The movement for Islamic reformation initiated by
Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897), Muhammed 'Abduh
(1849-1905) and 'Abdul Rahman al-Kawakibi (1849-1903) was
a radical departure from the attitude of the traditional
leaders of Islam.[11] While the latter demanded a return to
the original form and spirit of Islam the movement for
Islamic Reformation took cognizance of the emerging forces
in the Islamic community and the world at large and stressed
the necessity of reinterpreting Islamic teachings in the
light of new conditions. The movement for Islamic
Reformation was particularly interested in proving the
compatibility of Islam with modernity. In order to uphold
Islam's ability to adapt itself to modern life, the
movement encouraged free inquiry and reasoning and abjured
outdated beliefs and superstitions.[12]

Though the movement for Islamic reformation
considered religious doctrines as its main and primary
theoretical source, and though it upheld the institutions
of the Caliphate and the Islamic Empire, it nevertheless
was a progressive movement in essence. It was greatly
influenced by the French Revolution and Western civilization
and thus it aspired to restate the social principles of

[11]Haim, op. cit., p. 18.

[12]Kemal H. Karpat (ed.), Political and Social
Thought in the Contemporary Middle East (New York: Praeger,
1968), p. 25.