



The Inevitable Caliphate?: A History of the Struggle for Global Islamic Union, 1924 to the Present

By Reza Pankhurst

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While in the West 'the Caliphate' evokes overwhelmingly negative images, throughout Islamic history it has been regarded as the ideal Islamic polity. In the wake of the "Arab Spring" and the removal of long-standing dictators in the Middle East, in which the dominant discourse appears to be one of the compatibility of Islam and democracy, reviving the Caliphate has continued to exercise the minds of its opponents and advocates. Reza Pankhurst's book contributes to our understanding of Islam in politics, the path of Islamic revival across the last century and how the popularity of the Caliphate in Muslim discourse waned and later re-emerged. Beginning with the abolition of the Caliphate, the ideas and discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb ut-Tahrir, al-Qaeda and other smaller groups are then examined. A comparative analysis highlights the core commonalities as well as differences between the various movements and individuals, and suggests that as movements struggle to re-establish a polity which expresses the unity of the ummah (or global Islamic community), the Caliphate has alternatively been ignored, had its significance minimised or denied, reclaimed and promoted as a theory and symbol in different ways, yet still serves as a political ideal for many.

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Review

"Reza Pankhurst provides a unique and probing examination of modern thinking on the caliphate....This detailed analysis of the ways in which the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb ut-Tahrir, and al-Qaeda as well as smaller groups reformulate and use the concept today is both judicious and informed. It provides the most reliable guide available to an idea and political symbol that holds attraction for many Sunni Muslims while inciting anxiety, even fear, among others, including many non-Muslims and Shi'a."--Professor James Piscatori, Durham University

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"Anyone trying to understand the current happenings in the Middle East could do worse than refer to the work. What they will find is a narrative that does not use western liberal democracy as the yardstick." -- *Huffington Post*

About the Author

Reza Pankhurst is a political scientist and historian, specialising in the Middle East and Islamic movements. He has a doctorate from the London School of Economics, where he previously completed his masters degree in the history of international relations.

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