



No God but God: Egypt and the Triumph of Islam

Geneive Abdo

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Shrouded in mystery, the Islamic presence in the Middle East evokes longstanding Western fears of terrorism and holy war. Our media have consistently focused on these extremes of Islam, overlooking a quiet yet pervasive religious movement that is now transforming the nation of Egypt.

Drawing on hundreds of interviews, *No God But God* opens up previously inaccessible segments of Egyptian society--from the universities and professional sectors to the streets--to illustrate the deep penetration of "Popular Islamic" influence. Abdo provides a firsthand account of this peaceful movement, allowing its moderate leaders, street preachers, scholars, doctors, lawyers, men and women of all social classes to speak for themselves. Challenging Western stereotypes, she finds that this growing number of Islamists do not seek the violent overthrow of the government or a return to a medieval age. Instead, they believe their religious values are compatible with the demands of the modern world. They are working within and beyond the secular framework of the nation to gradually create a new society based on Islamic principles. Abdo narrates fascinating accounts of their methods and successes. Today, for example, university students meet in underground unions, despite a state ban. In addition, sheikhs have recently used their new legislative power to censor books and movies deemed to violate religious values.

Both fascinating and unsettling, Abdo's findings identify a grassroots model for transforming a secular nation-state to an Islamic social order that will likely inspire other Muslim nations. This model cannot be ignored, for it will soon help organized Islamists to undermine secular control of Egypt and potentially jeopardize Western interests in the Arab world.

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