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THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE ISLAMISTS IN JORDAN AND THE PALESTINIAN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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The Political Role of the Islamists in Jordan and the Palestinian Occupied Territories

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There is a strong feeling among the Muslims that Islam differs greatly from other religions in that, unlike others, it has a universal dimension and covers all spheres of life. It represents both a religion and a state. Therefore, political actions are considered as part of religion, and for the Islamists, being a politician does not mean that it is necessary to depart from religion. Rather it is to be more religious, or a truer believer. Thus, the contemporary debate about whether or not Islam has a political agenda usually takes place between Islamists and secularists and not between Islamists and other Muslims.

Historically, Islam has shaped most of the national movements against European colonialism in the Arab world, including Palestine. The most influential Palestinian resistance against the British Mandate and the Zionist encroachment contained an Islamic element, beginning with Izz Eddin al-Qassam's movement in the early 30s, continuing through the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt, and finally with the establishment of the State of Israel.

Political Islam in Jordan and Palestine

The outbreak of political Islam in modern times occurred in Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood movement (the Ikhwan), which emerged there in 1928 under the leadership of Hasan al-Banna, is considered to be the main source of not only the Ikhwan movements in Jordan and Palestine, but also of additional Islamic movements throughout the region.

Muslim Brotherhood

The three major Islamic organizations in Jordan and in the Palestinian Occupied Territories are the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic Liberation Party (ILP), and the Islamic Jihad. Numerous other groups located specifically in Jordan have formed, such as "Jaysh Muhammad" (Muhammad's Army) and "Shabab al-Nafir" (the "call-to-arms" youth). The latter became widely known after the trial of two members of the Jordanian Parliament who were accused of being the faction's leaders.

The role of the Ikhwan in Egypt in establishing the Islamic Brotherhood in Jordan and Palestine was both ideological and organizational. Jordanian and Palestinian students, who were studying at al-Azhar at that time, gained first-hand exposure to the movement's ideological backbone. Also, many members of the movement spread its message when they volunteered to fight against Zionists in Palestine in the forties. In terms of organization, leaders from the Ikhwan in Egypt visited Palestine and Trans Jordan

before 1948 and personally supervised the establishment of branches of the Brotherhood in several Palestinian and Jordanian cities and towns.

Until 1948, the Ikhwan was the only political Islamic organization working in Jordan and Palestine. However, it was not entirely united under one control; rather, each branch in each city was independent in executing its own decisions. Following the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Ikhwan branches located in the remaining Palestinian lands of the West Bank were incorporated into the organization on the East Bank of Jordan to form the society of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Due to the unique geopolitics of the Gaza Strip¹, the Ikhwan organizations there remained strongly committed to the Palestinian national plight as well as closely linked to the Ikhwan in Egypt. The existence of the Brotherhood in the Gaza Strip was connected completely with the Brotherhood in Egypt during the entire period of Egyptian rule in Gaza, from 1948 until the Israeli occupation in 1967.

During these two decades, the Ikhwan in Gaza, along with other nationalist groups, were more active in furthering the Palestinian struggle than their counterparts in the West Bank. They vigorously protested UNRWA's plans to settle the Palestinian refugees in Sinai and the Canadian sponsored plan to make Gaza an international area in the fifties. The Ikhwan in Jordan, consisting now of both Jordanians and Palestinians, became well-integrated into the Jordanian political and social life, and succeeded in forming an unparalleled relationship with the Jordanian regime. Consequently, they became more distanced from the daily intricacies of the Palestinian national struggle.

Although the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan had never been a dominant force in the executive authority, they had never posed a serious opposition nor threat to the regime. In fact, the Ikhwan was the only political movement which had functioned legally all the time in Jordan. For example, when the Jordanian regime prohibited all political activity in 1957, the Ikhwan were exempt from this decision(1). Even in those few instances when they had to take a position of opposition to the official power, they strived to explain their stance in terms of opposition to the government, not the monarchy. The Muslim Brotherhood's opposition and criticism in Jordan were never directed towards the king.

The Jordanian regime and the Muslim Brotherhood shared many common

¹ * Gaza Strip is a small area (364 km) on the Sinai borders with one of the highest population density in the world (in 1991 it was 1857 person per square kilometer). Most of the population are refugees.

interests. The Brotherhood considered Jordan a secure haven after facing troubles in neighboring countries, especially during the long period of clashes between the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria and the Syrian regime. In addition, it is well known that the King of Jordan has a very solid bond with religion. Not only is he a descendant from the Prophet's family, but he has also demonstrated a personal commitment to Islam. Religion has always been emphasized to legitimize the monarchy in Jordan. Furthermore, it was of mutual interest to the Jordanian regime and the Ikhwan in counteracting the Jordanian and Palestinian nationalist movements. These movements were the candidates for any alternative to the regime, as well as the ideological opponents for the Muslim Brotherhood. It is well known that the key goal of the PLO's strategy has always been the independence of Palestine as determined by the Palestinians, while the Ikhwan considered the Islamic dimension and unity with neighboring countries, particularly Jordan, as the cornerstone in their position on Palestine. However, the Jordanian regime and the Muslim Brotherhood was not completely immune to rifts. There were times when their relations were tense. One reason for this tension stems from the Muslim Brotherhood's hostile attitudes towards the West while the Jordanian regime attempted to copy and to court Western countries and culture.

The close relationship between the Jordanian regime and the Ikhwan endured, despite two critical periods- the Israeli occupation of the west bank in 1967, and the conflict with the PLO in September 1970. Because of the competition between the Islamic movement and the PLO, and between the Jordanian regime and the PLO for influence in the Occupied Territories, the Ikhwan in the Occupied Territories continued to have strong relations with the Jordanian regime even after the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank.

The Ikhwan, whether in Jordan or in the Occupied Territories, declared openly their opposition to King Hussein's disengagement from the West Bank in 1988, which was considered by the Palestinian national movement to be one of the best achievements of the Intifada. Ziad Abu Ghanimah, the spokesman of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan at that time, pledged that they would work to re-establish the links with the West Bank. He added that this was a crucial issue which the members of the Muslim Brothers in Parliament would devote their attention(2). In the West Bank, Sheikh Hamed al-Bitawi, the preacher of the Aqsa mosque and one of the recent deportees to Lebanon, during the Friday sermon following the King's decision, urged Jordan, the PLO, and the Arab countries to reappraise their support. Al-Bitawi stressed that the Palestinian issue is an Islamic one and that it is dangerous to consider it solely as a Palestinian nationalist issue (3).

The situation of the Ikhwan in Jordan and the Occupied Territories continued without much change until the outbreak of the Intifada in the late 1987 in spite of the large increase in the number of supporters and supporting institutions, an effect of the resurgence

of Islam, which began in the late seventies.

The Ikhwan positions concerning the Palestinian issue and the resistance to the Israeli occupation remained unchanged. They concentrated chiefly on the religious dimension for the reformation of the individual and society. They also stressed the necessity of creating an Islamic society, which will form the underlying basis for all societal needs. Other external Islamic issues, like Afghanistan, demanded extra attention from the Ikhwan, which seemed to be at the expense of the national problem.

However, the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising in December 1987 and the participation of the Ikhwan in this uprising in establishing HAMAS, represented a significant and serious change in their attitudes towards the Palestinian issue. Their ideology remained virtually intact; however, the crucial change was in their practical approach towards the occupation.

HAMAS was established in Gaza Strip immediately after the Intifada by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. It consists of a military wing for the resistance of the occupation and a "security" one to fight against corruption.

Sheikh Yassin is a well respected figure in the Gaza Strip. He was born near Askalan in the south of Palestine, finished his secondary school in Gaza and went to continue his higher education in Ein Shams in Egypt, but he gave up because of 1967 war. He became handicapped in 1952 and worked as a teacher from 1958 until 1978. In 1979 Sheikh Yassin established the Islamic Mujamma' in Gaza and became its director from 1979-1984. In 1984, He was jailed for security reasons and sentenced for 13 years, but he was released after 10 months as a result of the exchange of prisoners between Israel and the Palestinians. Sheikh Yassin was arrested again in May 1989 and sentenced for life.

The formation of HAMAS was the clearest sign of a new, unprecedented position on national issues. The Ikhwan established HAMAS for a combination of reasons. Many young students, who became members of the Islamic blocs in the universities, institutes, schools, and through daily contact with their colleagues in the national organizations were much affected by the national issue. Additionally, some sources mentioned the existence of dissenting opinions amongst leaders of the Ikhwan regarding the necessity for establishing and the role of HAMAS(4). Also, some Israeli sources talked about the diversity between the radical and moderate leadership of HAMAS, but the movement negated that(5).

Participation in the Intifada was considered by the people as the touchstone for any Palestinian movement. The credibility of any Palestinian political organization was measured by its level of involvement in and its sacrifices during the Intifada. The Ikhwan

realized this from the onset and participated in the general national struggle.

Other Islamic organizations, such as Islamic Jihad, successfully combined exercising national action with a religious background. This was an incentive for the Ikhwan to expedite the establishment of HAMAS.

HAMAS carried the same religious ideology as the Ikhwan movement. It borrowed the general slogan of the movement: "Allah is its aim, the messenger is its ideal, Koran is its constitution, jihad is its way, and the death for the sake of God is its extreme wish"(6). The general objectives of HAMAS are harmonious with the goals of Ikhwan in regarding Islam as a way of life and with establishing an Islamic state(7).

The national dimension of HAMAS and the reality of its participation in the struggle against the Israeli occupation make it essential for the movement to depart from previous general and ambiguous slogans of the Ikhwan and formulate more precise and practical demands. Therefore, the movement has embraced short-term objectives, such as obtaining the release of Palestinian prisoners, opposing the further construction of settlements, deportation, and Israeli taxes(8). There are also long-term objectives, such as rejecting the idea of the international peace conference and the autonomy plan, continuing resistance to the occupation, and liberating the "believers" and their homeland(9). To Hamas embodies the same principles as the Ikhwan concerning the Palestinian issue. What changed was the daily practical activity towards the occupation and the national question.

The views on the religious and historical origins of the Palestinian issue are shared by all Islamist factions, yet they usually differ on the means to achieve the liberation of Palestine. For Islamic Jihad, ILP, and HAMAS, the land of Palestine is an Islamic waqf. It is important for both religious and strategic reasons and it must be liberated on religious grounds through the holy jihad. According to Islamists, only Islam is the "real historic enemy for Israel and Jews"(10).

Nevertheless, the importance of the Palestinian question and the reaction to it differs from one Islamic faction to another. The Islamic Jihad and the Muslim Brotherhood considers it as the central issue for the whole Islamic nation, while the ILP considers the problem as any other Islamic problem in the world. In practical terms, the ILP is the least political Islamic organization to be interested in the Palestinian national issue. This is because it believes that the struggle to liberate Palestine should be the duty of the Islamic Caliphate after the establishment of the Islamic State. Thus, the party does not propose any form of resistance before the establishment of the Islamic state. For the Islamic Jihad, the conflict with Israel is a struggle between truth (haq)

and falsehood (batel)(11). This struggle, according to the movement, should have started at the moment the occupation began. Therefore, Islamic Jihad is highly critical of the positions of the Muslim Brotherhood and the ILP towards the occupation.

The Ikhwan's practical position on the national issue has not always been in harmony with their ideological position. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt participated in the armed struggle in the 1948 War in Palestine. Since that time and until the establishment of HAMAS at the beginning of the Intifada, the Palestinian national issue was subordinated on their agenda. The Muslim Brothers, for a long time, considered the Islamization of the society more important than any other issue.

For the Ikhwan, like other Palestinian religious political movements, the Palestinian question is an Islamic one. Because the two are inseparable, it is important to Muslims worldwide. According to the Ikhwan, the Zionist plan to occupy Palestine has a religious basis, thus the reaction to that plan should also be religious.

Since the Palestinian issue is also an Islamic issue, no single Muslim nor group of Muslims can surrender all or any part of Palestine. The movements perceives Israel as a cancer or alien body planted by imperialists in the body of the Islamic world to further guarantee its permanent fragmentation and to make its control much easier(12).

Historical Palestine, from the Jordan River to the sea, is a central demand for Palestinian and Jordanian Islamists. It is considered by them as a "waqf" land which no individual can surrender. Any attempt to make a compromise through negotiations is strictly prohibited. The only acceptable solution for the Islamists is for the complete withdrawal of the Israeli forces and the establishment of the Islamic Palestine. HAMAS views the conflict with Israel as a conflict of existence. It is a historical conflict between principles and cultures(13).

The Palestinian issue was not a central concern for the Palestinian and Jordanian Ikhwan during the period between 1948 to 1978. Their main interests were limited to educational and social affairs and some external political issues, such as Afghanistan. Therefore, HAMAS interest in the Palestinian question represents a qualitative shift from the Ikhwan position towards the Palestinian national problem.

This shift pertained only to the Occupied Territories. In Jordan the greatest change in the Muslim Brotherhood occurred with the beginning of what is termed the "democratic process" in Jordan.

The King's decision to break relations with the West Bank was followed by his announcement to initiate a process of democrati-

zation in the country. In November 1989, the first free parliamentary elections were held in which Muslim Brothers gained 22 out of 80 seats, the largest bloc in the Jordanian Parliament. Several independent Islamists were elected as well.

The Ikhwan maintained their good relations with the regime throughout this democratic process. Their members in the Parliament voted in support of the entire government that was formed after the starting of the process and participated in Badran's government of 5 ministers.

It was very difficult to maintain positive relations during that period as a lot of critical events occurred in the region, as well as in Jordan itself. For example, their position during the Gulf Crisis, the peace process, the formation of some radical fundamentalist movements, and the arrest of the members of these movements, two of which were Islamist MPs, negatively affected the Ikhwan's relationship with the regime. Before the King released the two Islamist MPs who had been sentenced for 20 years, tensions between the Brotherhood and the monarchy soared.

There is considerable debate concerning the underlying motives of the coexistence between the Ikhwan and the regime in Jordan. This coexistence has never existed elsewhere in the Arab world, except in the Gulf states. Occasionally, the Islamists themselves participated in this debate in order to justify their special relations with the regime in earshot of the national movements and at other times to remind the regime itself that they are historically allied, especially when they face problems with the regime.

Kamal Rashid, the editor of the Ikhwan newspaper **al-Ribat**, summarizes the different views attributed to the question of the relations between the Brotherhood and the regime. He wrote that some people attributed the "wisdom" of the Jordanian regime to its avoidance of the faults made by other neighboring governments. Others referred to the particular nature of the Jordanian Islamist movement itself, its wisdom and political shrewdness in dealing with the regime. A third group referred to the conditions of Jordan, its geography, security, demography, and economy, which differs from that of other Arab countries (14). Still others contend that the regime realized the importance of the Islamic movement in balancing the leftists factions during the last three decades. Nowadays, when the left has weakened, the existence of the Ikhwan has become important to balance the Islamic situation in Jordan. According to these Islamists, the Muslim who is not involved in the Ikhwan movement becomes involved in violence, like the members of Jaysh Muhammad who were accused of using violence against Western institutions in Amman (15). The participation of the Ikhwan in the Jordanian Government during the democratic process was explained by the Islamists as a positive action and demonstrated their "good intention towards the regime at a time

when being in the opposition contains more publicity"(16).

In addition to the good relation between the Muslim Brothers in Palestine and Jordan on the one hand and the Jordanian regime on the other, the relation between HAMAS and the Jordanian Ikhwan is well-established. Organizationally, HAMAS is a subdivision of the Ikhwan movement. Many of the HAMAS leaders are located in Jordan. Reports show that much of the assistance that comes from the Islamic World to HAMAS usually comes through Jordan. Therefore, HAMAS would think twice before it would disagree with the Royal policy.

The Islamic Liberation Party (Hizb al-Tahrir)

It is worth mentioning that the party is mainly active in Jordan. However, it is a transnational party which is relatively exists in some other Arab countries like Tunisia and Libya, and also in some western European countries.

The ILP was established in 1953 as the second Islamic party in Jordan and Palestine. The founder of the party was Palestinian Sheikh Taqi Eddin Nabhani, who remained its head until his death in 1977. He was succeeded by another Palestinian named Sheikh Qadim Zallum. It is worth mentioning that the party is mainly active in Jordan. However, it is a transnational party which is relatively exists in some other Arab countries like Tunisia and Libya, and also in some western European countries.

The party consistently failed in its attempts to obtain permission to work legally in the country. It was obliged to act underground or semi-publicly, like most other political parties and movements in the country at that time.

During the period of outlawed participation in the political life of the country, it was actively involved in the Jordanian Parliamentary elections of 1954 and 1956. Sheikh Ahmad Da'ur, one of the historical leaders of the party was elected to Parliament two times before being dismissed in 1958 because of his strong criticism of the government.

However, the party's participation in Parliamentary politics was marginal and infrequent. The government accused the party of instigating several attempts to overthrow the regime, after which it arrested and prosecuted many of its members. The announcement of these attempts were not necessarily factual, but indicated that the party had gone beyond what was permissible, as specified by the regime. One example was their attempt to recruit members from the Jordanian army.

The ILP concentrates its effort on religious logical arguments and issues. It expresses these in concepts that are not easily grasped. This coupled with the regime's prosecution of the party made it an

organization for selected individuals, and less accessible to the public than was the Ikhwan.

The party calls for the revival of the Islamic Caliphate, which had fallen at the end of the Ottoman Empire. It believes that its main demand - to restore the Caliphate - is now becoming the popular demand of all Muslims, whether they be individuals or organizations. The Koran and the Sunna are the only references for the Islamic thought of the party. They believe Islam is the only principle which can succeed. Capitalism and socialism are corrupt and contradict the nature of human beings. According to the party, no principle or ideology put forward by human beings can survive. Since Islam is the principle of God, it is the only path to salvation (17).

Politically, the party believes that the main competition on the global level is between the United States and Britain, and all the conflicts in the world can be explained in terms of this competition. This way of thinking existed both before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ideologically, the world is divided into Dar al-Islam (the country of Islam) and Dar al-Kufr (the country of unbelieving). Dar al-Islam cannot be established until a Muslim Caliph emerges to rule the country in accordance to Islamic Shari'a. Therefore, the contemporary Arab and Islamic countries are considered to be part of Dar al-Kufr until the regimes are replaced by the Caliphate.

Unlike the Ikhwan, the ILP does not concern itself with individual reformation until the society, as a whole, has been reformed. It believes that the implementation of Islamic Shari'a cannot precede the establishment of the Islamic state. The duty of this state is to reconstruct society on an Islamic basis and to spread the Islamic "da'wa", mission, to non-Muslims throughout the world (18).

The party's priority is to Islamize the state. Thus, it declared that it is a political party, and does not devote much attention to ethical and religious reform of individuals. Furthermore, the party does not believe in establishing associations and institutions as it considers this a useless method which distracts the party from its main goal, which is to change the regime.

The party's neglect to build its own institutions is based on the party's interpretation of the Sunna. The Prophet did not build any institution in Mecca before the birth of the Islamic State. The birth itself is the prerequisite for building institutions. Because of this principle, the party lost many opportunities and means to strengthen itself, spread its ideas, and gain supporters. The experience of the political action in the Occupied Territories, including the religious movements such as Muslim Brothers, proved that the establishment and further development of institutions is essential for the success of any political party.

Contrary to Muslim Brothers who were satisfied by the slogan "Islam is the solution" without mentioning much details about the form of the state they intend to form, and the Islamic Jihad who is indulged in the resistance of the occupation, the ILP has formulated detailed policies with regards to domestic and foreign affairs of the future Islamic state. It has discussed in depth its position on the United Nations, with whom it intends to establish diplomatic relations, and even how it will grant visas to tourists who plan to visit the country. Furthermore, even though the ILP does not cooperate with any other movement, it has contemplated the possibility of the existence of numerous Islamic parties. The party has never signed any document with any other movement, though mutual cooperation is common between the Muslim Brothers and Islamic Jihad. In addition, the party believes that it is "haram" for a Muslim to participate in a non-Islamic movement. It is forbidden for the Muslims to join or assist any capitalist, communist, or national party since these are "kufr" parties (19).

As previously mentioned, the multiparty system can include only Islamic parties. Muslims are free to establish a party in order to question the current rulers or to gain power. However, the ILP believes that its interpretation of Islam is correct and it is their duty to revitalize the Islamic way of life in any Islamic country and to use this country as its starting point (20).

The fact that the party does not oppose the existence of multi-Islamist party system did not lead it to carry out any dialogue with these parties, particularly with the Ikhwan. The relations between the ILP and other Islamists are very weak, but this is mostly due to historical and organizational reasons, not ideological ones. It is important to note that although the ILP prohibits Muslims from joining the secular parties, it has never used violence against these parties or its members. During the history of the ILP, it has only used ideological means to argue with others, leaving "other means" for the coming Islamic state. This is not the case with the Ikhwan. They have cooperated and still cooperated with many secular and even leftist parties like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), and the Communist Party. At the same time, they have frequently had tragic clashes with these parties.

The ILP, despite its majority Palestinian membership, is not deeply concerned about the Palestinian struggle. It shares with other Islamic movements the view on the Palestinian question. However, the establishment of the Islamic state must be achieved first and only then will other matters be attended to. In light of the role of the Islamic state, the ILP has not taken any actions to resist the Israeli occupation. The Muslims in the Islamic world should work to establish the Islamic state and liberate Palestine, however the Palestinians inside the Occupied Territories are captives, and must do nothing but patiently await the arrival of the Islamic

state. Historically, the Muslims in Mecca were helpless until the Islamic army headed by the Prophet came from Medina. Now, the Palestinians are in a similar position.

Accordingly, the party does not believe in the current resistance in the Occupied Territories, such as strikes and demonstrations. It has not participated in the Intifada and unofficially considers it as an artificial creation by hostile, secular, national forces. The ILP has never taken any armed actions against the Israelis, since all these measures should be done in the future Islamic state. The victory, according to the party, is certain. It is God's promise to the believers. Therefore, the party rejects all compromises and all attempts to make a settlement in the region. It also rejects the resolutions of the UN concerning the issue and the call for an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The ILP is very centralized. The pamphlets, written originally in the headquarters, are distributed to other locations where the party has branches. As a result, the situation of the party in Jordan does not differ from its situation elsewhere, except for its reaction to Jordan's democratic process. The party rejects the process entirely because it considers democracy to contradict Islam since democracy means the starting point is the people, whereas in Islam the starting point should be God. Such an ideological position on democracy is accompanied by a political one. The party believes that participation in the process in Jordan means recognition and cooperation of a non-Islamic state.

Islamic Jihad

Examining the Islamic Jihad movement can be very confusing, mainly because many organizations bear the same name. There is, for example, the movement of Islamic Jihad in Palestine, which is the one to be discussed in this study, and the movement of Islamic Jihad Beit al-Maqdis headed by Sheikh As'ad Tamimi, who was deported to Jordan from the Occupied West Bank. This movement split further due to differing positions on the Iran-Iraq War. The Sheikh himself supported Iraq, while others supported Iran. And, finally, there is the movement of Saraya al-Jihad.

The founding of the Islamic Jihad in the late seventies was the first attempt after 1948 in the path of reunifying religion and nationalism in one movement in the Palestinian arena. The Islamic Jihad was also the first to emerge from a Palestinian nationalism framework with resistance to the occupation as its main goal(21). The Palestinian Islamic Jihad was influenced by the Islamist groups in Egypt through Palestinians students there. Dr. Fathi Sheqaqi, who had studied in Egypt and was deported by the Israelis in 1988, is considered the founder of the movement.

The movement considers itself as a furtherance of jihad along the historical context of Islam. Even though relations between the movement and the Ikhwan have not always been ideal, the movement regards the ideology of Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutob as two of its main references. The movement wrote that its emergence was a reaction to the death of al-Qassam and Hassan al-Banna. It was also a conscious reaction to the thesis of Sayyid Qutob, who was actually considered the spiritual leader of the contemporary revolutionary Islamic project(22).

The establishment of the Islamic Jihad in Palestine and Jordan was influenced by a combination of factors. For starters, the Ikhwan's role in finding an ideological base for political Islam in general, and through the ideas of Qutob, who talked about contemporary Jahiliyya society. Secondly, the negative (i.e. passive participation in direct resistance) national role of the Ikhwan from 1948 through the early eighties, created an urgency to find another body which would continue the jihad against the occupation. Additionally, other factors were the ideological role of the ILP in continuously bearing the concept of jihad, and its organizational role since two of the founders, Salih Serriya and Muhammad Salim al-Rahhal, were both Palestinians and members of the ILP. Lastly, the Islamic revolution in Iran influenced the Islamic Jihad in Palestine. The movement regards Iran as the first base for the real Islamic action, and the revolution was a victory for the Islamic plan in a strategic place(23).

Accordingly, the movement supported Iran throughout the eight years of war with Iraq. It saw the war as Iraqi aggression against the first base of the Islamic revolution. The movement also sympathizes with the Islamic resistance movement in Lebanon, especially with the actions of the Party of God (Hizbollah) against Israel.

The Islamic Jihad is very well-respected amongst the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Its actions, which focus on resisting the occupation, are louder than its words, a rarity in the region. Also, it disassociates itself from the competition with other movements for control of Palestinian institutions outside and inside Palestine. The military operations executed by Islamic Jihad are quite impressive, in terms of both Palestinian and Israeli standards. Likewise, the escape of six of its members immediately before the Intifada from a Gaza prison and their heroic death in a clash with the Israelis is considered to be an igniter of the Intifada.

The overall aims of the Islamic Jihad conform to a large extent with the aims of any other Islamist movement. The movement condenses these aims into the satisfaction of God and reviving Islam on a worldwide basis as their main priorities. The goals of the movement are embodied in facing the Western challenge on an Islamic basis and the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate(24).

These goals are very similar to those of the Ikhwan and the ILP. However, in regards to the Palestinian issue, significant differences are visible. Islamic Jihad wants to liberate Palestine, which would be the heart of the Islamic world. This deviates from the idea of the ILP which believes that establishing the Islamic State from the top-down, is a prerequisite for the liberation of Palestine, and from the Ikhwan which believes that the Islamic society, starting from individual level in a bottom-up approach, is the prerequisite to the liberation of Palestine.

As mentioned above, Islamic Jihad earnestly tries to avoid violence with other Palestinian organizations. It announced that its differences with the secular forces are only ideological, and its position towards these forces are based upon its attitudes toward the settlement of the national issue. The only clash Islamic Jihad had in the Occupied Territories was with the Ikhwan, not with secular movements(25).

The movement has never fully trusted the regimes in the Arab and Islamic world. It considers them as "puppets of the imperialist and kafir West" (26). It has warned the Arab regimes not to make a settlement with Israel and it has stressed that its battle with the regimes is not merely ideological. Lastly, it has reminded Arab regimes of President Sadat's fate(27).

In spite of the fact that the relations between Islamic Jihad and other Islamist movements are not usually good, the movement has always called for the unity of the Islamic groups. It is also true that the Islamic Jihad not only has never clashed with secular groups, but it has even joined with them in signing several communiques. Despite some cooperation, the Islamic Jihad is quick to ensure others that it has never been a member of the Unified Leadership of the Intifada and to offer its own Islamic scheme to solve the national problem, which differs completely from the national one(28). As long as the Islamic Jihad possesses its own plan, it believes that it should have its own establishments to best execute this plan. Thus, the movement refuses to merge with the PLO and its institutions. This has an affect of easing relations with the PLO, since the PLO will not consider Islamic Jihad in anyway a threat.

The movement holds that the question of Palestine is the central issue facing the Islamic nation. It strongly criticizes other Islamic groups by dividing them into two main camps: The first, which is in reference to the ILP, ignores the Palestinian issue as if it is no more than a problem between Oman and Ra's al-Khaima and thinks that the creation of an Islamic state will solve the problem and return Palestine to the Palestinians within hours(29). The second, which appears to be referring to the Ikhwan, believes that Palestine is an Islamic holy land, and that pure Islamic hands will liberate it without analysis or much effort(30). For Islamic Jihad, Palestine is important in three dimensions: Religious,

because of al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, as well as being the land of Isra' i.e ascension to heaven by the Prophet Mohammed. Historical, in which Palestine is used as the starting point for the Jews to smooth the entrance of the West into the region. Strategic, since Israel represents a direct danger to the existence of the Palestinian people and its future. Islamic Jihad's views towards Israel echo that of Iran's. Israel is a guard for the interests of the superpowers, headed by the "evil power" of the USA(31). The struggle between Muslims and Israel is inevitable and represents the struggle between evil and good. However, confronting the occupation is an issue which should not be postponed until the formation of an Islamic state or society. In this sense, Islamic Jihad distinguishes itself from the other Islamic factions.

Islamic Jihad is very hostile towards Arab and Islamic regimes, specifically that of Jordan. Facing these regimes in addition to facing Israel is considered by the movement as the way to struggle against what is termed as the "Imperialist Western Project" in the region. This position is close to that of the ILP but far from that of the Ikhwan, which has generally tried to avoid confrontation with Arab regimes.

The Social Background of the Islamic Movement

It is quite difficult to investigate the social background of the Palestinian Islamic movement since it had never been working completely in public, especially after the rise of the Islamic Jihad and Hamas at the beginning of the Intifada. Therefore the discussion about this subject will not be more than a general indication concerning the social change which took place in the movement during the last few years.

Like any other political movements in the area, the Islamic movement, since its establishment in the fourties, was able to mobilize members from all strata of the society. However, there were social changes that took place in the movement which were so evident among its upper leadership. These changes were accompanied by the change in the role of the movement from being the adaptation with political situation to be a protest against it.

From the time of the establishment, through the fifties and sixties, the leadership of the Ikhwan was concentrated in the feudal families in Palestine like al-Damin in Nablus, Jarrar in Jenin and al-Ja'bari in Hebron. However, most of the masses of the movement were from the middle class and the small businessmen.

Nowadays, the intellectuals occupy important positions in the leadership of the movement. Both in Jordan and in the Palestinian Occupied Territories, the Ikhwan became a main power in the unions of Engineers, Doctors and students. Evidently the large percentage of the academics, doctors, students and intellectuals in general

are among the Palestinian deportees in south Lebanon. The spread of the intellectualism is also obvious from the results of the elections in the trade unions, student councils ..etc.

The power of the Islamists among the workers continued to be weak. They could not be a real competitor to the nationalists in the workers' movement. However, the Ikhwan began to succeed in reaching the rural areas - a success which unlike to happen before.

Historically the Ikhwan are very influential among the merchants. However, the intellectuals began to be the main power in the movement. The Islamic bloc in the city of Rammallah, West bank, was able to win the whole seats in the chamber of commerce in the city. Likewise the Islamists took 45% of the votes in the chamber of commerce in the city of Nablus.

The distribution of the supporters of the Islamic movement according to the geographic location is also attracting attention. The movement is much stronger in the areas traditionally known as conservative, like Gaza and the cities of Hebron and Nablus in the West Bank, while it is weak in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Rammallah.

The distribution of the Hamas and Islamic Jihad deportees according to the place of living support this reality. 156 of the deportees were from Gaza Strip, 75 from Hebron and 56 from Nablus and the rest of the deportees are from other different areas. In Jordan also the influence of the Islamists are much evident in Amman and Irbid areas, and also in the Palestinian refugee camps.

Islamists in Jordan and Palestine: The Political Role

The political role of the Islamists in Jordan and the Palestinian Occupied Territories has three dimensions. The local dimension is manifested in the position of Jordan Islamists on the "democratic process" in the country. The position of both the Jordanian and Palestinian Islamists on the Intifada, the PLO and the peace talks begun in Madrid in 1991. The regional dimension covers their position on the Gulf Crisis and its implications, as well as the Arab order in the post-war era. The global dimension represents their position on the new global situation after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the beginning of the unipolar system under the leadership of the USA.

The Islamists in Jordan and the Democratic Process

The launching of the democratic process in Jordan, the presence of two extreme Islamic organizations (Jaysh Muhammad and Shabab al-Nafir), and the onset of the peace process, have been the main events in the domestic political life of the country during the last few years. The King of Jordan initiated a democratic process in 1989. This followed crucial global and regional changes, namely

the collapse of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries in Eastern Europe, and the rise of Western democracy as the prevailing dominant ideology. Furthermore, there was a severe economic crisis in Jordan in 1989, causing general unrest and large demonstrations in the south of the country.

In November 1989, approximately 900,000 Jordanians participated in Parliamentary elections after the absence of an elected Parliament since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967. In the 1989 elections, the Ikhwan won 22 out of 80 seats, becoming the largest single party in the Parliament. Islamist Dr. A. Arabiyyat was elected President of the Parliament. Muslim Brothers had supported the King's steps for implementing democratic measures. They also participated in Badran's government of 5 ministers which followed the election, including the Ministry of Education:²

This was their condition upon entrance to the government. However, supporting the democratic process in Jordan did not mean that the Muslim Brothers held only one interpretation of democracy. Yousef al-Azim, one of the founders of the Ikhwan in Jordan, commented in a T.V. interview that democracy is a step toward the Shura. Meanwhile, Ahmed al-Azahdeh, the spokesman of the Islamic bloc in Parliament, stated that democracy means the existence of opposition(32). In a step which indicated Ikhwan's support for democracy, they favored the Communist and Ba'thist parties' request to function legally. This came only after the Minister of Internal Affairs rejected the parties' request for legalization.

Despite the integration of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan's democratic process and their amiable dealings with the regime, relations did not always continue smoothly. Two points of contention between the government and the Ikhwan were due to the latter's opposition to negotiations with Israel begun in Madrid and also the appearance of the two radical Islamic movements, Shabab al-Nafir and Jaysh Muhammad. However, opposition to the peace talks did not have the expected outcome of negative attitudes towards the government. Rather, the Ikhwan were clearly against the peace process, but not so clearly against the government as a participant in the process. The Ikhwan described this conflict as a strain in the relations between the two sides, which was entirely the responsibility of the government(33). The government prohibited any meetings against the Madrid conference the Ikhwan intended to convene. Also, the King postponed Parliamentary session, which was

² The five ministers of the Ikhwan in Badran's government were:

- 1) Abdullah Al Ataylah for Education.
- 2) Yusif Al-Athem. Social Development.
- 3) Ibrahim Al-Kilani. Awqaf & Religious Affairs.
- 4) Majed Khalifa. Justice.
- 5) Kamal Al-Ajlouni. Health.

suppose to begin before the Madrid conference, until after the conference ended.

The other event which disturbed relations between the government and the Ikhwan was, as previously mentioned, the arrest of some members of Jaysh Muhammad movement accused of organizing terrorist acts against foreign institutions within Jordan. This was followed by the arrest of two members of Parliament, Laith Shbelat and Ya'cub Qirrish, and others who were accused of establishing an illegal organization to overthrow the regime under the name of Shabab al-Nafir. Simultaneously, some members from the Ikhwan were arrested for illegal possession of weapons. As a result of this, many people confused these arrests, and thought that the Ikhwan were behind the al-Nafir movement. Eventually, the King issued a royal pardon to release all the political prisoners in order to alleviate the confusion. However, the Ikhwan exploited these circumstances to serve their own interests. They pointed out to the regime that any Muslim not affiliated with the Ikhwan is likely to transfer into an extremist group, such as Jaysh Muhammad(34).

Islamists and the PLO

The three Islamic factions cannot be discussed as one unit in regards to their relations with the nationalists, in particular with Fatah. There is much potential for the Islamic Jihad to develop closer ties to Fatah. For starters, both were created as national and military oriented movements. Moreover, in spite of Fatah's secularistic roots, it has never expressed negative sentiments towards religion. In fact, many of its founders were religious, including Yasser Arafat himself. However, the most important catalyst for improving relations between Islamic Jihad and Fatah is the fact that Fatah has never viewed Islamic Jihad as a threatening competitor. It is certain that Islamic Jihad will remain smaller and more militarized than the political movement. It might be more qualified to challenge HAMAS, which is the main competitor to Fatah. Finally, Islamic Jihad's platform does not require its participation in the different PLO institutions, which further diminishes its potential as a serious competitor to Fatah. The movement has its own ideology and its own ideas on how to achieve it. These differ radically from those of Fatah.

Nevertheless, there are several other factors which contribute to the worsening of relations between Islamic Jihad and Fatah. The Islamic Jihad criticized the PLO's position on the Iraq-Iran War. Because the Islamic Jihad considers the Iranian regime as the only true Islamic one, it viewed the war as an aggression against the main base of Islam. Plus, the movement also rejects Fatah's conciliatory approach towards the Arab regimes, which are all part of a larger project to "eliminate" the Palestinian cause and form a conspiracy along with the Western powers and Israel(35).

The ILP's opinion about the PLO has not changed since its establishment in 1964. At that time, the party distributed a pamphlet claiming that the aim for establishing the PLO was to separate the West Bank from Jordan, to find an independent state without including Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and to internationalize Jerusalem. According to the party, this meant the fragmentation of an Islamic state, namely Jordan, into three parts. Thus, it is a sin for a Muslim to join the PLO or to support it financially or morally(36). Therefore, the party has never had any relations with the PLO.

Relations between HAMAS and Fatah contribute to the most important events in the internal Palestinian political arena. This is because the competition of the two movements greatly influence the Palestinian situation as a whole. For the most part, relations between HAMAS and the PLO have been somewhat strained, at times quiet and at times violent. Before the founding of HAMAS, and with the onset of an Islamic awakening in Palestine in the late seventies, Fatah leaned towards the Islamists when the leftist competitors were strong. These relations improved further after the PLO left Beirut in 1982, and both Fatah's and Ikhwan's relations with the Syrian regime deteriorated. In fact, Muslim Brothers in Palestine described Abu Musa³, who left Fatah, as a traitor, simply because he had good ties with the Syrians(37). Now, relations with Abu Musa's group have normalized. Another reason why relations between Fatah and the Ikhwan improved once the PLO left Beirut, was due to Fatah's strengthening of ties with the Jordanian regime. Relations between Fatah and Jordan were an indicator for relations with the Ikhwan, at least until the establishment of HAMAS.

The Ikhwan rejected the Palestinian National Council's (PNC) resolutions regarding the declaration of an independent Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza and the PNC's willingness to participate in the peace process. HAMAS reproached the PLO for its attempts to get closer to the USA (38). and disagreed with its estimation of forces inside Israeli society. The PLO realizes that within Israel political opinions range from leftist and rightist groups, progressive and racist. However, for Hamas, all Jews are the same. The Ikhwan's and other Islamists' position on Muslims Palestinians inside Israel is completely different especially when the question regards the Islamic movement there. Islamists inside Israel contributed in helping the people in the Occupied Territories during the Intifada. Some individuals carried out military operations against Israeli army. They also publish the news of the Islamists' activities with much details. However, there is no evidence on an identified organizational relations between the two sides.

³ * Abu Musa is the General who split from Arafat's leadership and formed a new party with sympathies towards Syria.

The principle reason behind the gap between PLO and HAMAS is the fact that HAMAS does not recognize the PLO as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Even though HAMAS claimed that it would not compete with or replace any political entity (39), some HAMAS leaders indicate distrust of the PLO. For example, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin said, "It is impossible to accept the PLO as a representative, unless it becomes an Islamic one"(40). Nonetheless, HAMAS has declared its readiness to join the PLO provided that certain conditions are met. These conditions include rejection of the peace process, and/or 40 per cent HAMAS representation in the PNC(41).

Islamists and the Intifada

HAMAS was founded shortly after the outbreak of the Intifada in late 1987. This marked a significant shift in the Ikhwan's policy towards the Israeli occupation. Previously, the nationalists disapproved of the Ikhwan's non-participation in resisting the occupation. HAMAS activities during the Intifada have gradually increased from the basic, such as fasting and praying, to the more complicated, like kidnapping and killing soldiers. At the start of the Intifada, it was evident that HAMAS activities were far from being the activities of the masses. A leftist writer wrote that HAMAS activities were characterized by the avoidance of direct clashes with the Israeli forces(42). Even if this matter was debated at the beginning, it is now very clear that HAMAS clashes with the Israelis have steadily become more violent. After the killing of several soldiers in both the West Bank and Gaza by the HAMAS military wing, called Kataeb Izz Eddin al-Qassam, plus the deportation of more than 400 HAMAS and Islamic Jihad supporters, the two movements have become the main military power to resist the occupation in the Occupied Territories.

Due to the revolutionary significance of the Intifada, many factions have attempted to claim responsibility for its outbreak. HAMAS asserted that it was responsible for distributing the first pamphlet in the Intifada on December 14, 1987. Islamic Jihad claimed that it signed the first pamphlet distributed in the Intifada on December 9, 1987(43). Both HAMAS and Islamic Jihad are participating practically, and from time to time, militarily in the Intifada. Yet, the ILP has not been enthusiastic in its support nor have its members participated in its activities. The party has steadfastly abided by its ideology, which says that all forms of resistance of the occupation are the duties of the coming Islamic state.

Islamists and the Peace Process

All the Islamic factions, both in Jordan and Palestine, rejected the peace talks between the Arabs and Israel that began in Madrid in October 1991. The PLO participated in the process indirectly by appointing a negotiating team from the Occupied Territories as a

response to Israeli conditions. Another Israeli condition was that the Palestinians should be part of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. This was explained by both Jordanian and Palestinian officials as providing an umbrella to the Palestinians. Because these conditions contradict the right of the Palestinians for self-determination and the responsibility of the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, some Palestinian nationalist factions (PFLP, DFLP) rejected the process. Also for the nationalists, accepting a delegation connected with Jordan connotes accepting a settlement connected with Jordan.

The Islamists had their own reasons for regarding the process negatively. The main reason being religious. The Islamists' ideology prohibits any settlement with Israel since the tenet that Palestine should be Islamic is an unnegotiable issue. However, there are other pragmatic reasons for rejecting the process, such as the political climate at both a regional and international level when the talks began, the goals and the expected outcome of the process, and the nature of the powers which initiated and facilitated the process(44).

In fact, it is difficult to completely differentiate between the ideological and the political reasons which caused the Islamists to reject the process. The PLO's recognition of the two Security Council resolutions, 242 and 338, on which the peace process relies, in principle, makes the existence of the Israeli state legal. Of course, the legality of Israel for the Islamists for various political and ideological reasons, is neither accepted nor worthy of discussion.

Although the three Islamist factions all rejected the peace process, the ILP and Islamic Jihad outwardly refused any possibility of future participation, even if conditions were to change. On the other hand, HAMAS, a more pragmatic organization, has left the door open for any future participation. For instance, Abdul Aziz Rantisi, the leader of the deportees in Lebanon, declared that HAMAS rejects autonomy, but it will not use violence against it. Likewise, HAMAS will not participate in elections if these elections are going to be a means to autonomy(45).

At the same time, a Palestinian Islamist wrote about the dangers of not participating in the process. He pointed out that by being far removed from the circle of decision making due to chronic opposition, will create suitable conditions for an autocracy, which, in turn, will try to eliminate the opposition entirely. The other danger is the possibility of being physically liquidated; if the Islamists will stay in opposition, the secularists in the PLO will be the dominant force and will promote the secularization of the society and threaten the religious and historical values of the Palestinians(46). There are some people among Islamists who believe that participation in the peace process is more beneficial than non-participation. In addition to this, one can hypothesize that

the Jordanian regime is able to apply pressure to the Muslim Brotherhood within Jordan not only to accept the process, but also use their influence on HAMAS for the same purpose. Therefore, HAMAS has left the possibility of entering the process open, but at a more appropriate time, i.e. most probably when it feels that the process is going to have positive results where the Palestinians will gain something.

Islamists and the Gulf Crisis

Islamists all over the world, including those in Jordan and Palestine, had different views on the Gulf Crisis between Iraq and the allied forces. Their religious ideology on this issue was interpreted differently by the various Islamic groups. And their views largely depended on the links of each movement to a particular Gulf State.

At the time of the crisis, an international Islamic conference held in Baghdad announced its support for the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and put forth a declaration of jihad against the American interests. Almost at exactly the same time, another Islamic conference convened in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, which supported the position of the Kingdom, condemned the occupation of Iraqi forces of Kuwait, and confirmed the legitimacy of the Saudi request for foreign military assistance. A third Islamic conference organized in Libya in the period between 30-31 October 1990 under the supervision of the Libyan President Qaddafi, leader of the **International Popular Islamic Leadership**, took a position of compromise. It asked for the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and called for the necessity to confront the foreign forces in the Gulf.

Both HAMAS and the Muslim Brothers in Jordan were very concerned with the Gulf Crisis from the beginning. Two months prior to the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, HAMAS sent a letter to the Arab Summit convened in Baghdad, which said that the escalation of the campaign against Iraq and the incitement of international opinion against its program to obtain technology and develop weapons can not be understood except in terms of hostility towards the Islamic and Arab nations and against its dignity and independence(47). The Muslim Brothers in Jordan, who described the American mobilization in the Gulf as a "Crusade", explained the goals of this action as follows: stopping the Islamic awakening in the region, protecting its access to oil resources, perpetuating the disunity of the Arab nation by the destruction of every Arab force, and maintaining Israel as the dominant power in the region(48).

The reasons for the Gulf Crisis, according to HAMAS, are religious as well as political. It considered the Gulf War as an event caused by the forces of "kufr" (unbelief), headed by the USA and supported by the Zionists, in order to destroy the scientific and military capabilities of Iraq. This would enable Israel to put an

end to the Intifada and to impose a settlement. HAMAS also said that the Gulf War was a chapter in the war against Islam and allowed for more opportunities for Zionist immigration to Palestine(49). The Ikhwan's religious contribution to the Crisis was to prohibit the seeking of aid from the unbelievers. They refused to accept the existence of the American and Western forces on the "Prophet's land", and complained that the American army in the Gulf consisted of some Jews(50)

The position of the Ikhwan on the Gulf Crisis had two dimensions; one was moderate, when they dealt with the problem between Iraq and Kuwait; the other was more extreme, when concerned with Western intervention in the Gulf. In short, the Ikhwan were not supportive of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, yet they supported the country when it confronted the USA and the West.

The Muslim Brothers worldwide, in Jordan, and HAMAS did not participate in the Islamic conference convened in Mecca to support the Saudis. They also were reluctant to attend the Islamic conference in Baghdad. However, they tried to find a compromise by forming a popular Islamic delegation which visited Baghdad, Riyadh, and Tehran. The delegation consisted of Muslim Brothers from Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen, and Islamists from Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey, Pakistan, Malaysia, Algeria, and Palestine.

Jordanian Muslim Brothers along with HAMAS expressed their solidarity with both Kuwaitis and Iraqis, usually without mentioning the regimes in the two countries. During the occupation, they called for the right of the people of Kuwait for self-determination and asked the Iraqi "brothers" to treat the Kuwaitis well. After the war, they asked the Kuwaitis to "open a new page" and not to forget the religious and kinship links with the people of Iraq(51).

HAMAS anticipated the possibility of war more than any other Palestinian movement. During the war and the long curfews imposed on the Occupied Territories, HAMAS's demands from people were mostly spiritual, such as fasting, praying, reading Koran, and crying "Allah Akbar" from rooftops. The movement also asked for the strengthening of the Palestinian national unity(52).

The Muslim Brothers in Jordan exploited the opportunity of the Gulf Crisis to ask the remainder of the Arab Marxists and atheists to shed their beliefs and return to Islam(53). Similarly, HAMAS asked Islamic peoples to announce jihad and to return to God's way, ie. Islam(54). The movement also tried to push the Iranian position closer to that of Iraq's. It asked the Iranians to "forget the past" and used typical, inflammatory Iranian terminology to convince them to support Iraq in the war against the international forces of "kufr" under the leadership of the biggest "Satan", the USA(55). In fact, HAMAS tried to connect the Gulf Crisis with the Palestinian issue. It asked the Iraqi President not to forget

Palestine. After the results of the War were apparent, the movement considered Baker's efforts to find a settlement in the region as an exploitation against the Arabs(56).

A combination of three factors formed Islamic Jihad's position on the Gulf Crisis: the ideological, which is Islam; the national, stemming from the movement's belief that the Palestinian cause should be central to all Muslims, and its special relationship with Islamic Iran. The movement considered the crisis as an indicator of the integral connection between the Crusaders, Zionists, and Arab kafers(57). According to the Islamic Jihad, what happened in the Gulf War was a savage campaign under the leadership of the USA against the Muslim countries and their holy places, indicating relentless Western hatred toward the Islamic nation(58). However, the movement did not believe that the Gulf Crisis was solely a Western conspiracy against Muslims. It confirmed that Saddam Hussein himself was isolated inside and outside Iraq, and was also responsible for the problem. Hussein thought that the occupation of Kuwait would help him to solve his problems(59).

Islamic Jihad understood the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait as an act committed by a "secular Arab order" to weaken the Islamic masses and to distract them from their central cause, the Palestinian issue(60). In addition, Israel exploited the Gulf Crisis to cover over the events of the Intifada and to sidetrack attention away from the influx of Soviet Jews to the Occupied Territories(61).

It was clear that the Islamic Jihad movement was against the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait because this facilitated the Zionists' strategy, brought American presence to the area, and directed attention away from the central issue in Palestine. The Islamic Jihad's condemnation of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait was not so much for the sake of the Kuwaiti regime or its independence.

Unlike HAMAS, Islamic Jihad considered the regimes in the Arab and Islamic countries as partners in the aggression against the Iraqi people. The movement referred to the regimes in Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Pakistan, the Gulf States, and Turkey as agents of the West(62).

The ILP viewed the Gulf Crisis ideologically and within the framework of its interpretation of most conflicts in the world, that is competition between the USA and Britain. Although the ILP strictly adheres to its religious ideology, it usually tries to explain issues in political terms. The party believed that the USA tried very early to dominate the Gulf, that is why it "fabricated" the energy crisis during the 1973 War in the Middle East. According to the party, this was not directed against the Saudis nor other Gulf States but against Britain(63).

Apart from political reasons, the party treated the Gulf Crisis as a religious issue. It assumed that the military intervention in the Gulf aimed at striking the Islamic awakening and preserving "kufr"

interests in the region(64). In any case, the strategic, political, and economic issues were the basis for the ILP's positions.

To sum up, the ILP discussed the situation within a framework of two elements: the conflict between "kufr" and belief and the competition between the US and Britain. Therefore, according to the movement, Saddam Hussein is a follower of the British, and the Iranian regime is a follower of the Americans. The Gulf Crisis crystallized when the British encouraged Saddam to occupy Kuwait as an act of defiance of the USA, and to annex Kuwait in order to solve its financial problems(65). The party thought that the war in the Gulf was unlikely, but when it did erupt, it explained the cease fire before the overthrow of Saddam, as a British demand to protect him.

Muslims, according to the party, were defeated because there was no Caliphate, which is the only thing that can protect against kafers' aggression. Therefore, since Saddam is not a Caliph, the party did not support him. However, it did support his act to occupy Kuwait because this furthered the unification of the Muslims.

Generally, the positions of the different Islamic factions on the Gulf Crisis were in harmony with their strategic goals. The ILP, which basically aims to achieve Islamic unity, agreed on the annexation of Kuwait to Iraq. The Islamic Jihad, whose main priority is the Palestinian cause, rejected the occupation of Kuwait outright. While the Muslim Brothers, whose aim is to Islamize the society and to save themselves, rejected the occupation of Kuwait, yet supported Saddam against the West. In summary, Islamic Jihad opposed both Saddam and the occupation while the ILP was against Saddam and for the occupation, and lastly, the Muslim Brothers supported Saddam in his confrontation with the West, yet they opposed the occupation of Kuwait.

Islamists and the New Global Changes

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, the end of the Cold War, and the domination of the USA over the world, were the main factors in the radical global changes that have taken place in the last few years. As a matter of fact, the Arab and Islamic World has not played any part in bringing about these changes directly; however, it has been more affected by their results than any other region in the third world.

Islamists in Jordan and Palestine describe the world situation after these changes as a one polar world controlled by the USA. After the disappearance of the communist bloc, strong propaganda began in the West which viewed Islam and Islamic fundamentalism as its main enemy. The Israelis, especially the former President H. Herzog, took advantage of every opportunity to incite opinion against the Islamic movements. This was to prove that Israel still

plays a key role in the region, even after the end of the Cold War. Yet, it is worthy to mention that since the onset of the one polar world under the leadership of the USA, and the influx of the US forces to the region, some secular Palestinians believe that the role of Israel has declined(66).

Numerous Arabs, including Islamists in Jordan and Palestine, believe that the USA needs an enemy in order to mobilize the people around American interests. The ILP declared that it was not abnormal that the USA began seeking new means to convince the American people that it should keep its global political role. American leaders traveled throughout the world, looking for "opponents of democracy" and for enemies who threatened the interests of the United States, to demonstrate the US's necessity of keeping its dominant role in world politics(67).

In addition to the status of the United States in the new global situation, the ILP is also concerned about the role of European countries and the United Nations. It confirmed that Europe, especially Britain, has attempted to return back to their previous spheres of influence. The party also believes that the United Nations is increasing its role and its capability to intervene in the internal affairs of some countries. The ILP has called for replacing the UN with another organization(68). Palestinian and Jordanian Islamists claim the new world order is unjust. According to them, it represents a unification of the West against Third World countries, rich against poor, North against South, white against non-white, industrial and post-industrial societies against less developed, and non-Muslims against Muslims.

Following the Gulf War and the implementation of the Security Council resolutions on Iraq, the literature of the Islamic movements pointed out the double standards used by the UN and the West with regards to Israel. This heightened when 415 Palestinian Islamists were deported to Lebanon and Israel's refusal to comply with Security Council Resolution 799 to return them. The Islamic movements in Jordan and Palestine believe that the main victim of the new world order is Islam and the Islamic movements. A Palestinian Islamist and deportee to Lebanon, Dr. Atif Odwan, wrote that the conflict in the future will be directed to annihilate Islam(69). This general Islamist opinion is legitimized by many events in recent years: using force against Iraq several times, the relative inaction of the West towards the ongoing tragedy of the Bosnian Muslims, the West's position on the problems in Algeria and against Libya, and finally, Western attitudes towards the Palestinian question.

The Arab order began to suffer greatly after the Gulf War. The Islamists are convinced that the disunity of the Arabs and the Muslims is in the West's interests. Thus, this is a suitable time for the West to further fragment the region. It is clear that the new world order eliminated any remaining solidarity between Arabs,

who have never been as fragmented as they are now. As a result, HAMAS considers the collapse of the Soviet Union as having negative consequences, even though Islamists traditionally view communism as its main ideological enemy. The new situation, according to HAMAS and other Islamists, created a state of dependency and weakness in the Arab World (70), and therefore should be rejected. The Palestinian cause is the main victim of the new world order, according to Islamists. This was embodied in the starting of the peace process between the Arabs and the Israelis in Madrid. Therefore, rejecting and fighting against the process is the main and most direct resistance to this entire new world order.

The collapse of the Arab order, understood to be a result of the new global changes, gave a great push to the Islamic movement. This movement has represented for the last few years and currently represents the only serious protest movement in the Arab world, including Jordan and Palestine. The hostility, or what is perceived to be hostility, of the West towards the Islamic movements, is a very influential factor in helping the Islamists gain more power. During the period of Egyptian President Nasser and the rise of nationalism in the Arab World, the Islamists were accused of being collaborators with the West. This is one reason why the Islamists are more popular among newer generations who have less knowledge of the history of that period.

Even so, the Islamists' rejection of the West is not absolute. HAMAS representatives met with American and other Western diplomats in Jordan to discuss the recent issue of the deportees and also to explain the background and current situation of the HAMAS movement in the United States. This could be an indicator that the West, especially the Americans who have refused to establish relations with the PLO, have open lines with HAMAS and vice versa. There is potential for HAMAS participation with recent Western projects in the region. Some nationalists regarded the meetings between HAMAS and some Western diplomats as an evidence on the lack of seriousness on the part of HAMAS in fighting against Western influence in the area. However, national movements did not react officially to this matter which passed hastily.

The Islamic movements are part of the region's political reality. On the one hand, more and more people find the appropriate means in these movements to save their identity. On the other hand, many people remain suspicious of the movements' views towards democracy and individual freedom. If the movements can reconcile their ideology with modern democratic principles, they will come to possess a popular, grass-root legitimacy, unknown to other organizations.

The national movement gained its popularity through historical struggle for independence. However, what actually happened was the deepening of the dependency on the West under the pretense that this was the only leeway for development. Nationalists now are

caught in the problem of dependency and the promised development had not been achieved. Thus, the Islamic movement appeared as a fighter against dependency, and the on-going failure of the development has become a continuous reason for the increase of the popular sympathy towards the Islamists.

The Islamists feel that their goal to establish an Islamic state is a realistic matter. Iran was an indicator that they can rule the country through a popular revolution, Afghanistan was an example for that through a national war, while Algeria through democracy. The changing of the Islamic dream to reality made their project more acceptable, specially when we realize that this is happening after the collapse of the socialist bloc and global transitions in favor of the West.

The Islamist movement in Jordan and Palestine is usually affected by the Islamic movement on the international arena. However, local situation, specially the political one remains decisive. Very recently Israel and PLO have agreed on a project called "Gaza-Jericho first". The Palestinian & Jordanian Islamists rejected that process; however, leaders of Islamists declared that the movement will not use violence against the project. This position puts the Islamic movement in a narrow track between its ideology and the feeling that it should not alienate itself from the present scene, so that Hamas will not be disclaimed, should any gains be achieved from the Gaza-Jericho project. Another threat that the Islamic Movement would have to count for the possible alliance among Israel, Palestinian and Egypt to abort the movement.

Notes:

1. Barghouti, I., "al-Islam baina al-Sulta wa al-Mua'rada fi al-Ordon", *Qadaya Fikriyyah*. No. 8, October, 1989, Cairo, P.235.
2. *Al-Quds*. November 22, 1989.
3. *Al-Nahar*. September 3, 1988.
4. To find more about the conditions of Hamas establishment, see: Barghouti, I., *al-Aslamah wa al-Siyasah fi al-Arabi al-Filistiniyyah al-Muhtallah*. Maktab al-Zahra, Jerusalem, 1990.
5. Hamas, *Pamphlet rejected a split in the movement*. 15/4/1992.
6. Hamas, *The Charter*. August 14, 1988, P. 5.
7. *Ibid*.
8. Hamas, *Comunique No. 3*. Dateless.
9. *Ibid*.
10. Student Council of the University of Gaza, "Fillistine wa al-Thakirah al-Mafqudah", *al-Neda'*. dateless, P. 23.
11. *Al-Tali'ah al-Islamiyyah*, opcit. P. 42.
12. Hamas, "Comunique on the occasion of the third anniversary of the Intifada", *Liwa' al-Islam*. No. 10, 44th year, December 30, 1989, P. 66.
13. Hamas, *Pamphlet Dated 23/12/1991*.
14. Kamal Rashid, "al-Islamiyyun wa al-Nitham fi al-Ordon", *Fillistine al-Muslimah*. No. 10, 10th year, October, 1992. P.31.

15. Yaser al-Za'atreh, "Hawla Ta'ayush al-Sultah Wa al-Islamiyyin fi al-Ordon", al-Quds. 20/10/1992.
16. Ibid.
17. Al-Tahrir Party, *Hizb al-Tahrir*. 9/5/1985.
18. Hussein bin Muhsin bin Ali Jaber, *al-Tariq ila Jama'at al-Muslimin*. Dar al-Da'wah, Kuwait, 1986, P. 300.
19. Al-Tahrir Party, 9/5/1985, opcit.
20. The ILP, *Mafahim Hizb al-Tahrir*. 5th Edition, Jerusalem, 1953, P. 9.
21. Barghouti, I., 1990, opcit, P. 65.
22. The Islamic Jihad, *al-Khutot al-A'mmah li Harakat al-Jihad*. Dateless, P. 4.
23. Ibid, P. 3.
24. Ibid, PP 4-5.
25. Ibid, P. 8.
26. Al-Bayan. No. 3, February 12, 1985, P. 2.,
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