
Politics and the violence. Dychotomy of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

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Abstract: Over its evolutionary course, the Quran, which is the holy book of Islam, has become not only a source of truths of faith for the umma (the Muslim community), but also a moral code containing a set of dos and don'ts. Due to its literary specificity, anachronism and the ambiguities appearing therein, it leaves room for interpretation, among both ordinary believers and scholars dealing with Quranic law. The literal interpretation of the holy book contributed to the emergence of many Islamic fundamentalisms. One of them is the Muslim Brotherhood established in the interwar period in Egypt. The aim of this paper is to show the coexistence of two intertwined functional elements of this organization – related to politics and terrorism, and resulting from the application of the literal and, at the same time, radical interpretation of the Quran.

Keywords: Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt, Islam, terrorism.

Streszczenie: Koran, święta księga islamu, stał się w swym ewolucyjnym toku dla ummy (społeczności muzułmańskiej) nie tylko źródłem prawd wiary, lecz również kodeksem moralnym, zawierającym zbiór nakazów i zakazów. Z uwagi na swą specyfikę literacką, anachroniczność i pojawiające się w nim niejasności, pozostawia pole do interpretacji, zarówno wśród zwykłych wiernych, jak i uczonych zajmujących się prawem koranicznym. Literalna interpretacja świętej księgi przyczyniła się do powstania wielu fundamentalizmów islamskich.

Do jednego z nich zaliczyć należy utworzone w okresie międzywojennym na terytorium Egiptu Stowarzyszenie Braci Muzułmanów. Celem niniejszego tekstu jest ukazanie współistnienia dwóch przeplatających się ze sobą elementów funkcjonowania owej organizacji – politycznego i terrorystycznego, wynikających ze stosowania dosłownej i radykalnej zarazem wykładni Koranu.

Słowa kluczowe: Bractwo Muzułmańskie, Egipt, islam, terroryzm.

Introduction

The growing global domination of Europeans in the 20th century, the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the activity of the Turkish dictator, Kemal Pasha Atatürk, breached the former, strong position of Islam. The weakening significance of the Muslim community in the 1920s resulted in ideological ferment among the elite of the Middle East. Egypt, which had been under British protectorate since 1881, had to wait over 40 years for its formal independence. After being proclaimed

independent (in 1922), the country was still forced to reckon with the significant influence of the British in practice as 225 thousand expats were managing Egypt's economy and the most important positions within the state were filled by British citizens. The sudden decline in the cotton export prices in the 1930s, caused by the global crisis, and the deteriorated quality of life of peasants, whose number amounted to 60% of the Egyptian population, contributed to increased social unrest. Such were the circumstances under which the decision was made to establish the Muslim Brotherhood, founded by Hassan Al-Banna. Returning to a purely Islamic society, rejecting European influence and strengthening the privileges of the umma became the primary governing idea – a through-line (Wróblewski 2019: 113-115).

Islam, which is the ideological foundation for the functioning of the Muslim Brotherhood, came into life within modern Saudi Arabia in the 7th century. Its icon is Muhammad, an Arab merchant from the Qurayshite tribe, born in Mecca in 570 (Rodinson 1991: 42-43). As the tradition has it, one night, at the Hira Cave in the “Mountain of the Light” (Arabic: Jabal al-Nour) near Mecca, Archangel Gabriel revealed himself to spread the truths of faith that served as the foundation to write down the Quran by Muhammad's companions. As a result, they contributed to the emergence of the religion called Islam. (Jelloun 2018: 30-32). The very word islam means “submission (to the will of God)”. After Muhammad died, the Muslims divided, which caused a dispute regarding the succession of power and shaped the division into the Sunni, called orthodox and Shia, who have practices a religious rite different to that of Sunni to this day. They also exhibit a different attitude towards doctrines. (Nydell 2001: 99-100). Although many very devout Muslims and Quranic law scholars call Islam a religion of peace, this has not protected it from radical forms. In his publication titled “Fundamentalizm islamski na Bliskim Wschodzie” [Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East], W. Grabowski calls fundamentalism a “religious movement postulating strict observance of Muslim law and protecting cultural identity against foreign influences, hence, wanting the return to the ‘foundations’ of Islam and strengthening its civilization through political activity, preaching or terrorist methods.” One of the most important original trends of fundamentalism was Wahhabism, which criticized the lack of respect for religious laws. However, the Salafi movement was particularly important in the context of the establishment and activity of the Muslim Brotherhood. It appeared in the 19th century and called for a return to the primary, raw form of Islam. (Mazurek 2015: 112-113)

Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood represented the Salafi movement. In Arabic, salaf means an “ancestor”. Therefore, Salafism refers to the value that guided the noble ancestors of the 7th century. This group includes the Prophet Muhammad and his first four successors: Abu Bakr, Umar Ibn al-Hattab, Usman Ibn Affan and Ali Ibn Abi Talib. They are called “the rightly guided Caliphs” (ar-rashidun). Salafis believe that the Quran and sunna (a collection of tales about the life of Muhammad) should be read by imitating the actions and words of the Prophet, without shaping individual judgements. Salafism has evolved over the course of history, just like the Muslim Brotherhood, which drifted away from the ideas of Wahhabism, yet remained faithful to Salafi thought (Larroque 2015: 28-30)

The objective of this article is to show the dichotomy of the brotherhood that started to take radical forms of functioning while moving towards the ideas of Salafism. The political activity, based on gradually attaining obedience and support among the Egyptians, was paired with violent and armed actions that should be dubbed as terrorist activity. A review of source literature in Polish and English allows drawing the conclusion that this dualism has not yet been clearly shown. Therefore, the author decided to apply a systemic, historical and comparative analysis to comprehensively draw specific conclusions. The publications by A. Larroque (*Geneza fundamentalizmów muzułmańskich* [Genesis of Islamic fundamentalisms]) and Ł. Fyderek, (*Autorytarne systemy polityczne świata arabskiego* [Authoritarian political systems of the Arab world]) turned out particularly useful in writing this text. They constituted a basis to study the subject of the Muslim Brotherhood and enabled understanding the issues and complexity related to the functioning of this organization. Whereas a report by the British 9 Bedford Row agency, released in 2015, is one of the most valuable documents that are available without any restrictions. It contains a multifaceted review of the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood from the historical perspective and is worth recommending not only to researchers, but also to regular readers interested in this subject matter.

1. The genesis of the Muslim Brotherhood

Hassan al-Banna believed that British influences and British democracy had shaken the unity of the Egyptian people. He dubbed political parties as evil that manifests itself through their constant internal struggles. He also repeatedly postulated dissolving the multi-party system and opposed social degeneration and corruption. Antidemocratic tendencies in al-Banna's ideas manifested themselves, among others, in upholding the classic Islamic theory of obedience to the ruler, which states that the rules can be opposed only when "sidetracking from the straight (religious) path". This reformer had caused domestic politics to start getting out of control, becoming undefined and hidden (Bakker, Meijer 2013: 299-300). Al-Banna was concerned about the growing power of Europe – technological inventions and expeditions to distant Islamic countries. Europe was a threat to the great Muslim society. Large areas of the Ottoman Empire began to be subject to European domination, e.g., Morocco and North Africa. The defeat of Turkey, a purely Muslim country, in World War I, reinforced strong European nations. According to al-Banna, they undermined the immense cultural heritage of Islamic nations, burdening it with authority in the form of direct occupation, colonialism, trust or mandate. Not only Great Britain, but also Spain, France and Italy played their special roles in this case. Therefore, threat came from different directions (Tamimi 1997: 6-7)

In response to the aforementioned challenges that not only Egypt, but the entire Islamic world had to face, Hassan al-Banna established the Muslim Brotherhood in March 1928. He did so with several of his friends, who were pious Muslims. They jointly swore an oath, calling themselves brothers in the service to Islam. Al-Banna was awarded the title of the supreme leader. There were only 6 members at the beginning of the Brotherhood's activity. Their number rose to 1,000 in 1933 and 200 thousand 4 years later. In 1943, the

organization comprised 500 thousand people, and as many as almost 2 million in 1945. However, the influences of the Brotherhood reached also beyond Egypt, primarily the Middle East and North Africa, with such countries as Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sudan, Palestine (Israel), Lebanon and even Malaysia (Brylew 2016: 179-180). The main objectives of this organization included promoting the ideas of original Islam, arising from direct interpretation of the Quran, negating Western influences, and the aforementioned increase in the number of Brotherhood members. Al-Banna was often invited by Egyptians to their homes and workplaces, giving speeches, thus making the Muslim Brotherhood an organization perceived as one operating “close to the people” (Özdemir 2013: 10). In its initial phase, the Muslim Brotherhood was highly active and used simple language to drift away from rigid formulas that entrapped Islam of the time. The Brotherhood ignored the wealthy elite of the Christian minority – the Copts. Together with his comrades, al-Banna formed cells in cities located within the Suez Canal – Ismailia, Port Said and Suez. The Muslim Brotherhood soon began to win supporters throughout Egypt. There were already 300 groups of the organization functioning in 1934. The Muslim Brotherhood had their own health care, primary and secondary schools, and formed vocational, sports, cooperative and charity organizations – which means it was active on numerous levels in order to strengthen its position. It quickly became a real power, also in religious matters. By usually showing respect for various interpretations of the principles of Islam, they were able to attract both moderate persons and supporters of terrorism. During the 5th Conference of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1938, Hassan al-Banna emphasized that Islam accepted the power in legislation and all of its regimes. When asked whether the Brotherhood planned to revolt against the current political system, he responded that the benefits of such a decision would not necessarily be significant but if peace talks with the government failed, a revolution could become a reality. During his speech, al-Banna accepted that introducing the Islamic system (a political model based on the Sharia law) should be a priority. All of the aforementioned declarations could have proven to be the rationale behind potential radical actions in the future (Stępniewska-Holzer, Holzer 2006: 59-61).

2. The political aspect of the Muslim Brotherhood

In 1936, Hassan al-Banna attempted to exert pressure on the Egyptian government, to persuade it to Islamize the education and legislation, and improve the economic welfare of the country. In the same year, he also wrote a letter titled “Nahwa al-nour” (towards the light), which he addressed to King Farouk and Prime Minister Mostafa el-Nahhas Pasha. Therein he wrote:

What has urged me to submit this letter to Your Excellency is a keen desire to guide the nation [...] in a righteous way, established on the most excellent of paths, drawing out for it the best of program [...] You will now see two ways before you, each one urging you to turn the nation in its direction and to follow its path [...] The first is the way of Islam and its principles, its rules, its culture and its civilization. The second is the way of the West and the outward aspects of its life, its organization and its methods. It is our belief that the first way, the way

of Islam, its principles and rules, is the only way which ought to be followed, and towards which the present and future nation should direct itself [...].

If we take the nation along this path, we shall be able to solve these life problems that other countries struggle with, which do not know this path and do not follow it [...]" (Zdanowski 2009: 41).

The postulate of Egypt pursuing a policy friendly towards other Muslim countries appeared in another letter to the Prime Minister, dated 1938. However, the appeals of the Brotherhood were not approved by the authorities, who did not want to make significant changes. Although the Brotherhood enjoyed great social popularity, it was unable to fulfil its political objectives by peaceful means. Neither in 1943 nor in 1945 did any of the Brothers win a seat in the Parliament; furthermore – even the leader of the organization, Hassan al-Banna, failed to do it (Purat 2014: 217).

3. The terrorist activity of the Muslim Brotherhood 3.1. Reasons for radicalisation

The lack of successful attempts to put pressure on the government forced the Muslim Brotherhood to change the method of impacting on the Egyptian authorities from peaceful to a much more radical one. There was also the growing aversion to Western imperialism. The so-called Special Section was formed in 1940. This group was of military nature and was born at the initiative of Muslim Brotherhood elders. The Special Section was strengthened by a group of scouts, which in turn was the aftermath of al-Banna's fascination with the Nazi and fascist youth scout groups forming in Germany and Italy in the 1930s. The objective of al-Banna was to establish an Islamic equivalent to those. However, Special Section's training was not solely based on physical exercise. It also included mental preparation, modelled on martyrdom and willingness to wage jihad (as understood by the Western world – "the holy war"), and to die. It was attempted to keep the new formation secret, in order not to draw the attention of the authorities (Beford Row 2015: 55-58)

Realizing the impossibility of introducing changes to the Egyptian legislation and the still significant influences of the British in the country, the leader of the Brotherhood announced the jihad in 1946. The escalation of terror resulted in the organization being outlawed. Attempts to negotiate with the government failed – they coincided with the assassination of the Egyptian Prime Minister, Mahmoud Fahmy El Nokrashy Pasha, conducted by the Special Section, which began spinning out of control. A year later, al-Banna himself died in retaliation (Tomasiewicz, 2017). The death of the founder and the most significant member of the Muslim Brotherhood ended an important chapter in the organization's history.

3.2. The Muslim Brotherhood during the Cold War

The transformation of the Egyptian political system was triggered by a coup d'état in July 1952. It resulted from social unrest towards the then political elite with ties to the court and the Wafd party (existing since 1923). King Farouk abdicated

after the coup, and power was seized by the Free Officers Movement that was a military conspiratorial cell. Two historically important leaders – Gamal Abdel Nasser Hussein, followed by Anwar el-Sadat – emerged from this organization in the future. When it came to power, the Free Officers Movement did not have any elaborate political plan to run the country. This was rather an ad-hoc solution to the issues through introducing military rule, including a land reform and brutally snuffed-out strikes. The constitution of 1923 was made void, and above all, the republic was proclaimed and was supposed to be headed by a president – instead of a monarch (Fyderek 2016: 44-45). Despite moderately effective attempts to establish cooperation between the new Egyptian authorities and the Muslim Brotherhood, there was a feud between them at the turn of 1953 and 1954, primarily due to the radical wing of the Brotherhood. The first president of Egypt, Mohamed Naguib could count on the support of the Brotherhood, whereas his rival, Gamal Abdel Nasser Hussein, who was deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior, was antagonistic towards the Brotherhood. Abdel Nasser was gaining political advantage over Naguib at the time. Repressions that began against the Muslim Brotherhood resulted in the outburst of students' protests at the University of Cairo in 1954. This, in turn, contributed to the banning of the brotherhood and arresting about 450 of its members. At that time, Abdel Nasser also concluded a contract with Great Britain that governed relations in respect of the Suez Canal. The deal raised many reservations – expressed even by the Egyptian signatory himself, since it did not give Egypt autonomy in managing the Canal, and the Canal itself was a trade route of enormous international significance. The provisions of the treaty, which still sustained the excessively strong influences of the British within the Suez region, were strongly condemned by Naguib and the Brotherhood. The Special Section started to prepare a plan to assassinate Nasser. At a rally in Alexandria, held in 1954, where the leader spoke to 10 thousand people, eight shots were fired in his direction – all of them missed. The leader completed his speech but a large-scale arrest operation was held on the same night. Almost 20 thousand people associated with the Muslim Brotherhood were imprisoned. Naguib was accused of connections with the organization and placed under house arrest. Owing to his charisma and political skills, Abdel Nasser strengthened his position, becoming the actual dictator of Egypt (Stępniewska-Holzer, Holzer 2006: 111-116).

In the 1950s, the Muslim Brotherhood organization – despite its defeats against the regime – was greatly influenced by Sayyid Qutb. He opposed the national propaganda machine that legitimized the actions of the state by dubbing them in line with the principles of Islam. As a result, the Brotherhood suggested a counter-ideology, which discredited the state propaganda, accusing the authorities of fascination with European social ideas. Qutb believed that Islam itself was a revolution, therefore, a revolution with Abdel Nasser was not needed by Muslims. Qutb, who learned the Quran by heart already in his childhood and was involved in political demonstration in his younger years, also published many texts commenting on events in Egypt; he also criticized Western policy in the Middle East. This thinker had broad horizons – he obtained his master's degree in the United States, majoring in pedagogy. His personal commentaries to the surahs (chapters) of the Quran are in the canon of Egyptian literature. He joined the Brotherhood in 1953, however a year later, he was

already sentenced to 10 years in prison. He knew Abdel Nasser who appreciated his work and the anti-imperialist attitude. Qutb was in constant contact with the Free Officers – and there were also many supporters of Qutb’s theory within their ranks. The activist tried to promote the idea that the foundation for the functioning of the state should be the Sharia law. He believed the Brotherhood to be a pan-Islamic organization that should contribute to deepening of the revolution by “infecting” other parts of the Muslim world. Over time, his beliefs became more radical, which also caused disputes between him and the Special Section. During his time in jail, he created his most popular work titled “Ma’alim fi’l tariq” (Milestones), where he argued that authority, which is not based on Muslim law, is in fact unlawful and refers to pagan times. This was a significant accusation against Abdel Nasser. Qutb criticized governments and human attitudes in his other works, which have inspired numerous terrorist organizations around the world. The activities of the Brotherhood intensified and the attitude towards Abdel Nasser remained unchanged. 800 members of the brotherhood were arrested in 1965, although unofficial sources said the number to be as high as 40 thousand. Numerous prominent leaders of the Brotherhood’s extreme wing were sentenced a year later. Qutb himself was also sentenced to death. Abdel Nasser died 4 years later, thus ending the first phase of the Republic of Egypt after it was established at the beginning of the 1950s (Zdanowski 2009: 64-71).

After Abdel Nasser’s death, his successor, Anwar el-Sadat opted for a different approach towards Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood as well. In the early 1970s, the Brotherhood gained a lot of liberty, also in terms of rebuilding student organizations. Within five years, they gained great popularity at universities. The Brotherhood also issued its own monthly, “Al-Da’wa”. The problem was that the association itself was rather divided – a moderate wing wanting to peacefully exert pressure on the authorities, on the one hand, and an extreme wing, carried by a wave of ideas put forward by Qutb and demanding bloody struggle on the other. This led to a dichotomy once again – a political trend mixed with one based on violence. Such armed units of the Brotherhood as the Muslim Group, Liberation and Jihad Organization were established in 1973. They based their activities on terror. The acts of violence culminated in October 1981 – el-Sadat was murdered. A new generation of extremists came to the fore in mid-1980s. In 1998, the radical member of the el Gama’a el Islamiyya slaughtered 58 tourists in Luxor. They also tried to overthrow the Egyptian government but to no avail (Tomasiewicz, 2017). They were led at the time by Hosni Mubarak, who was elected president in 1981, after the assassination of el-Sadat. He was the only candidate, winning 98.4% of the votes. He held his position for three decades. He avoided radical changes in domestic and foreign politics. Being an army officer, he was also a member of the Free Officers Movement. The qualities of a charismatic leader were also not something he exhibited – unlike his two predecessors. This, however, did not bother the society, which expected calm and balanced leadership. An unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Mubarak took place in Addis Ababa in 1995. A temporary crisis in his rule was quickly resolved. The state administration and the National Democratic Party still remained centralized. The formal aspect of power intertwined with unofficial decision that often

resulted from personal relationships with the president. Human relationships were an important part of the state apparatus (Fyderek 2016: 116-118).

3.3. The Muslim Brotherhood after the Cold War

During the era of Hosni Mubarak (he held the office of president in the years 1981-2011), the Muslim Brotherhood, besides their terrorist activity, also implemented educational and charity projects approved by the authorities. At the same time, politics reappeared in their operations. In 2000, they won 17 seats in the parliament, and as many as 88 in 2005, which constituted 20% of all available. They became the most important party in the duel with the incumbent president. Their success in 2005 made Mubarak realize that there was a considerable political force growing in Egypt. Mubarak, who violated human rights, redirected the attention of observers to the activities of the extreme wing of the Brotherhood – so as to arouse fear of Islamic fundamentalism. He simultaneously repressed the Islamists from the Brotherhood. Despite this, the group continued to succeed in the coming years, forming alliances with smaller, legally operating political parties. The political opposition in the country in the year 2011 could be divided into two groups. The first one was those who did not want to adhere to the social functioning rules imposed by the president's apparatus or ideologically opposed the pertaining political system. The other group consisted of activists seeking to destabilize this system. This included the Muslim Brotherhood. Internal partitions within the opposition, as well as varying objectives, hindered the process of consolidation and working out common methods to enable overthrowing the autocratic regime of Hosni Mubarak. Furthermore, the president was supported by the domestic security services and the army, which was highly respected in Egypt (Purat 2014: 223-225). However, the society did not think highly of him. When mass strikes against the authorities abusing their rights broke out in Tunisia at the turn of 2010 and 2011, Egypt and many other countries of North Africa and the Middle East saw a dramatic increase in unrest. This started the famous Arab Spring.

4. Activities of the Muslim Brotherhood during the Arab Spring

Tunisians, who started a huge – in the perspective of the Muslim world – revolution, were triggered by Mohamed Bouazizi, a street vendor with six children and a mother to support. When he was once again slandered by the police and his property was confiscated, he set his body on fire in desperation. This angered Tunisians so much that within three weeks they overthrew their president, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (Armbruster 2011: 63-64). Soon after, the Arab Spring “spread” onto other countries as well. It started in Egypt on 25 January 2011, during the national holiday – National Police Day. Law enforcement officers, respected by Mubarak, were only his corrupted and poorly trained tool, according to Egyptians. Fuelled by the successes of Tunisians, the Egyptians began organizing themselves via Facebook and Twitter (Puspitarasi 2017: 163). The main demonstration site in Cairo was the at-Tahrir square. There the protesters repeatedly repeatedly chanting: Aish, horreya, adala

egtema'eya (bread, freedom, human dignity). Despite the fact that Mubarak's apparatus oppressed them with increasing fierceness, the social resistance grew stronger. The police commanding staff itself appeared not to be unanimous in terms of how to proceed with the demonstrating mob. The pressured president stepped down on 11 February 2011 and was brought to trial a few months later (Osiewicz 2015: 69)

The Muslim Brotherhood entered the period of socio-political transformation in Egypt under a new leader, Mohammed Badie, appointed the head of the organization in January 2010. Although he had declared continuing the political activity of the Brotherhood, he based it on the "participation and not domination" slogan, which could have suggested peaceful intentions and gradual departure from radicalisms (Hamzawy, Brown 2010: 1-2). The Muslim Brotherhood were the best-organized section of the opposition during the Arab Spring; however, its leaders made a decision to cautiously participate in the demonstrations and – whenever possible – in the background. They did not want to become the target of harsh repression they had experienced previously. So, the uprising in Egypt was not started by the members of the Brotherhood, but by urban and cosmopolitan youth (Dzisiów-Szuszczkiewicz 2011: 47). From the perspective of the Muslim Brotherhood, the event at the beginning of 2012 was particularly important. It was then that the Freedom and Justice Party, a political wing of the Brotherhood, won 43% of the seats. This was the outcome of Brotherhood's cautious policy and increased social trust. Mohamed Mursi, this party's candidate, was elected the president, winning 51% of the votes in the second ballot of the election (Larroque 2015: 111). The initial actions of Mursi may have suggested that he would want to limit the influence of the army, and to consolidate power as well. As regards foreign policy, the new president focused on achieving two fundamental goals, namely, restoring Egypt to its former strong position in the region, and opening up to relationships with new partners – not only from the Middle East. Whereas the society demanded improved quality of life, fighting corruption, democratizing the system and domestic safety (Tumulec 2013: 132). Mursi lasted only a year in office – he was overthrown by the Egyptian military after a wave of further protests. He too was soon brought to trial, along with 14 other people associated with the Muslim Brotherhood. They were accused of using tortures, incitement to the murder of a journalist and two protesters, as well as their illegal imprisonment. Mursi was sentenced to 20 years in a prison cell, but this was not the end of charges brought against him. He was ultimately sentenced to death, with the penalty being annulled. He died in the court in June 2019 (BBC 2019). According to M. Tumulec, after the Arab Spring "the Muslim Brotherhoods were unable to cope with internal difficulties that turned out to be the greatest 'inhibitor', also in terms of international politics [...] As long as Egypt was tormented by domestic problems, it was impossible for it to become an important regional actor [...] The foreign policy objectives presented at the beginning of Mursi's presidency were wishful thinking and were devoid of strategic calculation (Tumulec 2013: 147). On the other hand, P. Sasnal of the Polish Institute of International Affairs, when commenting on the situation in Egypt, said that "it was the first country of the "Arab Spring", where Islamists were unable to deal with taking power over from a dictator. After taking reins in 2012, the Muslim Brotherhood lost the privilege

of being in the opposition and took the responsibility of running the state. As predicted, the Islamists failed miserably, both in terms of getting the country out of an economic crisis (outflow of investments, reduced foreign exchange reserves, increased unemployment and debt) and the social feelings (insecurity, feeling of detriment and injustice)” (Sasnal 2013).

5. The landscape after the Arab Revolution and the marginalization of the Muslim Brotherhood

After removing Mohamed Mursi from his office in June 2014, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, a military commander, was appointed the new president of Egypt. He won as much as 94% of the votes in the general elections. However, after 28 months in office, his support dropped to 44%. The financial stand of the society has not improved over the following years, and the citizens are not satisfied with the pace of changes (Głogowska, 2018: 62-63). In 2018, el-Sisi ran for re-election and won 97% of the votes, however, this resulted from completely eliminating the opposition (the main opponent was arrested, his campaign manager battered, and other electoral committees decided to withdraw due to being threatened). El-Sisi’s only rival was an insignificant politician, who, ironically, supported el-Sisi himself (The Telegraph 2018).

After losing power, the Muslim Brotherhood was disunited into several smaller fractions. The organization was recognized in Egypt as a terrorist one, with the Freedom and Justice Party also banned. Since then, its leaders who are currently residing primarily outside Egypt (in such countries as Turkey, Qatar and Great Britain) have been trying to convince its younger former members that the right method to restore the former glory are peaceful actions. They have also been referring to the initial phase of the Muslim Brotherhood, from the time of its founder, Hassan al-Banna (The Conversation 2019). Hence, history comes a full circle.

Conclusions

The Muslim Brotherhood founded in 1928 represented an ideological trend referring to the Salafi ideas – relying on old traditions of Islam from the period of Prophet Muhammad and the Great Caliphs. Quran was perceived as an absolutist source of faith and moral principles that should guide every Muslim. Initially, the Brotherhood was a minor organization but over time became popular throughout Egypt, with hundreds, thousands, and eventually millions of followers. Simultaneously, with its growing importance and the escalating need to become independent from Great Britain, it started adapting radical forms, using violence and terrorism. Over the 90 years of its history, it manifested a dichotomy – with a moderate wing, which strived to achieve political goals by peaceful means, and an extreme wing, willing to inflict suffering. The founder of the brotherhood was Hassan al-Banna, who was eventually executed. He exhibited a growing tendency of adapting increasingly extreme attitudes. Another historically important figure of the Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb was an inspiration to the members of the association, owing to his

unmatched knowledge of the Quran and his comments in this respect, as well as the literary work created in prison, with a strong ideological impact. Qutb shared the fate of the organization's founder and was also executed. In the second half of the 20th century, the Muslim Brotherhood was still fighting for influence in Egypt, wanting to instill restrictive interpretation of Islam's Holy Book within the domestic legislation; however, it was internally divided. When it finally managed to wait out three dictators and win power after the Arab Spring, it was unable to get rid of radicalism. To sum up, one may be tempted to venture the conclusion that the organization's bipolarity, which involved the parallel pursuit of two strategies – peaceful policy and terrorism – was unsuccessful in bringing about long-term effects. Successes were rather momentary outbursts ending in repressions by the state apparatus, and thousands of Muslim Brotherhood members, consequently forcing the organization to revive once again and to make up for incurred losses. It currently is in the same state – putting itself back together. When analysing the course of history, it is hard not to get the impression that it was not the last time we had heard of the organization. It still has numerous devoted followers, although they currently reside outside Egypt. The crisis within the Muslim Brotherhood does not have to mean the decline of the organization. However, whether or not the Brotherhood will be able to revive once again – the years to come will definitely show.

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