

SALAFISM'S HISTORICAL CONTINUITY: THE RECEPTION OF 'MODERNIST' SALAFIS BY 'PURIST' SALAFIS IN JORDAN

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INTRODUCTION

Years ago, I gave a talk on Salafism at my university and a colleague of mine had been kind enough to encourage her students to come and listen to this talk, which—according to her—would focus on 'Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad 'Abduh, Rashīd Riḍā and other Salafis'.¹ She was surprised when I did not even mention these famous nineteenth- and twentieth-century reformers at all, but instead focused on the modern-day 'purist' Sunni Muslims known as Salafis nowadays. Although this was just a misunderstanding, it does point to a bigger problem in the academic study of Salafism today: can nineteenth- and early twentieth-century reformist thinkers and scholars plausibly be labelled 'Salafi' and, if so, what is their connection to the self-professed Salafis we hear so much about today?²

* My thanks to this *Journal's* anonymous reviewers for their constructive criticisms.

¹ For more on these reformist thinkers, see Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983 [1962]); Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn 'al-Afghānī'* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983 [1968]); id., *Sayyid Jamal al-Din 'Al-Afghani': A Political Biography* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972); Elie Kedourie, *Afghani and 'Abduh: An Essay on Religious Unbelief and Political Activism in Modern Islam* (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, [1966] 1997); Umar Ryad, *Islamic Reformism and Christianity: A Critical Reading of the Works of Muhammad Rashīd Riḍā and His Associates (1898–1935)* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Simon A. Wood, *Christian Criticisms, Islamic Proofs: Rashīd Riḍā's Modernist Defense of Islam* (Oxford: OneWorld Books, 2008).

² General studies on this type of Salafism include Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (London: Hurst & Co., 2009); Bernard Rougier (ed.), *Qu'est-ce que le salafisme?* (Paris: Presses Universitaires

Over the past few decades, academic scholars of Islam have often treated reformers such as al-Afghānī (1838–1897), ‘Abduh (1849–1905) and Riḍā (1865–1935) as ‘modernist’ Salafis and even as the founders of a movement called ‘Salafiyya’ (Salafism).³ Other reformist scholars from the same era, particularly certain members of the Iraqi al-Ālūsī family such as Maḥmūd Shukrī al-Ālūsī (1857–1924) and the Syrian Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī (1866–1914), have also been included by many scholars as adherents to a movement or trend labelled ‘Salafiyya’ or ‘Salafism’ that is said to have existed in Iraq and Syria in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁴

There is a lot of debate about these labels, however, since academics disagree about whether all those mentioned in the literature as part of the

de France, 2008); Behnam T. Said and Hazim Fouad (eds.), *Salafismus: Auf der Suche nach dem wahren Islam* (Freiburg: Herder, 2014).

³ See, for example, Emad el-Din Shahin, ‘Salafiyah’ in John L. Esposito (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 28–35, at 30; Oliver Scharbrodt, ‘The Salafiyya and Sufism: Muḥammad ‘Abduh and his *Risālat al-Wāridāt* (Treatise on Mystical Inspirations)’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 70/1 (2007): 89–115.

⁴ For Iraq, see Butrus Abu-Manneh, ‘Salafiyya and the Rise of the Khālidiyya in Baghdad in the Early Nineteenth Century’, *Die Welt des Islams*, 43/3 (2003): 349–72; Hala Fattah, ‘“Wahhabi” Influences, Salafi Responses: Shaikh Mahmud Shukri and the Iraqi Salafi Movement, 1745–1930’, *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 14/2 (2003): 127–48; Basheer Nafi, ‘Abu al-Thana’ al-Alusi: An Alim, Ottoman Sufi, and Exegete of the Qur’an’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 34 (2002): 465–94; id., ‘Salafism Revived: Nu‘mān al-Ālūsī and the Trial of the Two Ahmads’, *Die Welt des Islams*, 49 (2009): 49–97; Itzhak Weismann, ‘Genealogies of Fundamentalism: Salafi Discourse in Nineteenth-Century Baghdad’, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 36 (2009): 267–80. For Syria, see David Dean Commins, *Islamic Reform: Political and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Thomas Eich, ‘The Forgotten *Salafi*—Abūl-Hudā aṣ-Ṣayyādī’, *Die Welt des Islams*, 43/1 (2003): 61–87; id., ‘Questioning Paradigms: A Close Reading of ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bayṭār’s *Ḥilya* in Order to Gain Some New Insights into the Damascene *Salafiyya*’, *Arabica*, 12/3 (2005): 373–90; Mun‘im Sirry, ‘Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī and the Salafī Approach to Sufism’, *Die Welt des Islams*, 51 (2011): 75–108; Itzhak Weismann, ‘Between Sūfī Reformism and Modernist Rationalism—A Reappraisal of the Origins of the Salafiyya from the Damascene Angle’, *Die Welt des Islams*, 41 (2001): 206–37; id., ‘The Politics of Popular Religion: Sufis, Salafis, and Muslim Brothers in 20th-Century Hamah’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 37/1 (2005): 39–58; id., *Taste of Modernity: Sufism, Salafiyya, and Arabism in Late Ottoman Damascus* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

Salafi movement can actually be labelled 'Salafi'. These discussions have focused on the Iraqi scholar Abū l-Thana' Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ālūsī (1802–1854)⁵ and especially on the Syrian scholar Abū l-Hudā al-Ṣayyādī (1850–1909).⁶ An important point of disagreement in these debates is the perceived dichotomy between Salafism and Sufism. While the former is associated with literalism and strict adherence to the Shari'a, Sufism is often seen as more focused on spirituality and esoteric dimensions of Islam. As such, the two are often seen as opposites,⁷ yet recent research has shown that several prominent nineteenth-century Salafi reformers were closer to certain forms of Sufism than the supposed dichotomy between them would suggest.⁸

Such debates over who is a Salafi and who is not suggest a lack of clarity about the definition of 'Salafi' and 'Salafism', which is indeed the case, and this is partly for epistemological reasons. An important contribution to clarifying this matter was made by Lauzière. Quoting Skinner's approach to the study of ideas,⁹ Lauzière analyses Salafism through the prism of conceptual history and, looking at how Muslim scholars label themselves and their ideas, concludes that it is doubtful that the substantive noun 'Salafism' (Salafiyya) even existed prior to the twentieth century. Moreover, Lauzière states that while the epithet 'Salafi' has been used from mediaeval times, prior to the twentieth century it referred only to specific theological views ascribed to *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ* ('the pious predecessors'), not to the all-encompassing emulation of these earliest generations of Muslims claimed by today's Salafis.¹⁰

⁵ Nafi, 'Abu al-Thana'.

⁶ Thomas Eich, 'Rejoinder: Abū l-Hudā and the Alūsīs in Scholarship on Salafism: A Note on Methodology', *Die Welt des Islams*, 49 (2009): 466–72; id., 'Abū l-Hudā l-Ṣayyādī—Still Such a Polarizing Figure (Response to Itzchak Weismann)', *Arabica*, 55 (2008): 433–44; id., 'The Forgotten Salafi'; Nafi, 'Salafism Revived', 54–9; Itzchak Weismann, 'Abū l-Hudā l-Ṣayyādī and the Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism', *Arabica*, 54/4 (2007): 586–92.

⁷ See also Lloyd Ridgeon (ed.), *Sufis and Salafis in the Contemporary Age* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

⁸ Eich, 'Rejoinder: Abū l-Hudā'; Scharbrodt, 'The Salafiyya and Sufism'; Sirry, 'Jamāl al-Dīn'; Weismann, 'Between Sūfī Reformism and Modernist Rationalism'.

⁹ Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics, Vol. I: Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 160, cited in Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism: Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 14.

¹⁰ Henri Lauzière, 'The Construction of Salafiyya: Reconsidering Salafism from the Perspective of Conceptual History', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 42/3 (2010): 369–89, at 371–3; id., *The Making of Salafism*, 16–19.

Furthermore, taking mediaeval scholarly views on what ‘Salafi’ means as a yardstick, Lauzière claims that al-Afghānī and ‘Abduh did not espouse views that could be described as ‘Salafi’ (either in the theological or the all-encompassing sense) and did not refer to themselves as such. Lauzière traces the mistake of labelling these men ‘Salafis’ to the impact of the work of the French Orientalist Louis Massignon and concludes that ‘the belief that Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad ‘Abduh spearheaded a movement of Islamic modernism called *salafiyya* in the late nineteenth century relies on assumptions rather than evidence.’¹¹ Finally, Lauzière also claims that even scholars like the aforementioned Maḥmūd Shukrī al-Ālūsī and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, who did hold ‘Salafi’ theological views in combination with a reformist and modernist attitude toward science, religion and rationalism and who may therefore be described as ‘modernist Salafis’, did not constitute a ‘modernist Salafi movement’ labelled ‘Salafism’ at the time.¹²

As may be expected from such iconoclastic work, Lauzière’s publications have been criticized by other academic scholars. Taking a different epistemological approach—that of intellectual (rather than conceptual) history—Griffel discerns clear ideological links between—to use Lauzière’s terminology—‘modernist Salafi’ views and ‘purist Salafi’ ones on the basis of their shared preference for a (general and unspecified) return to the *salaf* and especially a rejection of the schools of Islamic law (*madhāhib*, sing. *madhhab*; *lā madhhabiyya*). As such, Griffel claims there is a historical continuity between ‘modernist’ Salafis and ‘purist’ Salafis and explicitly claims that ‘Abduh should be seen as part of the former group.¹³

Weismann, in his critique of Lauzière’s work, does not go quite so far. He nevertheless notes that the latter sees ‘the late nineteenth- to mid-twentieth-century concept of *modernist Salafism* [...and] the purist version dominant today’ as ‘largely incongruent or even contradictory’

¹¹ Lauzière, ‘The Construction of *Salafiyya*’, 373–84. The quotation is on 384. Id., *The Making of Salafism*, 4–6, 33–44.

¹² Lauzière, ‘The Construction of *Salafiyya*’, 375–6.

¹³ Frank Griffel, ‘What Do We Mean by “Salafi”? Connecting Muḥammad ‘Abduh with Egypt’s Nūr Party in Islam’s Contemporary Intellectual History’, *Die Welt des Islams*, 55/2 (2015): 186–220. See also Lauzière’s reply to Griffel and the latter’s response to that: Henri Lauzière, ‘What We Mean versus What They Meant by “Salafi”: A Reply to Frank Griffel’, *Die Welt des Islams*, 56 (2016): 89–96; Frank Griffel, ‘What is the Task of the Intellectual (Contemporary) Historian?—A Response to Henri Lauzière’s “Reply”’, *Die Welt des Islams*, 56 (2016): 249–55.

(emphasis in the original).¹⁴ Weismann himself claims that '[i]t seems rather that modern Salafism began with the Islamic reformers of Baghdad and Damascus from where it was passed on to Egypt'.¹⁵ Weismann, in other words, agrees with Lauzière in the sense that he, too, seems to exclude al-Afghānī and 'Abduh from the category of 'modernist Salafis', but disagrees with him by claiming that there is a historical continuity between the 'modernist Salafi' reformers from nineteenth-century Iraq and Syria and today's 'purist Salafis'.¹⁶

In sum, academics do not agree on which nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars can be labelled 'Salafi' and—more importantly for this article—reach different conclusions with regard to the historical continuity between these 'modernist' Salafis and today's 'purist' ones. Interestingly, little attention has been paid to how the latter deal with this issue. Some scholars have briefly mentioned that 'purist' Salafis disavow al-Afghānī and 'Abduh¹⁷ and have mixed feelings about Riḍā,¹⁸ but no systematic study has been done into the views of 'purist' Salafis on the 'modernist' Salafis who are at the core of this debate. This article seeks to partly fill this gap by analysing the reception of 'modernist' Salafis in the work of Jordanian 'purist' Salafis. Jordan is particularly interesting in this regard since it borders and has enjoyed transnational contacts with both Iraq and Syria—perhaps the two most important countries with regard to 'modernist' Salafis—as well as Saudi Arabia—which has had a huge impact on 'purist' Salafis—and, as a result, its own Salafi community has been strongly influenced by all of these states.¹⁹ As such, this article seeks to contribute to the debate on the historical

¹⁴ Itzchak Weismann, 'Review: New and Old Perspectives in the Study of Salafism', *Bustan: The Middle East Book Review*, 8/1 (2017): 22–37, at 28.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 26–7.

¹⁶ Weismann confirms this elsewhere: 'A Perverted Balance: Modern Salafism between Reform and Jihād', *Die Welt des Islams*, 57 (2017): 33–66; *id.*, 'Die Salafiyya im 19. Jahrhundert als Vorläufer des modernen Salafismus' in Thorsten Gerald Schneiders (ed.), *Salafismus in Deutschland: Ursprünge und Gefahren einer islamisch fundamentalistischen Bewegung* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2014), 103–15. See also Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, 5 (and n. 5).

¹⁷ Griffel, 'What is the Task of the Intellectual (Contemporary) Historian?', 198; Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, 10; Quintan Wiktorowicz, 'Anatomy of the Salafi Movement', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29 (2006): 207–39, at 212.

¹⁸ Bernard Haykel, 'On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action' in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism*, 46–7; Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, 10.

¹⁹ Joas Wagemakers, *Salafism in Jordan: Political Islam in a Quietist Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 95.

continuity between these two types of Salafis by viewing them from this new, Jordanian angle.

Based on Jordanian ‘purist’ Salafi writings, which I collected in Jordan or downloaded from the internet, as well as semi-structured interviews conducted with adherents to ‘purist’ Salafism in the Hashemite Kingdom in the period 2008–2014, this article first provides background information on the history of ‘purist’ Salafism in Jordan, with a specific focus on the Syrian-Jordanian scholar Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī (1914–1999). It then moves on to analyse the perception of ‘modernist’ Salafi scholars by al-Albānī and the politically quietist branch of ‘purist’ Salafism in Jordan. Next, it deals with the political branch of the ‘purist’ Salafis in the kingdom and the way they have perceived ‘modernist’ Salafis. Finally, in the conclusion I will link the topic of this article to the debate described above.

My analysis follows a method similar to Lauzière’s: rather than comparing the ideas and beliefs of Jordanian ‘purist’ Salafis with those of ‘modernist’ ones, as Griffel has done in his article on this topic, I analyse Jordanian ‘purist’ Salafi publications on the basis of the ‘modernist’ Salafi sources *they* cite, describe their content and situate them in the context of Jordanian ‘purist’ Salafism as a whole. As such, this article will shed light on how today’s Jordanian ‘purist’ Salafis themselves view ‘modernist’ Salafis, which offers greater insight into the historical continuity between the two types of Salafis in general.

‘PURIST’ SALAFISM IN JORDAN

Any discussion on ‘purist’ Salafism in Jordan must include al-Albānī, whose influence on the Jordanian Salafi community in the last two decades of his life was enormous and probably also affected the way ‘modernist’ Salafis are seen by some ‘purist’ Salafis in the kingdom.

Al-Albānī’s Pre-Jordan Years

Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī was born in 1914 in Shkodër, a city in the north-west of Albania, to a religious family, but grew up in Syria. He is said to have begun his study of Islam at an early age and, learning with his father—an adherent of the Ḥanafī school of Islamic law—and other local teachers, developed a distinct interest in the study of *ḥadīth*.²⁰

²⁰ Aḥmad Ṣālīḥ Ḥusayn al-Jabbūrī, *Juhūd al-Imām al-Albānī Nāṣir al-Sunna wa-l-dīn fī bayān ‘aqīdat al-salaf al-ṣālīḥīn fī l-īmān bi-llāh rabb al-‘ālamīn* (Amman: al-Dār al-Athariyya, 2008), 49–50; Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad

This helped him to develop his own methodology for *ḥadīth* criticism²¹, which caused him to move away from his father's Ḥanafī *madhhab* and to develop his rejection of the blind emulation (*taqlīd*) of any school of Islamic law.²²

Through his study of *ḥadīth* and his rejection of the *madhāhib*, al-Albānī began focusing more and more on the lives of the Prophet Muḥammad and his companions, causing him to move in the direction of the claim to emulate the *salaf* in every sphere of life. Al-Albānī's Salafism was a politically quietist one, however, that focused more on piety, rituals and his long-time project of *al-taṣfiya wa-l-tarbiya* (cleansing Islamic tradition and teaching) than on politics. Indeed, his famous saying that 'the good policy is to stay away from politics' (*min al-siyāsa tark al-siyāsa*) seems to underline his apolitical tendency,²³ although this interpretation of his words has been contested, as we will see later on. Still, al-Albānī enjoyed a good relationship with the Damascene (and more Salafi-oriented) wing of the strongly politicized Syrian Muslim Brotherhood.²⁴

b. Surūr Sha'bān, *Al-Shaykh al-Albānī wa-manhajuhu fī taqrīr mas'āl al-ītiqād* (Riyadh: Dār al-Kiyān, 2007), 49–52; Usāma Shaḥāda, *Al-Da'wa al-Salafiyya: Maqālāt fī maḥbūmihā, tārikhihā wa-tabāyunihā 'an jamā'āt al-'unf wa-l-taṭarruf* (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), 121–2; Iyād Muḥammad al-Shāmī, *Ārā' al-Imām al-Albānī al-tarbiyya* (Amman: al-Dār al-Athariyya, 2009), 47–9; Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Shaybānī, *Mukhtaṣar Kitāb al-Albānī (jihādūhu wa-ḥayātūhu al-'ilmiyya)* (Kuwait: Markaz al-Makḥṭūṭāt wa-l-Turāth wa-l-Wathā'iq, 1998), 7–8.

²¹ Kamaruddin Amin, 'Nāṣiruddīn al-Albānī on Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*: A Critical Study of His Method', *Islamic Law and Society*, 11/2 (2004): 149–76.

²² Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunni Ḥadīth Canon* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 321–3; Emad Hamdeh, 'Qur'ān and Sunna or the *Madhabs*? A Salafi Polemic Against Islamic Legal Tradition', *Islamic Law and Society*, 24 (2017): 1–43; Shaḥāda, *Al-Da'wa*, 121–3; al-Shāmī, *Ārā'*, 49–51; Samīr b. Amīn al-Zuhayrī, *Muḥaddith al-'Aṣr Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī* (Riyadh: Dār al-Mughnī, 2000 [1999]), 14–15.

²³ Stéphane Lacroix, 'Between Revolution and Apoliticism: Nasir al-Din al-Albani and his Impact on the Shaping of Contemporary Salafism' in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism*, 58–80, at 69–70.

²⁴ Muḥammad Abū Rummān and Ḥasan Abū Haniyya, *Al-Salafiyya al-muḥāfaẓa: istrātiḡiyyat 'aslamat al-mujtama' wa-su'āl al-'alāqa 'al-muntasiba' ma'a l-dawla, Conservative Salafism: a strategy for the 'islamaization' of society and an ambiguous relationship with the state* (Amman: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010), 33; Muḥammad Zāhid Kāmil Gūl, 'Al-Khiṭāb al-siyāsī li-l-Salafiyya al-Albāniyya' in *Rimāḥ al-ṣaḥā'if al-salafiyya al-Albāniyya wa-khuṣūmuhā* (Dubai: Markaz al-Misbār li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Buḥūth, 2010), 94–5.

Just as al-Albānī broke with his father's Ḥanafī school, he also clashed with Sufī tendencies in Syria and—partly as a result of this, but also because of his ideological singlemindedness—created a lot of enemies. More traditional Sunni scholars, who generally did follow a *madhhab* and practised some form of Sufism, sometimes strongly disagreed with al-Albānī's unorthodox rulings and even contacted the police against his 'defamation' of Sufī leaders.²⁵ Luckily, an offer from the Saudi Salafī scholar 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Bāz (d. 1999) to work at the Islamic University of Madina in the early 1960s allowed him to escape this situation. Yet his unwillingness to follow a *madhhab*, his controversial rulings and his criticism of Wahhabism's founder Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb (1703–1792) for his attachment to the Ḥanbalī school of Islamic law created enemies in Saudi Arabia, too. As a result, his contract was not renewed in 1963.²⁶ Fortunately for al-Albānī, the increasing pressure on him in Syria, to which he returned, coincided with the search within the budding 'purist' Salafī community in Jordan for someone to lead them and provide them with scholarly guidance.²⁷

The Evolution of Salafism in Jordan

According to 'Alī al-Ḥalabī, the most prominent 'purist' Salafī scholar in modern-day Jordan, the kingdom's Salafism started in the early 1920s, with pilgrims from the territory that constitutes Jordan today returning from Makka and Madina with Salafī ideas they encountered there. He also points out that several prominent Muslim scholars tied to the early Transjordanian emirate and—later—kingdom as muftis or judges were highly critical of Sufism, Shi'ism and other trends in Islam and even wrote rebuttals against them, which al-Ḥalabī apparently sees as an indication of their Salafī tendencies.²⁸ He also notes that the members of the Shinqītī family who travelled from the Arabian Peninsula to Amman with Ḥusayn b. 'Alī (ca. 1853–1931)—the emir of Makka and father

²⁵ Thomas Pierret, *Religion and State in Syria: The Sunni Ulama from Coup to Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 106–7.

²⁶ Stéphane Lacroix, 'L'apport de Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani au salafisme contemporain' in Bernard Rougier (ed.), *Qu'est-ce que le salafisme?:* 45–64, at 51–4; id., 'Between Revolution and Apoliticism', 65–8.

²⁷ See also Emad Hamdeh, 'The Formative Years of an Iconoclastic Salafī Scholar', *The Muslim World*, 106 (2016): 411–32.

²⁸ 'Alī b. Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ḥalabī al-Atharī, *Mujmal Tārīkh al-da'wa-l-salafīyya fī l-diyār al-Urdunniyya* (Amman: al-Dār al-Athariyya, 2009), 13–14, 37–40.

of the first king of Transjordan, ‘Abdallāh (1882–1951)—were ‘Salafi (‘*alā madhhab al-salaf*) in creedal matters and the attributes [of God] (*fi l-‘aqā'id wa-l-ṣifāt*)’.²⁹

‘Purist’ Salafism in Jordan may thus have roots that go back to the very beginnings of the kingdom, yet it is doubtful whether this could be said to have resembled an actual Salafi trend, let alone a movement. The latter did not come about until the arrival of al-Albānī, who initially came to the kingdom on the invitation of some Salafis there, but eventually settled in Jordan permanently. Given al-Albānī’s vast knowledge of *ḥadīth* and his long-time adherence to ‘purist’ Salafism, he came to be seen as a scholarly giant among his followers. He quickly became the informal leader of the ‘purist’ Salafi community in Jordan, whose members not only admired his knowledge, but also his steadfastness and his single-minded willingness to focus on ‘cleansing’ Islamic tradition from religious innovations (*bida'*) and teaching this ‘pure’ Islam to others (*al-taṣfiya wa-l-tarbiya*).³⁰

While al-Albānī’s status as a scholar was not in doubt among his followers in Jordan, the direction in which he pushed ‘purist’ Salafism was. While many adhered to his quietist approach of extracting (*takhrīj*) supposedly weak *ḥadīth* from works on Islamic theology and law and preaching this ‘purified’ message without resorting to political activism, others were less enthusiastic about this. Some ‘purist’ Salafis in Jordan claimed that politics was an indispensable part of Islam (and Salafism) and therefore engaged in more politically committed rhetoric and explicitly sought to incorporate current affairs, international relations and political activism into their type of Salafism.³¹

²⁹ Ibid, 31.

³⁰ Jacob Olidort, *The Politics of ‘Quietist’ Salafism* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2015), 15–19; Wagemakers, *Salafism in Jordan*, 105–8.

³¹ Joas Wagemakers, ‘The Dual Effect of the Arab Spring on Salafi Integration: Political Salafism in Jordan’ in Francesco Cavatorta and Fabio Merone (eds.), *Salafism After the Arab Awakening: Contending with People’s Power* (London: Hurst & Co., 2016), 119–35, 274–8; id., *Salafism in Jordan*, 201–26. A third trend, Jihādī-Salafism, is so different from the other two because of its use of radical and violent solutions that it will not be taken into account in this article. For more on this trend, see Joas Wagemakers, *A Quietist Jihadi: The Ideology and Influence of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); id., ‘A Terrorist Organization that Never Was: The Jordanian “Bay‘at al-Imam” Group’, *Middle East Journal*, 68 (2014): 59–75.

THE RECEPTION OF ‘MODERNIST’ SALAFIS BY QUIETIST ‘PURIST’ SALAFIS IN JORDAN

The perception of ‘modernist’ Salafis, particularly those from Syria, can be discerned in the writings of some of the scholars leading the ‘purist’ Salafi movement in Jordan, but in quite different ways. First and foremost among them was al-Albānī, who frequently encountered ‘modernist’ Salafī thought during his early life, which helped shape his religious views and impacted his development as a scholar and which is even likely to have set him on the path of Salafism in the first place.

‘Modernist’ Salafis as Perceived by al-Albānī

When al-Albānī was still a youngster, he went to a bookshop in Damascus and found an issue of Rashīd Riḍā’s famous journal *Al-Manār*, which Riḍā edited and used to publish his own views by writing numerous articles for it. Al-Albānī is said to have been struck by an article by Riḍā himself in which the latter criticized the famous mediaeval scholar Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (1058–1111) for his Sufi beliefs and his use of supposedly unreliable *ḥadīths* to support them. This apparently had such an impact on the young al-Albānī that he began his study of *ḥadīth* as a result of this.³² In Salafi descriptions of al-Albānī’s life, this incident is often mentioned³³ and, indeed, al-Albānī himself stated that ‘the *Al-Manār* journal was the thing that opened the way for me to engage in the study of *ḥadīth*’ and he recalled the exact volume, issue and even page numbers of Riḍā’s article.³⁴

Despite the strong impact Riḍā’s work apparently had on al-Albānī, the latter later stated that Riḍā’s writings contained ‘departures from the Sunna in many places’,³⁵ a remark that can be explained by the different agendas both men had: whereas Riḍā (during his early years as a scholar) was mostly interested in reforming Islam in a rationalist and modernist way and only wanted to weed out some ‘weak’ *ḥadīth*, al-Albānī wanted to revert to the *salaf* in a strictly textual way that avoided rationalism

³² Brown, *Canonization*, 321; Hamdeh, ‘Qur’ān and Sunna or the *Madhhabs?*’, 5.

³³ See, for example, al-Jabbūrī, *Juhūd*, 52; Sha’bān, *Al-Shaykh*, 52; Shaḥāda, *Al-Da’wa*, 122, 127–8; al-Shāmī, *Arā’*, 49.

³⁴ ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh al-Sadḥān, *Al-Imām al-Albānī: durūs wa-mawāqif wa-‘ibar* (Riyadh: Dār al-Tawḥīd li-l-Nashr, 2008), 31–2. The quotation is on 31.

³⁵ Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, ‘Mas’al wa-ajwibatuhā’, *Al-Aṣāla*, 2/10 (1414 [1994]): 39.

and, as such, was more radical in his criticism of allegedly unreliable *ḥadīth*. It is therefore likely that it was Riḍā's iconoclastic attitude towards Islamic tradition and his rejection of *taqlīd* in favour of relying on the sources, rather than the specific contents of his ideas, that attracted al-Albānī to Riḍā.³⁶

Still, this was apparently enough for al-Albānī to be inspired by Riḍā's work. In his verification (*taḥqīq*) of one of Riḍā's books,³⁷ in which he commented on its use of *ḥadīths* and other matters, al-Albānī apparently did not feel the need to 'correct' the idea mentioned in the book that Riḍā was the author of a 'Salafi [work of] exegesis (*tafsīr*)',³⁸ commonly known as *Tafsīr al-Manār*,³⁹ suggesting he agreed that Riḍā was, indeed, a Salafi. Al-Albānī similarly extracted and commented upon the *ḥadīths* used in a book by 'modernist' Syrian Salafi reformer Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī that its author wrote against what he labelled the worship-related *bida'* in mosques.⁴⁰

Such instances of the perception of 'modernist' Salafis by al-Albānī likely emanate from ideological overlap with regard to issues such as *taqlīd*, *bida'* and ('extreme' forms of) Sufism,⁴¹ but probably also because al-Albānī is said to have been in touch with many of these 'modernist' Salafi reformers. As mentioned, al-Albānī had ties with the Damascene (and Salafi) wing of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and is also said to have been 'in touch with major scholars, such as the [Egyptian] scholar Aḥmad Shākīr [1892–1958, the Egyptian founder of the Salafi organisation Anṣār al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya], shaykh Hāmid al-Fiqqī [d. 1959] [...], [Moroccan Salafi reformer] dr. Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī [1893–1987] and [the Syrian reformer and student of al-Qāsimī's] Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb [1886–1969].'⁴²

³⁶ Emad Hamdeh, 'The Emergence of an Iconoclast: Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī and his Critics' (PhD diss., University of Exeter, 2014), 87–8; interview with Jordanian 'purist' Salafi Fathī al-Mawṣilī, Amman, 23 January 2013.

³⁷ Shaḥāda, *al-Da'wa*, 128.

³⁸ Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Ḥuqūq al-Nisā' fī l-Islām* (with commentary by Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī) (Beirut and Damascus: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1984), 3.

³⁹ Id., *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Ḥakīm* (Cairo: Dār al-Manār, 1934–1935).

⁴⁰ Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Iṣlāḥ al-masājid min bida' wa-l-'awā'id* (*ḥadīth* extracted and commented upon by Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī) (Beirut and Damascus: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 5th edn., 1983).

⁴¹ See, for instance, al-Albānī's own book *Taḥdhīr al-sājid min ittikhādh al-qubūr masājid* (Beirut and Damascus: 1398 [1977/8]; Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1392 [1972]).

⁴² Shaḥāda, *Al-Da'wa*, 128.

Al-Albānī is also said to have spent many hours in the Zāhiriyya Library, founded by the well-known Syrian ‘modernist’ Salafi reformer Ṭāhir al-Jazā’irī (1852–1920),⁴³ who was instrumental in reviving the influence of Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328) and his works (which had a huge influence on both ‘modernist’ and ‘purist’ Salafis).⁴⁴ Finally, al-Albānī also regularly published articles in some of the reformist journals published at the time,⁴⁵ such as *Al-Tamaddun al-Islāmī*, a publication created by the similarly named Syrian Salafi association.⁴⁶ Al-Albānī thus seems to have been in touch with the ‘modernist’ Salafi intellectual and social milieu of his time and appears to have viewed it favourably.⁴⁷

‘Modernist’ Salafis as Perceived by Quietist ‘Purist’ Salafis in Jordan

Given al-Albānī’s influence on ‘purist’ Salafism in Jordan, it seems likely that he passed on to his students some of his familiarity with ‘modernist’ Salafis. Moreover, it also seems likely that his students were aware of Syrian ‘modernist’ Salafis independently of al-Albānī because of the close proximity between Jordan and Syria. Not only are those two states neighbours, but the areas they cover were also part of the same province during the Ottoman Empire and thus have long historical ties.⁴⁸ It may therefore be said that developments taking place in Syria were likely to be noticed in Jordan rather quickly. It is striking, however, how little today’s quietist Salafis in Jordan refer to the ‘modernist’ Salafis that were such an important part of al-Albānī’s intellectual milieu.⁴⁹ To be sure, they do refer to ‘modernist’ Salafis sometimes, but far more often rely on classical scholars or modern ‘purist’ Salafi ones, like those of today’s Saudi religious establishment. In fact, it appears that even in the cases where Jordanian quietist Salafis do refer to ‘modernist’ Salafis, such

⁴³ Brown, *Canonization*, 322.

⁴⁴ Commins, *Islamic Reform*, 41–2.

⁴⁵ For a collection of these articles, see Nūr al-Dīn Ṭālib (ed.), *Maqālāt al-Albānī* (Riyadh: Dār Atlas, 2000).

⁴⁶ Pierret, *Religion and State in Syria*, 104. For more on this, see Ahmad Mouaz al-Khatib, ‘Al-Tamaddun al-Islami: passé et présent d’une association réformiste damascène’, *Maghreb-Machrek*, 198 (2008–09): 79–89.

⁴⁷ Interviews with Jordanian former ‘purist’ Salafi Wā’il al-Batīrī, Amman, 11 January 2014; Jordanian ‘purist’ Salafi Faṭḥī al-Mawṣilī, Amman, 23 January 2013.

⁴⁸ Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850–1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁴⁹ Interview with Jordanian former ‘purist’ Salafi Wā’il al-Batīrī, Amman, 11 January 2014.

references should not always be taken to indicate that they were actually influenced by them.

In his book on the history of Salafism in Jordan referred to earlier, al-Ḥalabī partly attributes the alleged early influence of Salafism in the kingdom to supposedly ‘modernist’ Salafis. He states, for example, that Riḍā was among ‘the leading personalities (*rijālāt*) of Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī’⁵⁰ and that the latter was once mentioned in a sermon that the former gave.⁵¹ While these references are perhaps somewhat underwhelming, given the impact Riḍā had on al-Albānī, al-Ḥalabī is clearer with regard to Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb. The latter is cited by al-Ḥalabī for his negative views on ‘Alawites in Syria’⁵² and is described by him as ‘the owner of “the Salafi Press” in Cairo’, as ‘among the most famous pioneers (*min ajall mashāhīr ruwwād*) of the modern Salafi *da’wa*’ and as ‘the editor of the newspaper *Al-Qibla* that was published in Mecca and was the official newspaper at the time of Sharīf Ḥusayn [b. ‘Alī]’.⁵³

While al-Ḥalabī’s words about al-Khaṭīb are obviously supposed to underline the latter’s Salafi credentials and—in turn—to show that the Hashemite dynasty has been tied to Salafis from the nineteenth century, this is less than convincing. Leaving aside the actual influence al-Khaṭīb had on Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī, which is not our concern here, it is interesting that al-Khaṭīb is specifically mentioned by Lauzière as the person partly responsible for creating misunderstandings about the term ‘Salafism’ and setting Massignon on the wrong path. Because of his ‘Salafi Bookshop’ (*al-maktaba al-salafiyya*) and his ties to ‘modernist’ Salafi scholars such as al-Jazā’irī and al-Qāsimī, it is tempting to see al-Khaṭīb as a Salafi himself, either in the older, theological sense or the more recent, all-encompassing meaning of the term. Lauzière has shown, however, that al-Khaṭīb neither emphasized the theological views associated with ‘modernist’ Salafis nor adopted the claim of emulating the *salaf* in every sphere of life (including theology), as seen among ‘purist’ Salafis. Instead, he ‘expanded the scope of [this adjective [“Salafiyya”]] well beyond its original theological meaning and associated it with a broad and

⁵⁰ al-Ḥalabī, *Mujmal*, 29–30.

⁵¹ Ibid, 23. Interestingly, Riḍā later writes rather negatively about Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī and the Hashemites, See Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Al-Khilāfa aw al-imāma al-‘uzmā mabāhith shar‘iyya siyāsiyya ijtimā‘iyya islāḥiyya* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Manār, 1341 [1922-3]), 73–6.

⁵² ‘Alī b. Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ḥalabī al-Atharī, *Kalimat ḥaqq ‘ilmiyya fī aḥdāth Sūriyya* (n.p.: Manshūrāt Muntadayāt Kull al-Salafiyyīn, 2012), 39–40.

⁵³ Id., *Mujmal*, 20.

multifaceted reformist program'⁵⁴ and, as such, 'embodied the overlap between Salafi inclinations and Islamic modernism'.⁵⁵

The fact that al-Ḥalabī, whose 'purist' Salafī views clash with the rationalist nature of Islamic modernism,⁵⁶ nevertheless cites al-Khaṭīb to make his point could be due to his believing that this reformer really was a Salafī like himself. It is more likely, however, that al-Ḥalabī—who, as I have pointed out elsewhere, has been instrumental in Jordanian 'purist' Salafī efforts to portray Salafism as an irenic, anti-terrorist, regime-friendly and reliable partner in the fight against radical groups such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS)⁵⁷—has done so to cement his efforts to tie Salafism to the Jordanian royal family and its forebears and frame it as the Hashemites' loyal ally. As such, al-Ḥalabī's references to al-Khaṭīb should probably be seen in this context, rather than as a sign of the latter's true influence on him.

References to 'modernist' Salafis in the writings of other Jordanian quietist Salafī scholars are also small in number. There is the occasional reference to Riḍā⁵⁸ and one of the leading shaykhs of the quietist form of 'purist' Salafism in the kingdom, Mashhūr b. Ḥasan, wrote a series of articles on the Algerian scholar Muḥammad al-Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī (1889–1965). The latter is described as cooperating with the Algerian scholar 'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Bādīs (1889–1940) against French colonialism⁵⁹ and engaging in 'calling (*da'wa*) [people] to the correct creed (*al-'aqīda al-ṣaḥīḥa*) and [showing] commitment to the Book and the Sunna and the method of the pious predecessors (*manhaj al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*)'. Mashhūr b. Ḥasan also describes al-Ibrāhīmī as working to 'reform the creed of the Algerians' and 'resisting the superstitions and religious innovations (*al-khurāfāt wa-l-bida'*) that have distorted the creed of the Muslims' and credits him with 'resisting heretical Sufism (*al-Ṣūfiyya al-mubtadi'a*)'.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Lauzière, 'The Construction of Salafīyya', 377.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 376.

⁵⁶ See, for example, Muḥammad [b.] Mūsá [Āl] Naṣr, 'al-Fikr al-tanwīrī fī l-Mīzān', *Al-Aṣāla*, 5/28 (1420 [1999]): 42–4; 'Abd al-Raḥīm Ṣamāyil al-Sulmī, 'Maṣādir al-Talaqqī 'inda Ahl al-Bida', *Al-Aṣāla*, 2/7 (1414 [1993]): 28–31.

⁵⁷ Wagemakers, *Salafism in Jordan*, 152–7.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Abū 'Abdallāh 'Umar b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Buṭūsh, *Kashf al-astār 'ammā fī tanzīm al-qā'ida min afkār wa-akḥṭār* (Amman: al-Dār al-Athariyya, 2009), 133–4.

⁵⁹ Mashhūr [b.] Ḥasan, 'al-Shaykh: Muḥammad al-Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī', *al-Aṣāla*, 1/1 (1413 [1992]): 32.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 33. See also parts 2 and 3 of this series of articles: id., 'al-Shaykh: Muḥammad al-Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī—2', *al-Aṣāla*, 1/2 (1413 [1992]): 43–5; id., 'al-Shaykh: Muḥammad al-Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī—3', *al-Aṣāla*, 1/5 (1413 [1993]): 56–8.

The small number of references to 'modernist' Salafis by Jordanian quietists should be seen in the context of the changes undergone among quietist Salafis in the kingdom. As we saw above, al-Albānī was well-travelled, influenced by a relatively wide range of reformist scholars, independent and critical of the Saudi religious establishment. As I have shown elsewhere, however, his students—through a combination of ideological change, regional developments, internal divisions, regime pressure and challenges from other types of Salafism—drifted in the direction of a more regime-friendly, Saudi-influenced type of quietist Salafism. As such, their contemporary references tend to be 'safer' choices like the Saudi shaykhs 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Bāz and Muḥammad b. Šāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn (d. 2001), rather than the 'modernist' Salafi scholars that al-Albānī engaged with.

THE RECEPTION OF 'MODERNIST' SALAFIS BY POLITICAL 'PURIST' SALAFIS IN JORDAN

Unlike their quietist brothers and sisters, political 'purist' Salafis believe Salafism should be broader than merely 'cleansing and teaching' the message of Islam and claim it should also encompass political activism. While quietist Salafis in Jordan agree that Islam has a political dimension, they postpone its development to a later stage, when society is supposedly ready for it, while political Salafis want political activism in the here and now.

Political Salafism in Jordan

Despite their differences with quietists, political Salafis base their thinking about the political dimension of Salafism not only on their own positions about the subject, but also on those of the man who continues to be a source of inspiration to their apolitical brethren: al-Albānī. For example, Usāma Shaḥāda, the most prominent political Salafi writer in Jordan, claims that al-Albānī's aforementioned statement that 'the good policy is to stay away from politics' was political in nature, rather than doctrinal. Al-Albānī, according to Shaḥāda, never meant to say that political participation was wrong from an Islamic point of view, but merely wanted to state that it was unwise in Syria in the circumstances of his time, having witnessed several military coups and considering it dangerous to get involved in politics in such a situation.⁶¹

⁶¹ Shaḥāda, *Al-Da'wa*, 69–70.

Interpreting al-Albānī's words as apolitical for pragmatic—not religious—reasons may, indeed, be accurate, given that al-Albānī was sceptical of political groups that did not adhere to Salafi teachings, but does not seem to have been against engaging in activism or politics as such.⁶² In fact, when al-Albānī praised Riḍā's Qur'ānic exegesis, he stated that it is

a good exegesis—on the whole—and it deals with the problems of the Muslims today. In it are social, political and historical studies that one does not find in previously known books of exegesis. In fact, one does not [even] find them in the books of contemporaries (*al-mu'āṣirīn*), because Rashīd Riḍā is a great scholar (*'ālim kabīr*) and a Muslim politician (*siyāsī Muslim*).⁶³

Such praise for Riḍā's attention to political and social issues facing the Muslim world of his time suggests that al-Albānī was perhaps less against politics than his quietist followers would like to think. In any case, it shows that at least some quietist and political 'purist' Salafis contest al-Albānī's legacy in this regard and that both trends want to portray him as being on their side of the issue.

It is such views about the desire and even the necessity to engage in social and political activism that have spawned several political Salafi groups in Jordan, including, most prominently, the Jam'iyat al-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna, which was founded in 1993. Because of the group's new and possibly radical character, the regime kept a close watch on it and arrested and imprisoned several of its members. In the 2000s, however, the group made a new start with a new leader, Zāyid Ḥammād, who has ensured that it now has branches all over the country, has its own magazine (*Al-Qibla*) and is engaged in social activism across Jordan.⁶⁴

Adherents to political Salafism in Jordan, including members of the Jam'iyat al-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna, usually refer to their trend as 'reformist' Salafism (*al-salafiyya al-iṣlāḥiyya*). This not only reflects their broader approach to Salafism than what quietists espouse, but it also reveals the fact that none of them actually engage in the type of political activism—parliamentary participation, rallies, demonstrations, founding a political party, etc.—that they would like to get involved in. Because of regime

⁶² Abū Rummān and Abū Haniyya, *Al-Salafiyya al-muḥāfaẓa*, 91–5; Ḥasan Sulaymān, 'Mawqif al-Salafiyya al-Albāniyya min al-Jamā'āt al-Islāmiyya' in *Rimāḥ al-ṣaḥā'if*, 142–8; Wagemakers, *Salafism in Jordan*, 83–9.

⁶³ Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, 'Masā'il wa-ajwibatuhā', *al-Aṣāla*, 1/2 (1413 [1992]): 73. See also id., 'Masā'il wa-ajwibatuhā', *al-Aṣāla*, 2/10 (1414 [1994]): 41.

⁶⁴ Wagemakers, 'The Dual Effect of the Arab Spring on Salafi Integration', 124–6.

restrictions, political Salafis in Jordan limit their activities to political discourse and social activism, including providing material and spiritual aid to Syrian refugees in Jordan.⁶⁵ The same applies to other political Salafi groups in the kingdom, such as the Jam'iyat al-Irtiqā' al-Khayriyya, which shares the Jam'iyat al-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna's 'reformist' outlook and has similarly been influenced by political Salafi thinking, but which is ultimately limited to charitable activism.⁶⁶

'Modernist' Salafis as Perceived by Political Salafis in Jordan

When assessing the reception of 'modernist' Salafis by political (or 'reformist') Salafis in Jordan, it is important to bear in mind that to the latter, all types of Salafism have important things in common. Shaḥāda, for example, states that

the claim that there is historical Salafism, Wahhābī Salafism, reformist Salafism, nationalist Salafism and activist Salafism that differ from and contradict each other is an imaginary claim, because all these Salafisms are united in their position towards the Qur'ān, the Sunna, the performance of acts of devotion (*adā' al-'ibādāt*), the rejection of religious innovations and forms of polytheism (*nabdh al-bida' wa-l-shirkiyyāt*) and stimulating the method of independent interpretation (*manhaj al-ijtihād*) according to the *shar'ī* norms known to their scholars (*al-ma'rūfa li-ablihā*). There is no difference between them with respect to these at all.⁶⁷

Thus, Shaḥāda clearly sees Salafism as broader than merely a certain set of theological ideas and lists both ideological and ritual aspects that all 'Salafisms' supposedly have in common, as may be expected from a 'purist' Salafi.

Interestingly, Shaḥāda does not mention political activism as a typically Salafi trait, suggesting that—despite the political Salafi emphasis on societal and political reform—doctrinal aspects are most important in the end. This is also the impression one gets if one looks at the scholars cited by political Salafis in Jordan. To be sure, Shaḥāda praises 'modernist' Salafis for general qualities such as fighting illiteracy and pioneering the use of magazines⁶⁸ and commends several of them for calling for jihad,⁶⁹ but he also draws doctrinal lines through which he excludes prominent activists from the circle of Salafism. He rejects, for example, the idea that Ḥasan al-Bannā (1906–1949), the Egyptian

⁶⁵ Ibid, 126–32.

⁶⁶ Id., *Salafism in Jordan*, 206.

⁶⁷ Shaḥāda, *al-Da'wa*, 23.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 14, 36.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 62–3.

founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Pakistani Islamist scholar Abū l-Aʿlā Mawdūdī (1903–1979) were Salafis. His reason is that they ‘had an independent method (*manhajān mustaqillan*) that squared with Salafism in some basic points (*maḥāwir asāsiyya*), but differed with it in other basic points that invalidate using “Salafism” for those that adopt them.’⁷⁰ Shaḥāda is also clear in his refusal to label as Salafis the two men central to the academic debate on the meaning of Salafism: al-Afghānī and ‘Abduh. ‘They were not of the doctrine of the *salaf* (*muʿtaqad al-salaf*) or their way (*ṭarīqatihim*),’ he writes, ‘as al-Afghānī was probably a Shiʿite and ‘Abduh was a rationalist.’⁷¹

While rejecting al-Afghānī and ‘Abduh as worthy of the label ‘Salafi’, political Salafis in Jordan have an entirely different view of the third person often named alongside these two men: Rashīd Riḍā. His reception by al-Albānī is mentioned frequently by Shaḥāda⁷² and he is regularly referred to as a Salafi.⁷³ It is also in political Salafis’ treatment of Riḍā that we can see why he is so important to them: unlike other scholars whose Salafism is not in doubt, such as al-Albānī or Saudi shaykhs like ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Bāz and Ibn ‘Uthaymīn, Riḍā and others actually engaged in societal and/or political activism. These reformist scholars therefore serve as examples to political Salafis in Jordan because they represent precisely the type of ‘reformist’ Salafism that the latter want and claim to represent. They also constitute proof to political Salafis that political and social activism can be combined with Salafism. In his battle for legitimacy for political Salafism in Jordan, Shaḥāda therefore stresses Riḍā’s societal and political involvement⁷⁴ and his prescience with regard to colonialism and Zionism.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Ibid, 29.

⁷¹ Ibid, 28.

⁷² See, for instance, *ibid*, 127–8.

⁷³ Ibid, 23, 83, 120; Zāyid Ibrāhīm [Ḥammād], ‘Ḥawla Jam‘iyyat al-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna’, *al-Qibla*, 4/10–11 (2005): 109; ‘Liqa’ “al-Mir’āt” ma‘a Ra’īs Jam‘iyyat al-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna’, *al-Qibla*, 1/3 (2002): 36. See also Ibrāhīm Sulaymān, ‘Al-Muḥaddithūn wa-l-Isrā’īliyyāt’, *al-Qibla*, 7/18 (2009): 7–17; ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ ‘Umar, ‘Naṣā’ih wa-tawjihāt’ in Nizām Salāma Sakkijhā (ed.), *Naṣā’ih wa-tawjihāt al-mufakkirīn wa-‘ulamā’ al-Islām li-l-jamā‘āt wa-l-aḥzāb al-Islamiyya* (Amman: al-Maktaba al-Islāmiyya, 1999), 104.

⁷⁴ Usāma Shaḥāda, ‘Bayān ḥukm al-Islām al-siyāsī’, *al-Ghad* (www.alghad.com/articles/732384, accessed 22 January 2018), 24 September 2007; *id.*, ‘Al-Iṣlāḥ al-insānī al-ijtimā’ī al-siyāsī al-waṭanī’, *Al-Ghad* (www.alghad.com/articles/732745, accessed 22 January 2018), 19 September 2007.

⁷⁵ *Id.*, ‘al-‘Allāma Rashīd Riḍā wa-l-khaṭar al-ṣahyūnī’, <http://osamashahade.com/%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%>

This same combination of activism and Salafism can, according to political Salafis affiliated with the Jam'iyyat al-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna, be found in the lives and works of many other 'modernist' Salafis. One group mentioned specifically is that of the 'Salafi scholars of Palestine', which include 'the major Salafi scholar and important politician Kāmil Qaṣṣāb [1873–1954]' and his contemporary and partner 'Izz al-Dīn al-Qaṣṣām (1883–1935). Both men are praised for writing a book

in which there is a defence of the creed of the unity of God (*'aqīdat al-tawḥīd*), the spreading of the Sunna, fighting religious innovations, *da'wa* to hold on to the Qur'ān and the Sunna and leaving the superstitions and practices (*al-khurāfāt wa-l-'awā'id*) that differ from them. The book clearly reveals the Salafism of its two authors, the two shaykhs al-Qaṣṣāb and al-Qaṣṣām.⁷⁶

Aḥmad al-Dhuwayb, the deputy leader of the Jam'iyyat al-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna, further stresses al-Qaṣṣāb's fight against *bida'*, but also points out that he contributed to the revival of the Muslim community through education, the founding of schools, publishing on political reform in various periodicals and waging jihad in Palestine.⁷⁷ Shaḥāda portrays al-Qaṣṣām in a similar way, stating that after having been a Sufi, he became 'committed to the Qur'ān and the Sunna and the method of the companions [of the Prophet Muḥammad]'. Moreover, Shaḥāda states, he fought religious innovations, including expressions of popular religion, and had both teachers and students who were Salafis themselves. Finally, Shaḥāda stresses that al-Qaṣṣām was not only doctrinally sound, but also worked as a teacher 'whose lessons dealt with all the issues of the religion and the world'. This willingness to engage with issues outside of the realm of religion was particularly clear in al-Qaṣṣām's participation in jihad in various countries, including Palestine, where he was killed in 1935.⁷⁸

Given that many Jordanian Salafis are of Palestinian origin, one could argue that these are merely attempts to praise scholars actively involved in furthering the rights of the Palestinians. If that were the case, however,

D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%B1%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D8%B1%D8%B6%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D9%87%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86%D9%8A (accessed 22 January 2018), 12 June 2014; id., *al-Da'wa*, 60.

⁷⁶ 'Indamā yatakallamu l-tārīkh', *al-Qibla*, 4/10–11 (2005): 9.

⁷⁷ Aḥmad al-Dhuwayb, 'al-Shaykh al-mujāhid: Muḥammad Kāmil al-Qaṣṣāb—raḥimahu-llāh ta'āla', *al-Qibla*, 7/18 (2009): 54–7.

⁷⁸ Usāma Shaḥāda, 'al-Shaykh al-mujāhid 'Izz al-Dīn al-Qaṣṣām', *Al-Bayān* (www.albayan.co.uk/print.aspx?id=2677, accessed 12 December 2013), 20 March 2013.

one would expect similar praise for Hamas and other Islamic Palestinian movements, but this is mostly absent. Moreover, political Salafis extend their praise to far more scholars than merely those with Palestinian connections, such as the aforementioned Iraqi ‘modernist’ Salafi scholar Maḥmūd Shukrī al-Ālūsī, who is referred to as ‘a Salafi who loved the *da‘wa* of the imam Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb and spread and defended it’.⁷⁹ He is also frequently mentioned elsewhere, as are some of the scholars by whom his family were influenced, such as Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān (1832–90), as well as those who influenced the latter, such as Shāh Walī Allāh (1703–62) and Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Shawkānī (d. 1834).⁸⁰

Political Salafis in Jordan pay most attention, however, to ‘modernist’ Salafis from Algeria, Morocco and especially Syria, probably because these—in their view, at least—represent the combination of Salafism and political activism most explicitly. There is a strong emphasis, for example, on the anti-colonial activism of Algerian scholars in a series of articles by Shaḥāda that focuses on important reformist shaykhs. The first of these, the aforementioned ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Bādīs, is portrayed by Shaḥāda as a pious Salafi scholar whose beliefs were rooted in a Salafism that preceded him but were also shaped by Riḍā’s *Al-Manār* journal, which had also influenced al-Albānī.⁸¹ Shaḥāda underlines these points by directing his readers’ attention to Ibn Bādīs’ founding of the Algerian Association of Muslim Scholars (Jam‘iyyat al-‘Ulamā’ al-Muslimīn) and the combating of ‘innovation and deviation in the religion’ (including in ‘deviant’ Sufism) that he engaged in in the context of this group. Apart from these traits, which are clearly mentioned to show Ibn Bādīs’s Salafi credentials, this scholar also worked towards achieving Algerian independence from French colonial occupation and noted thirteen points that he felt should be included in the new Algerian constitution. These included the idea that the Muslim community (*umma*) is the

⁷⁹ ‘Indamā’, 7. See also Shaḥāda, *al-Da‘wa*, 105–6.

⁸⁰ [Ḥammād], ‘Ḥawla Jam‘iyyat’, 109; ‘Liḳā’ “al-Mir‘āt”, 36; Shaḥāda, *Al-Da‘wa*, 120; id., ‘Min tārikh al-iṣlāḥ al-mu‘āṣir’, <http://osamashahade.com/%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%A9%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%AE-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B5%D8%B1> (accessed 29 January 2018), 4 August 2014. For more on al-Shawkānī, see Bernard Haykel, *Revival and Reform in Islam: The Legacy of Muhammad al-Shawkani* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁸¹ Usāma Shaḥāda, ‘Silsilat rumūz al-iṣlāḥ 4—al-‘Allāma ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Bādīs 1’, *al-Rāṣid* (www.alrased.net/main/articles.aspx?selected_article_no=5634, accessed 29 January 2018), 23 May 2012.

source of power and that, as a result, being critical of a ruler was certainly allowed.⁸²

Shahāda writes similarly about the aforementioned Muḥammad al-Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī, who was not only equally involved in Algeria's fight for independence but was also instrumental in leading the Association of Muslim Scholars after Ibn Bādīs' death.⁸³ The same applies to al-Tayyib al-ʿUqbī (1888–1960), an Algerian scholar who was heavily influenced by Ibn Bādīs and al-Ibrāhīmī, joined them in the Association of Muslim Scholars and is described by Shahāda as having studied in Makka, from whence he returned to Algeria, where he was nicknamed 'the Wahhābī, because of his great activity in calling [people] to the Salafi creed and the rejection of polytheism'. Al-ʿUqbī's Salafism is not only found in his Salafi beliefs, however, but also in his activist struggle against French colonialism and his clash with 'followers of Sufi orders (*al-ṭuruqīyyūn*), superstitious people (*al-khurāfiyyūn*) and arch-conservatives (*al-jāmidūn*)'.⁸⁴

More relevant for today's Jordanian political Salafis than the fight for independence is the question of political participation. The latter can be found among Moroccan 'modernist' Salafis praised by members of the Jordanian Jam'īyat al-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna. Foremost among these is Abū Shu'ayb b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dukkālī al-Ṣiddīqī (1878–1937), who is praised for his study of *ḥadīth*, his call for 'the Sunni Salafi creed, his tireless work to spread it and his devoting his life to fighting deviant sects'.⁸⁵ Like other reformers mentioned before, al-Dukkālī is also praised for his 'method [...] of combating polytheism, superstition and religious innovation', but—unlike those we saw previously—he is given credit for working as a Minister of Justice in Morocco and using his position to reform the state from within.⁸⁶

One of al-Dukkālī's students, Muḥammad al-ʿArabī al-ʿAlawī (1884–1964), also became Minister of Justice in Morocco and is similarly seen

⁸² Id., 'Silsilat rumūz al-iṣlāḥ 4—al-ʿAllāma 'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Bādīs 2', *Al-Rāṣid* (www.alrased.net/main/articles.aspx?selected_article_no=5721, accessed 29 January 2018), 20 June 2012.

⁸³ Id., 'Silsilat rumūz al-iṣlāḥ 5—al-ʿAllāma Muḥammad al-Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī', *Al-Bayān* (<http://albayan.co.uk/Mobile/Article2.aspx?id=2476>, accessed 29 January 2018), n.d.

⁸⁴ Id., 'Silsilat rumūz al-iṣlāḥ 6—al-Tayyib al-ʿUqbī', *Al-Rāṣid* (r:id="rId1" w:history="1", accessed 29 January 2018), 16 September 2012.

⁸⁵ Muḥammad 'Alī Shāhīn, 'Abū Shu'ayb b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dukkālī al-Ṣiddīqī (1295 AH/1878–1356/1937 AD)', *al-Qibla*, 2/4–5 (2003): 58–9.

⁸⁶ Usāma Shahāda, 'Silsilat rumūz al-iṣlāḥ 1—al-Shaykh Abū Shu'ayb al-Dukkālī al-Maghribī', *al-Rāṣid* (r:id="rId2" w:history="1", accessed 5 February 2018), 21 January 2012.

as a model for today's political Salafis in Jordan. He is portrayed as having been a Sufi who later turned Salafi and who was greatly influenced by reformist thinkers of his time, including al-Afghānī and ʿAbduh. His contribution, according to Shaḥāda, lay not only in his political work, his anticolonialism and his work against religious innovations, but also in his being responsible for getting a fellow Moroccan, the famous Salafi reformer Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī (1893–1987) to abandon the Tijāniyya Sufi order and become a Salafi himself.⁸⁷ Another Moroccan student of his, the reformist scholar ʿAllāl al-Fāsī (1910–1974), took the political involvement of 'modernist' Salafis even further by not only spreading Salafism through his lessons, but also through his founding of the Independence Party (Ḥizb al-Istiqlāl).⁸⁸

As convincing as this positive reception of 'modernist' Salafis may sound, it is important to stress that just as some Jordanian quietist Salafis probably use the case of Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb to 'prove' the long history of Salafi–Hashemite ties, political Salafis may be most interested in underlining the compatibility between Salafism and political activism and use Moroccan reformers such as those mentioned above to help them make their case. Indeed, as al-Dhuwayb wrote in an article in *Al-Qibla*:

The scholars of the Salafi *manhaj* in particular, in a period not long ago, occupied a major position in the revival of the *umma*. [...] They understood the meaning of *daʿwa* to God the Exalted in its total understanding (*mafhūmihā l-shāmīl*). They had a clear role in politics, jihad and guiding the *umma* with regard to its leaders and the people who were led. [...] Why has the role of scholars and preachers (*duʿāt*) at this time been limited to nothing else than knowledge matters and the realisation of heritage (*taḥqīq al-turāth*). [...] The divine scholar (*al-ʿālim al-rabbānī*) does not limit his role to education, guidance and cleansing (*al-taʿlīm wa-l-tawjīh wa-l-taṣfiya*). We do not doubt the importance of these, but limiting oneself to them and ignoring a major aspect of the duty of the scholars

⁸⁷ Id., 'Silsilat rumūz al-iṣlāḥ 2—Shaykh al-Islām Muḥammad al-ʿArabī al-ʿAlawī', *al-Bayān* (r:id="rId3" w:history="1", accessed 5 February 2018), 3 January 2013. For more on al-ʿArabī's role in al-Hilālī's conversion to Salafism, see Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, 54–9.

⁸⁸ Shaḥāda, 'Silsilat rumūz al-iṣlāḥ 3—al-ʿAllāma al-Mujāhid ʿAllāl al-Fāsī', *al-Bayān* (r:id="rId4" w:history="1", accessed 5 February 2018), 3 January 2013. As Lauzière has shown, Moroccan reformist scholars, particularly ʿAllāl al-Fāsī, sometimes had a tendency to include themselves in a movement called 'Salafism' that they equated with the Islamic modernism associated with al-Afghānī and ʿAbduh, with little or no connection to the strictly theological meaning that the term 'Salafi' had in the Middle Ages, let alone the all-encompassing emulation of the *salaf* that it refers to now. See Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, 148–53.

(*mahammad al-‘ulamā’*) contributes to the clear reversal of the role of the leading scholar and his participation in the revival of his *umma*.⁸⁹

Al-Dhuwayb’s statement is probably not just an expression of admiration for ‘modernist’ Salafis of the past, but also a veiled accusation against quietist Salafi scholars in Jordan, who are precisely the ones that limit their role to education and cleansing Islamic tradition. In other words, political Salafis’ many references to ‘modernist’ Salafis who combined piety with politics are not just meant to inform their readers of the desirability of this combination, but also to position themselves vis-à-vis their quietist brethren in Jordan. This search for Salafi-*cum*-political reformers also partly explains why they focus so much attention on Syrian reformist scholars: they were just as activist as other ‘modernist’ Salafi scholars in the region, but their beliefs were sometimes more explicitly Salafi in nature, making them perfect role models in a competition with quietist Salafis who attach great value to doctrinal purity.

Apart from their activism and their more explicit Salafi credentials, Syrian ‘modernist’ Salafis also provide a clear link with al-Albānī. As such, they represent the perfect rebuttal to quietist Salafis who believe that one should stay away from political activism. This is not so much the case with ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār (1837–1917), who died when al-Albānī was only a small child and to whom I have only found one reference as having been ‘among the major activist scholars of Damascus to spread the Salafi *madhhab*’.⁹⁰ This is all the more so with Ṭāhir al-Jazā’irī, however, who was, as we saw above, responsible for spreading the works of Ibn Taymiyya and founding the Zāhiriyya Library that had been so important to al-Albānī’s *ḥadīth* studies and his path to Salafism. This, Jordanian political Salafis point out, was quite remarkable in Syria since most scholars of his time rejected Ibn Taymiyya.⁹¹ He is also credited with generating a message of ‘calling for *ijtihād*, studying, contemplating and returning to the Qur’ān and the Sunna and war on ignorance, superstition and religious innovations’.⁹² This message was not just a result of his ‘modernist’ Salafi beliefs, however, but also his efforts to educate people and spread knowledge on a host of subjects.

⁸⁹ al-Dhuwayb, ‘al-Shaykh’, 53–4.

⁹⁰ ‘Indamā’, 7.

⁹¹ Aḥmad al-Dhuwayb, ‘al-Jazā’irī mawsū‘a tataḥarraku’, *al-Qibla*, 6/16 (2008): 54–65, at 59–60.

⁹² Shaḥāda, ‘Silsilat rumūz al-iṣlāḥ 7 – al-‘Allāma Ṭāhir al-Jazā’irī’, *al-Bayān* (r:id=“rId5” w:history=“1”, accessed 5 February 2018), 3 January 2013.

Indeed, several Jordanian political Salafis praise al-Jazā'irī as a highly educated man.⁹³

Given al-Jazā'irī's focus on education, it is not surprising that he taught several men who would later become famous as 'modernist' Salafis themselves, including al-Qāsimī and al-Khaṭīb. The former, as we saw before, published a book that was republished by al-Albānī. Shaḥāda, perhaps because of this, spends less time than usual in proving that this reformer was, indeed, a Salafi, but more or less accepts this as a given. He does note, however, that al-Qāsimī used to be

a follower of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*, the Ash'arī creed and the Nashqbandiyya [Sufi] order, but because of his being a clever and discerning student of knowledge (*ṭālib 'ilm dhakiyyan wa-mutamayyizan*), because his father and grandfather were both scholars and because he was well read (*kathīr al-muṭāla'a*), it was easy for him to discover the mistake that he was making and that the truth lies in following the Qur'ān, the Sunna and the *manhaj* of *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*.⁹⁴

Besides his being a Salafi, the example of al-Qāsimī also makes clear that what today's political Salafis in Jordan admire about nineteenth- and twentieth-century reformers is not just the combination of their doctrines and activism, but also that the latter was used in the service of the former through renewal (*tajdīd*) and *ijtihād*.⁹⁵ Shaḥāda shows that, at least to a certain extent, the 'modernist' aspect of al-Qāsimī's Salafism was valued as well, by stating that '*ijtihād*, breaking deadlock (*al-jumūd*) and blind imitation (*al-taqlīd*) and dealing with the problems of the age' were prominent characteristics of al-Qāsimī's reform. He also states that al-Qāsimī was a keen follower of current affairs and 'new ideas in politics and the economy', seeking to apply his reform to 'the religion of the people and their world'. Shaḥāda suggests that this attitude should be an example to other Salafis, citing al-Qāsimī's words during a visit to Madina in Saudi Arabia: 'Madina is in the greatest need of a reformer, a zealous leader who strives for the enlightenment of its ways (*yas'ā fī tanwīr ṭuruqihā*) and the expansion of its culture and for paving the way for its material and moral progress (*ruqīhā al-mādī wa-l-adabī*).'⁹⁶ Thus,

⁹³ al-Dhuwayb, 'al-Jazā'irī', 56–63; 'Indamā', 7; Shaḥāda, 'Silsilat [...] 7 – [...] al-Jazā'irī'.

⁹⁴ Shaḥāda, 'Silsilat rumūz al-iṣlāḥ 8—'Allāmat al-Shām Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī (1)', *al-Bayān* (r:id="rId6" w:history="1", accessed 9 February 2018), 3 January 2013.

⁹⁵ Bassām Nāṣir, 'al-Ijtihād wa-l-tajdīd fī ḥiwār 'Almānī uṣūlī', *al-Qibla*, 4/10–11 (2005): 24.

to Shaḥāda, al-Qāsimī's broad reform did not just exist beside his Salafism, but was a natural result of it.⁹⁶

The same reasoning can be seen in political Salafis' treatment of Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb. He is, of course, frequently mentioned as the founder and owner of the Salafi Bookshop in Cairo,⁹⁷ yet his Salafi credentials—interestingly enough, in light of what Lauzière has written about him—are mostly accepted as a given. One author states that al-Khaṭīb was a 'Salafi scholar' and 'among the leaders of the modern Salafi school (*min ruwwād al-madrasa al-Salafīyya al-ḥadītha*)',⁹⁸ but he does not explain this. In a recent edition of a work by al-Khaṭīb published by the Jam'īyat al-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna,⁹⁹ the introduction (written by Shaḥāda) refers to him as 'the writer, the scholar and the editor (*muḥaqqiq*)', but not as 'the Salafi'.¹⁰⁰ Shaḥāda nevertheless writes that al-Khaṭīb had a 'strong and deep relation with knowledge and Salafism', although this seems to be a reference to his ties with al-Jazā'irī and al-Qāsimī, rather than a description of his own ideas.¹⁰¹ Shaḥāda actually seems quite aware that al-Khaṭīb, though strongly sympathetic towards Salafi ideas, was—as Lauzière has pointed out—involved in a much broader reformist project. In fact, this seems to be one reason why Shaḥāda likes al-Khaṭīb so much, which—given what we know about the motives of political Salafis in Jordan—is not surprising. He points out in detail that al-Khaṭīb sold many different types of books and that he did so very consciously, thereby helping to shape and support a reformist movement that cared about more than just doctrinal issues.¹⁰²

A contemporary of al-Khaṭīb, and a student of al-Qāsimī's who is also mentioned sometimes by Jordanian political Salafis, is the grandson of 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār, Muḥammad Bahjat al-Bīṭār (1894–1976). According to Shaḥāda, he began to follow Salafi beliefs under the influence of his grandfather and called for a return to the Qur'ān and Sunna, as well as *ijtihād* and a rejection of *bid'a*. Via his numerous

⁹⁶ Usāma Shaḥāda, 'Silsilat rumūz al-iṣlāḥ 8—'Allāmat al-Shām Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī (2)', *al-Bayān* (r:id="rId7" w:history="1", accessed 9 February 2018), 16 January 2013.

⁹⁷ 'Indamā', 8; Shaḥāda, *al-Da'wa*, 49, 83.

⁹⁸ Ra'fat Ya'qūb, 'Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, 1886–1969 AD', *al-Qibla*, 11/24 (2013): 61.

⁹⁹ Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, *Ma'a l-ra'īl al-awwal* (Amman: Jam'īyat al-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna—Lajnat al-Kalima al-Ṭayyiba, 2014).

¹⁰⁰ Usāma Shaḥāda, introduction to *Ma'a l-ra'īl al-awwal*, by Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb (Amman: Jam'īyat al-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna—Lajnat al-Kalima al-Ṭayyiba, 2014), 5.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 7.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 19–20.

contacts throughout the Arab world and his various teaching positions at universities, he came into contact with many scholars and students and—in a direct link with the Salafi community in Jordan—even taught al-Albānī.¹⁰³ Through al-Bīṭār, the trend of nineteenth- and twentieth-century ‘modernist’ Salafis thus comes full-circle, back to the scholar who is still central to Jordanian Salafism and whose legacy is still being fought over. In fact, it is the activism of various kinds displayed in the lives of the reformist scholars mentioned throughout this article that, Shaḥāda states, ‘help us to understand the true position of al-Albānī on politics’.¹⁰⁴

CONCLUSION

This article has shown that ‘modernist’ Salafis have been widely cited by modern-day Jordanian ‘purist’ Salafis, but to varying degrees. While al-Albānī has likely been influenced by various ‘modernist’ Salafis, particularly during his years in Syria, his quietist Salafi followers in Jordan have mostly lost this historical continuity. Even when they do refer to reformers like Rashīd Riḍā and Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, it seems to be more out of a desire to show Salafism’s long historical ties with the ruling Jordanian Hashemites than out of a genuine ideological connection. This is different, however, for political Salafis in Jordan, who make great efforts to stress their historical and ideological continuity with nineteenth- and twentieth-century ‘modernist’ Salafi scholars. To them, politics in the here and now is part and parcel of Salafism and they use these scholars as examples to show that the combination of Salafi thought and activism was quite normal once. Moreover, they use these reformist scholars’ influence on Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī to ‘prove’ that they—and not quietist Salafis—are the true heirs of the man whose legacy, years after his death, still dominates Salafism in Jordan.

None of this challenges two of Lauzière’s central arguments, namely that there was no Salafi movement in the nineteenth century labelled ‘Salafiyya’ and that the term ‘Salafi’ referred to certain theological views prior to the twentieth century, rather than the all-encompassing emulation of ‘the pious predecessors’ it refers to now. Moreover, Jordanian Salafi writings about earlier reformist scholars also confirm his

¹⁰³ Id., ‘Silsilat rumūz al-iṣlāḥ 9—‘Ālim al-Shām Muḥammad Bahjat al-Bīṭār’, *al-Bayan* (r:id=“rId8” w:history=“1”, accessed 9 February 2018), 16 January 2013.

¹⁰⁴ Id., *al-Da’wa*, 64–70. The quotation is on p. 69.

findings about the role of al-Afghānī and ‘Abduh since I have found no references to their being Salafis. In fact, in a challenge to Griffel’s claim, both men are actually consciously excluded from Salafism by the most prominent political Salafi writer in Jordan.

While all of these findings support Lauzière’s claims about the history of Salafism and challenge Griffel’s, it is important to stress that this article followed an epistemological approach similar to Lauzière’s: letting the Salafi authors themselves speak, rather than independently comparing ideas, as Griffel does. It is therefore not entirely surprising that my findings square at least partly with Lauzière’s. Nevertheless, this article also shows that Griffel seems to be on to something with regard to the historical continuity between ‘modernist’ Salafis and ‘purist’ ones, a claim also supported by Weismann.

While quietist Salafis in Jordan are more likely to have consciously downplayed ‘modernist’ Salafis’ importance, precisely because they disavow the social and political activism that many of these reformers were involved in, this is entirely different for Jordan’s political Salafis, who clearly cite ‘modernist’ Salafis very often. One could argue that they merely do this to support their own claims about including political and social activism in Salafism and use these nineteenth- and twentieth-century reformers as a tool to delegitimize their quietist Salafi competitors in Jordan. While this certainly seems to play a role, political Salafi discourse in Jordan about these reformers is simply too sustained, too discerning about who is included and who is not, and too much focused on these scholars’ actual Salafi beliefs, for this argument to explain this phenomenon in its entirety. In any case, it proves that political Salafis in Jordan view their own identity as broad enough to include authorities from among both ‘purist’ and ‘modernist’ Salafis in their discourse, which suggests that Lauzière’s distinction between the two trends may have been too strict.

It thus seems that, despite confirming several of Lauzière’s findings about the history of Salafism, there seems to be a greater historical continuity between ‘modernist’ Salafis and ‘purist’ ones than his research indicates, at least in the eyes of Jordan’s political Salafis. This not only confirms Weismann’s findings in this regard and partly also Griffel’s, but also shows that the study of modern-day Salafism can shed light on the ties between the two types of Salafis. Of course, this article has only looked at Jordan, a country historically and geographically connected to Iraq, Saudi Arabia and especially Syria. This specific position may mean that Jordan is, in fact, an outlier and that there is a greater ideological distance between ‘modernist’ and ‘purist’ Salafis in other contexts, but further research on, say, North African countries or those in the Gulf, is needed to bring more clarity to this issue.