Muslim Brotherhood and Salafism

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It has become common for some politicians in Western countries to view both peaceful and violent Islamic movements with a certain degree of suspicion, particularly since the radical Islamist al-Qaeda organisation committed the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. In the Arab world, such movements have been considered a nuisance or even a threat for a much more extended period. In countries such as Egypt and Syria, regimes have long fought Islamist organisations they deemed a danger to their dictatorships and, as such, have sometimes killed thousands to protect their autocratic rule. An exception in this respect is Jordan, which has had rather cordial relations with at least some of its Islamic movements for decades.

Jordan, unlike the republics in the region, has a regime whose royal family can boast of a strong Islamic pedigree. The present ruler of Jordan—King Abdullah II—is the great-grandson of Hussein b. Ali (c. 1853–1931), the emir of Mecca, and through him, he traces his lineage all the way back to the Hashem clan of the Prophet Muhammad. This claim of prophetic discordance has given the country its official name—Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan—and the royal family's roots in Mecca have ensured that its Sunni Islamic credentials are not in doubt. This can also be said about the

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country as a whole. While Jordan has a small Christian minority, the overwhelming majority of its inhabitants are Sunni Muslims, often heavily influenced by the spiritual paths of Sufism. The state also offers a Sunni Islamic infrastructure with *sharia* judges, a Ministry of Religious Endowments and a Fatwa Department influenced by the Hanafi and Maliki schools of Islamic law.[1]

Apart from the more orthodox form of Islam that the state's institutions represent and the spirituality found in Sufism, Jordan has also witnessed the rise of Islamic movements of various types. One of these is *Jama'at al-Tabligh*, a movement rooted in the teachings of the Indian scholar Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas (1885–1944), which focuses on the transmission (*tabligh*) of a message of personal piety that reached Jordan in the 1950s. A much more political organisation also present in Jordan is *Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami* (the Islamic Liberation Party), which was founded by the Palestinian scholar Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani (1909–77) in East Jerusalem in 1953 when it was under Jordanian control and which strives for the resurrection of the caliphate in the Muslim world. Because of its explicitly anti-establishment character, this organisation is a controversial one in the Arab world and has been banned in Jordan. While difficult to gauge, it seems to have few followers in Jordan today. Two movements in Jordan that are more popular and whose adherents are far more numerous than either *Jama'at al-Tabligh* or *Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami* are the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafism. This chapter, therefore, focuses on these two movements, giving special attention to how both have negotiated their relations with the regime throughout their history.

The Muslim Brotherhood: From Cooperation to Confrontation

The Society of the Muslim Brotherhood (*Jama'at al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin*) was founded by an Egyptian schoolteacher called Hasan al-Banna (1906–49) in 1928. He later propagated it as a broad and general message

[1] Hasan Abu Haniyya, *Al-Turuq al-Sufiyya: Durub Allah al-Ruhiyya; Al-Takayyuf wa-l-Tajdid fi Siyaq al-Tahdith* [Sufi Orders: The Spiritual Paths of God; Adaptation and Renewal in the Context of Modernization] (Amman: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2011); Muhammad Abu Rumman and Hasan Abu Haniyya, *Al-Hall al-Islami fi l-Urdunn: Al-Islamiyyun wa-l-Dawlah wa-Rihanat al-Dimuqratiyya wa-l-Amn* [The Islamic Solution in Jordan: Islamists, the State, the Contests of Democracy and Security] (Amman: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2012), 39–53.

of Islam that could supposedly provide answers to all questions, including the British colonial occupation of Egypt. Strongly anti-imperialist and focused on making Egyptians embrace Islam as their belief system and lifestyle, al-Banna travelled around the country preaching his ideas, leading the organisation to grow substantially while also being noticed by the authorities. Al-Banna's message, which was often critical of the country's rulers and their unwillingness to confront the British, gained more adherents, and the Muslim Brotherhood also engaged in electoral politics and even fought against Zionist forces in the battle for Palestine in 1948. These led the Egyptian authorities to take an increasingly negative stance towards the organisation, and the regime banned the Muslim Brotherhood in 1948. After one of its members turned out to have assassinated a minister, al-Banna—although he condemned the killing—was murdered in 1949.[2]

Cooperation: Loyalty to the Regime

Although al-Banna was not so much a great scholar or thinker, he had an activist message that was inspiring to many. Local branches of the Muslim Brotherhood were founded in other countries in the Arab world (and beyond), including in Transjordan. There, a merchant called 'Abd al-Latif Abu Qura (c. 1906–67) became strongly interested in the Palestinian cause during the strike against the Zionist presence in Palestine in 1936, and it was there that he first met members of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Having been impressed by them, he received permission from al-Banna to set up a local branch of the organisation. Thus, Abu Qura set up the Transjordanian Muslim Brotherhood and became the organisation's first leader in 1945.

The fact that such an organisation could be founded in Transjordan and even received an official license in 1946 was perhaps not a coincidence. The first ruler of Transjordan, Emir (and later King) Abdullah I (r. 1921–51), was probably quite aware that his Meccan roots and the fact that Transjordan was a colonial creation did not contribute to his popularity among the local people. He, therefore, used several sources of

[2] For more on the early Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, see Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement, 1928–1942* (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 1998); Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (Oxford, etc.: Oxford University Press, 1969).

authority—including Islam, in the form of his prophetic lineage—to bolster his status as a ruler. His support for the early Muslim Brotherhood may, therefore, have been a strategic move to support Islamic organisations to undergird his own religious credentials and authority.

However, King Abdullah I was also suspicious of the Muslim Brotherhood. He realised that they had developed into a political opposition in Egypt and was aware of their strongly anti-Zionist (and later anti-Israel) views, which clashed with the more conciliatory position he had adopted. He, therefore, supported the Brotherhood as a religious organisation that could act as a counterweight to the nationalist ideas that were increasingly popular in the Arab world but simultaneously kept a close eye on them to see if they did not develop into a political movement. Under Abu Qura's leadership, the Brotherhood mostly stayed away from the political opposition and focused on religious and charitable activities, although it also sent fighters to join the battle for Palestine in 1948, just as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood had done.

The Brotherhood took on a more confrontational character when a new generation of members rose to become leaders of the organisation. Consisting mostly of educated professionals from landowning East Bank families, these young men were politicised through their interest in the Palestinian question and, as a result, adopted a more overtly political discourse. First and foremost among them was Muhammad 'Abd al-Rahman Khalifa (1919–2006), who took over from Abu Qura as the Brotherhood's leader in 1953 and remained the group's General Guide (*al-muraqib al-'amm*) until 1994, thereby becoming the longest-serving leader of the organisation. Although Khalifa objected to the aforementioned Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani's decision to split off from the Muslim Brotherhood and form *Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami* in 1953, he sympathised with al-Nabhani's view that the organisation should take a more political approach and strive to establish an Islamic state.[3]

Despite the more politicised discourse, the Muslim Brotherhood still remained firmly loyal to the regime during Khalifa's leadership, especially in its earlier decades. This was due to several factors. First, the regime and the Brotherhood saw Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser as an enemy. While the Egyptian regime's pan-Arab, republican, and socialist policies, were anathema to Jordan's pan-Arab, monarchical, and conservative

[3] Marion Boulby, *The Muslim Brotherhood and the Kings of Jordan, 1945–1993* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1999), 39–54.

views, the Muslim Brotherhood criticised Nasser for cracking down on their brethren in Egypt. Thus, the Brotherhood fully supported the Jordanian regime when it prevented a Nasserite coup in 1957. Second, the Jordanian regime often acted in ways—both concerning foreign and domestic policies—that squared with the Muslim Brotherhood's own views. The regime fought (but lost) the war against Israel in 1967, for example, and allowed the Brotherhood to have a parliamentary presence from 1956 onwards. It was partly due to such factors but also because of its non-confrontational approach, that the Muslim Brotherhood—despite being strongly pro-Palestinian—did not protest the regime's crackdown on Palestinian militants during Black September in 1970.

Confrontation: Adopting the Role of Oppositional Force

The fact that loyalty and cooperation characterised relations between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jordanian regime does not mean that there were no tensions. Members of the Muslim Brotherhood were sometimes arrested, and their first weekly newspaper, *Al-Kifah al-Islami*, was taken out of circulation now and then in the 1950s. Such measures from the regime ensured that the Brotherhood knew who was in charge. After 1967, when Jordan lost the West Bank to Israel, King Hussein (r. 1953–99) suspended parliamentary elections. This meant that from 1967 to 1989, when parliamentary elections were resumed, the Muslim Brotherhood did not really have an avenue of political participation while the enemy they shared with the regime—Nasserism—was no longer a threat. In this context, the Muslim Brotherhood developed a more oppositional character.

When parliamentary elections did take place again in 1989, the Muslim Brotherhood was the only group that was well organised on a national level because political parties were not allowed. Moreover, the extensive charitable and social network that the organisation had built up since the 1940s could now be put to good use to mobilise supporters and attract voters. As a result, the Islamic movement (comprising individual candidates from the Muslim Brotherhood and independent Islamists) won 34 seats in parliament out of a total of 80. The elections were a huge success for the Muslim Brotherhood. To the regime, however, the elections had not so much been an attempt at greater democratisation or liberalisation, but a way of managing the discontent that had erupted over drastic economic reforms that left many people less well off in the short term.

When it saw that the 1989 elections had brought about a parliament—including particularly its Islamist members—that had the potential to be a force of criticism and opposition to its policies, the regime took several measures to ensure that the next elections would result in a more regime-friendly lower house. Through gerrymandering and—most importantly—a change in the electoral law, it ruined the chances of the Muslim Brotherhood achieving such electoral success again, thereby damaging the relations between the Islamist movement and the regime.[4]

Meanwhile, other changes in Jordan occurred that affected the relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and the regime. In 1992, the Jordanian government adopted the Political Parties Law, causing the Brotherhood to set up a political party called the Islamic Action Front (IAF), thereby consolidating the more politicised direction the organisation had taken. It also meant that the Muslim Brotherhood increasingly became a movement, rather than just an organisation, encompassing charitable activities, hospitals, religious activism, and now also a political party. The Brotherhood could express its contention through all these organisations and activities, and it increasingly felt the need to.

Although it had been grateful to King Hussein for not giving in to American pressure to join the international coalition against Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein during the Kuwait Crisis in 1990–91, the Brotherhood was adamant in its refusal to accept the 1994 peace agreement between Jordan and Israel. It was also frustrated that, despite its opposition (and that of many other Jordanians), it had been unable to stop this agreement from being adopted, adding to a more general sense of the relative futility of being in parliament. Combined with the disappointing outcome of the 1993 parliamentary elections as a result of the regime's interference in the electoral process, the IAF (as well as other parties) decided to boycott the 1997 elections.

[4] Kamel S. Abu Jaber and Schirin H. Fathi, "The 1989 Jordanian Parliamentary Elections," *Orient* 31, no. 1 (1990): 67–86; Hanna Y. Freij and Leonard C. Robinson, "Liberalization, the Islamists, and the Stability of the Arab State: Jordan as a Case Study," *The Muslim World* 86, no. 1 (1996): 8–16; Russell E. Lucas, "Deliberalization in Jordan," *Journal of Democracy* 14, no. 1 (2003): 137–40; Katherine Rath, "The Process of Democratization in Jordan," *Middle Eastern Studies* 30, no. 3 (1994): 538–40; Glenn E. Robinson, "Defensive Democratization in Jordan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 30, no. 3 (1998): 390–3; Curtis R. Ryan, "Peace, Bread and Riots: Jordan and the International Monetary Fund," *Middle East Policy* 6, no. 2 (1998): 55–7; Jillian Schwedler, "A Paradox of Democracy? Islamist Participation in Election," *Middle East Report*, no. 209 (1998): 27–8.

The following period brought challenges of a different kind. In 1999, King Hussein died and was succeeded by his son King Abdullah II, who shared his ancestors' suspicion of the Muslim Brotherhood and—on top of that—was perhaps less inclined to be influenced by the close historical ties that the Hashemite regime had enjoyed with the movement. As a result, the growing distance between the two became even wider. This situation was exacerbated by the terrorist attacks in the US on 11 September 2001. Although these attacks had nothing to do with the Muslim Brotherhood, it was relatively easy for uninformed or hostile forces to conflate the movement with al-Qaeda, thereby creating pressure for the Brotherhood to show its ideological "moderation" and its loyalty to the Jordanian regime. Given the fact that the reasons the Brotherhood boycotted the 1997 elections—a toothless parliament, the absence of real reform, no change in the electoral law—were still there, it was probably this increased pressure that caused it to participate in the parliamentary elections of 2003.

The above may give the impression that the Muslim Brotherhood was the passive victim of regime repression and did not play any active role in its plight. Although the Brotherhood was the target of crackdowns by the Jordanian regime, the crisis in the relationship between the movement and the regime was not entirely of the latter's making. One example of this is the visit of Brotherhood members to the mourning ceremony held in honour of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (1966–2006), the Jordanian leader of al-Qaeda's Iraqi branch who was infamous for killing hundreds of civilians through bomb attacks and beheading at least one person. Although many Jordanians supported al-Zarqawi as someone they believed was fighting the American army that had invaded Iraq in 2003, their opinions about him changed when he claimed credit for the 2005 attack on several hotels in Amman, killing dozens of civilians. One could explain the visit of some Brotherhood members to al-Zarqa', the birthplace of al-Zarqawi, as a courtesy call from politicians who felt obliged to pay their respects to a family from their constituency, but many viewed it as inappropriate and insensitive to honour a man responsible for the deaths of Jordanian civilians.

It is not clear whether the arrest of the Brotherhood members and the eventual imprisonment of two of them for visiting al-Zarqawi's mourning ceremony had any negative impact on their electoral chances. What is clear is that the 2007 elections were a disaster for the movement, and it appears that a combination of internal divisions, election rigging by the regime, an

inefficient strategy, sagging popularity, and an uneven record in parliament were responsible for the IAF's worst electoral result so far, winning only 6 out of 110 seats in parliament. Not having achieved much during its time in parliament and still waiting for its demands of real political reform—including changing the hated electoral law—to be met, the Muslim Brotherhood decided to boycott the following parliamentary elections in 2010 and made the same decision in 2013.[5]

Although the Brotherhood was clear in its refusal to participate in the 2013 elections, a lot had changed in both the region and the movement since its previous boycott in 2010. The major regional change was the Arab Spring, a term used for the series of uprisings and protests that unseated dictators in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya and created unrest in several other Arab states. Although Jordan did not witness anything remotely resembling an uprising, it was affected by it. The regime became less tolerant of the Muslim Brotherhood, which had played a major role in the uprising in Egypt, and arrested and imprisoned several of its members, including the movement's deputy leader, Zaki Bani Irshid, for their alleged engagement in incitement and jeopardising relations with other countries.

At the same time, the Muslim Brotherhood had also undergone internal changes. Although individual members had left the movement at various stages during its history—to protest its boycott of the parliamentary elections in 1997, for example—it had remained intact as a single unit. This changed in the period 2012–15. The roots of this lay in ideological differences, primarily about the regime, political participation, and whether the movement should be exclusively Islamist or be open to extensive cooperation with others. The mostly ill-defined term "hawks" is often applied to those Muslims Brothers who take a sceptical view of the regime and political participation and tend towards Islamist exclusivism, while their ideological opposites are often referred to as "doves."

While the movement had mostly been led by two "doves" since 1989—'Abd al-Majid Dhunaybat (1994–2006) and Salim al-Falahat (2006–08)—the Brotherhood elected Hammam Said (2008–16) as their leader in 2008, a more hawkish figure. His election, as well as that of other hawkish Brothers to other leading positions, indicated the hardening of views

[5] Abu Haniyya and Abu Rumman, *Al-Hall*, 63–155; Mohammad Abu Rumman, *The Muslim Brotherhood in the 2007 Jordanian Parliamentary Elections: A Passing "Political Setback" or Diminished Popularity?* (Amman: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2007), 61–72.

among the members of the movement as a result of the regime's tougher policies towards the Muslim Brotherhood.

Despite the growing attitude of inflexibility and scepticism towards the regime within the movement, the "doves" continued to exist, of course, and became increasingly dismayed with the Brotherhood's course. As a result, several initiatives were taken by prominent members that eventually led to major divisions within the movement. The first of these was the 2012 Jordanian Initiative for Building (Al-Mubadara al-Urdunniyya li-l-Bina'), better known as the ZamZam Initiative (named after the ZamZam Hotel in Amman, where its founders met to discuss it). The initiative was led by Ruhayyil Gharayiba, a prominent member of the Brotherhood, and explicitly called for political reform based on a broad coalition of members from all sections of society. To more hawkish members of the Brotherhood, this was a challenge to the character and organisational framework of their exclusively Islamist movement, and its leaders were therefore sceptical of the initiative and eventually fired Gharayiba—as well as two other members—from their ranks.

The dismissal of Gharayiba and the others did not go down well with some of the more dovish members of the Brotherhood who may not have supported the ZamZam Initiative, but who did not believe that firing its leaders was called for either. These "wise men" (as they were often labelled), who initially merely wanted to mediate between the Brotherhood leadership and the ZamZam initiators, became increasingly dismayed with what they saw as the unwillingness of the former to compromise and began venting frustrations over the movement's leadership as a whole that had brewed for a longer period of time but only now came to the surface in a divisive way. The conflicts that developed between the Brotherhood leadership and the "wise men" eventually led to a rupture, and in December 2015, hundreds of Brothers followed the latter in handing in their resignation from the movement. Given the stature of some of those resigning—including Hamza Mansur, a former Secretary General of the IAF, and Salim al-Falahat, the aforementioned former General Guide of the Brotherhood—this was a harsh blow.

The Brotherhood's trouble did not end there because while all of this was happening, another split off was in the making. This one was led by 'Abd al-Majid Dhunaybat, another former General Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, who was critical of the direction the movement had taken over the past few years and had decided to organise meetings with like-minded members to reform the movement. This slowly grew into a new

Muslim Brotherhood, however, and this group eventually registered with the authorities as the Association of the Society of the Muslim Brotherhood (*Jam'iyyat Jama'at al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin*). Because the government accepted only one Muslim Brotherhood and because it accused the older organisation of not having its registration in order, it eventually banned the original Muslim Brotherhood and only allowed the new one. This new organisation even went so far as to present itself as the real Muslim Brotherhood and claim the assets of the organisation from which it had split off. The original Muslim Brotherhood, currently led by a caretaker leadership, is in a sort of legal limbo and is technically illegal, but still exists.

The relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jordanian regime has thus gone from cooperation to confrontation, with the former no longer in existence as a single organisational unit. The regime's increased scepticism of the Brotherhood as a result of not just the changing relationship over the past few decades but particularly the movement's role in the Egyptian uprising led it to scrutinise the group's every move. The Arab Spring thus heightened the regime's sensitivity towards any oppositional activities and caused it to crack down on dissent more easily.

The Brotherhood, for its part, was too divided to come up with a single answer to the Arab Spring. Some believed that more opposition was called for; others thought that now was the time to take a less confrontational approach to escape the regime's eventual response. Because the regime exploited these divisions, it ended up with a more dovish official Muslim Brotherhood and an outlawed unofficial one. The latter has, in a sense, been brought to heel; during the parliamentary elections of 2016, the IAF—despite being led by more hawkish members—probably realised that it had better play along with the regime's game to remain legal and decided to participate again. This means that its contention is expressed in parliamentary terms and—most importantly, from the regime's point of view—has become manageable again.

Salafism in Jordan: Between Cooperation, Opposition, and Confrontation

The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, but also in other countries, is characterised by a broad and general ideology, and its members do not usually delve into great detail about Islamic law or spirituality, let alone theology. Salafism is, in that sense, the complete opposite of the Muslim Brotherhood

because it pays precise attention to such aspects of Islam. Salafis can be defined as those Sunni Muslims who claim to emulate *al-salaf al-salih* ("the pious predecessors," usually associated with the first three generations of Muslims) as closely and in as many spheres of life as possible. Because of their desire to follow the Prophet, his companions, and their early descendants, Salafis pay considerable attention to what these first generations of believers did, said, allowed and forbade through the study of *hadith*s. As a result, references to these traditions relating sayings of the Prophet or his early followers often pervade the discourse of Salafis, keen as they are to adhere closely to Muhammad's lifestyle in all areas of life, including dress, language, and gender relations.

What sets Salafis apart from other Muslims is not just their lifestyle, but—more importantly—their ideology. Concerning theology, they adhere strictly to what they see as the pure ideas on the unity of God (*tawhid*) and the different components of faith (*iman*) they believe were adhered to by the earliest Muslims, rejecting any rational or metaphorical readings of the Qur'an. Instead, they read the sources literally and as they were supposedly revealed. Legally, Salafis differ from other Sunnis, and they state, for instance, that since the four schools of Islamic law (*madhahib*, sing. *madhhab*) that mainstream Sunnis often follow did not exist when the Prophet and his immediate followers were alive, Salafis should not practice blind emulation (*taqlid*) of these schools either. They should instead interpret the Qur'an and the Sunna independently (*ijtihad*) and according to the understanding of the *salaf*, thus underlining their desire to emulate the latter in the legal sphere, too. As this requires a lot of knowledge of Islamic law, many non-scholarly Salafis follow a school of Islamic law—often the Hanbali one—in practice.[6]

Origins and Early Development of Salafism in Jordan

The different tenets of the Salafi ideology as described above have deep roots in the history of Islam. Their appearance in Jordan is of a more recent date. According to some Jordanian Salafis, the earliest signs of the

[6] For more on Salafism, see Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (London: Hurst & Co., 2009); Bernard Rougier (ed.), *Qu'est-ce que le salafisme?* [What is Salafism?] (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2008); Behnam T. Said and Hazim Fouad (eds.), *Salafismus: Auf der Suche nach dem wahren Islam* [Salafism: In Search of True Islam] (Freiburg, etc.: Herder, 2014).

Salafi ideology in the kingdom could already be seen under the rule of King Abdullah I, who is said to have been influenced by scholars with Salafi tendencies or was even accompanied by some of them when he moved from Mecca to what is now Jordan.

While this may be correct, one could not speak of a Salafi trend until the 1950s when several important local scholars started adopting Salafism as their religious ideology. Prominent men in this regard are the Turkish-born Ahmad al-Salik (1928–2010) and the originally Palestinian Muhammad Ibrahim Shaqra (c. 1933–2016), both of whom had studied at al-Azhar University in Egypt but had become Salafis upon their return in the mid-1950s. Their Salafi preaching at mosques in Amman created a small following, which was supported by other sheikhs, like Syrian-born Muhammad Nasib al-Rifa'i (1915–92), who joined al-Salik and Shaqra in their missionary activities (*da'wa*) in Amman, and the originally Palestinian Yusuf al-Barqawi (d. 2009), who preached in al-Zarqa'.

Apart from their Salafi beliefs, the men described above had in common that they all had roots outside Jordan. The same applies to the man who turned the budding Salafi trend in Jordan into a far greater movement—Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani (1914–99). Born in Albania but raised in Syria, al-Albani was already a scholar of considerable reputation when he went to work at the Islamic University of Medina in Saudi Arabia in the 1960s. He was later invited to come to Jordan by the aforementioned Jordanian scholar Muhammad Ibrahim Shaqra and, after visiting the country several times, eventually decided to settle there. Al-Albani's considerable knowledge of *hadith*s and his long experience in the Salafi trend, to which Shaqra and his countrymen were relative newcomers, ensured that he naturally became the informal leader of the Jordanian Salafi movement. Through his sermons, fatwas, and publications, he managed to gather a large following.

Al-Albani's followers met and spoke with him mostly through informal meetings at people's homes to avoid attracting too much attention from the authorities. The latter were nevertheless sceptical of this Syrian scholar, who was preaching such an unusual message of personal piety and ritual purity. Although al-Albani's message was focused on "purifying" Islamic tradition and preaching the result to his followers—a strategy he referred to as "cleansing and teaching" (*al-tasfiya wa-l-tarbiya*)—and was thus decidedly apolitical, the Jordanian regime still saw him as a security concern. As a result, al-Albani was temporarily banned from the country but was allowed back in later when Shaqra convinced King Hussein that

al-Albani could be relied upon to side against what he saw as the real danger to Jordan: Shias. Afterwards, Salafism was given some more freedom by the regime and was also allowed to become institutionalised, through a journal (*Al-Asala*), mosques, and, after al-Albani's death, a special centre called the Imam al-Albani Centre for Studies and Research.

Divisions Among Salafis: Domestication, Politicisation, and Confrontation

Salafis thus grew closer to the Jordanian regime, particularly after al-Albani's death, but this came at a price. While al-Albani was a-political, he was also independent. As a major sheikh who seemed to reach his scholarly conclusions without taking into account how others felt about it or what political repercussions it would have, he could support his a-political ideas with his actual aloofness from political activism. Some of his students, however, were more inclined to be actively pro-regime (rather than remaining neutral on the state's affairs) and sometimes sought contact with like-minded scholars in Saudi Arabia.

When the Gulf War of 1990–91 brought the more politically engaged Sahwa movement to the fore in Saudi Arabia, some of al-Albani's students—particularly Ali al-Halabi (b. 1960), the most prominent Salafi scholar in Jordan today—actively distanced themselves from this movement and its scholars. This tendency to take sides against enemies of the regimes in the region was strengthened when the regime actively sought to domesticate Jordanian Salafis by incorporating them into its sphere of influence through the Al-Albani Centre mentioned above. This placed the major Salafi scholars in Jordan clearly on the side of the regime, a position they were glad they had taken when several attacks by Salafi-inspired terrorists—especially the 11 September 2001 attacks and the 2005 bombings in Amman—gave Salafism a bad reputation.

All these developments led to the emergence of three types of Salafis in Jordan: quietist Salafis, whose apolitical tendencies are dominant among the Salafi community in the kingdom; political Salafis, who do believe in political activism; and Jihadi-Salafis, who believe in the justification of violent action against their own regime on religious grounds. Because the latter two trends often took a far more critical view of the Jordanian state, quietist Salafis felt the need to condemn them, refute their arguments, and denounce the Arab Spring and the Salafi proponents of this phenomenon. Although they partly did so to show their loyalty to the regime, they also

felt a genuine ideological motivation to denounce the revolutions and uprisings in the region, believing that such revolts would only lead to more chaos and civil strife. This overt and explicit loyalty to the regime has resulted in a domesticated quietist Salafi trend that has lost its independence, rarely strays into politics of any kind, and focuses almost entirely on achieving doctrinal and ritual purity through lessons, sermons, and publications.[7]

It was to be expected that al-Albani's aloofist a-politicism—not to mention his students' loyalist quietism—should encounter criticism from other Salafis in Jordan, which did happen indeed. Some of them wondered why their form of Islam, which they saw as relevant and applicable to all aspects of life, should be limited to studying and teaching, at least for the foreseeable future. While al-Albani's philosophy focused on Islamising society through preaching and education to prepare it for the founding of an Islamic state—a process that could take centuries—other Salafis wanted a focus on politics right now. This desire for immediate political action and a wish to think about politics in Salafi terms was helped by the Gulf War. During that conflict, the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat seemed to side with Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, who had just occupied Kuwait. The regime of the latter responded to this by expelling virtually all Palestinians—some 400,000—from its soil after the war. Since many of these Palestinians had come from the West Bank in the 1950s and 1960s when it was Jordanian territory, they were officially Jordanian citizens, and some 250,000 of them, therefore, "returned" to Jordan. Some of these were Salafis and had been influenced by the ideas of the originally Egyptian scholar Abu Abdullah Abd al-Rahman b. Abd al-Khaliq and his organisation, *Jam'iyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami*. The latter was of a strongly political Salafi persuasion before the Gulf War and the Palestinians who came to Jordan and adhered to such ideas as well abetted the already existing criticism of al-Albani's quietism.

Throughout the years, several organisations and associations have been set up promoting a more political—or "reformist," as they call it—interpretation of Salafism. Some of these have focused on charitable work, particularly among Syrian refugees who have fled the civil war in their country since 2011. This may not sound very "political," but it is in the sense that it actively engages with public affairs and bases its activism on this. Political

[7] Joas Wagemakers, *Salafism in Jordan: Political Islam in a Quietist Community* (Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

Salafis believe that Salafism is about more than studying and preaching, and they contend that engaging in societal activism—even if it is as uncontroversial as helping refugees—sets them apart from their quietist brethren.

The most prominent political Salafis organisation in Jordan—and one that is also more overtly political—is *Jam'iyyat al-Kitab wa-l-Sunna* (The Association of the Book and the Sunna). Founded in Amman in 1993 by a disparate group of Salafis critical of al-Albani's focus on studying and preaching, it went through several ups and downs (including repression by the authorities, who mistrusted this new group) but eventually—in the early 2000s—re-emerged as an organisation that more narrowly focused on charitable activities. Its discourse, however, is explicitly political. Articles in its magazine *Al-Qibla*, for example, deal with regional conflicts in terms of international relations, geopolitics, and state's interests, rather than seeing them merely as conflicts between Sunnis and Shiites, for instance.

The *Jam'iyyat al-Kitab wa-l-Sunna*'s political awareness has been heightened by the Arab Spring, during which some Salafi groups—most prominently in Egypt—have risen to power and have won a substantial number of seats in parliament. Unlike quietist Salafis in Jordan, who rejected the Arab Spring as a source of chaos and civil strife (*fitna*) and believed it was better to support the rulers (even if they were repressive ones), political Salafis in the kingdom enthusiastically endorsed the uprisings and the Salafi groups who decided to run for public office. The leader of the organisation, Zayid Hammad, and prominent members who regularly write articles for *Al-Qibla*, like Usama Shahada and Ahmad al-Dhuwayb, have openly sided with the protesters against the regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, and Libya, and particularly, Shahada has been a strong supporter of the Egyptian Salafi political party *Hizb al-Nur*.

Despite the organisation's support for Salafi political activism, it has been somewhat difficult for *Jam'iyyat al-Kitab wa-l-Sunna* to translate its enthusiasm into founding a Salafi political party in Jordan. The reasons for this given by the organisation's members themselves include that the country does not have enough Salafis to make such an effort worthwhile, the existing Salafi community does not have a mature and robust infrastructure, and it would not be clear what such a political party would stand for and how it would differ from the Islamist IAF. Moreover, the parliamentary experiences of the Muslim Brotherhood and the IAF are not exactly encouraging.

Finally, *Jam'iyyat al-Kitab wa-l-Sunna* is given considerable freedom by the regime to pursue its goals throughout the country under its mandate from the Ministry of Culture. Any decision to set up a political party would make the organisation the responsibility of the Interior Ministry, which is unlikely to look favourably towards the establishment of yet another Islamic party in opposition to the regime. As such, setting up a political party could give the organisation a bad name and might even jeopardise all its other activities. The *Jam'iyyat al-Kitab wa-l-Sunna*, while political in outlook, therefore, seems to have no concrete plans to set up a political party anytime soon, and this seems to be even more the case for other political Salafi groups in Jordan.[8]

Whereas Jordan's quietist Salafis are characterised by domestication and its "reformist" ones by politicisation, the third branch—Jihadi-Salafis—have chosen the path of confrontation with the regime. Of course, radical Islamist ideas go back further in time than the rise of Jihadi-Salafism in Jordan. The revolutionary ideas of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood member Sayyid Qutb (1906–66), for example, were written in the 1960s, when Jihadi-Salafism did not yet exist in Jordan. It was the mixing of politicised ideas like those of the Muslim Brotherhood (and particularly the radical ones espoused by Qutb) with (radical reinterpretations of) the purity-centred beliefs found in Salafism that produced Jihadi-Salafi ideology. The connection between these two ideologies was made in various places, but perhaps most prominently during the *mujahedeen* (jihad fighters) phase in Afghanistan in 1979–89.

One person who emerged from this period as one of the leading scholars of Jihadi-Salafism was Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi (b. 1959), a Palestinian sheikh who was born in the West Bank but spent his childhood in Kuwait and who lived in Peshawar (Pakistan) during the war in Afghanistan. When he was expelled from Kuwait after the Gulf War, along with so many other Palestinians, he went to Jordan to spread his views there. Jordan, meanwhile, was going through a tumultuous period at the time. Apart from the aforementioned far-reaching economic reforms, the parliamentary elections and the peace negotiations with Israel in the early 1990s, this period also saw its Arab neighbour and ally—Iraq—invade another Arab country—Kuwait—but was subsequently driven out by an international

[8] Ibid., 201–19; *id*., "The Dual Effect of the Arab Spring on Salafi Integration: Political Salafism in Jordan," in *Salafism After the Arab Awakening: Contending with People's Power*, ed. Francesco Cavatorta and Fabio Merone (London: Hurst & Co., 2016), 119–35, 274–8.

coalition led by the US. This not only brought about a sense of Arab incompetence in the face of overwhelming Western military power but also brought hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to Jordan.

This sequence of drastic changes—economic, political, diplomatic, military, and demographic—led to a sense of insecurity among many Jordanians, who felt they were losing control of their own society. This, in turn, caused some young men to seek more radical Islamist solutions, set up militant groups that engaged in attacking people, and develop a discourse that was strongly anti-regime. It was precisely in this time-frame that al-Maqdisi came to Jordan, where he—as a relatively experienced thinker—could easily provide these radicalised youngsters with an overarching ideology that made sense of their grievances. His own loosely organised group of followers was called *Jama'at al-Tawhid* (the Group of the Unity of God) or *Jama'at al-Muwahhidin* (the Group of the Unifiers of God)—though it became known as *Bay'at al-Imam* (Fealty to the Imam) in the media—and included Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

The group was involved in making plans to avenge the Palestinians killed by Israeli terrorist Baruch Goldstein in Hebron in 1994, but they were arrested before they could execute the attack, landing the entire group in prison, from which they were released on the occasion of King Abdullah II's ascension to the throne in 1999. Since then, al-Maqdisi has become one of the leading Jihadi-Salafi scholars in the world, although he sometimes clashed with his former student al-Zarqawi, who rejected his teacher's advice to focus on radical *da'wa* in Jordan itself and decided to go abroad, where he eventually became the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq before being killed in 2006.[9]

[9] Muhammad Abu Rumman and Hasan Abu Haniyya, *Al-Salafiyya al-Jihadiyya fi l-Urdunn ba'da Maqtal al-Zarqawi: Muqarabat al-Huwiyya, Azmat al-Qiyada wa-Dababiyyat al-Ru'ya* [Jihadi-Salafism in Jordan after the Killing of al-Zarqawi: The Approximation of Identity, the Crisis of Leadership and the Obscurity of Vision] (Amman: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2009); Beverley Milton-Edwards, "Climate of Change in Jordan's Islamist Movement," in *Islamic Fundamentalism*, ed. Abdel Salam Sidahmed and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 123–142; Joas Wagemakers, *A Quietist Jihadi: The Ideology and Influence of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi* (Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 191–236; *id.*, "A Terrorist Organization that Never Was: The Jordanian 'Bay'at al-Imam' Group," *Middle East Journal* 68, no. 1 (2014): 59–75. For more on al-Zarqawi, see Jean-Charles Brisard (with Damien Martinez), *Zarqawi: The New Face of Al-Qaeda* (New York: Other Press, 2005); Fu'ad Hussein, *Al-Zarqawi: Al-Jil al-Thani li-l-Qaida* [Al-Zarqawi: The Second Generation of al-Qaeda] (Beirut: Dar al-

The ideology guiding the Jihadi-Salafi movement in Jordan is decidedly Salafi in the theological and legal sense, but much more challenging to the state because its adherents hold it against the country's rulers (king, prime minister, ministers, etc.) that they supposedly do not apply Islam at the state level. Other Salafis agree that the *sharia* should be the law of the land, but—whereas quietists seek to achieve this goal eventually through peaceful *da'wa* and politicos want to get to that point through political participation—Jihadi-Salafis believe that the current order should be overthrown and contend that violence against the state is justified. The underlying justification for this anti-state violence is the belief that the kingdom—just like other Muslim countries—is ruled by apostates who, because of their alleged unwillingness to apply Islamic law in full, have ceased to be Muslims. This process of excommunication (*takfir*) of fellow Muslims enables Jihadi-Salafis to place rulers outside the religion of Islam and thereby legitimises waging jihad against them in pursuit of an Islamic state.

As the conflict between al-Maqdisi and al-Zarqawi suggests, Jihadi-Salafis do not agree on everything. Al-Maqdisi represents the more careful and scholar-centred wing of the Jordanian Jihadi-Salafi movement, judging violence against the state as legitimate but unwise because of the regime's overwhelming power. The followers of al-Zarqawi's represent the more action-oriented and fighter-driven wing of Jordan's Jihadi-Salafi movement. They are more likely to wage jihad and care less about the legal and doctrinal niceties that scholars such as al-Maqdisi write and preach. This division between scholar- and fighter-centred approaches has also more or less translated in what has become the most important bone of contention among Jordanian Jihadi-Salafis: whether or not to support the Islamic State (IS), the organisation that took over from al-Qaeda as the most prominent Jihadi-Salafi organisation in the Middle East during 2012–17.

Although al-Maqdisi had been in the forefront of those scholars calling for the establishment of an Islamic state (rather than merely waging jihad for jihad's sake), he became increasingly dismayed with the excessive violence displayed by IS, its exclusive mindset, and its tendency to disavow opponents (even those within the Jihadi-Salafi movement). IS, which could have represented the ideal, scholar-centred state that al-Maqdisi and

Khayya, 2005); Loretta Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005).

his followers dreamed of, turned out—in their eyes, at least—to be the very fighter-centred nightmare that they had feared all along. For a few years, al-Maqdisi has been supported in his anti-IS (but pro-al-Qaeda) views by Abu Qatada al-Filastini (b. 1960), a major Palestinian-Jordanian Jihadi-Salafi scholar who resided in England for a long time before his expulsion to Jordan in 2013. Together they have formed perhaps the most prominent ideological bloc against IS. Many of al-Zarqawi's supporters (as well as some of al-Maqdisi's), however, have enthusiastically supported IS as the heir to al-Qaeda in Iraq, and some have even joined IS in Syria. This division is the most important source of strife between Jihadi-Salafis in Jordan. Ironically, this has led to a situation in which al-Maqdisi and Abu Qatada, who have spent years denouncing the "apostate" regimes in Jordan and the rest of the region, are now seen as relatively non-confrontational because of their opposition to IS.[10]

Conclusion

Islamic movements in Jordan are quite diverse. Some have a quietist, apolitical character, while others are highly politicised; some focus on education or seek to change the political system from within, while others are confrontational and prepared to use violence. Doctrinally, there are significant differences, as well, with both Muslim Brothers and Salafis prominently present in the kingdom; the former are activist but not very specific in theological or legal matters, while the latter are often—though not always—the exact opposite.

One of the things they have in common is that they must, somehow, all deal with and relate to the Jordanian state. Some, like the Muslim Brotherhood, have done this through a close relationship that has gradually deteriorated and has resulted in the original Brotherhood being outlawed altogether. Only the groups willing to play by the regime's rules—either because they split off from the Brotherhood or because they represent a regime-friendly version of the organisation—have survived.

[10] Kirk H. Sowell, *Jordanian Salafism and the Jihad in Syria* (Washington, D.C.: Hudson Institute (www.hudson.org/research/11131-jordanian-salafism-and-the-jihad-in-Syria, accessed 21 November 2017), 2015; Joas Wagemakers, "Jihadi-Salafism in Jordan and the Syrian Conflict: Divisions Overcome Unity," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (forthcoming as a hard copy, but available online at http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1057610X.2017.1283197 (accessed 21 November 2017)).

The Salafi movement, on the other hand, started out as an independent trend but slowly grew into a loyalist and explicitly pro-regime current. Two other Salafi trends developed, partly in opposition to these quietists, into a highly politicised "reformist" type of Salafism and a radical and sometimes violent branch labelled Jihadi-Salafism. In the changing political landscape in both the region and the kingdom itself, Islamic movements have thus shown quite a tendency to adapt, split up, and survive (if they were willing to cooperate with the regime) or perish (if they did not). The regime, while often struggling to handle all these different Islamic trends, has generally come out on top.

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