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CHAPTER 8

Foreign Policy as Protection: The Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood as a Political Minority During the Cold War

Joas Wagemakers

Introduction

In contemporary Jordan, the Muslim Brotherhood and its parliamentary affiliate, the Islamic Action Front, are widely seen as the most important political opposition in the Hashemite Kingdom. Since 1989, when parliamentary elections were held for the first time since 1967, the relationship between the Brotherhood and the regime has generally deteriorated. In fact, it has reached such depths that the original Muslim Brotherhood Society (*Jamāʿat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*), founded in 1945, has effectively become illegal since a new and more pro-regime alternative Muslim Brotherhood Society Association (*Jamʿiyyat Jamāʿat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*) was approved by the regime in 2015 (Ryan 2018, pp. 75–76). Yet the relationship between the Brotherhood and the regime was not always like this. During the Cold War, between the group's founding

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in 1945 and the 1989 elections, the Brotherhood and the regime were on generally quite good terms. The reason for this can partly be found in shared interests with regard to foreign policy: the regime wanted to maintain its conservative monarchy in the face of international and regional challenges during the 1950s–1970s.

For its part, the Muslim Brotherhood, finding itself to be a political minority (perhaps even an endangered group), sought continued approval from the king and generally sided with the regime in its foreign policy decisions. This way, the Brotherhood not only helped secure its own position in Jordan, but in doing so it also buttressed a regime whose own position in the region during the Cold War was far from safe. As such, the Brotherhood provided it with crucial support when it needed it most. The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, while explicitly espousing a religion that is shared by an overwhelming majority of the country's population, can be seen as a political minority because it turned this religion into a political ideology (Islamism) in a way not shared by communist, nationalist and pan-Arab parties in the Jordanian parliament. Moreover, the Brotherhood's position can also be seen as endangered in Jordan because it represents, in several ways, the polar opposite of what the regime stands for. Throughout the period dealt with in this chapter, the Brotherhood was an activist, overtly Islamist organisation that was increasingly supported by and representative of Palestinian-Jordanians.

The regime, however, though conservative and proud of its Islamic pedigree was certainly not Islamist and relied on East Jordanian support, from which it also drew most of its officers, officials and others. The Muslim Brotherhood, in other words, served and represented an ideological and demographic group in Jordan whose interests in the kingdom itself often did not square with those of other political parties or the regime. In order to ensure its political survival, it thus needed to show its value to the regime. This chapter is based on the Muslim Brotherhood's own sources, such as its 1950s newspaper *Al-Kifāḥ al-Islāmī*, books written about the history of the organisation by (former) members and fieldwork conducted between 2012 and 2014. First, it gives a brief overview of the early history of the Muslim Brotherhood as situated in an internationally and regionally entangled Jordan in order to show the context of relations between this organisation and the Jordanian regime.

Second, this chapter delves into several important international foreign policy challenges that confronted Jordan during the 1950s and it analyses how and why the Muslim Brotherhood sided with the regime in

this period. Third, this contribution deals with further regional matters that the Jordanian regime had to deal with in the 1950s–1970s period and revisits the Brotherhood's response to these. This chapter shows that although the Muslim Brotherhood had important and substantial differences of opinion with the regime, it often agreed with the kingdom's foreign policy during this Cold War era. By stressing what it had in common with the regime, the Muslim Brotherhood could thus position itself and secure a status as a loyal and patriotic political minority, thus escaping the kind of regime crackdowns that affected neighbouring branches of the Brotherhood in Egypt and Syria. As such, this chapter argues that the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood used this strategy of aligning its foreign policy views with those of the Jordanian regime in order to protect its standing as a political minority within Jordanian domestic politics.

The Muslim Brotherhood in an Entangled Jordan

As is well known, the country we now know as "Jordan" was first formed as a result of the cascade of events that followed the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire during World War I, led by the Hashemite Emir of Mecca, Sharif Husayn Bin Ali (c. 1853–1931), and his sons with British support. As a result of these successful efforts, Britain awarded the territory that would first be known as Transjordan to Husayn's son Abdullah (1882–1951), who was made emir of this newly founded country in 1921 (Robins 2004, pp. 16–19; Wilson 1987, pp. 39–59). The nature of this transaction—the colonial allocation of land to a "local" ruler—almost ensured that the British would be pulling the strings of power and this is, indeed, precisely what happened. In 1928, the Anglo-Jordanian agreement formally confirmed British influence over Transjordanian financial, legal, domestic and foreign affairs, which—despite local opposition—hardly changed when the country was granted independence through the Treaty of Alliance in 1946 (Aruri 1972, pp. 25–27, 74–77, 81–88).

What did change British influence over Transjordanian affairs was the 1951 Jerusalem assassination of King Abdullah (who reigned from 1946 to 1951) by a Palestinian nationalist. Abdullah's death led to a period of uncertainty in what was now called "Jordan", from which King Husayn (reigning from 1953 to 1999) eventually emerged as the new monarch. By this time, Britain's status as a world power was declining and its most important rival for this position—the United States—had started taking

a greater interest in Jordan. This was particularly due to the Cold War context, with America seeking to curtail the influence of the USSR and regional socialists like President Jamal ʿAbd al-Nasir of Egypt (in power between 1954 and 1970). The United States therefore did its best to keep King Husayn on its side by supporting his regime with military and economic aid (Little 1995). While America's Cold War efforts to keep Jordan away from Soviet influence should also be seen in the context of its efforts to help and protect Israel (Markussen and Waage 2018), and although the United States never had the colonial influence over the Hashemite kingdom that Britain once enjoyed, it did replace the British as Jordan's main Western patron—a position it has retained ever since.[1]

A Regime in Search of Legitimacy

Because of the Hashemites' Arabian origins and their continued support from the British and the Americans, they clearly could not rely on local roots and authenticity to buttress their status as rulers. As such, and in order not to appear as foreign rulers of this newly created country, they had to emphasise the tribal, Arab and Islamic aspects of their rule and personalities. Early tribal alliances with Emir Abdullah came about through the latter's substantial efforts to woo the local Bedouin population by establishing a personal relationship with them through hospitality, gifts and selectively providing them with patronage and power (Alon 2007, pp. 40–43).[2] Britain assisted Emir Abdullah in these efforts by appointing General John Bagot Glubb "Pasha" to set up a tribal military force in 1936.

This not only brought the restless Bedouin tribes under control, but also incorporated them into the national army, known as the Arab Legion (Alon 2007, pp. 92–109; Aruri 1972, pp. 31–32; Massad 2001, pp. 105–178). The latter term also alludes to the idea of a pan-Arab identity that was used by Abdullah in order to promote his leadership and legitimacy. As one of Husayn Bin 'Ali's sons responsible for the Arab Revolt, the Emir of Transjordan had pan-Arab territorial ambitions that went beyond the borders of his own country (Wilson 1987, pp. 25–38) and used these

[1] See, for instance, O'Connell (2011). For more on Jordan's foreign policy after the late 1980s, see Lynch (1999), Ryan (2009).

[2] For an example of tribal chief who established close relations with the Hashemite rulers in Jordan, see Alon (2016).

to appeal to a greater audience, as did his grandson, King Husayn (Jolen 2003, pp. 164–165). Even in this early stage of Jordan's history, there is thus evidence that foreign policy was seen as important in shoring up and securing domestic legitimacy, authenticity and sovereignty for the Hashemite monarchy.

Apart from emphasising tribal and Arab aspects of Hashemite rule, the kings of (Trans)Jordan have also long highlighted their Islamic credentials. This was expressed in various ways. One of these was the stressing of their status as *sharīfs* (descendants of the Prophet Muhammad) (Jolen 2003, pp. 159–164), which is strongly linked to their claim to act as the protectors of the holy places in Jerusalem (Abdullah II 2011, pp. 187–195; Katz 2005). Another way the Hashemites' Islamic status was legitimised was through their promotion of conservative Muslim norms in Jordanian legislation, culture and society, as well as state support for Islamic institutes (Abū Rummān and Abū Haniyya 2012, pp. 23–30, 38–59). Yet another way in which the Islamic cultural, legal and societal claims and credentials of the Hashemite regime could be bolstered was through support for Muslim organisations. This is where the Muslim Brotherhood comes in.

Regime Support for the Muslim Brotherhood

Founded by the Egyptian teacher Hasan al-Banna in 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood was an organisation aimed at making Egyptian society and the state more Islamic through a bottom-up strategy of missionary activities and political activism. Strongly anti-colonial and anti-Zionist and mostly aimed at a lay audience, the organisation quickly spread throughout Egypt, gaining many members along the way.[3] The Brotherhood subsequently spread to other countries through al-Banna's missionary activities or via non-Egyptians who had been in contact with the organisation's leader. One of these countries was Jordan, where a wealthy and strongly pro-Palestinian merchant called ʿAbd al-Latif Abu Qura (d. 1967) was impressed by an article he had read in an Egyptian Brotherhood publication.[4] He subsequently contacted al-Banna, who

[3] General works on the early Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood include Lia (1998); Mitchell (1993).

[4] For more on Abu Qura from the point of view of two admirers, see Yūsuf al-ʿAẓm (1995, p. 2), ʿAwnī Jaddūʿ al-ʿUbaydī (1992).

sent two emissaries to Jordan, where they spread the Brotherhood's message, resulting in the creation of a Jordanian branch of the organisation in 1945 (Boulby 1999, pp. 39–42). Unlike the Muslim Brotherhood in other countries, a delegation from the organisation actively sought the ruler's blessing for their activities and also received it in 1946, the same year Transjordan became independent. As Boulby points out, King Abdullah may have patronised the Muslim Brotherhood to avoid its development into a political opposition and, perhaps more importantly, may also have seen his support for the organisation as buttressing his own Islamic credentials.

In the 1950s, given the challenge posed by the Arab socialist nationalism espoused by Nasser, the king may also have viewed the Brotherhood as a useful religious and conservative counterweight to such secularist populism in the region (Boulby 1999, pp. 46–47). Since King Abdullah did not want the Muslim Brotherhood to develop into a political opposition, he gave them plenty of room to develop their non-political activities. In keeping with Hasan al-Banna's tactics, the Jordanian Brotherhood focussed on education, but produced no writings in its early years and recruited its members mostly through boy scout clubs. It also organised study groups and youth meetings (Boulby 1999, pp. 45, 47). This non-political attitude changed somewhat in the 1950s, when a new, younger and more politicised leadership came to the fore, with Muhammad ʿAbd al-Rahman Khalifa (1919–2006) replacing Abu Qura as the organisation's leader in 1953. They placed greater emphasis on regional political issues and on their desire to establish an Islamic state, although the latter remained vague enough to continue to be acceptable to the regime (Boulby 1999, pp. 50–55).

A more problematic issue in the relations between the Jordanian Brotherhood and the Hashemite regime was the Palestinian question. The kings of Jordan have a long history of cultivating ties with Israel, ranging from King Abdullah's early relations with Zionist leaders (Shlaim 1998) through to King Husayn's ultimately successful attempt to make peace with Israel during the 1990s (al-Khazendar 1997, pp. 51–97), and on to King Abdullah II's ongoing maintenance of cordial relations with the Jewish state (Abdullah II 2011, pp. 187–213). The Muslim Brotherhood, on the other hand, was strongly pro-Palestinian. The organisation's founder, ʿAbd al-Latif Abu Qura, had already been involved in raising funds for Palestine in the 1930s (Boulby 1999, p. 41) and believed the primary aim of the Brotherhood should be to support jihad against the

Zionists, which some of the organisation's members actually engaged in during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War (Boulby 1999, pp. 45, 49).

The possibility of potential tensions between the Hashemite regime and the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood grew because of the Palestinian question, especially following the presence of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood on Jordanian soil. After the war of 1948, the West Bank became part of Jordanian territory and, as a result, the Palestinian Brotherhood came to exist within Jordan's borders (Abu-Amr 1994, pp. 4–6). While it was clear that the Jordanian Brotherhood disagreed with King Abdullah about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (Boulby 1999, pp. 47, 48), this did not necessarily lead to a clash between the two. In effect, the Brotherhood viewed the Palestinian question through the prism of general imperialist domination at the time (Boulby 1999, pp. 55–56). Since the regime and the Brotherhood both agreed on the need to rid the region of this general imperialism, the organisation could nestle its own anti-Zionist discourse within a broader anti-imperialist narrative that the Hashemite rulers also supported to a certain extent. As such, the Brotherhood directed the regime's attention to greater international and regional challenges by incorporating its position as a political minority into the broader fate of the state as a whole.

The Brotherhood's Response to Jordan's International Challenges

Today, the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan is not a united movement. The literature on the organisation often distinguishes the less compromising, hard-line "hawks" from the more flexible and pro-regime "doves" within the movement.[5] Others point to the focus on the Palestinian question that some (often Palestinian) members choose at the expense of concentrating on internal Jordanian issues, which other (frequently East Jordanian) members want to deal with primarily.[6] These divisions may partly have been the result of the greater politicisation that took place after parliamentary elections were held again in 1989, but they are likely to have existed much earlier. Given these divisions, it is remarkable how united the Brotherhood remained on issues of foreign policy

[5] See, for instance, Brown (2012, pp. 102–103).

[6] See, for example, Wickham (2013, p. 199).

from the 1950s to 1970s. We know this because several highly diverse Brothers have written accounts of the organisation's history that are quite alike in how they view and portray the Jordanian regime's foreign policy challenges and how the Brotherhood responded to them.

Apart from sources published by the Brotherhood as a whole, this chapter makes extensive use of these accounts of the organisation's history written by three (ex-)members. The first of these three (ex-)members is ʿAwnī al-ʿUbaydī, a Palestinian-Jordanian former Muslim Brother who speaks highly of King Husayn and elements of the regime.[7] Al-ʿUbaydī not only published a biography of the Jordanian Brotherhood's founder (al-ʿUbaydī 1992), but also wrote a history of the Brotherhood in Jordan and Palestine (al-ʿUbaydī 1991). The second author dealt with here is Muḥammad Abū Fāris, a Palestinian-Jordanian Muslim scholar whose ideologically inspired scepticism towards the regime and its laws made him one of the most hawkish members of the Brotherhood until his death in 2015.[8] Abū Fāris did not write a complete historical account of the organisation, but did author a book on important chapters of its political history (Abū Fāris 2000). Finally, Bassām al-ʿUmūsh is an East Jordanian former member of the Brotherhood who left the group in 1997 over its decision to boycott the parliamentary elections of that year and is quite pro-regime.[9] Like Abū Fāris, al-ʿUmūsh did not write an account of the Brotherhood's entire history, but authored a book on the organisation's most important historical chapters, including a strong focus on foreign policy (al-ʿUmūsh 2006).

Between Loyalism and Pragmatism

The impressions that the (ex-)members of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood have about their organisation's ties with the Hashemite regime differ. Some express clear admiration for King Abdullah and find it only natural for such a religious personality to side with the Brotherhood. Al-ʿUbaydī, for example, states about this king:

[7] Interview with ʿAwnī Jaddūʿ al-ʿUbaydī, Amman, 11 January 2014.

[8] Interview with Muḥammad Abū Fāris, Amman, 21 January 2013.

[9] Interview with Bassām al-ʿUmūsh, Amman, 30 January 2013.

> He [was] a scholar of the religion, a foster son (*rabīb*) of the Hashemite house, a descendant of the noble Hashemite family tree (*al-dawḥa al-Hāshimiyya al-sharīfa*) because the religious side in the king's personality was an authentic side (*jānib aṣīl*) that he inherited by degrees (*kābiran ʿan kābir*). From his earliest youth (*mundhu nuʿūmat azfārihi*) he was raised at the hands of major scholars (*kibār ʿulamāʾ*) of the Shari'a and Islam. (al-ʿUbaydī 1991, p. 38)

Al-ʿUmūsh—although he stresses the support the Brotherhood received from King Abdullah, the latter's opening of the organisation's first headquarters in 1945 and the strong ties between King Husayn and various Islamists—also realises that the Hashemites' ties with the Brotherhood may have increased King Abdullah's popularity and legitimacy (al-ʿUmūsh 2006, pp. 10–13). This suggests that the Brotherhood may have realised that royal pragmatism played a role in the relationship between the king and the organisation. Indeed, Brotherhood members themselves have indicated that they also supported the kings of Jordan out of pragmatic considerations, knowing that alternative rulers were likely to be worse (Boulby 1999, pp. 47–48; Wickham 2013, p. 197). As such, the Brotherhood's support for the regime in times of trouble could emanate from loyalty to the monarchy, but also from its pragmatic realisation that it could use foreign policy to cement its relationship with the kings on whose position its own political future depended.

The Baghdad Pact

It was this same mixture of ideologically inspired loyalism and political pragmatism that caused the Muslim Brotherhood to side with the regime when the latter was confronted with international challenges. The first of these was the so-called Baghdad Pact (later renamed the Central Treaty Organisation [CENTO]), an international Cold War alliance formed in 1955 that included Iraq (hence the original name), Iran, Pakistan, Turkey and Britain in order to curb the influence of the Soviet Union. Because of the anti-British sentiment prevalent in large parts of the Arab world, Iraq was heavily criticised by other Arab countries for its pact with Britain, particularly by the Egyptian President Nasser (Aruri 1972, pp. 120–122). Given Jordan's historical reliance on British support and its possible joining of the Baghdad Pact, Arab nationalists such as Nasser were quick to question the Hashemite Kingdom's status and legitimacy as a truly

Arab country, portraying it instead as a buffer state for the interests of Britain and as providing security guarantees for Israel (Lynch 1999, p. 25).

Despite the Arab pressure on the kingdom not to join the Baghdad Pact, as well as the demonstrations in Jordan against the agreement, King Husayn was inclined towards making common cause with Iraq and Britain and selected several prime ministers to implement such a policy. The failure of their governments to achieve this goal because of popular pressure, however, caused the regime to decide not to join the Baghdad Pact after all (Aruri 1972, pp. 122–128). Part of this popular pressure came from the Muslim Brotherhood. Al-ʿUmūsh, for example, states that "the Jordanian people rejected the [Baghdad] Pact and described it as imperialistic and demonstrations opposing the pact took place. […] The Brotherhood was in the vanguard of those resisting the pact" (al-ʿUmūsh 2006, p. 105). Al-ʿUbaydī also mentions Jordanians' rejection of the Baghdad Pact and equally states that:

> The Society of the Muslim Brotherhood was in the vanguard of the demonstrators, standing with all its power before this imperialist pact. It resisted [the pact] with firmness (*ṣalāba*) and courage (*shajāʿa*) until that led to the imprisonment of the General Controller (*al-murāqib al-ʿāmm*) in the Al-Mahatta Prison in Amman. Some of the Brothers were wounded. (al-ʿUbaydī 1991, pp. 161–162)[10]

Abū Fāris, though very different in general outlook than the other two Muslim Brothers cited so far, discusses the Baghdad Pact in very similar terms. He states that:

> European imperialist states even strove to preserve their interests in the Arab and Islamic world, trying to establish coalitions with the states of the region. These coalitions worked to tie the Islamic world to the interests of the European states, be they political, economic or otherwise. […] This imperialist pact was led by Britain and was based on the idea of creating a military pact that included Arab states, Europe, Pakistan, Iran and the Jewish state of aggression on the land of Palestine under the slogan of fighting [Soviet] communism and confronting it. […] The Muslim Brotherhood was in the cities and villages resisting this evil pact (*hādhā l-ḥilf*

[10] The quotation is on page 162.

> *al-khabīth*) and refusing Jordan's participation in it. (Abū Fāris 2000, p. 29)

Given this unity of opinion on the Baghdad Pact's supposed imperialist nature and the fissures it caused among Arab and Muslim countries, it is perhaps not surprising that the Jordanian Brotherhood's newspaper *Al-Kifāḥ al-Islāmī* described the pact as "a danger to the unity of the [Muslim] community (*waḥdat al-umma*)" (*al-Kifāḥ al-Islāmī* 1957a, p. 9). Framed as such, the Brotherhood fully supported the regime's eventual policy on this issue, thereby buttressing the Hashemites' Arab credentials in a region where these were questioned sometimes.

The Eisenhower Doctrine

The Brotherhood took a similar attitude towards the Eisenhower Doctrine. The latter was a Cold War policy statement by the American administration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower published in 1957 that, like the Bagdad Pact, sought to contain Soviet communism. Because of the diminished influence of traditional allies such as Britain and France in the Middle East, the United States felt obliged to take a more aggressive attitude towards fighting communism in the region. As such, it offered both economic and military aid to any Middle Eastern countries willing to resist Soviet influence (Dann 1989, p. 46). Although King Husayn wrote an open letter in 1957 expressing his rejection of communism—a move that he is said to have discussed with the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood beforehand and that was praised by the organisation (Aruri 1972, pp. 138–139)—he still refused to accept the Eisenhower Doctrine, probably in an effort not to appear as a supporter of the West (Dann 1989, p. 47). The Muslim Brotherhood supported the regime in its policy of anti-communism, on the one hand, and its unwillingness to subscribe to the Eisenhower Doctrine, on the other. One article in *Al-Kifāḥ al-Islāmī* portrayed the American statement as part of its efforts:

> To colonise the [Middle] East again […]. So it is not in our interest to join [either] East or West. The East and the West, the Russians and the Americans, both want to dominate us, desiring the riches of our country. There is only one way of deliverance for us (*laysa lanā illā ṭarīq wāḥid li-l-najāt*), namely to unite under one banner (*al-takattul taḥta rāya wāḥida*), which is the banner of Islam. (Manṣūr al-Ḥayārī 1957, p. 2)

The weekly newspaper also claims that the people supported the king in his "historic stance", stating: "No imperialism and no dissolution [of Jordan]; no alliances (*aḥlāf*) and no heresy (*ilḥād*)" (*al-Kifāḥ al-Islāmī* 1957b, p. 10). Abū Fāris, similarly, cites *Al-Kifāḥ al-Islāmī* as saying that the Eisenhower Doctrine merely existed to serve American security aims, cause American dominance of the region, support "the state of Jewish aggression" and keep the Arab states weak (Abū Fāris 2000, p. 32). Al-ʿUbaydī is even more explicit, describing the Eisenhower Doctrine as "among the imperialist projects that seek to consolidate the dominance (*iḥkām al-sayṭara*) on our region and impose unjust policies (*al-siyāsāt al-ẓālima*) that serve [the United States] and its schemes (*maṭāmiʿihā*)".

With regard to the organisation as a whole, al-ʿUbaydī writes:

> The Muslim Brothers […] fought [the Eisenhower Doctrine] and attacked it with a communiqué (*bayān*) that they published and spread among the people in 1957, in which they made clear to the community (*al-umma*) its truth and the truth of what it wanted. They warned them about that. [The communiqué] said: 'Oh emissary of Eisenhower, say to your master (*li-sayyidika*) [that] any attempt to impose the new American imperialism on our peoples will be fought by us with the same strength that we used to fight the Baghdad Pact and Britain's imperialist projects'. (al-ʿUbaydī 1991, p. 166)[11]

Thus, while the Muslim Brotherhood approached the subject from a clearly anti-American perspective that it knew was not shared by the regime, it found common cause with the Hashemites in their rejection of the Eisenhower Doctrine, further underlining their status as a generally dissenting but loyal and—in this case—useful political minority.

The "Arabisation" of the Army

Anti-imperialist feelings may have inspired the Muslim Brotherhood to oppose the Baghdad Pact and the Eisenhower Doctrine, but the regime's rejection of these plans did not establish King Husayn's reputation as a truly Arab ruler in the eyes of his critics. What did go a long way to achieve just that was his dismissal of the British General and Chief of Staff John Bagot Glubb from the Jordanian army. As mentioned, Glubb

[11] The author cites the communiqué as quoted in al-Ḥasan (1990, p. 67).

had played a major role in the kingdom's military from 1936 on, to the frustration of anti-imperialist forces, who viewed his presence as one of the last vestiges of British colonial influence over their country. While it is unclear whether Glubb was dismissed because of popular regional and national pressure or because of the king's long-held frustrations over the limitations to Arab officers' career prospects under Glubb's leadership and the latter's British sympathies, Glubb was sacked in March 1956, a decision that proved quite popular in Jordan and the region (Aruri 1972, pp. 128–131; Dann 1989, pp. 31–33; Massad 2001, 178–185).

The Muslim Brotherhood, through its weekly newspaper *Al-Kifāḥ al-Islāmī*, was highly critical of Glubb and his role in the Jordanian army. It not only condemned the British influence on the military through Glubb's presence as one of enmity and danger to Jordan and the Arab world, but it also accused Great Britain of collaborating with Israel (Boulby 1999, pp. 66–67). The king's decision to dismiss Glubb was therefore welcomed by the organisation, for example by al-ʿUmūsh. The latter describes Glubb as:

> A leader of the Jordanian Arab army, an officer of the Border Force (*quwwat al-ḥudūd*) that was designated to protect the borders with Palestine. Jordanians used to call him 'the guy with the palate' (*Abū Ḥanīk*) because his palate (*ḥanak*) was impaired, but he was politically experienced (*muḥannakan siyāsiyyan*). He affiliated with some tribes and gave his son the Arabic name 'Faris'. He used to eat [the Jordanian national dish] Mansaf according to the way of the Arabs (with the hands), with which he abandoned British protocol and etiquette. He was even close to the people and some tribes mourned his death, where they overturned coffee pots (a sign of deep sorrow [*ishāra ilā l-ḥuzn al-ʿamīq*]). (al-ʿUmūsh 2006, p. 253)[12]

Despite this praise, however, al-ʿUmūsh also states that "the Brotherhood supported the king on the day of the Arabisation of the army (*yawm taʿrīb al-jaysh*) on 1 March 1956 because an Arab army being led by an English officer was incomprehensible and unacceptable (*shayʾ ghayr mafhūm wa-lā maqbūl*)" (al-ʿUmūsh 2006, p. 251). The dismissal of Glubb turned

[12] The ritual of overturning coffee posts is a custom among some Bedouin to mourn the loss of a sheikh. See http://esyria.sy/sites/code/index.php?site=deiralzor&p=stories&category=community&filename=201401100020473 (accessed 8 March 2019). I thank Maksim Abdul Latif for this information and reference.

out to be the first step in a longer process of making the Jordanian army a national (rather than a British) one through the promotion of Jordanian officers to top positions, the forced retirement or dismissal of almost all other British officers in the army and the removal of British ideas on how the military should be run (Massad 2001, pp. 185–189). Given the Jordanian Brotherhood's views on the British political, military and economic influence in their country in general and Glubb's top position in the Jordanian army in particular, it should come as no surprise that the king's decision to start this process of "Arabisation" was supported by them as well (Abū Fāris 2000, p. 46; al-ʿUmūsh 2006, pp. 251–252).

Thus, the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood was an activist, Islamist and Palestinian-supported organisation at odds about these characteristics with both other parties and the regime and also disagreed with the latter's pro-Western views. Yet at least partly guided by political pragmatism, it expressed its rejection of British and American influence in anti-imperialist terms, which the regime could (ultimately) accept and portray as equally its own. As such, the Brotherhood mostly did not present its views on these matters as criticism of the regime, but as part of an anti-imperialist discourse that was implicitly motivated by loyalty to Jordanian and Arab ideals shared by the king himself. Presented this way, the Brotherhood's views on foreign policy were not a source of division, but something that it, as an otherwise political minority, had in common with the regime.

The Brotherhood's Response to Jordan's Regional Challenges

The Jordanian regime's rejection of the Baghdad Pact and the Eisenhower Doctrine as well as Glubb's dismissal from the army increased King Husayn's popularity. They did not, however, turn him into a full-blown Arab nationalist along the lines of Egypt's President Nasser. The Jordanian king's Arab nationalism was one of conservative monarchism, not revolutionary socialism, and the policy choices that flowed from these and other differences continued to cause friction between Jordan and other countries in the Middle East. As a result, the greatest challenges facing the stability of the Hashemite Kingdom were no longer from outside the Arab world, but from within the region.

The Alleged Nasserist Coup

The first of the regional challenges to the Jordanian regime came from Nasserism itself. President Nasser's mixture of Arabism and socialism was not just popular in Egypt, but also across the region, including in Jordan. This was expressed during the 1956 parliamentary elections in the Hashemite Kingdom, in which the pro-Nasser National Socialist Party won a relative majority of seats. The party's leader, Sulayman al-Nabulsi, was asked by the king to form a new cabinet and became prime minister of a government that not only enjoyed popular support, but also pursued pro-Soviet policies and closer military and political cooperation with Egypt and Syria at the expense of King Husayn's influence and his more pro-Western tendencies. The growing Soviet and regional influence that this entailed caused the king to be increasingly dismayed about the situation and he ultimately dismissed al-Nabulsi as prime minister on 10 April 1957 (Aruri 1972, pp. 134–140; Dann 1989, pp. 39–52).

The dismissal of al-Nabulsi as prime minister did not mean that the pro-Nasser tendencies present in society had suddenly vanished. Demonstrations in the following days called for the reinstatement of the al-Nabulsi government. Moreover, General Ali Abu Nuwwar, who had replaced Glubb as chief of the Jordanian army, also demanded the return of a representative government and even set an ultimatum, leading to rumours of a coup by Nasserist army officers (but also of a palace crackdown against the latter). Despite the popularity of Nasserism, however, large sections of the country stayed loyal to the king and especially in the army. An alleged coup by the so-called Free Officers brewing in the eastern city of al-Zarqa was therefore thwarted by loyalist elements in the army, causing Abu Nuwwar to flee to Syria (Aruri 1972, pp. 140–143; Dann 1989, pp. 55–59; Massad 2001, pp. 189–195). The crushing of the supposed coup did not end the regime's troubles, however. Further demonstrations broke out, communiqués signed by "the Free Officers" demanded Abu Nuwwar's return and representatives of political parties called for the reinstatement of the al-Nabulsi government.

In the meantime, Ali Al-Hayari, Abu Nuwwar's successor as commander of the Jordanian army, also fled to Syria. Knowing that he had international as well as some regional (Saudi) support encouraged King Husayn's purge of Nasserist military officers, putting the army's command back in loyalist hands. In a sign of support for the monarchy, some 200 Bedouin sheikhs assured the king of their allegiance. The Hashemites

were back in control (Aruri 1972, pp. 143–144; Dann 1989, pp. 59–67; Massad 2001, pp. 195–198). The Muslim Brotherhood, for its part, sided with the regime again. Although the main supporters of the king during the April 1957 attempted coup were the tribal elders and the army, the Brotherhood was still a force to be reckoned with, which meant that its support counted (Dann 1989, p. 60). Moreover, while the Brotherhood had sided with the regime on previous occasions, they had done so in a way that squared with both the regime's own discourse and public opinion. This time, however, they clearly went against popular trends of pro-Nasser sentiment in Jordanian society.

Yet their motivation seems to have been at least partly rooted in the pragmatic consideration that the Hashemite monarchy, for all its faults, was certainly preferable to a pro-Nasser regime, particularly given the increasing repression that the Egyptian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood was suffering (Boulby 1999, pp. 58–65; Dann 1989, p. 39). Realising that their continuing political existence rested with a survival of the monarchy, the Brotherhood approvingly cited the king's statements during this period about the people's loyalty to him and his regime (*al-Kifāḥ al-Islāmī* 1957c, p. 1) and against the "conspiracies" consisting of "elements supported from outside the country" (*al-Kifāḥ al-Islāmī* 1957d, p. 1). In an apparent reference to the Free Officers, the organisation asked "in whose interest – oh callers of sedition (*duʿāt al-fitna*) – are you working?", pointing out that it was imperialism and Zionism that should be fought, not the kingdom (*al-Kifāḥ al-Islāmī* 1957e, p. 1). The Brotherhood also referred to the people behind the alleged coup as "failed conspirators" (*al-mutaʾāmirūn al-fāshilūn*) and "straying parties" (*al-aḥzāb al-ḍālla*) and claimed the people and the army were on the side of "the young king" (*al-malīk al-shābb*) (*al-Kifāḥ al-Islāmī* 1957f, p. 12).

The very diverse (ex-)Brotherhood members featured in this chapter also agree on their reading of the events of April 1957. Al-ʿUmūsh clearly portrays the Muslim Brotherhood and the regime as being on the same side, stating that "the period of the 1950s was a period of open conflict between Islamists and the left", adding:

> The king was not in agreement with these leftists (*hāʾulāʾi l-yasāriyyīn*) because they had a foreign connection (*aṣḥāb imtidād khārijī*) [and] were tied to the Soviet Union and leftist Arab states like Iraq, Syria and Egypt.

> As such, the Brotherhood's intellectual interest (*maṣlaḥat al-Ikhwān al-fikriyya*) coincided with the political interest of the king (*maṣlaḥat al-malik al-siyāsiyya*). (al-ʿUmūsh 2006, p. 28)

In a similar vein, al-ʿUbaydī states the following with regard to Prime Minister Sulayman al-Nabulsi's pro-Nasser government:

> In the presence of this danger that came to threaten the kingdom and its king, in the presence of this sedition (*hādhihi l-fitan*) that the [al-Nabulsi] government caused in this country garrisoned (*hādhā l-balad al-murābiṭ*) on the greatest border (*ʿalā akbar khaṭṭ*) with the arch enemy (*ʿadū ladūd*) and in the presence of the spread of this unbelief and heresy (*al-kufr wa-l-ilḥād*) in the name of socialism, communism and nationalism (*al-waṭaniyya*), the Muslim Brotherhood had to confront (*lam yajid al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn buddan min muwājaha*) this government. (al-ʿUbaydī 1991, p. 165)

Abū Fāris strikes a similar tone in his assessment of the Free Officers:

> This group professed loyalty to the [Egyptian] President Jamal ʿAbd al-Nasir, who used to strive to rule the Arab world and set up an empire in it for him (*wa-iqāmat imbarāṭūriyya lahu fihi*). This movement [of the Free Officers] received material and immaterial support (*musāʿadāt māddiyya wa-maʿnawiyya*) from the idolatrous regime (*al-niẓām al-ṭāghūtī*) in Egypt that used to hate the Muslim Brotherhood everywhere and shed the blood of scholars (*al-ʿulamāʾ wa-l-fuqahāʾ*) and preachers (*al-duʿāt*) among the Egyptian people. (Abū Fāris 2000, p. 37)

Abū Fāris also writes that the Muslim Brotherhood could not simply accept such developments and had to take action:

> The Muslim Brotherhood opposed this movement [of the Free Officers] in the army, outside of it and in the streets, aiming to rid the wrong (*al-adhā*) from themselves (*ʿan anfusihim*), their possessions (*amwālihim*), their honour (*aʿrāḍihim*) and their blood (*dimāʾihim*). So they terminated this revolutionary, bloody, liquidating movement (*hādhihi l-ḥaraka al-inqilābiyya al-dāmiya al-taṣfawiyya*), thereby sparing much blood (*ḥaqanū bi-dhālika dimāʾ kathīra*) and stopping a civil war. (Abū Fāris 2000, p. 39)

This may be an exaggeration, but the Muslim Brotherhood was certainly involved in major and public demonstrations of loyalty to the regime in

this period (al-ʿUmūsh 2006, pp. 44–45). Moreover, there is no doubt that the regime greatly appreciated the organisation's support during its time of need and "from this point on there existed an unwritten understanding of coexistence between King Hussein and the Brotherhood, echoing the relations between the movement and his grandfather in the 1940s" (Boulby 1999, p. 61). In other words, while the Brotherhood had not grown any closer to the regime with regard to its activism, Islamism and its representation of Palestinian-Jordanians, foreign policy proved a useful area of pragmatic cooperation that allowed both parties to realise their own interests.

"Black September"

Up to and including this failed coup, the Muslim Brotherhood's choices to side with the Jordanian regime were couched in anti-imperialist rhetoric and in line with its Islamist ideology. As such, while the Brotherhood's decisions may have been presented as being more regime-friendly than they actually were and although supporting King Husayn against the Egyptian President Nasser was clearly unpopular among many Jordanians, the organisation acted in a way that conformed with its general ideas. This was not so evident when the group decided to support the Jordanian regime during its crackdown on Palestinian militants in September 1970, which came to be known as "Black September". As mentioned above, the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan was strongly pro-Palestinian and some of its members had even fought in the 1948 war. The question of Palestine has always remained of great importance to the organisation since then.[13] The desire to act on behalf of the Palestinians and against Israel took on new urgency after 1967, when Jordan lost the West Bank to Israel during the June War of that year.

Palestinian militants, who had been active in fighting Israel before, escalated their attacks from Jordanian territory, thereby causing Israeli reprisals that dragged Jordan into the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (Sayigh 1997, pp. 202–255). Although this was primarily a Palestinian fight against Israel, the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood also got seriously involved and acted under the command of the Palestinian militant Fatah

[13] A limited overview of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood's activities with regard to Palestine can be found in Abū Ghanīma (1989). For more on the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's efforts on behalf of Palestine, see El-Awaisi (1998).

organisation, while maintaining operational autonomy and enjoying good relations with the Jordanian army (Hegghammer 2013, pp. 367–374; see also al-ʿUmūsh 2006, pp. 66–72). The cordial ties between the Brotherhood and the kingdom's military were not shared by the Palestinian militants themselves. This was particularly true for leftist groups such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), whose revolutionary Marxism and claim to Jordan as part of Palestine were clearly at odds with the conservative monarchy and territorial sovereignty of the Hashemite Kingdom.

The PFLP was growing more confident, however, and was preparing for armed action against the Jordanian regime in order to take over power and stop the existing ceasefire between the Arab countries and Israel, presumably with the intention of causing a much broader confrontation between the two sides. To achieve this, the PFLP hijacked four planes, three of which they landed on Jordanian territory. Although in disagreement with some of the PFLP's claims, the overarching Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) sided with the Marxist group in calling for a "revolutionary nationalist government". This challenge set the stage for an all-out confrontation between the Jordanian army and the Palestinian militants in "Black" September 1970. The army defeated the militants, killing some 3000–5000 of them (Sayigh 1997, pp. 255–267).[14] Given the strongly pro-Palestinian sentiments among Jordanian Muslim Brothers, the crackdown on Palestinian militants must have been harrowing for them. Moreover, the Brotherhood's own militancy against Israel also came to an end in September 1970, when all guerrilla activities were stopped by the regime.

Yet there was little love lost between the PFLP and the Brotherhood (Hegghammer 2013, p. 374). One of the leading Brotherhood militants involved in the fight against Israel at the time, ʿAbdullah ʿAzzam (1941–1989), argued strongly against communism and leftist Palestinian factions and in favour of fighting under the banner of Islam as the only way to defeat the Jewish state. This attitude was informed by his belief that communism was strongly tied to Jews, but also because of his personal experiences with what he saw as atheist and immoral leftist Palestinian militants (Hegghammer 2013, pp. 382–384). Still, several Arab countries sided with the Palestinians in their conflict with the Jordanian regime

[14] The quotation is on page 260.

(Sayigh 1997, pp. 264–266), and even within the kingdom's own army, some 5000–7000 soldiers defected to the PLO (Sayigh 1997, p. 267). Supporting either side was therefore difficult and controversial and the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan realised this, viewing the battle as unclear from an Islamic point of view and seeing resistance against the army as illegitimate and unacceptable (Hegghammer 2013, p. 375).

The Brotherhood therefore remained neutral during the fighting in September 1970, thereby implicitly supporting the stronger side that was bound to win, namely the Jordanian regime.

This ambiguity—having no regrets about tacitly supporting the regime but feeling sad that it had come to so much bloodshed—can also be found in the writings of the Muslim Brothers central to this chapter. Al-ʿUmūsh, for example, refers to the clash between the army and the militants as "the sedition of September (*fitnat Aylūl*)" (al-ʿUmūsh 2006, p. 74) and states:

> As for the role of the Brotherhood, it rejected participation in the events [of September 1970]. It published a communiqué on 14 June (sic!) 1970 entitled 'For the interest of this blind sedition (*al-fitna al-ʿamyāʾ*)', which said: '… The army, with all its courageous and genuinely believing individuals (*bi-jamīʿ afrādihi l-muʾminīn al-ṣādiqīn al-shujʿān*), and the components of the courageous and genuine fighters (*ʿanāṣir al-fidāʾiyyīn al-ṣādiqīn al-shujʿān*) all agree on a single goal, namely the liberation of the occupied homeland (*al-waṭan al-muḥtall*) […]'. (al-ʿUmūsh 2006, p. 84)

Thus, the Brotherhood saw "Black September" as evil infighting, which it dismissed as akin to "the claim of the pre-Islamic period of ignorance (*daʿwa l-jāhiliyya*) with its tribal solidarities (*bi-ʿaṣabiyyatihā l-qabaliyya*) and its reactionary customs (*ʿādātihā l-rajʿiyya*)" (al-ʿUmūsh 2006, p. 84). Interestingly, al-ʿUmūsh, who has stated that he would limit the political influence of Palestinian-Jordanians so as not to give the impression that a Palestinian state has already come into existence in the kingdom, accuses fellow Muslim Brother Abū Fāris of using supposedly less neutral language (al-ʿUmūsh 2006, p. 74).[15] It is certainly true that the Palestinian-Jordanian Abū Fāris is less balanced in his choice of words, as partly cited by al-ʿUmūsh:

[15] Interview with Bassām al-ʿUmūsh, Amman, 30 January 2013.

> It is worth mentioning that this period [of armed Palestinian activities against Israel from Jordanian soil] did not last long **because a concocted, bloody clash** (*ṣaddām damawī muftaʿal*) **took place between the militant movements and the Jordanian army**, which ended with the closure of the [military] bases [used by the militants], the persecution of the remnants of the fighters and their expulsion from Jordanian soil to outside Jordan to – of all places – Lebanese soil. (Abū Fāris 2000, p. 174) [my emphasis][16]

While these words are undoubtedly angrier than al-ʿUmūsh's and suggest evil intent behind the events ("a concocted, bloody clash"), Abū Fāris does not lay the blame squarely at the Jordanian regime's feet. In fact, elsewhere in Abū Fāris's book, he describes the situation as starting with cooperation between the two sides and acknowledges that both are to blame for the deterioration of relations between them. He also recognises the challenge the Palestinian militants posed to Jordanian security, mentions those killed on both sides and cites the same Brotherhood communiqué that al-ʿUmūsh also quoted (Abū Fāris 2000, pp. 48–49). Above all, Abū Fāris laments the infighting, which he also refers to as "sedition", just like al-ʿUmūsh, and states that:

> The weapon with which the soldier killed his fighting [Palestinian] brother (*qatala bihi l-jundī akhāhu l-fidāʾī*) or with which the fighter shed his soldier brother's blood (*safaka bihi l-fidāʾī dam akhīhi l-jundī*) is the possession of the [Muslim] community and the community will be responsible for it towards them [i.e., towards both sides]. We must only direct this weapon – every weapon – towards the enemy (*ilā ṣudūr al-ʿadū*): Israel and its protectors from among the states of unbelief and imperialism, at the head of which is America and those who move in its orbit (*man yadūru bi-falkihā*). (Abū Fāris 2000, p. 49)

Thus, despite their differences, Abū Fāris is quite close to al-ʿUmūsh in his assessment of "Black September" and that of the Brotherhood as a whole, realising that the stability of the kingdom was of the utmost importance at that moment. Most striking, however, is his choice of words, using the very anti-imperialist language that the Brotherhood has often employed to show that, when it comes to foreign policy, the organisation—as an

[16] The words in bold are the ones cited by al-ʿUmūsh.

activist, Islamist and Palestinian-supported political minority—is on the same side as the Hashemite Kingdom's regime.

Conclusion

Throughout its history, Jordan has been strongly influenced by other countries from the very beginning: by Great Britain as a colonial power, by the United States as a patron, by Egypt and other countries in the region as critics of its Arab credentials and by Palestinians as challengers to its stability. Amidst all of this, the regime sought to portray itself as different than others: Arab, yet not in a revolutionary, socialist way, but in a monarchical, conservative way, using the ruling family's Islamic heritage to buttress its rule. The regime sought and found support from the Muslim Brotherhood to underline its Islamic and conservative credentials, particularly at times of international and regional upheavals. The Brotherhood, for its part, wanted to escape the fate that other branches of the organisation had suffered and explicitly sought permission for its activities from the Jordanian regime, knowing that this would provide it with protection in the form of allowing it to exist. While the Brotherhood's activist, Islamist and Palestinian-supported goals differed from those of the regime, its stress on anti-imperialism in issues of foreign policy allowed the organisation to nestle its own position as a political minority in the regime's broader discourse of getting rid of foreign influence. As such, it used foreign policy as a means of protection by employing it to show that it shared an agenda with the regime and that it was loyal to the same ideals that the king held dear.

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