested by the texts. The texts are divine, they are God's direct word through the *Qur'an* and in the Prophet's traditions as contained in the *Sunnah*. The texts serve as the basis prescribing Islamic life; this is acceptable to the Salafists. Divine scriptures are the clear guidance and guidelines for the Salafists' *manhaj* and course of actions in this world. Reasoning may change, but the perseverance of close proximity to the divine texts is thus considered as the only appropriate form of adhering and implementing divine principles and commandments.

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There are many scholars who represent Salafism such as Dr. Muhammad ‘Abd al-Maqsud, Dr. Muhammad Isma’il al-Muqaddim, Muhammad Hasan, Muhammad Hussein Ya’qub, Abu Ishaq al-Hueiny, Mustafa al-‘Adawi and others. Salafis come from all Egyptian social classes.

*NICO PRUCHA: What is your message to the Egyptian youth?*

ABD AL-MUN’IM MONEEP: To learn their religion and history in a correct and well-suited manner so that their choices become wise in this important stage of the history of our Islamic *ummah*.

*NICO PRUCHA: How do you imagine or visualize the Islamic State in the future?*

ABD AL-MUN’IM MONEEP: I imagine an Islamic State in the future based on several elements. First and foremost, the Islamic state shall be based on justice and freedom. Political decision-making processes should be subjected to the principles of the *al-Majlis al-Shura* while acknowledging varieties of Islamic jurisprudence, creeds, and political pluralism.

*NICO PRUCHA: Thank you for sharing your views with the readers of ‘Perspectives on Terrorism’.*

**About the interviewer:** Nico Prucha holds an Mag. Phil. degree in Oriental Studies from the University of Vienna where he is also working on his PhD. He is the author of “The Voice of Jihad” -Al-Qaeda’s first online magazine.

## Notes

[1] “Ikhwan online”: <http://www.ikhwanonline.com/new/Default.aspx>; corresponding links to Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and a RSS-feed are available on the website

[2] Jama’*a* al-Da’wah al-Salafiyya, represented by prominent scholar Yasir al-Barhami. For an interview in Arabic with al-Barhami on details of the *Jama’*a* al-Da’wah al-Salafiyya*: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G\\_7euMplqyQ&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_7euMplqyQ&feature=related). Al-Barhami maintains a website, *sawt al-salaf* ([www.salafvoice.com](http://www.salafvoice.com)), where he frequently publishes fatwas (legal opinions) and articles. The website also serves as a platform to publish statements (*bayan*) of the *al-Da’wah al-Salafiyya* Group. “Anna Salafi” (“I am a Salafist”) is the most prominent website for the *al-Da’wah al-Salafiyya* movement, online at: [www.anasalafy.com/index.php](http://www.anasalafy.com/index.php).

[3] *Al-Jama’at al-Qutbiyyun* was founded in prison after the 1965 sentences of scores of Muslim Brotherhood members. Sayyid Qutb is considered the main thinker and spiritual counselor for historical as well as contemporary Islamist and jihadist groups. A prominent writer, Sayyid Qutb shaped the Islamists’ ideology with his two main works, his renowned *Milestones* and his commentary on the Quran *In the Shade of the Quran*. He was arrested in 1965 and executed in 1966. A small group of Muslim Brothers under the leadership of Sayyid Qutb’s brother, Muhammad, parted from the Brotherhood as they differed with regard to strategies on how to properly conduct Islamic work and missionary activities. Nowadays their numbers do not exceed 1,000 members. Muhammad Qutb is a professor at the Umm al-Qurra University in Mecca and his writings are frequently published on jihadist websites such as Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi’s *Minbar al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad*, [www.tawhed.ws](http://www.tawhed.ws). His writings can also be accessed directly via <http://tawhed.ws/a?a=pum8ossa>.

[4] Their website is currently under construction (<http://www.fic-25.com/>), the main activities are on their Facebook group, <http://www.facebook.com/Islamic.Coalition>. Their number and role in Egyptian politics seem rather marginal; this is also reflected by the small number of “likes” on Facebook (1,300).

[5] Also on Facebook, <http://www.facebook.com/gabhasalafia>, with about 70.000 “likes”. A banner remembering the victims of the January 28, 2011, clashes as well as the massacre of anti-Mubarak soccer fans in a stadium in Port Said on February 2, 2012 introduces the Facebook group. A main websites is also currently under construction, <http://www.gabhasalafia.com/>.

[6] ‘Abd al-Mun’im Moneep: *dalil al-harakat al-Islamiyya fi l-Masr*, Maktaba Madbuly: Cairo, 2010.

[7] <http://www.elshaab.org/indexnew2.php>

[8] <http://dostor.org/>

[9] ‘Abd al-Mun’im Moneep. *Kharita al-harakat al-Islamiyya, Shabaka al-‘Arabiyya li ma’lumat huquq al-insan*: 2009.

[10] ‘Abd al-Mun’im Moneep. *Muraja’at al-jihadiyyin – al-qissa al-khaffiyya l-muraja’at al-jihad wa-l-jama’at al-Islamiyya dakhil wa-kharij al-sujun*, Maktaba Madbouly: Cairo, 2010.

[11] ‘Abd al-Mun’im Moneep. *Al-Tanzim wa-l-tanzir – Tanzim al-Jihad wa-shabaka al-Qaeda bayna l-madi wa-l-hadir wa-l-mustaqbal*, Maktaba Madbouly: Cairo, 2010.

[12] Official website: <http://www.egyig.com/>. The recantations made in prison were available on the website both before and after the revolution of 2011. Since then, however, old ideological materials – carefully selected – have resurfaced. New are open demands calling for the release of its ideological leader ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Rahman who is imprisoned in the United States. Al-Jama’at al-Islamiyya established its own political party, the *Hizb al-bana’ wa-l-tanmiyya*, (“the Building and Development Party”). The official party’s website is available at <http://benaaparty.com/>. A Facebook group (over 3,000 “likes”) has been set up as well, <http://www.facebook.com/benaawatanmia>.

[13] <http://www.moheet.com/2011/09/27/اهن-موصال-ح-سرية/>

[14] According to al-Zawahiri in his book *Knights under the Banner of the Prophet*, Fursan taht raya al-nabiyyi, second edition, first part. As-Sahab: 2010, p. 17; Montasser al-Zayyat, trans. Ahmed Fekry. *The Road to Al-Qaeda – The Story of Bin Laden’s Right-Hand Man*. London: Pluto Press, 2002, p. 25.

[15] Denis Joseph Sullivan, Sana Abed-Kotob. *Islam in Contemporary Egypt: Civil Society vs. the State*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999, p. 76.

[16] Al-Salafiyyat al-yatim – Al-Wajha al-filastiniyya li-“l-jihad al-alami” wa-“l-qa’ida”. Beirut: Dar al-Saqi, 2011, pp. 23-37.

[17] See for example: Nico Prucha. ‘Abdallah ‘Azzam’s outlook for Jihad in 1988 – “Al-Jihad between Kabul and Jerusalem”, <http://www.rieas.gr/images/nicos2.pdf>.

[18] For an account, the controversial book by Montasser al-Zayyat offers some insight: Montasser al-Zayyat, trans. Ahmed Fekry. *The Road to Al-Qaeda – The Story of Bin Laden’s Right-Hand Man*, London: Pluto Press: 2002.

[19] Ayman al-Zawahiri. *Fursan taht raya al-nabiyyi*, second edition, first part. As-Sahab: 2010. 45.

[20] As-Sahab. *Al-Liqa’ al-maftuh ma’ al-shaykh Ayman al-Zawahiri*, first part, 35-37.

[21] Hizb al-Nur, online at <http://www.alnourparty.org/>.

[22] Hizb al-Asala: <http://www.alasalah.org/pages/home.htm>. On Facebook, the party endorses Egyptian President Morsi, <http://www.facebook.com/alasala.party>.

According to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, “It is the second Salafi party after al-Nour to gain official recognition in Egypt. Al-Asala is a member of the Democratic Alliance.” Furthermore, the party’s program consists of: “-Supporting an Islamic religious state in Egypt; - Supporting reforms that will move the Egyptian state and society toward Islam” and of “Rejecting the Camp David Accords and peace with, or recognition of, Israel”. <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/20/al-asala-authenticity-party>.

[23] This line established the dogma that the Quran is created and hence not co-eternal with God. This contrast with the orthodox Sunni view, that the Quran is the direct word of God (*kalimat allah*). The *Mu'atazilah* flourished from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> century in Baghdad and Basra.