

**Development of Political Islam's
Thought in the Arab World**

**Jordan's Islamic Movement as a
Model (2007-2017)**

Editor

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Seminars

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The Abstract

The present book is the output of a symposium titled **Development of Political Islam's Thought in the Arab World Jordan's Islamic Movement as a Model (2007-2017)** in August 2017, joined by several political, academic and other national figures.

The thought development of Jordan's MB is investigated as a model of political Islam movements in the Arab states. The following aspects are discussed: the political thought's adaptation to international shifts in political, social and economic spheres; ability to contain modern concepts like civil state, democracy and political plurality; impact of these changes on its political action at the national, regional and international levels; the issues facing political Islam's policies and thought and how they are viewed by the groups themselves; and the plans of Jordan's MB for the next four years (2017-2020).

The work consists of an introduction, six chapters and appendices. The introduction raises a number of questions on the MB's ability to adapt with modern developments, mainly with regard to globalization. Political Islam movements are accused by some political and social powers of being unable to cope with national, regional and international shifts or establish a pure Islamic political thought which could contain modern conceptions like the civil state, democracy and political plurality. On the other hand, the MB responds by calling such accusations as 'ideological' and 'exclusive', to keep it out of political action and influence.

Chapter One titled Political Thought Fundamentals of Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood is prepared by Jameel Abu-Bakr Director General of Assabeel newspaper. It explores the purpose of politics from the MB's perspective: to care for the affairs of the nation in the different aspects of life, by being closer to honesty and far away from corruption. The following principles are mentioned:

- Islam, in its inclusive understanding, is the basis of the nation's renaissance and the track of reform for all spheres.
- Politics in Islam lies under major issues of doctrine, but not under minor matters of jurisprudence

- Jordan – as people, land and identity – is an integral of the Arab and Muslim nations and shall contribute to their unity and advancement.
- The belief in the role of Islam in establishing a good citizen and building the nation is a necessity.
- The state founded by Prophet Mohammad was actually a civil one.

The main techniques are summarized as follows:

- Committing to higher Islamic and human morals and virtues
- Respecting political plurality and adopting peaceful change
- Striving to make Jordan a civil state of Islamic reference
- Considering public freedoms and political partnership rights for all citizens without discrimination
- Believing that inclusive reform covers politics, constitution and legislation.

Chapter Two titled Issues Facing Political Islam is prepared by Zaki beni Irshid former Secretary General of the Islamic Action Front party. 'Intellectual and political repulsion' is discussed by the author within the group in national, regional and international relations. The investigation covers the MB's handling of the following main issues: identity of communities; democracy; peaceful devolution of power; plurality and participation in election and government; stance on world order and regional and international relations; terrorism; civil state; religious components of the society; women; and human rights, referring to the positive development at the leadership level. It is concluded that the MB future shall not be made by mere wishes, but by determination to overcome current obstacles and seize the chances which accompany all the challenges or make new chances.

Chapter Three titled Muslim Brotherhood's Political Action Tools is prepared by Mousa Al-Wahsh Assistant Speaker of Parliament and IAF member. MB's political action and presence in Jordan departs from original Islamic values. The main relevant tools adopted by the group are: making vertical and horizontal political alliances; promoting moderate press discourse with realistic considerations; public mobilization in major issues

threatening the future of national constants; and presenting renaissance perspectives which advance the kingdom. The above shall take place through partisan, parliamentary and municipal action as well as through governorate councils and professional and labour unions. The conclusion looks into MB's prospects of political action, summarized as follows:

- Reaching an action umbrella for all political and civil segments
- Taking part with all components to bear national responsibilities
- Building an inclusive national framework to advance political action
- Enhancing trust and communication between the MB and all the community components.

Chapter Four titled Impact of Muslim Brotherhood's Political Action on the Community and State's Policies is prepared by Dr. Ahmed Al-Shunnaq Secretary General of the National Constitutional Party. A number of matters related to the group are discussed, like its moderate thought as well as acceptance of and cooperation with the Other. That has been translated by means of the Higher Coordination Committee for the Opposition Parties – including Arab-nationalists, leftists and nationalists – as well as the National Reform Alliance, which represents a renewing political model for the programme-based reform thought. In terms of the relation between the MB and the Jordanian regime, there have been shifts within the group to provide reassurances and to be consistent with the state's policies. Examples are halting organizational connection with Hamas, and with the mother MB of Egypt by amending the internal regulations which stated that it was a branch of the movement founded by Hassan Al-Benna in Cairo.

Chapter Five titled Pragmatic and Contractual Forms of the Policies of Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood is prepared by Dr. Khaled Al-Dabbas Political Science Instructor at the University of Yarmouk. The above forms are divided into two types: intellectual and practical. An example of the former is the group's ability to adapt by accepting political plurality and attempting to provide Islamic theorization for the conception. Another is the approval of democratic values. The group has managed to keep the room for renewal open by encouraging religious discretion to keep up with modern developments, rather than close-mindedness. That was obvious in the MB's

reform initiative of 2005 called “Islamic Movement’s Reform Vision”, which was considered a significant turning point in the group’s intellectual development. An instance of the latter is to ally with the regime and oppose the government. It has also reiterated that maintaining the security of Jordan is an act of worship, and the MB’s history has not witnessed resorting to violence or illegal activities in the kingdom. In return, the regime realizes the issue and, thus, has resisted pressures by regional powers to crush the group in Jordan. At the end, the foundation of the IAF serves as MB’s political arm, avoiding the involvement of the entire group in this field.

Finally, Chapter Six titled Critical Analysis of the Political Experience of Jordan’s Muslim Brotherhood in the period 2007-2017 is prepared by Atef Al-Joulani editor-in-chief of Assabeel newspaper to discuss the intellectual and political reviews which took place within the MB. According to the author, the group’s feeling of the need to review political performance and reach internal agreement on a number of important political issues came from within and even before the Arab Spring. It resulted from challenges faced by the group at internal and external levels. In 2014, the IAF issued the Statement of General Policies and Approaches. The document constituted a turning point in the framework of intellectual and political reviews, showed the group’s desire to formulate its route in light of the significant variables taking place in the last few decades and encouraged improvement of attitude and performance.

As for political participation, the author argues that the group became convinced of the necessity of taking part in all available spaces of political action. In terms of the relation with the regime, it has managed to cope with the realities of the new stage of tension. It has avoided provocation and contained further escalation and exercised political action through the IAF. Actually, the last two years, it could make notable political achievements in the general, local and decentralized elections. To conclude, the MB demonstrates a desire for more openness and construction of alliances and partnerships with political and people’s bodies and national figures on programme rather than ideology basis.

There were three speeches in the event’s opening session. The first was delivered by Eng. Abdul-Hadi Al-Majali former Speaker of Parliament and founder of the National Movement. He briefly reviewed the MB’s history in Egypt, since the establishment in 1928 until the 1980’s when it took part in the legislative election due to some kind of transparency, accountability and

plurality. With reference to Jordan, the group did not strategically benefit from the political openness of 1989, as it founded the IAF but kept it under its own control. He also criticized the MB's boycott of the general election in the period 2007-2016, which negatively affected partisan action and plurality in the kingdom. He concluded by calling for an initiative for dialogue between the group and the regime to learn about each party's attitudes and concerns. In addition, dialogue should be held between all the national political parties, including the IAF, for the purpose of serving the reform of the country as well as the security of both the country and citizen until reaching a pluralistic national state.

The second opening speech was delivered by Mohammad Al-Zyoud Secretary General of the IAF. He said that the Arab uprisings did not only express the need for the political systems to change their treatment of reality, but also targeted political opposition. In other words, they indicated the failure of both official and opposition efforts for genuine reform. As a reform movement, the MB took part in those developments by taking early practical steps in partnership with the Other. It contributed to the foundation of coalitions with other political parties or professional unions regardless of ideology. It also built the National Reform Front and, later, the National Reform Alliance, under which it participated in the general election of 2016 and the municipal and governorate councils elections of 2017.

In the third opening speech, Jawad Al-Hamad Director General of the MESC referred to the deformation of the image of political Islam movements by both Arab and foreign decision-makers. Although the MB, in general, and in Jordan, in particular, attempts to counter such campaigns through statements and practices, many Western authors mix between political Islam movements and violent terror groups intentionally or unintentionally. The choice of the period 2007-2017 for the investigation is attributed to the major and strategic shifts in the MB's political thought and ties with the Jordanian regime. He urged for dealing with the group, which enjoys moral, public and peaceful strengths to protect the society and counter any tendencies of extremism or terrorism. That would make the kingdom strong and united against internal challenges and external threats like the Zionist project.