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Hizbut-Tahrir in Lebanon and the Arab World:  
History, Ideology and Praxis

By

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# Hizbut-Tahrir in Lebanon and the Arab World: History, Ideology and Praxis

Mohamad Khalil Gharib

## ABSTRACT

This is a study of one Islamic party: *Hizbut-Tahrir, Wilayat Lubnan* (hereafter *Hizbut-Tahrir*). It aims to shed light on the history, ideology, and recent stances of this important, albeit little researched, player. Founded in Jerusalem in the late 1940s, *Hizbut-Tahrir* established itself on the Lebanese scene in 1953, when its founder – the Palestinian Sheikh Taqiuddin al-Nabhani (b.1909 – d.1977) – was evicted by the Jordanian authorities and forced to resettle in Lebanon. The study involves a review of primary and secondary sources in English and Arabic on *Hizbut-Tahrir* and Islamic movements; as well as interviews with academics, specialists, state officials, and *Hizbut-Tahrir* activists. What gives this study pertinence and currency is that *Hizbut-Tahrir's* recent activism and stances raised many question marks and concerns in Lebanon, as well as regionally and internationally. Following the end of the Pax-Syriana in Lebanon, *Hizbut-Tahrir* became more active on the Lebanese scene, especially in the poor populated suburbs in Tripoli. This study is prompted by at least three considerations. The party, despite its activism and presence in several countries, has received scant attention in the burgeoning academic literature on Islamic movements. Second, *Hizbut-Tahrir* has heightened its presence and activities in Lebanon, particularly in northern Lebanon, after 2005. Third, the party has benefited from the weakening of state controls in several Arab countries, in the wake of the Arab Spring, in order to play a larger role in the unfolding events, while adhering to its ideology that emphasizes the restoration of the Islamic Caliphate and its renunciation of violence.

Keywords: *Hizbut-Tahrir*, Caliphate state, Islamic movements, Sheikh Taqiuddin al-Nabhani, *Wilayat Lubnan*

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

This is a study of one Islamic party: Hizbut-Tahrir, wilayat Lubnan (hereafter Hizbut-Tahrir). Throughout the study, we refer to the party by its Arabic name rather than its English translation (Islamic Liberation Party). It aims to shed light on the history, ideology, and recent stances of this important, albeit little researched, player. This study involves a review of primary and secondary sources in English and Arabic on Islamic movements as well as interviews with academics, specialists, state officials, and activists. There is a plethora of Islamic movements throughout the Arab and Islamic world with different ideologies, modes of organization, and levels of appeal. This is one example of an Islamic movement that has so far received limited attention in the growing literature on political Islam. What gives this study pertinence and currency is that the party's recent stances raised many question marks and concerns locally, regionally, and internationally. Following the end of the pax-syriana in Lebanon (El-Husseini, 2012), Hizbut-Tahrir (Islamic Liberation Party) became more active on the Lebanese scene -- especially in poor populated suburbs in Tripoli. The growing presence, activism, and appeal of the party, particularly in northern Lebanon, are what prompted this study.

By most accounts, Hizbut-Tahrir (Islamic Liberation Party) dates back to 1953, when its founder, the renowned Palestinian judge Taqiuddin al-Nabhani (b.1909 – d.1977), began spreading his ideas to select members of the community. These ideas centered on the importance of restoring the Islamic Caliphate (Khilafah) based on a

three stage approach. Soon afterwards, informal gatherings of party members started taking place in Palestine and spread as far as Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq. Almost invariably, governments reacted with hostility to such activities, imprisoning those whom they identified as party members or sympathizers. According to party sources, some members were even killed in jail (Al Nabhani, 2010).

One aim of the thesis is to understand how and when the party appeared on the Lebanese scene. This discussion will also focus on the suppression of the party by the Syrian-Lebanese security apparatus between the termination of the civil war and the end of the pax-Syriana. More importantly, the study will investigate the party's activities and stances since 2005.

Hizbut-Tahrir (Islamic Liberation Party) is a political party and not a religious order or a charity group. It, however, operates within an Islamic background. In line with most Islamic movements, it rejects the separation between religion and politics on the grounds that doing so is non-Islamic. The stated overarching goal of the party is to restore the Caliph within the Islamic Umma (nation) and to establish Islamic rule. In its public statements, Hizbut-Tahrir emphasizes that government must be established based on God's Book, the Holy Quran, and the noble Sunna of the Prophet. In its own self-understanding, the party was established in line with Quranic verse 3-104: "let there be among you a group that invites to the good, orders what is right and forbids what is evil, and they are those who are successful."<sup>1</sup>(Al Nabhani, 2010).

The party's avowed purpose is to restore the Islamic Umma to its glorious days after it had experienced a decline especially in the latter days of the Ottoman Empire and during the colonial-mandate period when western powers dominated most parts

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<sup>1</sup>All translations of Quranic verses are from the party website.

of the failed Ottoman Empire (e.g. Egypt, Palestine, and the Levant). According to Hizbut-Tahrir, the independent states that emerged after the exit of the European colonial-mandate powers proved to be blasphemous (Kufr) states because their foundations were borrowed from European powers and contradicted, sometimes blatantly, the teachings of Islam and its spirit. The party aims at educating people to live the Islamic way in an Islamic society under the umbrella of the Caliph, according to rules derived from the Quran and the Sunna -- which are the principle sources of Islamic Shari'a. In the Caliphate state, Muslims choose a Caliph who is appointed through Albay'a (adherence); and his role is to rule based on the Quran and the Sunna of the prophet. The role of the Caliph is to spread the message of Islam through Alda'wa (call for belief) and to protect the Islamic Umma through calling for Jihad against those who threaten its independence and core interests. The party aims to rescue the Islamic Umma from its dark period and to restore it to the ranks of the major world powers. This is to be achieved through educating people -- especially Muslims -- on Islam and how it can provide the bases for transforming the current realities of the Muslim Umma.

In the doctrine of the party, the Muslim Umma must confront infidels and states that promote infidelity (kufr). This confrontation need not be a violent or military one. Since it is a party for all Muslims, every Muslim, irrespective of gender, color, and race can be a member of Hizbut-Tahrir. Equally important -- at least as it mentions in its public statements --the party claims to be open to all Muslims irrespective of their doctrinal beliefs (Mazhab). Members of the party must commit to the Islamic doctrine: Al- Aqeeda. This commitment is supposed to have a transformational effect on party members leading them to blend with the other members and to work together to spread the Aqeeda (Al Nabhani, 2001).

The calling (Al Da'wa) for Islam is the principle driving force of the party. Through the calling, the party aims at instilling Islamic faith and ideas among nominally Muslim populations in Muslim-majority states. Members of Hizbut-Tahrir are expected to rebel against ideas that contravene God's teachings and to reject actions that displease God. They are to abide by and promote the lawful (Al Halal) and to stay away from and discourage the prohibited (Al Haram). (one of the best studies on the lawful and the prohibited from an Islamic perspective is Yusuf Qaradawi, *the lawful and the Prohibited...*) The Islamic creed (Aqeeda) is at the core of a comprehensive political doctrine that establishes a system for dealing with all the problems that people face: whether social, cultural, economic, and political. While Islam like all universal religions does not recognize borders, Hizbut-Tahrir is highly cognizant that it must begin its work in the most hospitable environment, namely states with large concentrations of Muslims.

As noted above, the party's manifesto (first articulated by al-Nabhani) emphasizes change through three stages: The first stage involves inculcating Islamic ideas and values among individuals. The second stage revolves around spreading those thoughts gradually, through interactions among party members and with other members of the Islamic Umma, in order to achieve as large a following as possible. The third stage, which is the natural culmination of the first two, is to implement concrete steps in order to establish an Islamic government (the Khilafa), which defends the Muslim Umma and spreads the message of Islam to the whole world (Al Nabhani, T. 2001). As the study will demonstrate, this is a controversial ideology, as some of its tenets are criticized by mainstream Islamic figures such as the renowned cleric sheikh Yousuf al-Qaradawi (Baroudi, 2014).

In light of Hizbut-Tahrir's greater room for maneuver following the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, a significant portion of the thesis will be devoted to presenting the party's stances on local and regional developments. In this regard, it must be noted that it was only in 2006 that the party was legalized by Lebanon's Ministry of Interior. This enabled the party to act in the open and to publicly present its positions regarding developments in Lebanon and the region. This thesis aims to capture the party's stances as far as present realities in Lebanon and the country's future prospects. Moreover, the thesis identifies the party's positions on regional issues, with regard to the question of Palestine, the Arab spring and most importantly the ongoing conflagration in neighboring Syria.

#### Methodology:

This study relies on a blend of secondary and primary sources. The secondary sources are used to place the study in its proper historic and ideational contexts. They focus on Islamic movements and the modern history and politics of Lebanon and the Arab world. The primary sources comprise the literature of Hizbut-Tahrir -- whether in publications or material that is posted on the party's official website ([www.hizbuttahrir.org](http://www.hizbuttahrir.org)). This material, which includes references in Arabic and English, is the primary source as far as the ideology of the party and its relations with the Lebanese state and other Islamic parties are concerned. The primary sources inform us about the thought of sheikh al-Nabhani and party activities and stances as seen by the party itself. Last but not least, I rely on interviews with selected party activists who helped me understand how the party operates. Given the limited academic literature on Hizbut-Tahrir, the party material and the interviews (i.e. The primary sources) were indispensable for conducting this study.

The main questions that the study raises these are presented as follows: To start with, what is the historic and ideational context in which the thought of al-Nabhani, which became the linchpin of the Islamic liberation party program, emerged? Second, what are the main tenets of the thought of the party founder? Third, how did the party thought and membership spread from Jerusalem and its environs to cover most Arab countries as well as other majority-Muslim countries (e.g. Indonesia) and the Western countries. Fourth, how did the party establish itself in Lebanon and how did it relate to other Lebanese Islamic movement and to the Lebanese state during the many phases that the Lebanese political system went through (ie pre-civil war in Lebanon, the civil war years, the pax-Syriana period, and the current phases since the withdrawal of Syrian troops in spring 2005). Fifth, what are the party's stances regarding the Palestinian issue especially since the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) IN 1993? Sixth, how did the party perceive the Arab spring and how does it situate itself vis-a-vis the unfolding events. Last but not least, have the recent changes contributed to a more hospitable environment for the fulfillment of the party's long dream of reestablishing the Islamic caliphate? Through addressing these questions, the thesis hopes to acquaint the reader with the thought and praxis of a hitherto little studied Islamic movement.

Outline of the thesis:

Because this is a case study that requires work with primary material in Arabic, it sacrifices breadth for depth. In other words, the focus shall remain on this specific party, rather than casting the net too widely to cover Islamic movements and political Islam. Chapter two provides a detailed overview of the thought of the party founder Sheikh Taquiuddin al-Nabhani and the historic and ideational trends that influenced

his thinking. Chapter three focuses on one concrete manifestation of al-Nabhani's thought and activism; the founding of Hizbut-Tahrir Wilayat Lubnan. Chapter four takes us back to Palestine, the birth place of Hizbut-Tahrir. It reviews the Party of Liberation stances on the Palestinian struggle; and in particular party activism in Gaza and the west bank since the inception of the autonomous Palestinian authority in 1993. It also provides an *exposé* of the party stances on regional issues since the onset of the Arab Spring. Finally, chapter five is the concluding chapter which reviews again the main ideas of the thesis.

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Life and Thought of Sheikh Mohamad Taqiuddin al-Nabhani and the Founding of Hizbut-Tahrir**

This chapter introduces Hizbut-Tahrir and Mohamad Taqiuddin al-Nabhani, its founder. It elaborates on the major historical and ideological influences that shaped up al-Nabhani's life and attend to the family and environment he grew up in. After a discussion of the development of the party, the chapter discusses some of the important principles upheld by Hizbut-Tahrir and elaborates on its spread throughout the corners of the globe.

#### **2.1 Introducing Mohamad Taqiuddin Al-Nabhani**

Mohamad Taqiuddin bin Ibrahim bin Mustafa bin Ismail bin Yusuf al-Nabhani's lineage is traced back to the ancient Arab tribe of Bani Nabhan, which settled in the village of Ijzim (currently in the West Bank) in the district of Safad in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Safad had belonged to the city of Haifa in the north of Palestine and the Jewish settlement of Kiral Mehral was established on its ruins in 1949.

Aside from being fond of religious science and literature, al-Nabhani's family was among those who cherished the Ottoman caliphate. Within the confines of this family, Taqiuddin al-Nabhani memorized the entire Holy Quran before the age of thirteen, and was taught the Shari'a by his father Sheikh Ibrahim as well as by his grandfather Sheikh Yusuf al-Nabhani<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Sheikh Yusuf al-Nabhani studied at al-Azhar and then went on to work as an editor at the printing house of "al-Jawai'b" newspaper in al-Astana. Upon his return to the Levant, he resided in Beirut for nearly twenty years after working in the judiciary world and becoming the head of its Court of Law in

Taqiuddin Al-Nabhani was born in 1914. As aforementioned, he was taught the principles of religious science by his father and maternal grandfather; the latter also helped him memorize the Holy Quran at a young age. Al-Nabhani began his elementary studies in Palestine's public schools, he then moved to Acre ('Akka) in order to continue high school (Spencer & Roberts, 2008), but he did not complete his studies there. At his grandfather, Sheikh Yusuf al-Nabhani's, wish he traveled to Cairo, instead, in an attempt to join the prestigious al-Azhar school. He enrolled in al-Azhar high school in Egypt and graduated with honors. He was then admitted to its Faculty of Sciences where he attended seminars conducted by sheikhs his grandfather had introduced him to such as Sheikh Mohamad al-Khodor Hussein -- whose influence on the young al-Nabhani will be explained in a later chapter.

In 1932, al-Nabhani graduated from al-Azhar University with a degree in Shari'a law and a diploma in Arabic language and literature from al-Azhar's Faculty of Science. Between 1929 and 1932 he worked toward and earned a bachelor's degree in judiciary studies from the Higher Institute of Islamic courts, which is also under al-Azhar's jurisdiction. Afterwards, he took a teaching post in the field of Islamic religious law at the Palestinian department in the secondary schools of Haifa. Later on in 1938 he applied to join the religious courts (Shari'a courts) because he preferred to be in the judiciary field where several of his colleagues, who had previously studied with him at al-Azhar, were then working. With their help, he was appointed as a clerk

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1887 A.D. He then traveled to Medina, and when the First World War broke out, he returned back to his village, where he spent his last days. Al-Nabhani wrote several books on the topics of Sufism, literature, Hadith (Prophetic tradition), history, and Interpretation of the Quran (Tafseer), and more than 48 of his books went to print, most of which he had composed during his stay in Beirut. He has several books criticizing Ibn Taymiyyah (from the school of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, 1263-1328) and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah (1292-1350) (Wahhabi figures). Some of his notable publications include: A Compilation of the Dignities of the Islamic Rulers "Jame' Karamat al-Awliya," The Collection of Al-Nabhani's Praise of Prophet "al-Majmou'ah al-Nabhaniyah fil-Madai'h al-Nabawiyyah," and The Small Wonder "al-Rai'ah al-Soughrah," the last of which is a long poem that criticizes Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Sheikh Mohamad Abdo and Mohamad Rashid Rida (Spencer & Roberts, 2008).

to the court of Bissan, after which he was transferred to Tiberias, and then to Haifa as the head of clerks in Haifa's religious court (Al Nadawi, 1965).

In 1945, he was appointed as a judge at the Court of Ramla (an ancient Arab city between Jaffa and Jerusalem which used to be one of the five districts of al-sham province under the Abbasid and Ummayyad Empires) in Palestine. He served as vice president of the association "Al I'tisam," which was founded by Sheikh Mohamad Nimr al-Khatib in Haifa in 1941 with the purpose of combating prostitution, alcohol-consumption and gambling among other vices. There, he met Hassan al-Banna's (the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood) brother-in-law, Saeed Ramadan, who called him to join Sheikh al-Khatib and the Muslim Brotherhood movement. Al-Nabhani, however, did not respond positively to the call because he wished to focus on his career. In 1946, al-Nabhani met Abdul Aziz al-Khayat in Ramla. Al-Khayat (b.1891 - d.1970) was one of the first Palestinians to join the growing ranks of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine. Al-Khayat, however, would later leave the brotherhood to join al-Nabhani's Hizbut-Tahrir after the latter founded the party. This incident highlights the fluidity of Islamic movements, in the sense that it is not uncommon for Islamists to move from one Islamic party to another; it also exposes some of the basic similarities of thought between the Brotherhood and other smaller movements such as Hizbut-Tahrir.

Following the Palestine war in 1948, al-Nabhani left Ramla for Damascus. But later, in the same year, he returned home to become a judge on the Shari'a Court of Jerusalem. In 1951, al-Nabhani arrived in Amman, Jordan where he settled until the beginning of 1953 – which is also the year Hizbut – Tahrir was established. As the thesis will later demonstrate, Hizbit-Tahrir has been, for years, part of the Islamic movements' scene in Jordan (Alaywan, 2009). Although al-Nabhani was traveling

around the region during this period, the bulk of his energies were devoted to promoting the new party in Palestine and its environs.

## **2.2 Sheikh al-Nabhani and The Founding of Hizbut-Tahrir**

Hizbut-Tahrir was founded in the city of Jerusalem in 1953. At that time, Sheikh al-Nabhani had become a member of the Shari'a Court of Appeal in Jerusalem. Undoubtedly, though, the official launching of the party was preceded by several years of planning, which probably started as early as 1949. Around 1953, al-Nabhani met with several religious figures and 'ulama, including Sheikh Ahmed Daour, Nemr el-Masri, Daoud Hamdan, Adel al-Nabulsi, Ghanem Abdo, Munir Shoukeir, and Sheikh Abdul Qadeem Zalloum near Jerusalem. It is worth noting that Sheikh Abdul Qadeem Zalloum-- who hails from al-Khalil city -- eventually became second in command to Sheikh al-Nabhani in the hierarchy of Hizbut-Tahrir. With al-Nabhani in the lead, these figures formed the nucleus of the new party (Al Kilani, 1995).

Due to the senior position he came to occupy in the party, a brief discussion of the life of Sheikh Abdul Qadeem Zalloum is worthwhile. Sheikh Zalloum was the son of sheikh Yousef bin Abdul-Qadim bin Younes bin Ibrahim al-Sheikh Zalloum. He came from a family that was well known for its religious devotion; his father, who had worked as a teacher during the Ottoman period was the one who taught him how to memorize the Holy Quran. His father's uncle, Abdul Ghaffar Younis Zalloum was the mufti of al-Khalil during the Ottoman Empire. The Zalloums were one of the families that served in the Ibrahimi Mosque in Jerusalem.

Sheikh Abdul Qadeem Zalloum was born and raised in the city of al-Khalil until he was fifteen years old, completing his primary education at the Abrahamic School of al-Khalil before joining al-Azhar University to learn the principles of jurisprudence (fiqh) in 1939. He received his first merit degree from al-Azhar mosque in 1942 and

his Shari'ah law degree with a specialization in jurisdiction from the Faculty of Shari'ah (also from al-Azhar) in 1949.

After that, he taught in the schools of Bethlehem for two years after which he moved back to al-Khalil, in 1951, to also work as a teacher. In 1952, he met Sheikh Taqiuddin al-Nabhani and started to go regularly to Jerusalem in order to coordinate and further discuss the development of Hizbut-Tahrir with him. He joined the party upon its inception in 1953; rising to a leading position by 1956. He published several books which include: Funds in the Khilafah State "Al Amwal fi Dawlat Alkhilafah," Hizbut-Tahrir's Curriculum for Change, "Manhaj Hizbut-Tahrir fi AlTaghyir," and Definitions in Hizbut-Tahrir "Altaarif Fi Hizbut-Tahrir. The last of these books enshrined several of Hizbut-Tahrir's principles, which became part of its doctrine. Sheikh Zalloum passed away of natural causes on April 29, 2003 and was buried at the same site in Beirut as al-Nabhani (Esposito, 2003).

Going back to the founding of the party, in 1952, the founding members of Hizbut-Tahrir formally applied before the Jordanian Ministry of Interior to obtain a license allowing them to establish a political party. The party's cabinet came to comprise Taqiuddin al-Nabhani as president, Daoud Hamdan as vice president and secretary, Ghanem Abdo as treasurer. Two other key founding members were Adel al-Nabulsi and Munir Shoukeir. Towards the end of the first Arab-Israeli war, an armistice agreement was signed between Israel and Jordan, on April 13, 1949. The terms of the armistice left Jordan in control of the West Bank including East Jerusalem. In 1950, Jordan formally annexed the West Bank; an act was then criticized by the Arab league and other parties (Moussalli, 2004).

On March 14, 1953, with its base located in Jerusalem, Hizbut-Tahrir obtained the license to commence its party activities according to the enforceable Ottoman law on associations. However, on March 22, 1953 the Jordanian authorities had a change of mind, issuing a statement which considered Hizbut-Tahrir illegal, thereby prohibiting its members from any party-related activity. Subsequently, the authorities arrested some party members. This banning of the party, so soon after its emergence, was due to the authorities' heightened suspicions regarding its political aims (Al Kilani, 1995). In November 1953, the Jordanian authorities forced al-Nabhani to flee Palestine to Damascus; he was not allowed to return because of the ban on the party's activities. In Damascus, the Syrian authorities arrested al-Nabhani, forcing him out of Syria and into Lebanon. Although Syria at the time was still -- at least on paper -- a parliamentary democracy, then Syrian president, Adib al-Shishakli was showing signs of unease toward the operations of Islamic movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the smaller Hizbut-Tahrir. Equally important is the fact that al-Shishakli had a good rapport with king Talal bin Abdullah of Jordan. Al-Shishakli believed that king Talal had abandoned old Hashemite ambitions about annexing Syria and wanted to avoid a confrontation with him. In a nutshell, the Syrian authorities saw little benefit and no political capital to be generated from granting asylum to the exiled Sheikh. Accordingly, they sought to deport him to neighboring Lebanon. Initially, the Lebanese authorities refused to admit al-Nabhani to Lebanon, which meant that he would remain in the neutral zone between Lebanon and Syria, but following the intercession of then Mufti of the Lebanese Republic Sheikh Hassan al-Alaya (who was Mufti between 1952 and 1966), he was granted permission to enter Lebanese territory. The involvement of Mufti al-Alaya in this issue reflected al-

Nabhani's growing influence outside Palestine and his recognition as a religious scholar of significant standing (Al Markaz Al Arabi, 2006).

Following al-Nabhani's departure in 1953, Sheikh Abdul Qadeem Zalloum and Sheikh Ahmad Daour became in charge of party affairs in Palestine in 1956. This period witnessed the beginning of fractures within the party, as two of the founding members –Daoud Hamdan and Nemr al-Masri – left the party because they believed that al-Nabhani was not consulting enough with the other leaders, which ran contrary to the principle of al-Shoura (Alaywan, 2009).

Benefiting from Lebanon's relatively open political system, Sheikh al-Nabhani worked on spreading his ideas among the Lebanese educated youth; he managed to do so without interference until 1958. The year 1958 was a critical one in Lebanon's history because it witnessed the revolt of the country's Muslim leaders against the Christian dominated regime of Camille Chamoun (1952-1958). During that year, the Lebanese authorities began to restrict al-Nabhani's movement after realizing that his ideas were threatening the fragile status quo and sectarian balance in the country. To avoid arrest, al-Nabhani fled Beirut to Tripoli, which at the time was under the control of Chamoun's opposition (Attie, 2004).

During the reign of Abdul Salam 'Aref, between 1963 and 1966, and while being primarily based in Lebanon, Sheikh al-Nabhani traveled to Iraq several times. Although sources are vague on this issue, for understandable reasons, one can only speculate that al-Nabhani and the Iraqi leader saw some mutual benefit from striking up a friendship. Arguably, 'Aref wanted to strengthen ties with Sunni religious leaders who would contribute to undermining the secular Arab nationalist ideology championed by Egyptian President Jamal Abdul Nasser. In its own publications, Hizbut Tahrir justifies these visits on the grounds of al-Nabhani's support for the

people of Iraq. Relations with ‘Aref, however, deteriorated, for reasons we are not aware of (although we can speculate that it had to do with the Nasser-Aref rapprochement and it is in this context that one must read the arrest and torture of al-Nabhani at the hands of the Iraqi security services) (Al Nabhani, 2010). On December 11, 1977, Sheikh al-Nabhani passed away in Beirut of natural causes and was buried near al- Khashekji mosque in the martyrs’ cemetery (Wagemakers, 2012).

### **2.3 Principles of Hizbut – Tahrir**

Undoubtedly, the restoration of the Islamic caliphate represents the overarching goal of Hizbut-Tahrir. It is also the central idea in the thought of al-Nabhani. This belief that the unity of the Muslim Umma is to be achieved through the reestablishment of the caliphate is the linchpin of the party ideology. Al-Nabhani’s writings provide considerable insights on: 1) why the caliphate is needed, 2) its functions and 3) the means to restore it. Al-Nabhani provides a succinct definition of the office of the Caliphate “It is the general head for all Muslims in order to establish the provisions of Islamic Sharia and to carry the call of Islam to the world; it is both the imamate and the caliphate in one.” The caliph<sup>3</sup> is thus simultaneously a ruler with extensive (albeit not unbounded powers); as well as the principal spokesman for Islam and its chief advocate.

To reiterate, in line with al-Nabhani’s thought, the end goal of the party is to set up the caliphate. Al Nabhani defines the concept of the caliphate and explains the conditions for setting it up. He goes on to explain the means of adherence (*albayaa*) to the caliph as well as who participates in this process. Furthermore, al-Nabhani caters to all possible scenarios and circumstances that the Umma might be subjected

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<sup>3</sup> The Caliph heads the caliphate. It is the official title for the head of state of the Islamic Umma (Islamic community ruled by Sharia).

to from the removal of the caliph to the Umma's loss of the caliphate -- as is the reality today -- which is described in al-Nabhani's volume "The Caliphate" (*Al-khilafah*). This important work by al-Nabhani has become a major reference point for the party of Liberation on this issue. In *Al-khilafah*— which is part of a larger tome entitled "The Islamic Character" (*Al-Shakhsiyya al-Islamiyya*) – al-Nabhani states that setting up the caliphate is the duty of every Muslim residing in every corner of the globe. Accordingly, working for the reestablishment of the caliphate is a duty incumbent on all Muslims just like the other religious duties (al-Faraed); such as prayer, fasting and paying alms.

Al-Nabhani believes that allegiance to the caliph can be expressed with a handshake or in writing. In this regard, he does not discriminate between men and women. Women can shake hands with the caliph as part of the ceremony of al-Bay'a, the same way men can. This symbolic acknowledgement of women's role in al-bay'a is not recognized by the mainstream Sunni sects; namely: the Shafi, Hanafi, Maliki, and Hanbali sects.

To qualify to this supreme office within the Muslim Umma, the Caliph must demonstrate the following attributes: First, he must be an adult Muslim male of a mature age and of proven Quarayshi descent (Quraysh being the tribe of the Prophet Muhammad). Second, he must demonstrate the qualities of rational reasoning and arguing and be fair to all members of the Umma. Third, he must labor tirelessly for the causes of the Umma, and dedicate all his energies (and those of his immediate subordinates) to ensure rule in accordance to the Sharia. Finally, he must ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to support the spreading of the message of Islam globally.

While Al-Nabhani does not provide clear answers to how the Caliph is to be chosen, he recommends several approaches to facilitate the process of selection. Al-Nabhani does not object to the recent methods of voting, such as casting a secret ballot, for one's preferred candidate. In a nutshell, modern processes can be used to fill this highly traditional office (Abu Al Rashta, 2005).

Al-Nabhani disagrees with the opinion that Sharia dictates the person who occupies the office of Caliph. For him, this notion contradicts the principle of declaring allegiance (albaya') in person or through voting. Al-Nabhani's understanding of the caliphate can be summarized as follows. First, the Caliph has to be chosen by members of the Muslim community. In al-Nabhani's reading of Islamic history, the prophet did not appoint a successor in order not to bind the hands of his surviving companions. While Sharia requires the presence of a Caliph to lead the Umma, the selection of this person is to be done by Muslims. Choice based on knowledge of the qualifications of the contesters is an indispensable element of proper Islamic governance. In this regard, Al-Nabhani notes: "The office of prophecy and conveying the message is separate from that of ruling the community because prophecy is a divine gift bestowed by Allah, while the office of the Caliph is an earthly position to which Muslims choose whomever they deem fit to rule over them as Caliph". The Caliph thus discharges of the temporal duties that were once exercised by the Prophet; but he does not (and cannot) assume any prophetic role, since prophecy ended with Muhammad (Al-Nabhani, 2001).

Al-Nabhani laments the absence of qualified state men who could assume the tremendous duties of the office of Caliph and discharge of these duties in such a

manner as to bring felicity to the rise of Muslims and alleviate the status of the Muslim Umma to place it at par or even ahead of all other nations (Zalloum, 2002).

In an accompanying volume "The Islamic State,"(Al-Dawla al-Islamiyya),al-Nabhani warns of the dangers of infatuation with western democracy and western culture. For al-Nabhani western culture is a product of the colonial west which subjugated Muslim people and poisoned their minds against true Islamic rule. It is only by rejecting western democracy and culture that Muslims can genuinely become independent of the west and masters of their own destiny.

In al-Nabhani's view, the role of Hizbut-Tahrir is not to lend legitimacy to nations whose boundaries were drawn by the European colonial powers, but to work to abolish these artificial borders in order to reestablish the unity of the Muslim Umma through resurrecting the one Caliphate. At its essence, the project of restoring the Caliphate is about reestablishing the lost unity of the Muslim Umma. Al-Nabhani offers a somewhat innovative reading of the life of the Prophet Mohamad. In line with the Islamic tradition, he distinguishes between the Meccan and Madinian periods. In the Meccan period, al-Nabhani notes the prophet consecrated himself to spreading the message of Islam in his community through purely peaceful means. The prophet endured persecution for years. It was only after the migration to Medina and the growth in the number and power of Muslims that the prophet assumed temporal duties as the ruler of the first Muslim community. Al-Nabhani sees himself as treading in the path of the prophet when he focuses on spreading his ideas which to whom emanate from a true understanding of Islam. The ultimate goal of reestablishing the Caliphate cannot be achieved instantly;it requires arduous and long work to educate Muslims on the centrality of the Caliphate in Islam(Al Nabhani, 2002).

In line with al-Nabhani's thinking, Hizbut - Tahrir focuses on the principles that should guide the transition from a divided weak Umma to a united strong Umma under the Caliphate state. These principles include: First and foremost, the sovereignty of the Sharia in the sense that there should be no manmade laws that contravene the Sharia. Stated otherwise, the lives of Muslims ought to be guided by divine rules that are enshrined in the holy Quran and the noble Sunna of the Prophet. In support of this, Hizbut-Tahrir invokes the following Quranic verse: "All ye who believe obey Allah and obey the prophet and those who have command over you." Second, the Sharia needs to be applied in the context of the needs of the time. It is the role of the Caliph supported by the Ulama (religious scholars) to adapt the Sharia to contemporary circumstances and to derive, when needed, specific laws from the Sharia. Third, reestablishing the Caliphate is a collective duty that all true Muslims need to engage in. Last but not least, upon the selection of the Caliph, it becomes incumbent on him to ensure that the Sharia is properly applied in all ways of life. This is a multifaceted task requiring the promulgation of new laws based on Sharia and the implementation of these laws in a fair and prompt manner. In a nutshell, the Caliphate state is administered by a competent and honest Caliph who is supported by competent aides; and who rules not based on individual whim or caprice, but in line with the dictates of the Sharia.

Hizbut -Tahrir emphasizes that the Caliph must govern based on an Islamic constitution. This Islamic constitution is to be drawn by prominent Ulama who are steeped in Islamic sciences and who understand the prevalent political and social realities facing Muslims (Zalloum, 2002).

## **2.4 Sheikh al-Nabhani's Background and Influences on his Thought**

This section considers three broad types of influences on the thought of al-Nabhani which also impacted the creed of the party he founded. The first set of influences is historic in nature pertaining to 1) European encroachments on the Ottoman Empire, 2) the imposition of the British mandate on Palestine which culminated with Palestine's partition, and 3) the abolishment of the Islamic Caliphate and failed attempts to restore it in the Arab World. The second set of influences is ideological and pertains to the clash between the beliefs of al-Nabhani and each of Marxism and Arab nationalism. Finally, the third set revolves around family influences.

#### **2.4.1 Historic Influences**

Arguably, it was the British mandate in Palestine, and British support for Jewish immigration, that provided the initial impetus for al-Nabhani's political thought and activism. Al-Nabhani spent his formative years in Palestine which was then under the British mandate (1918-1948). The Zionist assault on Palestine that ensued after the British mandate fueled his future political endeavors. Like the overwhelming majority of Palestinians, al-Nabhani was opposed to the Zionist project in Palestine and to the British occupation and its acquiescence for the Zionist project. Therefore, the thought of al-Nabhani, and the party he founded, ought to be considered, first and foremost, in the context of local resistance to the Western colonial project whose main manifestation was support for Jewish immigration to Palestine and later to the country's partition between Arabs and Jews. In a nutshell, this principled opposition to the "Western-Zionist Colonial" project in Palestine and the Arab world represented the bedrock for the political thought of al-Nabhani (Al Nabhani, 1950).

Al-Nabhani was cognizant of the conspiracy against Palestine and the multiple schemes to compromise its Arab and Islamic character. In al-Nabhani's view,

Palestine had a known and clear enemy, “the Jews -- a “sly and deceitful enemy,” Britain, and finally the Arab countries who had claimed their commitment to Palestine by sending their armies only to stand at the divisive border without really fighting. In fact, Sheikh al-Nabhani goes on to explicitly accuse the Arab states of conspiracy, and insists that the only thing the Arabs achieved by entering Palestine was to halt the Jews at the borders they had already reached. This demonstrated that they did not enter the country to really destroy the Jewish state or reverse the partition because it would compromise their international relations in general and relations with Britain in particular. Regional ambitions and personal hatred stopped the Arabs from taking the proper military decisions that would have led to the freedom of Palestine (Al Nabhani, 1950).

In October 1947, a plan that addresses the imminent Palestinian crises was approved at the Alley meeting in Mount Lebanon. This plan stipulated that the reliance in resisting the Jewish state is on the Palestinian people and that the Arab states will however supply arms, ammunition and money while remaining at the borders. Nonetheless, this plan was hijacked. In fact, the Mufti of Palestine al-Haj Mohamad Amin al-Husseini (b. 1895 – d. 1974) reveals in his memoirs that due to British and Jewish pressure on the Arabs, the plan was modified. Furthermore, these foreign powers convinced the Arabs to distance Palestinians from the battle, and pushed some of them to bring in their armies, instead, into Palestine. Moreover, following the modification of the plan, the Arab League took some dubious decisions, which according to critics, aimed at intentionally weakening the Palestinian resistance to the increasingly assertive and militant Jewish settlers.

These measures allegedly included. First, the Arab League cut off all financial aid which had been approved during the Bloudan Conference<sup>4</sup> in Syria in 1946. Equally important, it confiscated all money donated by the Arab people. Last but not least, the military commission that the Arab League had appointed refrained from distributing weapons (which the political committee of the Arab League had already approved in 1947), and fourth, the military committee confiscated the abundant weapons which the Lebanese people had paid for in 1947 to arm al-Mujahidin under the leadership of Abdul Kader Husseini.

During this difficult period, Hajj Mohamad Amin al-Husseini emerged as a first-class political symbol and as a religious figure immersed in politics, especially after he lost his bet on the Central Powers led by Germany during World War II, which had dreamed would eliminate the Zionists and liberate Palestine. Consequently, it is worth mentioning that he was expelled from Palestine for thirty years between 1937 and 1967 (Al Hout, 1986). Clearly then, al-Nabhani was not the only religious figure to be drawn to politics due to the turbulence that Palestine witnessed in the later 1940s and 1950s.

Equally important, the thought of al-Nabhani ought to be placed in the context of the centuries of decline of Ottoman power beginning from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the concomitant growth of the power of the Christian west. The growing imbalance of power between the Muslim East and the Christian West forced the Ottoman sultans to grant many concessions to western powers and their Christian protégés in the Ottoman Empire. These continuous encroachments on the rights and privileges of the Muslim population left strong imprints on the character and thought of many Muslim figures throughout the Islamic world. From an Islamic

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<sup>4</sup> The Bloudan conference, which was held in Bloudan, Syria, was a response to the British-American committee decisions that agreed on dividing Palestine (Aloudwan, 2009).

point of view, the final coup de grace came with the abolishing of the Ottoman caliphate in 1924 at the hands of the secular Turkish officers, who were led by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (who became the *bête noire* for many Islamic movements).

The Islamic response to the shift in the balance of power in favor of the Christian West and the corresponding encroachments of Western powers and Western institutions, norms and beliefs prompted the emergence of local Islamic resistance movements against European and US colonialism. Hizbut-Tahrir was one of these movements, albeit not the first. For instance, and in other parts of the Muslim world, in an earlier period, Abdelkader al-Jazaeiri (b. 1808 – d. 1883) launched armed resistance against the French in Algeria. In Sudan, and in response to British colonialism, the al-Mahdiya movement emerged to confront British occupation. In Libya, the al-Sanussiyya movement fought against the Italian occupation, triggering a relentless and violent campaign to quell opposition taking the lives of thousands of Libyans in the process (Al Ansari, 1980).

This resistance, however, did not succeed in defeating Western encroachments and was largely ineffective. Subsequently, several Muslim intellectuals and activists sought to better understand and emulate the scientific and military achievements of the West in order to contain Western attempts at further expansion. In this context of limited reconciliation with the West, the so called reconciliatory ("al-Tawfikiyya" ) movement emerged. Painting with a broad brush, advocates of al-Tawfikiyya believed in a nuanced approach to the West. They understood the importance of drawing on the achievements of the West in the military, scientific and even intellectual spheres in order to improve the lot of the Muslim world. However, such advocates remained

entrenched to the basic teachings of the Islamic religion (although they understood them differently from most of their predecessors).

Equally important, they rejected the assimilation of the Muslim world into the west and sought to resist -- primarily via peaceful means. It is in this context of renewal that advocates of al-Tawfiqiyya sought to promote an understanding of Islam that does not place it necessarily on a collision course with Western culture. Broadly speaking, and despite individual differences in approach, this movement was led by diverse figures such as Jamal Eddin al-Afghani (1838-1897), Mohamad Abdo (1849-1905) and Abdul Rahman al-Kawakibi (1854-1902). The movement demonstrated openness to external influences (as long as they did not contradict the basic principles of Islam) and accepted co-existence with Europe, contrary to Islamic fundamentalism, of which more will be said further on.

In sum, the al-Tawfiqiyya movement preaches that Islam accepts all that is true, essential and necessary for society to survive and flourish, taking into account the realities of time and space. This openness is anchored in many Qur'anic verses that encourage Muslims to dialogue with others; and to benefit from the knowledge and achievements of all cultures in order to improve the welfare of the Muslim community (Al Ansari, 1980).

Advocates of al-Tawfiqiyya supported the rejuvenation of the Islamic civilization at the mental, intellectual, socioeconomic and scientific levels. According to its critics, though, this openness contravened some basic Islamic principles and departed from the opinion of the community (al-jama'a). Furthermore, those critics maintain that this flexible attitude toward Islam, that al-Tawfiqiyya became associated with, opened the flood gates for the spread of secular thought throughout the Arab world. For those critics, it was not by coincidence that both al-Tawfiqiyya (as a school of

thought) and secular Arab nationalist thought emanated from Egypt in the early part of the twentieth century.

The secular movement in Egypt was initially represented by the magazine “al-Moktataf” and the newspaper "al-Moqattam," as well as by its members Yaacoub Sarrouf, Shaheen Makarios and Gerji Zeidan (1861-1914). During this early period, though, the champions of secularism, whether in Egypt or the Levant, were primarily Christians who were educated at least in part in the West. Despite some limited notable exceptions (e.g. Lutfi al-Sayed, and Tawfic Hakim in Egypt) secular ideology has not yet penetrated the ranks of Muslim elites, to say nothing about the masses. Nevertheless, secularism was becoming a potent force in the region and a serious challenge to the hegemony of traditional Muslim thought (Al Ansari, 1980).

The abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924 represented another impetus to the development of the creed of Hizbut Tahrir. In brief, the party interpreted this move a major and unprecedented assault by the West and secular elements in Turkey on the Muslim Umma. That same year, the Cairo conference, failed to produce a new successor to the deposed Ottoman Sultan Abdul majid II who only ruled from 1922 to 1924. A possible candidate could have been King Fouad (b.1868- d.1936) of Egypt, but this did not materialize (Piscatori, 2006).

A second conference was held two years later, in May 1926, in Cairo at al-Azhar University. Many scholars from the Muslim world attended, which proved this attempt to be more serious than previous conferences held and efforts made to restore the Khilafah. This second attempt, or what was known as the General Islamic Conference, involved scholars and dignitaries from Syria, Morocco, Iraq, the Arabian Peninsula and India, as well as delegates from a few countries in Europe and South Africa. As a result of this conference and to better achieve the greater goal of

restoring the Islamic Umma -- headed by the Caliphate -- committees were formed and commissioned to confirm the necessity of restoring the caliphate in Islam and study and reflect upon the conditions, in Islam, that dictate the succession of the caliphate.

The conference recognized the possibility of restoring the legitimate Islamic caliphate, suggesting that Muslims in the eastern world, as well as in the west, begin preparing the scene and means for reviving it. In order to achieve a successful conference, a large representation of all stakeholders in the restoration of the caliphate system was present. The conference attendants included prominent members of the Muslim community with a diverse body of Muslims being represented in a meeting in Cairo as delegates of various Muslim countries worked together on finding Islamic terms for the caliphate(Rida, 1926).

Mohamad Rashid Rida (b.1865- d.1935), a prominent Lebanese Islamic thinker who wrote extensively on the principles of and the need for an Islamic state, and who was a member of one of the sub-committees of the General Islamic Conference, wrote a treatise which brought the concept of the caliphate closer to reality by suggesting that the social and intellectual elites play the role of problem solvers and advisors (Ahl el-Aked and Ahl el-Shoura) with regard to resolving the issues that may arise in the Umma. Rida's practical suggestions have heavily influenced and are reflected in al-Nabhani's theory on establishing the caliphate, which was written a quarter of a century later. Al-Nabhani was particularly moved by Rida's opinion on the elites. He refuted the idea of a predominant caliphate and put restrictions on the caliph in order to prevent the caliph from abusing his power at the cost of the public. Rida, however, criticized the Ottoman state in his memoire, mentioning that it was not a legitimate succession, nor was it valid because it was a caliphate of defeat (Khilafat taghalob).

His vision for the ideal state was one where there is no oppressor and no victim. A just rule would be achieved if the reigns were passed over to the elites (Al Abyad, 1993).

#### **2.4.2 Ideological Influences**

At the ideational level, the ideas of Hizbut-Tahrir represented a reaction to the spread of two ideologies to the Arab world; Marxism and Arab nationalism. In the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Marxism represented an important, albeit not an existentialist, threat to the hegemony of Islamic thought in the Arab world. Marxist ideas began to creep into the Arab and Muslim world shortly after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917 (Roy, 2004). As with secular ideologies (e.g. nationalism), the initial advocates of Marxian thought in the region were non-Muslims. This is not to deny that some Muslim thinkers (such as in Sudan) were swayed by Marxian thought and did not see Marxism as contradicting the basic teachings of Islam. What lured a minority in the Arab world to Marxian thought was its revolutionary potential, opposition to western imperialism and its alleged status as a scientific approach to analyzing society and its promise of eradicating serious and endemic problems, primarily: poverty, backwardness and utter dependence on the West (Rodinson, 1979).

At a later stage, socialist and communist parties began to spread in the Arab world. The Egyptian Communist Party was founded in 1922, and other parties followed suit. Ahmed Refaat translated into Arabic the first Marxian works -- namely: V.I. Lenin's State and Revolution. The Syrian intellectual Khaled Bikdash (1912-1995) translated the Communist Manifesto in 1933. The inroads that Marxism made into the Arab world remained quite limited. The appeal of this ideology did not spread

to the masses -- except in limited geographic areas; e.g. some sections of Iraq and Sudan (Abdul Hakim, 1962).

On the contrary, Arab nationalist thought, which from the outset presented itself as indigenous (rather than European inspired), caught fire with large sections of the Arab elites and masses alike. Some Arab researchers believe that Mohamad Ali Pasha's rule in Egypt between 1805 and 1847, and his reform activities as well as the expansion in the Levant, Sudan and the Arabian Peninsula is the first unitary work in Arab modern history.

Mohammad Ali Pasha's dreams of unity collided with the European colonial invasion of Arab countries: France occupied Algeria in 1830, Britain rushed to control the island of Sumatra as well as Aden in 1834, and many other Arabic countries were stripped from the Ottoman Empire. The Christian missionaries who had infiltrated some of these countries stepped up in preparation for the colonial movement through the dissemination of language teaching and cultural activities as well as humanitarian aid, taking advantage of the facilities granted to them, especially in the era of Ibrahim Pasha. Among the intellectuals who emerged in cultural forums at the time were Nasif al Yaziji (b.1800 - d.1871), Adel Arslan (b.1887 - d.1954) and Botrous al-Bustani (b.1819 – d.1883). This activism led to authoring encyclopedias, publishing newspapers and writing books. Thus, two essential forces emerged in Lebanon in support of the Arabic mission, a French force and an American force, and both helped support the Arabic Ba'ath (Geddes, 1981).

Following the conflict between the so-called methodology (almanhajiyah alTawfikiyya), European secularism and Islamic fundamentalism, the force and technology gained power and control on the ground due to their colonial power. As a

result, Egypt was occupied in 1882, the French and British gained full control over the Levant in 1918 and the Caliphate was abolished in 1924.

This is how the West was directly able to govern the Levant, by dominating through its administrative and political approaches, as well as through its methodology in economics and civism, and by gearing the region into following its global capitalist cycle. This European dominance consisted of exporting raw material, relying on the Levant as a consuming market for European products, and using the region as a strategic corridor for its trade routes. Strongly and vigorously, western cultural influences began permeating to Arab societies.

While opinions differ on the reasons behind the emergence and spread of Arab nationalist thought, it is evident that its proponents could appeal to broad sections of the Arab public. This appeal stemmed from the population's disenchantment with the Ottoman era, which had produced little development in the Arab world, and its vehement opposition to the preservation of the colonial system, even if under new guises. Arab nationalists (unlike Arab liberals) advocated severing ties with the colonial west, were open to socialist ideas, and above all adopted a benign attitude toward Islam. Through accommodating their ideology to Islam and avoiding any direct assault on its tenets, Arab nationalists were able to draw support from many observant Muslims. Moreover, the most ardent champions of Arab nationalism in the second part of the twentieth century were devout Muslims. Jamal Abdel Nasser was arguably the prime manifestation of this conciliation between Arab nationalism and Islam; although there are many other examples at least at the level of rhetoric (such as Saddam Hussein in Iraq (Tibi, 1997)).

Critics of Arab nationalism, nevertheless, point to its European origins. In support of their viewpoint, they emphasize that Arab nationalists adopt a western construal of

the Umma which emphasizes language, common history and culture as the bases of the Umma rather than religion per se. The nationalist understanding of the Umma is fundamentally at odds with the Islamic perspective of the Umma. Al-Nabhani and other Islamic figures were undoubtedly unimpressed by Arab nationalism (Roy, 2004).

### **2.4.3 Other Influences**

As aforementioned, Taqiuddin Al-Nabhani was highly influenced by his grandfather Sheikh Yusuf al-Nabhani. Al-Nabhani acknowledges his debt to his grandfather; highlighting how he benefited from his plentiful knowledge, and took on political law cases that his grandfather was familiar with through his close contact with people in the Ottoman state. His grandfather had a significant role in persuading Taqiuddin's father to send him to al-Azhar in order to continue his education. And due to the old school system that used to allow it, Taqiuddin was able to attend religious seminars at al-Azhar given by Sheikhs his grandfather had personally recommended (Zarakli, 1992). The most prominent of them was Sheikh Mohamad al-Khodor Hussein (b. 1876 - . 1958), who was an Islamic thinker of some renown.

As al-Nabhani came under the influence of this religious scholar, a brief discussion of Sheikh Mohamad al-Khodor Hussein's life and achievements will ensue. Hussein is of Algerian origins (of Hasani or Husseini descent, according to and his lineage is traced back to al-Adarisa of Morocco (which is a large and prestigious family from Al-Maghreb al-Arabi). He was born in Tunisia, and was influenced by his maternal uncle Mohamad al-Makki, a senior scholar of his time and respectable among people in the Ottoman Empire.

Al-Khodor's education began at al-Zaytuna Mosque in Tunisia where he received a degree in Shari'a, and then founded the magazine "al-Sa'ada al-Ozma" (The Great Happiness) upon graduation in 1903. He was elected governor of Bizerte, and when Italy invaded Libya in 1911, he called upon the Umma and the Ottoman Empire for support through his magazine. He lived in Istanbul for a period of time working as an editor for the minister of war Anwar Pasha. In 1916, al-Khodor Hussein was arrested in Damascus by Jamal Pasha, and then upon his release returned to Istanbul. . In 1920, following the end of the World War I, he returned to Damascus when Syria came to be ruled by Prince Faisal ibn al-Hussein. He later settled in Cairo in 1921 and began his scholarly production, and in 1924 he founded the association "Taawon Jaliyat Afriqia al-Shamaliyyah," (The Cooperation of the Communities of North Africa). Sheikh Hussein fought a major intellectual battle in a response to Taha Hussein's book on Jahili poetry through a critique entitled "Naqed Kitab fil She'er el-Jahili." (The Critique of a Book of Jahili Poetry).

In 1951, he became a member of the council of senior Muslim scholars, and in 1952 he became the head sheikh at al-Azhar. Sheikh Hussein responded to the book "al-Islam wa Usul el-Hokom" (Islam and the Principles of Rule) which was written by Sheikh Ali Abdul Razzaq, one of the most renowned sheikhs at al-Azhar. This book was one of the boldest attempts to justify the termination of the Ottoman caliphate; and the need to close the chapter of its return. Therefore al Nabhani benefited from Hussein's book and agrees with its criticism of banning the return of the caliphate as this return to the caliphate state is the core mission of the party he would establish. Sheikh Hussein spent his last days in al-Astana (known as Istanbul today) at the request of Sultan Abdul Hamid (Alaywan, 2009).

#### **2.4.4 Overview of Hizbut-Tahrir's Presence Globally**

Hizabut-Tahrir has a considerable presence in many nations of both the western and Islamic world. It claims to have branches in at least 45 nations stretching from Asia to the United States. Moreover, the internet age has allowed easy access to the party's online literature for anyone who is interested or contemplating to join the party. This has spiked the number of party members and aided in its expansion. The easy access has also facilitated the spread of the party to countries such as Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Malaysia, Pakistan, Turkey, and Bangladesh. Still, in many nations of both east and west, the party faces a high level of animosity regarding its presence and operation in these nations ("Western Fears of the Spread of Hizbut Tahrir," 2013).

The political leadership of the party on the global spectrum dictates that one leader rules over all the party's branches or wilayat. The leader is elected through an internal process and has no terminal election term. In other words, the ruler continues to rule until his death or in the case of resignation (Abou Zahab, 2004).

This chapter offered an exposé of the various individuals and events that shaped Sheikh al-Nabhani's political thoughts. It started out by mapping the significance of his family background in introducing him to Islam and went on to shed light on two notable individuals -- Sheikh Mohamad al Khodr Hussein and Hajj Mohamad Amin al-Husseini -- who influenced his thought. The chapter also offered insight on various ideologies -- Marxism and Arab nationalism -- and their role and contribution to al-Nabhani's personal ideologies. Furthermore, the chapter introduced some of the historical background (e.g. the siege of Palestine and the Arab's betrayal of that cause) that was also significant to his political development.

## **Chapter Three**

### **An Overview of Hizbut – Tahrir in Lebanon**

This chapter condenses considerable material in trying to present an overview of the evolution of Hizbut Tahrir activities in Lebanon. It goes on to address the party's relationship with various other Islamic movements. These include: Muslim Brotherhood, the Salafi movement represented by Al Haraka al Salafiya fi Lubnan headed by Sheikh Da'I al Islam al Chahal, and the Association for Islamic Charitable Projects (Al Ahbash) as well as the relationship with Hezbollah. Furthermore, the chapter analyzes Hizbut Tahrir's understanding of the Lebanese social and political system.

#### **3.1 The Rise of Hizbut-Tahrir in Lebanon**

As previously noted Sheikh al-Nabhani settled in Lebanon as of 1956. This long stay in one country enabled him to lay the foundations of his party in a relatively receptive environment. According to Hizbut – Tahrir, the nature of Lebanon, as well as its political and demographic structure do not allow the establishment of an Islamic state on its territories. That is why the party in Lebanon is actively working on preparing an infrastructure to make this geographic spot an integral part of the long-sought Islamic state. Because it considers that Lebanon is part of the Islamic world that was unfairly separated from the historic bilad-alsham, Hizbut- Tahrir mainly wanted to deliver the message to Muslims that they should give their allegiance to Lebanon; instead, the loyalty should be to the Islamic Umma as a whole. This was the principal point on which the party was founded in Lebanon. In fact, its main objective is to prepare Lebanese people and habilitate them to become part of the broader

movement of the Umma as a whole. Moreover Lebanon stands out in the region as a platform for freedom of speech. This could be used in the party's favor, as it allows it to deliver the voice of the party whereas it had not been able to do so in the regional milieu (Alloush, 2011).

The history of Hizbut – Tahrir in Lebanon goes back to the early days of founding the party in Palestine. The restrictions imposed by the Jordanian authorities on the party activities in Jerusalem and its environs as well as the arrest of some of its founders, forced the party founder to move to Syria where he also faced objections and rejection for his party's activities. Therefore the party moved most of its activities to Lebanon in 1953. The founding Sheikh went on to spend most of the remainder of his life – some 25 years -- in Lebanon. In fact, when he settled in Lebanon, al-Nabhani started to work on founding a local chapter of the party. Between 1958 and 1959 an official framework was formed and the party applied for appraisal and notification from the Lebanese authorities and notified the Ministry of Interior of its intent to commence its operation<sup>5</sup>.

Accordingly the party acted considered itself legally licensed, after the year 1959, however this did not last for long. In 1961 and in reaction to the failed coup attempt by the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP), the Lebanese authorities banned the SSNP. This also prompted a ban on Hizbut- Tahrir, whose members were always persecuted by the state security systems, anyway. At the height of the Chehabist period (1958-1964), the Lebanese authorities closely monitored all the party's activities. Such activities included distributing publications and holding of gatherings in the streets and the mosques which were platforms for projecting the party's views.

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<sup>5</sup>According to Lebanese laws, the government should issue the license within fourty days of application. In case the government does not issue the license nor reject it in the allocated time, the license is still granted.

Several party members were subjected to imprisonment with such rigor that even Sheikh Al- Nabhani himself became wanted, and this prompted him to move from Beirut to Tripoli where he remained undercover for the rest of his life (Chami, 2003).

The party tried to engage in the political process through fielding candidates who were not chased after by the security agencies. In 1964, Youssef Baadarani (still alive to the date of writing) ran as an electoral candidate for the parliamentary elections in Beirut. Baadarani was a prominent follower of Sheikh Al- Nabhani, and during his electoral campaign, he was pressured by the state authorities who fought against him and restricted him, so he couldn't succeed at that time. Later that same year (1964), the party nominated Sheikh Othman Safi to run in the parliamentary elections in Tripoli. In brief, the party participated in several parliamentary elections, through candidates that it thought would be acceptable to the authorities, but failed to win any seats (Ghanem, 1983).

When the Lebanese Civil War erupted in 1975, the party did not participate in any armed conflict nor did it join any political group or militia. Some individual members of the party, however, did take up weapons for purposes of self-defense. All throughout the war, the party didn't have any public headquarters or center. It wasn't until 2006 that it established a library in the Mazraa district of Beirut this library, however, wasn't an official center, but a gathering place for the party's youth.

When the Syrian Army entered Lebanon, it began persecuting the party's youth. In this, it was assisted by the Lebanese security forces. Party members were targeted when they distributed publications<sup>6</sup> or the gathered after Friday prayers. These publications, which reflected the party's attitude toward the Lebanese actualities, were

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<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting here that the party issues two types of publications: local ones that pertain to Lebanon's wilaya and which are locally circulated under the name of Hizbut-Tahrir – Wilayat Lubnan and international ones which hold global message for a global audience.

distributed anywhere in the world where Hizbut-Tahrir was present. These publications are written by the founders of the party. According to party officials, the Syrian regime considers Hizbut-Tahrir among the most dangerous parties, and claims that its youth used to be arrested on the Lebanese territories before being taken back to the Syrian prisons for interrogation (Al Markaz Al Arabi, 2006).

In the ideology of Hizbut – Tahrir the armies of Arab states are not considered as enemies per se. When the Syrian army entered Lebanon in 1976, Hizbut-Tahrir did not join other Islamic and leftist movement in opposing Syrian military intervention. Source .Thus, there are no documented cases of party members attacking or harassing Syrian troops. This stance also applies to the Lebanese army. The party has chosen to avoid armed conflict with it. This principle can be contrasted to that of Salafi Islamic movements that consider national armies to be instruments of *Kufr* states and thus legitimate targets for attack. Further proving their lack of interest in violent strife with the Syrian troops is the fact that although Hizbut –Tahrir was subject to a lot of hostility, when the Syrian troops entered Tripoli, in 1976, the party members did not confront them militarily. They also maintained a pacifist attitude when Syrian forces heavily shelled Tripoli in the late 1980s<sup>7</sup>.

Even in the core of the Syrian revolution (which will be further elaborate on in chapter four), the party kept -- at the beginning --on warning against aiming at the Syrian army, until the army started using violence , which made the party vindicate self-defense as a right of the people. Overall, the party considers that during the Syrian era, the Syrian and Lebanese security systems cooperated and jointly performed hostile acts against the party and its members (Itani, 2008).

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<sup>7</sup> Syria reentered Tripoli in 1985 to eradicate the unified Muslim movement (Harakat al Tawheed al Islami) among other reasons. In 1986, Syrian forces committed a massacre of 700 people in Tripoli, known as Bab el Tebeh Massacre.

With time, the youth of Hizbut – Tahrir adopted a different trend toward the Syrian – Lebanese security system. At the end of the 1990s, the party was facing multiple arrests, and by the year 2000, the majority of people affiliated to Hizbut-Tahrir were arrested. More recently however, the party has stepped up its challenge of the system (Hizbut Tahrir - Wilayat Lubnan, 2008).

### **3.2 Hizbut-Tahrir and the relation with Hezbollah**

Hizbut-Tahrir's stances towards Hezbollah are fraught with certain ambiguities and even inconsistencies. Thus, while the Party of Liberation considers Hezbollah to be implicitly associated with US policies, it supports Hezbollah's struggle against the common enemy: the state of Israel. Ideologically speaking, the two parties subscribe to alternative, even clashing, modes of Islamic government. Hezbollah is known to support the Shiite-based doctrine of Wilayat al-Faqih (Rule of the Jurisprudent), while Hizbut-Tahrir's supports the Caliphate. Hizbut-Tahrir is also weary of Hezbollah's close religious and political ties to Iran (Jaber, 2011).

More so, Hezbollah is fiercely assaulted by Hizbut Tahrir on social media sites in such a way that it calls it "Iran party" or "Iran militia." Hizbut -Tahrir considers Hezbollah involved in an American- Iranian plan working to compromise Arab activity -- mainly through what's happening in Syria. According to the party, the objective behind Hezbollah is the predominance of the Persian Shiite Iran over Lebanon. Whether they admit it or not, the Iranians are serving US politics in the region, whereby Iran and the US have the same objective which is to prevent any possibility of a Sunnite Islamic rise and to repulse the victory of the Syrian revolution (Abedin, 2009).

In 2012, Hezbollah tried to get in contact with Hizbut Tahrir and meet with its party members. This invitation was rejected by Hizbut Tahrir which demanded that

Hezbollah changes its attitude toward what is happening in Syria before any meeting would be possible. Some eminent figures in Hizbut Tahrir declare in 2012, Hezbollah kidnapped a young man from Hizbut - Tahrir in the southern suburb of Beirut. At that time, one young man of Al Mikdad family was kidnapped in Syria one year ago, as a reaction to the kidnapping performed by Hezbollah. The kidnapped man appeared in the media stating that he is affiliated with Hizbut - Tahrir, which triggered the party to consider itself targeted. In June 2013, Hezbollah members broke into houses and shops belonging to Hizbut - Tahrir activists in Beirut's southern suburb, even though those shops existed before Hezbollah's establishment in Lebanon(Shalha, 2012).

According to Hizbut -Tahrir, the Resistance of Hezbollah to Israel will remain ineffective unless Hezbollah extends its hand to other players. The right path to liberating Palestine is to wage a collective war led by the Umma as a whole and not by individuals or collectivities linked to some political systems. Hizbut - Tahrir considers that those who are protecting the Jews in Palestine are the regimes surrounding it and that the way to free Palestine is to overthrow, even one system among these so Al Jihad's path will be open to free Palestine. Another example that shows the uselessness of fragmented opposition to Israel is the Fedayeen. Hizbut – Tahrir considers that the fighting and the Fedayeen operations that were launched against Israel in the early 1970s and that were supported by the regional regimes with the purpose of serving Israel and making peace with it to reach the global of settlement is not the right way to combat Zionism (Abu Al Rashta, 2008).

### **3.3 Hizbut-Tahrir and the Political Activism in Lebanon during the Syrian Presence**

In the beginning of year 2001, the political milieu -- including some Islamic movements and Sheiks -- started enjoying political work under the umbrella of the

Syrian- Lebanese security system; whereas any activity undertaken by the political systems and the Islamic movements was subject to the control and demanded prior approval from the security centers. This motivated Hizbut-Tahrir to breach this custom and thus began its political struggle against the government systems by distributing circulars that challenge the state systems and their political decisions. The party figures also used to gather in the mosques and give speeches explicitly opposing the security systems, and this went on despite the daily arrests of the party's youth in such a way that the number of arrested members at times exceeded two hundred, while the Lebanese judicial authorities were lacking for any data and information to try those young men. This led to their being detained for months and years without trials.

These arrests didn't de-motivate the party, on the contrary it incited it to proceed in its activity and to draw more public attention and gain huge media coverage. The party was indifferent to the offers made by the security systems to cooperate with them – offers that promised the security system would loosen its grip on the party and stop arresting its members. For instance the party's media officer in Lebanon, Ahmad Al Kasas, was arrested and jailed for six months due to his political affiliations and his positions against the security systems. During his detainment in 2004, Al Kasas, who has been affiliated with the party since 1984, states that the work team linked directly to Sheikh Taquiddin al Nabhani was the most confidential team and its members' identities shall remain unrevealed. He leaked no information during his time in prison (A. Al Kasas, personal communication, January 27, 2014).

Ahmad al-Kasas and a group of the party's youth established a cultural association called *Rabitat Al Wai'i Al Sakafi* (The Association for Cultural Awakening) in 1994. Its purpose was to target the public; and it was located in Al Mitain Street in Tripoli.

The association was licensed in the same year by the Lebanese Ministry of Interior. It held intensive activities such as conferences, seminars, university activities, television broadcasts and booklets. Among the founders of this association was Waleed Dernaika, the chief (moukhtar) of Haddadeene district in Tripoli. The association performed a cultural role, whilst still spreading political content. Several people from both genders took part in these activities. In 2004, the association was heavily restricted which led to the arrest of Ahmad Al Kasas. It was well known to the security systems then that the association is linked to Hizbut- Tahrir because although its activities were restricted to culture, it had a challenging intellectual and political aspect to it. As for the party in Lebanon, it does not have a particular program for Lebanon, but it is a global party all over the world and has one methodology and one plan distributed over its provinces in the countries where the party exists under what is called “Wilayat.”

In 2004, Hizbut- Tahrir organized its first public demonstration in front of the Big Mosque in Tripoli, aiming at protesting against Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Alawi’s visit because he was the head of the American occupation government in Iraq. The party considered the demonstration crucial especially because all the Lebanese political forces, including Hezbollah, remained silent toward this visit. The party considers that these demonstrations aimed at showing the public that it will take the efforts of an entire Umma to defeat these tyrannical regimes and overthrow the Arab rulers who are the leaders of the regimes of atheism, despotism and subordination (A. Al Kasas, personal communication, January 27, 2014).

In the same year, some main figures of the party’s media central office raised their voices which prompted their arrest. These included the engineer Othman Bakhsh from Beirut and Dr. Ayman Al Kaderi from Bekaa. Both were arrested, followed then

by Ahmad Al Kasas who was also arrested despite his rise as president for “Al Wai’i Al Sakafi” association. Everyone was arrested after the demonstration that was held in the big mosque in Tripoli, even though Al Kasas didn’t even participate in the demonstration. Before his arrestment, Al Kasas was prohibited from participating in TV shows broadcasted on Al Jazeera sat, such as (Al Ittijah Al Moua’akess) and ( Al Sharia’a wal Hayat) shows, but the security systems were surprised to see that Al Kasas appeared in the show live from Beirut. On the show, he talked about the circumstances behind his arrestment in Tripoli when the security systems ambushed and kidnapped him at Bab Al Raml locality in Tripoli before taking him to Al Kobbe barracks then to Al Yarze (the headquarters of the Lebanese ministry of defense) where --, according to his statements -- he was hit and tortured during investigation. The investigation was focused on the relation of “Al Wai’i Al Sakafi” union with Hizbut Tahrir and the ways of funding this union and if it was being financially supported by Hizbut Tahrir. Meanwhile, multiple bodies issued communiqués condemning his arrestment, notable among them is the Secondary Teaching Instructors Union, since Al Kasas used to work as an instructor in the secondary cycle, in addition to a communiqué issued by the party of “Al Jama’a Al Islamiya,” “Al Tawhid” Islamic movement and “Al Rawabet Al Chaa’biya” committees which are presided by Maan Bachour. Moreover, pictures of Al Kasas were posted in Tripoli demanding his release. These posters, however, were immediately removed at the instruction of the security systems. According to Al Kasas’s statement: “Upon the recommendation of Waleed Junblat, the head of the progressive socialist party (PSP), Bakhach and Al Kasas were released and judged innocent,”(A. Al Kasas, personal communication, January 27, 2014).

### **3.4 Hizbut –Tahrir’s Critique of Lebanese Democracy**

The party considers that Lebanon, despite its claims to be a democratic country, is full of contradictions regarding the law of media freedom, which often-times conflicts the oppressing security system. The party considers Lebanese democracy to be superficial or even a sham. According to party rhetoric, successive Lebanese governments didn't show openness to Hizbut- Tahrir except for a few years after the assassination of Rafik Hariri; and in the aftermath of the withdrawal of the Syrian forces from Lebanon. However, according to the party, Lebanon is today living under an oppressive security system with rare media coverage (through the papers, television, radio) of party activities, because the security system and under western and American directives, issued warnings against any media outlet's coverage of the party's activities (Zalloum, 1990). Accordingly, it was difficult for Hizbut - Tahrir leaders to have access to media, notably on the Lebanese platforms. Even the allegedly large demonstrations organized by the party were barely covered by the media and some media people conspired against Hizbut Tahrir and claimed that it was supporting Ahmad Al Assir's movement in Sida and performing acts of sabotage.

According to Ahmad Al Kasas, a party activist from the north with extensive knowledge of party operations, the party did not take part in the fighting in Tripoli thus refuting media allegations. Al Kasas further notes that the party does not condone protests that turn violent and lead to clashes with security and threaten civilian life and property. The same source draws a distinction between the peaceful demonstrations that the party organizes (especially in the district of Al Tal square vs. the less orderly demonstrations in Abdul Hamid square which the party does not participate in nor support). In a nutshell, party sources emphasize the continued

reliance of the party on peaceful means of propagating its message and its refusal to be drawn by violent, and often, sectarian clashes.

Al Kasas denounced media coverage of the party claiming that it was biased and aimed at discrediting the party by portraying it as fanatic in its ideology and comprising of narrow-minded individuals who have superficial understanding of Islam. He further alleged that the media are in league with the security forces coordinating their efforts to lure people away from Hizbul – Tahrir. For instance, LBCI broadcasted a TV report stating that Hizbut-Tahrir is involved in the fighting in triploi and that some of its members are involved in the sectarian clashes and the confrontations with the security forces. Another Lebanese station MTV station as well mentioned that there was an assault against journalists during Hizbut-Tahrir demonstrations.

Such media allegations are the reason why Al Kasas considers that most of the Lebanese mass media want to show the party as a narrow-minded, fanatic, religious supporter of everything outlaw According to Al Kasas, the media is conspiring with the security systems to defame the party's image. Furthermore, OTV station asked Al Kasas to prepare a report about the party, but he conditioned them to have a live show to prevent the TV station from altering and reformulating his report. Al Kasas considers that the Lebanese media shows some figures and focuses on some movements' representatives working under the name of Islamic titles, however this only represents a small fraction of the Islamic community; he cites as an example Omar Bakri, Bilal Dekmak and others. Because Hizbut- Tahrir is among the leading parties within the Islamic community, Al Kasas considers that it faces fierce media opposition (A. Al Kasas, personal communication, January 27, 2014).

Hizbut-Tahrir's operation after the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon: Upon the withdrawal of the Syrian armies from Lebanon, the Lebanese security systems agencies continued to pursue and arrest the party's youth. In 2005, under the reign of the Prime Minister Fouad Al Sanioura, the ministerial council promulgated a decree announcing the possibility to found political parties without its consent. This occurred at the request of Parliament member Ghassan Moukhayber who used to be a member in the front of the MP Michel Aoun. Ironically, however, his political party was against issuing a permit for Hizbut - Tahrir.

Accordingly, Hizbut - Tahrir applied for "ilm wa khabar" appraisal and notification"Need better translation in 2005 when Ahmad Fatfat was the minister of the interior by delegation, and the authorization was therefore granted. During that time, Hizbut - Tahrir made shuttle visits to all the leaders and political parties without any differentiation between the parties of 8 and 14 March. This was prior to the notification's signature by the ministry of the interior. The visits included a one to Fatfat and it was a protocol visit to introduce the party's representatives in Lebanon. During that visit, the two parties shared a mutual opinion regarding the performance of the state intelligence which created tensions between Fatfat and the security systems. According to the party, Fatfat facilitated, through the army, the release of some of the party's youth who had been arrested for distributing publications for an unauthorized party. It is worth noting that many eminent figures of the Future movement, at that time, objected to the authorization of Hizbut - Tahrir.

To this day, the party's affiliates are still following up their cases in the military judicial authorities, including Ahmad Al Kasas and Dr. Mohamad Jaber who are accused of offending the military institution and the Maronite Patriarch. It is evident with each attempt that the pressure that is put against the party is based on the

recommendation of the security systems in the US embassy -- according to the statements of Ahmad al Kasas, the media representative of the party in Lebanon (A. Al Kasas, personal communication, January 27, 2014).

In the year 2010, the agenda of the ministerial council included a decision to ban Hizbut Tahrir activities; however, this decision was removed before the opening session. This removal is justified by the party with the close relations that blossomed between then Prime minister, Saad Hariri and the Syrian regime at that stage. However the political and the security situation, including the Sunni- Shiite conflict that affected the Lebanese arena at that time, didn't allow for the taking of such a decision. The party is so far taking precautionary measures against the Lebanese authorities justifying that by the fact that Hezbollah is the ally of the Syrian regime, therefore, taking possession of all the Lebanese state's important utilities as well as the judicial and security institutions including the Intelligence. Furthermore, some of the main political players in Lebanon, such as president Nabih Berri and the free national movement, refused to meet with the party's leaders, even though the party had a meeting before July war in the year 2006, with Hassan Nasrallah the general secretary of Hezbollah, when they had the opportunity to express their objection against the party's relation with the Syrian regime and with Iran -- especially because Iran isn't an Arabic Islamic nation, but a Persian nation(A. Al Kasas, personal communication, January 27, 2014).

Although Hizbut- Tahrir interacts with most of the parties and movements in Lebanon, it is boycotting the Lebanese forces party because it considers that this party has a dark criminal past mainly due to its involvement in former Prime Minister Rachid Karami's murder. As for running for the parliamentary elections, it is eligible, provided that the party does not constitute a part of the Lebanese politics or the

Lebanese system, but the candidate of the party shall be elected by the people to express the electoral program that includes the project of establishing the caliphate; whereas the elector refuses the current constitution so he doesn't endorse the government nor elect a president for the republic or endorse the budget of the state. It also subjugates the state to accountability, based on the Islamic law (Sharia) and not on the constitution. This is a brief part of the electoral program sponsored by the candidate of Hizbut Tahrir Youssef Baadarani who ran for Beirut and sheikh Othman Safi who ran for Tripoli, in the sixties (A. Al Kasas, personal communication, January 27, 2014).

During elections in the year 2005, the party examined the possibility of running for the parliamentary elections, but found it unnecessary to do so due to several reasons -- mainly that the elections at that stage were affected by strong political polarizations and there was no appropriate climate for the people to listen to electoral programs and campaigns. All categories were polarized in favor of the Sunnis, Shiites or any of the other confessions. However this didn't prevent some of the party's activists from running for the local elections whereby some of them were elected as chiefs (mukhtars). The party had a mukhtar in Haddadeene (a locality in Tripoli): Waleed Dernaika who got 3000 votes. He, however, had run individually and not based on the party's decision. According to the party, these electoral proceedings don't aim at making the party part of the Lebanese political system, but aims at emphasizing a party's figure that offers a new model of the political work, where the state is held accountable based on the Islamic religious provisions. The party does not aspire to form one day part of the political system neither in Lebanon nor anywhere else; as this is considered prohibited by the Islamic religious law. Hizbut Tahrir considers running only for the parliamentary or local elections, without reaching a

ministerial or political position (which means the executive authority)(A. Al Kasas, personal communication, January 27, 2014).

### **3.5 Hizbut-Tahrir and other Islamic Movements**

Hizbut – Tahrir has established a distinct platform for itself, but it continues to coexist and cooperate with various other Islamic parties in the region despite the presence of large discrepancies among them in their understanding of Islam and their interpretation of the Islamic Umma. As an Islamic movement, it is interesting to place Hizbut-Tahrir's ideology in parallel with other regional Islamic movements. When compared with (Al Ahbach), the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Wahhabists, many noteworthy contradictions arise.

#### **3.5.1 Hizbut – Tahrir and the Islamic Charitable Projects Association (Al Ahbach)**

The media officer in Hizbut Tahrir, Ahmad Al Kasas, sees that the party's members and the other Islamic movements deal with each other as brothers. However, when dealing with each other as collectivities, it is only a relationship of discussions, deliberations and mutual exchange of advice. Sometimes they coordinate together, but in a limited way. For instance, a few months ago, the party called for a demonstration in Beirut's downtown, where the party participated and coordinated with a number of Islamic bodies except for the Islamic Charitable Projects Association (Al Ahbach), because the party considers it subordinated to the Syrian security systems and devoid from any Islamic political activity (Salmani, 2012).

Hizbut-Tahrir and some of the other Islamic movements have glaring disputes regarding many key points in their respective religious ideologies. For instance, Al Ahbach, who mention this in their writings, consider Hizbut-Tahrir to be disbelievers. Moreover, (Al Ahbach) accused(takfir) Ibn Taymiyya and Sayed Qutb of being

disbelievers, which makes it very easy for them to attribute disbelief to anyone. Hizbut-Tahrir considers all Al Ahbach's accusations to be false and not linked at all with the party's real principles and beliefs. The gap between the two parties doesn't end there, for Hizbut-Tahrir refuses the idea of torture of the grave (masaalat azab al kabr) which dictates that after death the sinner experiences physical bodily pain after his soul is separated from his body. If indeed he/she was a sinner, that person experiences extreme measures of pain; the intensity of the pain is determined by how sinful that person had been. Another quintessential point on which the two parties disagree is the false messiah (al masih al dajjal). The false messiah is one of the signs of the coming apocalypse (end of the world) and will be manifested in the incarnate of Iblis on earth as a man with gruesome features (A. Kara-ali, personal communication, January 29, 2014). Hizbut-Tahrir again refuses such a concept.

The idea of free will is also disputed between Hizbut-Tahrir and Al Ahbach. While the former believes that man is his own master, the latter says that Allah ordains that all human action is preconceived. The contradiction of opinions is evident when Nabhani says in his book (The Islamic Character): "And these actions – human actions – have nothing to do with fate." In the same book, al Nabhani explains that when someone repents or decides to walk a straight path (al hidaya) it is a personal decision and not an act of God (Al Nabhani, 2001). According to Al Ahbach, al Nabhani's views contradict both the Quran and the sayings of Prophet Mohamad (Hadith). They continue to quote from the Quran: "He has created each thing and determined it with [precise] determination," (Quran: 25:2). Furthermore, the Quran says: "Allah has created you and what you do," (Quran: 37:96). This last Quranic verse encompasses all bodies and movements of worship whether it was volitional or imposed.

### 3.5.2 Hizbut – Tahrir and the Muslim Brotherhood

Initially, the Muslim Brotherhood was the sole reference for al Nabhani in his earliest political ventures. This was, in part, because at the time the Muslim Brotherhood was the only Islamic model available to al Nabhani. After the brotherhood was faced with a series of setbacks and obstacles – culminating in the assassination of Hasan al Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyed Qutb<sup>8</sup> took over operation of the party. During Qutb's reign, al Nabhani and the Muslim brotherhood found some common ground. The brotherhood regards al Nabhani as a worthy opponent because although al Nabhani contradicts the brotherhood on some ideas, they appreciate the quality of this thought. What brought the two closer is the similar organizational and political trends they exercised even though they operated on different visions for restoring the Caliphate. For instance the brotherhood does concur to the importance of restoring the caliphate, but limits its approach to this topic as something to strive for in the long-term. Al Nabhani, on the other hand, has made the return of the caliphate a fundamental issue upon which upon which his entire party is based (Ayoob, 2008). With the unofficial competition raging on between al Nabhani and Qutb, one can attest to the similarity of thought between the two which could not translate into political repulsion (Toth, 2013). Hizbut-Tahrir denies any remote influence of Qutb on al Nabhani; in fact al Nabhani claims that: "Sayyed Qutb used to advise his followers to consult read al Nabhani's book entitled "The Party's agglomeration" (Al takattol al hizbi). Al Nabhani considers that Qutb's last book, "Milestones on the Road" (Maalem fi al tareeq), is the Muslim

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<sup>8</sup>Sayyed Qutb (b.1906 – d.1966) was an Egyptian Islamic theorist and pioneering member of the Muslim Brotherhood. He authored over 20 books on various themes – notably on the social and political role of Islam (Roy, 2004).

Brotherhood's very own adaptation of Hizbut-Tahrir's "Al takattol al hizbi," (Tibi, 2013).

In conclusion, Hizbut Tahrir isn't a group or a division of the Muslim Brotherhood movement and the difference between the two isn't only related to organization, but it's a difference in the philosophy, the approach and the method of understanding Islam itself. According to Hizbut Tahrir, the Muslim Brotherhood movement is oscillating between Islamic thought on one end and the western civilization on the other.

### **3.5.3 Hizbut-Tahrir and the Wahhabi Movement**

The Wahhabi Movement is an ultraconservative branch of Sunni – Islam which resorts back to medieval teachings of Ibn Taymiyyah<sup>9</sup> and Ahmad ibn Hanbal<sup>10</sup>. Unlike Hizbut-Tahrir's pacifist approach, they have no objection to using violence as a means of attaining their goals (Algar, 2002).

Hizbut-Tahrir considers that the Wahhabi movement, which emerged in the Arabian Peninsula in the nineteenth century, represented a huge calamity to the Islamic Umma. This was mainly due to the role of Wahhabism in contributing to the collapse Ottoman authority (which represented the Khilafa) in the birthplace of Islam. According to the Islamic Liberation party, the Wahhabists resorted to the infidel west and adopted that deviant path to compromise the foundations of the caliphate state and impose itself on Arabian Peninsula and gradually move toward the Levant. Wahhabist, unlike Hizbut - Tahrir shun practices of veneration of the dead (Caldarola, 1982). While the party figures still visit the tombs of their founders

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<sup>9</sup>Ibn Taymiyyah (b.1263 – d.1328) was an Islamic scholar. He hails from a long line of Islamic theologians and he is one of the Godfathers of Wahhabi thought (Roy, 2004).

<sup>10</sup>Ahmad ibn Hanbal (b. 780 - d. 855) is a highly revered Sunni theologian who founded the Hanbali school of Islamic jurisprudence (Abu Zahra, 1947).

from time to another, the Wahhabist considers such practices as contradictory to the principles of Islam (Commins, 2006).

### **3.6 Lebanon - A Failed Attempt at a Unified Nation**

According to Hizbut -Tahrir, a community is about a lifestyle, or a way of life. Accordingly, and in the view of the party, there is no community in Lebanon. There are only different sects, and each sect has a particular lifestyle and purpose; and even construes of itself as a community. Therefore and due to its sectarian plurality, Lebanon cannot be conceived of as constituting a state because it lacks a sense of one community. For Hizbut-Tahrir, there is no reason to celebrate Lebanon's sectarian diversity. It was only rarely that these sects lived together in peace; and these relatively short periods of were only armistices in the raging conflicts between these sects. Since the inception of the Lebanese entity, its history has always been related to crisis. In the view of the Party, Lebanon's *raison d'être* was to provide a safe haven for the Christians of the Levant, particularly the Maronites. This dominance of one sect triggered fierce competition from the other sects, whereby most of them would form a coalition against the strongest one (the Maronites). In the early years of Lebanon's independence the conflict was primarily a Muslim – Christian conflict. While in the post-war period, matters became far more complicated with the emergence of a Sunni- Shia conflict, while Christians are divided between the two parts: one part supporting the Shiite and the other part supporting the Sunni. For these reasons, Lebanon is very far from forming a true state (Abu Al Rashta, 2011).

Hizbut- Tahrir refuses to call the Sunnis a sect, but it considers that Muslim people who accept being called a sect, have committed a crime to themselves and to their families. As for the Shiites, Hizbut -Tahrir does not consider them unbelievers,

even though there is a big intellectual problem between the two parties (Hizbut Tahrir - Wilayat Lubnan, 2008).

This chapter discussed the launching and development of Hizbut-Tahrir as an Islamic party in Lebanon. It further examined the party's relationship and dealings with various Sunni and Shia Islamic movements that have presence on the Lebanese political scene. Equally important, it shed light on the party's critique of the Lebanese political model. This critique goes well beyond questioning the democratic nature of the Lebanese political model. It cuts into the core of the Lebanese identity casting doubts on the viability of Lebanon as a multi-confessional state. The party's radical stances and its insistence on incorporating Lebanon into a largely Islamic entity (the Caliphate state) explain why the party was historically at odds with the Lebanese authorities; and why it was equally suppressed during the Pax-Syriana. Question marks continue to be raised regarding the party's ability to grow beyond a certain point in Lebanon, given its rejection of the multi-confessional nature of Lebanon and ideological rigidity regarding the restoration of the Khilafa: an old project that is rejected not only by Middle Eastern Christians, Shias and seculars, but also by most Sunnis.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Hizbut-Tahrir: Stances and Regional Developments**

While the focus of this thesis has been on Hizbut Tahrir in Lebanon, the party in Lebanon does not view itself as isolated from the activities of sister parties in the Arab world. As a matter of fact, party ideology does not recognize national differences and views the various branches of Hizbut Tahrir as belonging to the same mega multi-national party. This chapter begins by discussing the party stances on Palestine and its activities within the territories that achieved autonomous rule in 1993 in the aftermath of the Oslo accords; namely the West Bank and Gaza. While many factors are associated with the founding of Hizbut-Tahrir, the most notable of these is the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1921. For Hizbut-Tahrir, the Ottoman Empire, and despite its shortcomings, embodied the principle of the Khilafa. For centuries, it upheld al-Sharia and provided Muslims with protection against the encroachments of western-Christian powers. Perhaps most tragically from the Party of Liberation standpoint was the association between the Ottoman Collapse and the placement of Palestine under British mandate. As aforementioned, this mandate period served as the catalyst for the success of the Zionist project in Palestine which culminated with the creation of the state of Israel, the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and the imposition between 1948 and 1967 of Jordanian and Egyptian rule in the West Bank and Gaza. In retrospect, the colonial project in both its original and mandate forms represented the backdrop for the emergence of Islamic movements in the Arab and Islamic worlds. Hizbut-Tahrir was only one of these movements. Over the years, the party has grown and spread to all corners of the globe as well as

being actively present on the regional Islamic scene (Abu Al Rashta, 2004). Therefore, along with an overview of the party's role in Palestine, the chapter will also look into Hizbut Tahrir's stances in light of the Arab Spring revolutions in each of Tunisia, Syria and Egypt (the first and second revolutions). The development of each of the aforementioned nations' revolutions will be scrutinized according to the party's conviction that what was supposed to be a redemption of Islamic rule in the region and a chance to re-establish the caliphate state was hijacked by local agents of the United States and the west (Abu Al Rashta, 2004).

#### **4.1 Hizbut-Tahrir's Views and Criticisms of Recent Developments regarding the Palestinian Cause**

There is strong evidence to indicate that Hizbut-Tahrir has made a comeback at its birth place: Palestine. The party has recently become notorious for its ability to attract huge crowds whether in the West Bank or the Gaza strip – this became especially true after it's re-launch into the Palestinian political scene. In 2013 and according to Palestinian and Islamic experts, the party was able to mobilize thousands of people to march across the Gaza strip's streets during the 85<sup>th</sup> memorial of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (Fealy, 2007). Just 15 years before, the party's followers in Gaza strip were very few and would not have been able to execute such a spectacle.

In the early 1990s and with the establishment of an autonomous Palestinian authority in the West Bank and Gaza and self-governance in the Palestinian territories, some of Gaza's youth began to actively propagate the party's thought and ideology and thereby attracted a huge number of followers, among which are young, educated people who were in conflict with their political organizations. This is how they formed a party cell -- that was heavily influenced by al Nabhani writings -- which

evolved into a party unit and formed the first step in the organizational framework of the political party (Al Kasas, 2013).

In the 15 years that followed the establishment of the self-governance in Palestine, the party gradually found itself able to announce its resurfacing on the Palestinian scene and solidified its presence through the crowded marches and festivals that were often performed in 2013 in Gaza and the West Bank which were a preparation to enter the second phase of its journey. Such peaceful street gatherings echo Hizbut Tahrir's peaceful ideology which indicates that the party does not use violence as a means to establish the Caliphate and often times criticizes the groups and movements that do use military violence as a way to attain power. Moreover, it does not discriminate against any race or gender. For instance the party condemned the explosions of September 11, and considered them criminal because they targeted innocent civilians. However, this does not contrast the party's willingness to support resistance movements in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan or Chechnya. Hizbut-Tahrir does not have a military flank, but rather depends on infiltrating society through educating the masses on the party thought -- as articulated by al – Nabhani's thought – to make crucial changes in the political regime. This is what the party calls "political education." Despite its pacifist approach, many of the party's members continue to be arrested and are banned in Islamic countries because those countries consider that the party is in breach of their Islamic principles and dogma.

References indicate that a few years ago, the party's followers in Jerusalem were accused of throwing shoes at Ahmad Maher the former Egyptian prime minister during his visit to the holy sites in Jerusalem. Accordingly, the Israeli authorities arrested a number of people who took part in this assault; in compliance with the actions of the Israelis and, simultaneously, the Palestinian security systems took

action in other cities such as Al Khalil and arrested the party's leaders who were then tortured and filmed (Al Kasas, 2013).

Reports by the local press indicate that the party's followers are active in Jerusalem through organizing regular activities and giving speeches at religious sites as well as through talking about the principles of the party and calling for the caliphate. Furthermore, the party's intensive efforts and high level of activity is mirrored in the various conferences that are constantly being organized in Ramallah, Jerusalem, Beit Lahem, Nablus, El – Khalil, Gaza strip and all over Palestine. What do you mean in West Bank and Gaza or in Israel proper (historic Palestine).

In the same spirit of the political activism that Hizbut-Tahrir is engaged in, the party calls on the political milieu in Palestine to walk one unified path which dictates that Palestine be freed from the sea to the river and refuses every political activity that goes against this concept -- whether through elections or otherwise.

The party also demands a cessation of the competition over power in Gaza strip and the West Bank and insists that conciliation based on the division of power and the elections is futile. Moreover, Hizbut Tahrir considers that the only way out of this conflict over power is to reject the project of the trivial power by both conflicting parties and to follow the original conviction – which all Palestinian groups were established upon -- that is to liberate the whole of historic Palestine which entails the destruction of the state of Israel. In a press communiqué released by the media office of Hizbut-Tahrir in Palestine when was that, the party considered that the presidential decision -- a decision taken by current Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas that dictates that Palestinians and Israelis should negotiate to reach a compromise regarding the two-state solution -- is an instrument of political misguidance and a deviation from the principal path of the Palestinian cause. Furthermore, the

presidential decision compromises the cause f by creating the diversion of elections that do not have any real impact on the conflict between Muslims and the Jewish entity that is violating their land. Such elections threaten to surrender most of Palestine to the Jews, as they (the elections) will only be executed through the approval of the Jewish leaders (“Open Letter from Hizbut Tahrir's Media Bureau in Palestine to Jurists of the World,” 2014).

Hizbut - Tahrir in Palestine stated that the Palestinian cause is oscillating between the political disputes and conflicts when it comes to elections and conditions for conciliation. In fact the focus of resistance efforts has shifted to trivial disputes over elections and conflict over power which has become the priority for political activity among the competitors in Ramallah and Gaza. Furthermore, the party proposes its vision for the Palestinian cause and refuses the project of power (current electoral system) under the shadow of occupation, stating that: “the Palestinian cause, as perceived by any sane and loyal person, is the cause of a violated land that cannot be recuperated except through armies who strive for Jihad to plough out the occupation from its roots. Moreover, the currently proposed project for reconciliation among Palestinians, and according to Hizbut–Tahrir, involves those who are in power and under Israeli command and those who represent the opposition against this occupation. These are to highly opposing forces; therefore, the party considers that it is impossible to bring such contradicting forces together in agreement. Furthermore, the party insists that only the opposition should rule over all other incompetent movements (“Open Letter from Hizbut Tahrir's Media Bureau in Palestine to Jurists of the World,” 2014).

The party deems the conciliation treaty<sup>11</sup> that was signed in Egypt in 2011 as wishful thinking because it considers that one side might yield to the other: Would Ramallah's authority (which is represented by Fatah) forgo its support – in the view of Hizbut – Tahrir -- for the Jewish entity and side with the resistance and Jihad, or would Hamas, in Gaza, cede the choice of resistance and follow in the political line of Ramallah authority? Predictably, neither side would abandon its political ideals to accommodate the other. Further supporting Hizbut – Tahrir's accusation that Fatah is pro-Zionist, is the fact that the latter forbids the party from organizing the yearly ceremonies of commemorating the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, while the Hamas government in the Gaza strip announced its intention to allow the party to execute those ceremonies. In a statement distributed to the media, the party says that it has sent a notice to the authorities (Fatah) on the ninth of July 2009 revealing its intention to organize activities for that occasion, however it received reactions to prevent such ceremonies in multiple cities, as well as several . In the same year, which saw a strong resurfacing of Hizbut - Tahrir, on the Palestinian scene, the party began to intensively organize marches and public festivals. Some experts state that when Hamas won the 2006 parliamentary elections, the party's activities in the Palestinian territories were again encouraged. Noting this, Fatah attempted to place Hizbut –Tahrir at an opposing position to Hamas -- both as Islamic players on the Palestinian political scene. This, however, did not last long because Hizbut – Tahrir continued attacking and criticizing Fatah. Furthermore, Fatah feared that Hamas would employ the activities of Hizbut –Tahrir to its benefit – especially after Hamas largely participated in the protests that Hizbut –Tahrir organized against the Annapolis

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<sup>11</sup>A treaty that was signed by Fatah, Hamas and other Palestinian groups, in Cairo in 2011. The treaty was sponsored by the former Head of intelligence, Omar Suleiman, during the reign of Hosni Mubarak and aimed to lessen tensions between various Palestinian groups and find a political settlement regarding governmental and electoral issues.

conference<sup>12</sup> for peace – which Mahmoud Abbas attended (“Open Letter from Hizbut Tahrir's Media Bureau in Palestine to Jurists of the World,” 2014).

In 2007, during the Annapolis conference protests and after the gunning down of one of the Hizbut – Tahrir’s followers by security systems dependant to the authority (Fatah) in Al Khalil city in the strip, the relation between Hizbut Tahrir and the authority reached the highest levels of tension. The Hamas-backed Ihab al Ghossein, a spokesman for the Ministry of Interior in the government of Ismail Hannya, declared that “the government in Gaza does not prevent Hizbut-Tahrir from organizing ceremonies in Gaza as long as it does not breach any of the legal requirements.” However, this fragile agreement between the Hamas and Hizbut –Tahrir on the issue of resistance to the occupation disintegrated when Hamas arrested some members from Hizbut - Tahrir in Gaza because they distributed a statement in the strip’s streets, which directly criticized the speech of Khaled Machaal<sup>13</sup> in July 2009 after he acknowledged the Palestinian state on the borders of 1967 and declared that he was willing engage in dialogue with the administration. What administration what are you talking about In their statement, Hizbut-Tahrir declares that “Hamas movement is vagueon its views regarding the international and Arab decisions that acknowledge the two states” and the party enlightens that Hamas’ approval for the international agreements does not differ from eventually endorsing those same agreements. The party confirmed that it advised Hamas not to run for the elections under the occupation, but Hamas did not pay any attention to this advice, on the contrary it interpreted it as misguided (Ayoob, 2008).

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<sup>12</sup>The **Annapolis Conference** was held in Annapolis, Maryland on November 27, 2007, at the [United States Naval Academy](#). The purpose of the conference was to reinitiate the [Israeli–Palestinian peace process](#). Negotiations between both sides ensued after the conference.

<sup>13</sup>Khaled Machaal is the head of Hamas political bureau since 2004 and after Israel assassinated [Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi](#).

During a conference held in Ramallah, in June 2013, Hizbut –Tahrir clarified some of their positions regarding the Political game in Palestine. These include the party’s support for the: the Muslim Brotherhood ( Hamas) if they ascend to power. In fact, Hizbut - Tahrir will directly acknowledge them because the objective, as they claim, is to apply Islamic law ( Sharia). Moreover, they believe that the party isn’t Salafi-based, but still calls for dialogue with such Islamic movements. Third, Hizbut - Tahrir declared in the conference that the party is friendly with Hamas, but Hamas rejects this offer of friendship. For as Abou El Nour, one of a Hizbut - Tahrir’s leaders, declares the Palestinian government led by Hamas in the strip adheres to an illegitimate authority because this authority was founded on the Oslo Accords<sup>14</sup> for Palestinian autonomy, so it does not apply the Islamic order. Furthermore, the party considers that it is different from Hamas movement in the sense that it is a Palestinian movement while Hizbut Tahrir is international. Fourth, a monthly newsletter entitled the consciousness “Al Wai’i,” which is a political newspaper distributed in the Palestinian territories was launched after the 2013 conference. Fifth, the party classifies more than ten countries in the world – including USA, the United Kingdom, Germany and Russia-- as nations fighting against Muslims. Sixth, during this conference, some of the party’s activists praised the general secretary of Hezbollah as they consider Hezbollah honest in its work even if its ideology contradicts that of Hizbut – Tahrir. Seventh, Hizbut - Tahrir considers that Taliban movement is created by the Pakistani intelligence. Eighth, Hizbut - Tahrir forbids killing innocent civilians and condemns such acts in Iraq; the party is also against the sedition separating between Sunnis and Shiites. Ninth, some parties accuse Hizbut -Tahrir of resembling

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<sup>14</sup> The Oslo Accords, set in 1993 and 1995 are a set of agreements between the government of Israel and the [Palestine Liberation Organization](#) (PLO) by which each party recognized the other. This paved the way for the Oslo peace process which aimed to fulfill the Palestinian people’s right to self-governance.

to Al Qaeda, sans the weapons, but Hizbut -Tahrir rejects this. Tenth, in response to the Jordanian Intelligence's accusation of Hizbut - Tahrir as a party led by Britain, the party's activists reply that there is no evidence to support this ("Open Letter from Hizbut Tahrir's Media Bureau in Palestine to Jurists of the World," 2014).

Palestine was always the birthplace of the party's ideology. Al Nabahni's early experiences of marginalization of entire Palestinian communities and the western support for Zionism were the incentives upon which he would launch his party. Therefore, it was only logical to dedicate an entire chapter to the cause to enlighten the reader on the circumstances from which the party materialized and revisit that environment today to tie into how the cause endures and how the party's relationship with it has developed. Therefore, the most notable topic tackled in this chapter is the party's view of the Palestinian cause in recent times and the chain of events leading to the reconciliation between various Palestinian political groups and Hizbut-Tahrir's views on that reconciliation as well as the controversial two-state solution. In light of all this, Hizbut Tahrir considers that the sole salvation to all the complications generated by the stagnating Palestinian cause (as well as other pending dilemmas in the region) is the re-establishment of the Caliphate state.

## **4.2 Hizbut –Tahrir in Light of the Arab Spring**

The early stages of the Arab spring might have held a glimmer of hope for Hizbut Tahrir that Islamic redemption was imminent. According to a statement distributed by the party's youth in the strip of Gaza, Hizbut - Tahrir considers that the recently erupted Arab Spring revolutions represent a potential chance for transformation in the process of the Islamic nation after a long period of repression, ignorance and coercion. The party addressed a speech to the nation saying that: "The real revolution must break any link with the west and its systems." It also states that: "the practical

plan for change must follow the path of the messenger Mohamad since real change requires gaining the loyalty of the true adherents of Islam and is founded upon the pillars of God and his messenger instead of being subject to the capitals of the unbelieving countries. According to the party, parliamentary elections are useless since they cater to populations instead of God's true religion (Islam) and its leaders turn to the west for guidance instead of siding with the Islamic Umma in its great battle for liberation.

The revolutions that sprang up in the Arab region, starting from Tunisia and reaching Syria, signified the collapse of the dictatorial regimes that had, for a long time, neglected the concerns of the Umma. These "revolutions" were a promise of return of power to the advocates of the Islamic Umma. For if the Umma retains its rulers, it thereby also retains its power in determining political outcomes and enforcing the Islamic ideals it holds so dear. Only then will it be able to liberate itself from western hegemony and move forward to address the causes it cares for – most notable among them is the liberation of Palestine (Tibi, 2013).

The revolutions that have risen from the year 2010 until now have significantly altered the general scene and made the people's voice much louder than before. These revolutions, however, have failed to yield fruit in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya or Yemen, in addition to Syria whose tyrant is yet to fall. According to Hizbut – Tahrir, what has happened so far is that rulers fell, but the reigning regimes did not. The current ruling systems that are resilient in these countries are secular and their practices and are still connected to international policies that do not serve the Islamic countries' interest, but cater instead to the western nations' objectives (Manhire, 2012).

With further regional development and as the storm settled over the region, Hizbut – Tahrir revealed that what has come to be known as the Arab Spring is in fact closer

to a grand Middle East project, or conspiracy, that is being orchestrated by the United States. The aim of this grand conspiracy is to create a new political, economic and educational culture which the US sought to accommodate and fund (secretly) until the threads of this scheme began to unravel and surface. The details of said conspiracy were clarified in an analysis conducted by British newspaper, The Guardian, which attested that the west is relentless in its mission to control the Mideast – which brings back to memory the period of direct colonialism that divided the Arab and Islamic countries. Furthermore, The Guardian attests that the United States, and its allies, worked on promoting the concept of moderate Islam and ascended representatives of this version of Islam to power in various Arab nations. These moderates were armed with the capitalist and democratic doctrines (of American democracy) which steer them far from the principles of Islam and the concepts of Sharia law,” (A. Al Kasas, personal communication, January 27, 2014).

One should always keep in mind that the west didn't and will never surrender its interests in the Middle East without a fight. That is why when it became evident that those puppet rulers – or what Hizbut – Tahrir considers as US agents -- were on the brink of removal (due to the Arab spring conflicts), the United States retaliated and acted swiftly. For one thing, the Bush administration introduced the concept of “Moderate Islamists” after decades of rejecting political Islam as a foreign and undesirable concept. Suddenly, the United States seemed to embrace a modified version of political Islam – the very model that was flourishing all over the Arab Spring nations in post-conflict times. This is evident through the US's eagerness to support public movements even though many of them were of an Islamic nature. This interpretation of political Islam, and the Arab spring events that paved the way for its founding, were concocted during the presidency of George W. Bush. In fact, the

United States had struck deals with the moderate Islamists before anyone had even heard of the Arab spring developments (A. Al Kasas, personal communication, January 27, 2014).

Many politicians, thinkers and analysts treated this subject thoughtfully and confirmed that external parties were interfering with the course of events that would greatly affect a large number of oppressed populations who had deeply suffered from the oppressive corrupted systems. They also confirmed that what was called the Arab spring is nothing more than an illusion orchestrated, by that the US's intelligence and media forces, with the objective of leading the people to believe that they were responsible for ousting their corrupt rulers and that the west had no role to play in this (Al Nabhani, 2001). Accordingly, the youth would be misguided if they adopt western concepts of democracy and civil state and falsely believe that such concepts are not opposing to Islam, and as if the people themselves had chosen these concepts and slogans. Hizbut – Tahrir sources further elaborate on this grand process of a misguided revolution by attesting that as preparation for what is called the Arab spring, and two years prior to it, the United States trained Arab youth in Serbia on the process of the peaceful demonstration (i.e. how to rally up the masses and build up the revolution). These trainings, according to Agence France-Presse (AFP), cost the American government around 50 million Euros. General Houssam Souwaylem, the Egyptian strategic expert confirms to Egypt-based Al Hayat channel that the report of the International Institute for the Research on Globalization, in Washington, states that the CIA and the Pentagon have set plans to change the ruling systems according to modern ways starting with inciting youth communities -- who are linked through electronic social media -- to spread tumult and riot and work in groups aiming at creating ruling systems that support the USA and assist it in executing its plans in the

Mideast. This analysis of America's schemes is in harmony with Hizbut – Tahrir's own view (El Husseini, 2013).

### **4.3 Hizbut Tahrir's Activities in the Framework of Revolutionary Activism under the "Arab Spring"**

The Arab Spring revolutions fell during the reign of current Hizbut Tahrir leader Ata'a Bin Khalil Abu Rachta. Therefore the party's activities during these revolutions are largely dictated by Abu Rachta and an overview of his life is due:

Ata'a Bin Khalil Abu Rachta was born in 1943 to a small religious family in Raana village in Al Khalil. He received his Baccalaureate in civil engineering from Cairo University in 1966 and proceeded to work as an engineer in various Arab countries. He wrote a book entitled Al Wasit which discusses methods of building and road surveillance. His religious writings include a book entitled Studies in the Principles of *Fiqh*. He has been involved in the Hizbut-Tahrir party since his early years in the 1950s. By the 1980s, he had become a leading member of the party in Jordan and was officially appointed as the party's first official spokesperson. In 2003 and after the death of Sheikh Abdul Qadeem Zalloum, Abu Rachta became the third to be elected head of Hizbut – Tahrir after al Nabhani and Zalloum. Abu Rachta explains, in an interview, the rationale for the party's involvement in the Arab spring developments in the following way:

“Our mission has not changed in any place where there is an opportunity for us to execute our mission --which is carrying the call to go on with the Islamic life by establishing the Caliphate according to the path of our messenger Mohamed, may peace be upon him, since the mission in Mecca till building the state in Medina. That is why we call on people to join us in our mission because Caliphate is a great obligation that we must fulfill. This is how we interact with the Umma cooperating with it and through it to achieve this. We also call on people of power asking them to support us to establish the Caliphate and advise them not to waste their efforts by just changing people without changing all the laic system. This is what we [as a party] have done and will keep doing before and after the revolutions. However, the circumstances of the revolutions created a bigger venue for people listen to the voice

of justice without fearing the security systems like before; for this reason we see people nowadays gathered around us.” (Abu Rashta, 2006).

Evidently, Hizbut –Tahrir leaders regard the Arab spring events as a prime opportunity to steer the Arab populations toward the greater Umma because it has evolved into a time where people were challenging the existing regimes. In such chaos, change to their credit, would be possible. Furthermore, and according to Abu Rachta, people previously hesitated to join the party because they feared the security systems. Nowadays, the party’s activity is not only remarkably noticed in the areas of revolution, but also extends beyond the Arab world. For instance, Abu Rachta explains that the party enjoys strong activity in Pakistan, although there is no revolution actually taking place there. In areas of strong conflict, such as Syria, party activity has noticeably expanded because the obstacle of fear collapsed when people revolted against oppression and tyranny (Abu Rashta, 2006).

#### **4.3.1 The Arab Spring and the Case of Tunisia**

When one takes Tunisia as an example for the first spark of the Arab spring revolutions, it can be observed that the incident didn’t start on the seventeenth of December 2010 with the self-immolation of Mohamad Bouazizi. In fact the incidents started in Tunisia with the forming of a coalition of a huge base of parties -- associations and organizations from the civil society -- under a block entitled “The Movement of 18<sup>th</sup> of October for the Rights and Liberties.” This coalition dates back to 2005 and is supported by the USA. It plays an effective role in the political movement according to the American terms (Bay, 2014).

It is evident that the program is subject to America’s goals because, (as it is set by the movement of 18<sup>th</sup> of October) it fulfills the requirements of the USA under the title of the “Freedom of Speech and Press” and the freedom of establishing parties and

associations, lifting restrictions on their activities, releasing the empoisoned politicians, ensuring the return of the refugees and granting them esteem according to a law of general amnesty for every oppressed person. On the other hand, the movement of 18<sup>th</sup> of October encompasses a big number of parties and civil organizations which are aided by the USA and adopt the process of political conciliation with those who are called the “moderate Islamists,” (Bay, 2014).

These western-influenced parties are: The liberal Democratic Party, the party of conference for the republic, the workers communist Tunisian party (which became the workers Tunisian party), the Democratic Coalition for liberties, and other parties and organizations such as the International organization for Imprisoned Politicians Assistance and the Tunisian Association to Resist Torture.

The main objective of the 18<sup>th</sup> of October movement of is to divide the Tunisian people into categories that are represented by parties and associations; this is at the core of the American plan to achieve its dominative objectives. Further supporting the argument that America was brewing this stew of moderate Islamists is the visit of a delegation from the US embassy in 2006 to Hamadi Al Jibali, the secretary-general of Renaissance movement – a moderate Islamic movement. This visit, which lasted three hours and surprised some parties in power at that time, addressed many issues related to the Renaissance movement and its future role in the change required by the USA in Tunisia as well as the attitude of the movement toward US politics in the region. The USA has launched and is still exercising a most dangerous campaign of misguidance not only in Tunisia, but in the whole Islamic Umma -- especially in places where the revolutions of the Arab spring had quickly erupted. What was called the Tunisian revolution has offered USA the opportunity to proceed in its “Great Middle East” project in the region, which explains the declarations of John Kerry, a Democratic

senator and then president of the External affairs commission, when he said that: “The outcomes of president Bin Ali’ escape will exceed Tunisia, as the Middle East includes young people aspiring for a future free of any political oppression and economical corruption.” In light of the political evolutions that occurred in the Middle East and which led to the collapse of some ruling regimes and to tumult in others, and despite the distorted reporting of these events by the Media (which portrayed the revolutions as revolutions of oppressed people demanding just political change on the bases of democracy and public liberties) it shows that this is nothing but a USA claim. In fact, the United States is eager to show that the Arab people themselves want this democracy and political pluralism, and coincidentally, these are principles it, and other western countries, agree with wholeheartedly and is willing to defend with all means of power available (Abu Rashta, 2012).

#### **4.3.2 The Arab Spring and the Case of Syria**

More so, Hizbut Tahrir employs all its media potential and human resources in the provinces (wilayat) of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan and strongly engages in field activism. However, their activities in Syria are limited due to regular persecution by the security systems. Consequently, it has had better success in Lebanon and Jordan as it was able to mobilize a tradition of Friday demonstrations which was launched after the beginning of the Syrian crises in support of the public movement.

By the fourth month of the Syrian revolution and with the resilience and even aggravation of the crisis, some sheikhs, who were proponents of Hizbut – Tahrir, preached to the demonstrators that victory was in sight and that the declaration of the caliphate will launch from Syria – as Syria is the core of the Levant (Bilad al Sham) (source). One can note evidence of these preaching speeches on Youtube. One example is that of Sheikh Youssef El Eid in Al Hajar mosque in Al Nawa

AlHawraniyya village). The speech was given before a crowded population in the village square, where the Sheikh preached of the imminent victory and the building of the Islamic caliphate.

Some opposing parties, writers and analysts got accustomed to denying the Islamic characteristics that marked Syrian activism. This Islamic feel, however, is natural of any nation which has inherited Islamic religious culture for long generations. The critics, however, refute this and claim that the revolutions rose from people-based and spontaneous origins thereby completely bypassing a significant role of the sheikhs. . On these grounds, everyone shifted from extreme leftists -- such as the Communist labor party -- to extreme rightists -- such as the Socialist Union party - - to ride the tide of the usual protestations that will launch every time and everywhere there is public mobilization -- this, of course, includes the greatest democratic countries. Hizbut – Tahrir, however attests that it is very difficult for any opposing leadership to claim that it played any effective role. Only the sheikhs played a significant role in the revolutions. In parallel to that role – but not as influential – came the contribution of the revolutionaries who set up social media pages that spiked the revolutions, as well as the role of regional and international news cooperation (e.g. CNN, Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabia etc.) (Roy, 2004).

In its very first calling since the beginning of the revolution in Syria, Hizbut – Tahrir declared: “All ye Muslims in Syria, let it be an Islamic revolution, not civil revolution, nor a democratic revolution, may Allah grant you victory” (Nasra, 2011).

In a press release issued by Hizbut - Tahrir, pertaining to the “The Caliphate Commemoration Conference,” which was held in Indonesia, the party declared that all Islamic – Arab and non-Arab – nations want the Islamic Caliphate. The press release, which was entitled “Damascus Revolution is the strongest Issue in the

Caliphate Commemoration Conference,” explains that the head of Hizbut – Tahrir’s media bureau in Syria, Hicham Al Baba, gave a speech at the conference which declared that: “The nation wants an Islamic Caliphate, Syria wants an Islamic Caliphate, Jakarta wants an Islamic Caliphate, the nation wants the Caliphate again, repeat it while crying and supplicate Allah to witness the Caliphate soon...” Furthermore, the press release states that Indonesian youth party members insisted on being the first to build the Caliphate, where the head of the Indonesian bureau in Hizbut - Tahrir (Indonesia branch) stated: “We will be the ones to build it and our Sheikh Ata’a bin Khalil Abu El Rachta shall be our Caliph.” To which Hicham Al Baba replied: “The people of the Levant agree on what you said, Allah knows where the allegation would be, let’s say what Allah said: let the competitors compete,” (Al Baba, 2013).

In one of their habitual Friday press releases, entitled “Levant (Damascus) the home of Islam,” it was dictated that the Syrian people declared the revolution Islamic despite the American restrictions. Hicham Al Baba declares: “It is known all stakeholders in the Syrian conflict, whether friend or foe, are targeting the Syrian revolution. Hizbut - Tahrir irritates the enemies of Allah and his messenger; these enemies are even refusing to call Syria the home of Islam, claiming that it’s a Hizbut –Tahrir concocted nomination. For this reason, the media office of the party in Syria is calling all the loyal Muslims, in and outside of the Levant, to follow the messenger of God and make it a true Friday to combat the disbelievers armed with the messenger of God’s words: “Levant (Damascus) is the home of Islam.” Hizbut - Tahrir media office in Pakistan sees that taking part in the activism in Syria is crucial. This stance is echoed in a press release, dated July 17, 2013, that states that supporting the people of

the Levant is an obligation for the Pakistani army (who has the weapons) and not only an obligation of Taliban (Al Baba, 2013).

In an exploratory visit to the city of Al Rakka – an area that has been liberated from Al Assad regime, Hicham Al Baba, met closely with prominent figures and activists of the Syrian revolution who expressed their happiness toward Hizbut Tahrir's ideas, acts and attitudes. Al Baba, and after meeting with some figures of the city, later gave a speech at the city's mosque in the central market. The speech was to the audience of a huge crowd and covered the risks threatening the Syrian revolution, mainly in the light of the last progressing American campaign aiming at reinforcing Al Assad regime and putting a dead end to the revolution though calling for the Geneva II conference<sup>15</sup>(Al Baba, 2013).

Among the sacrifices the party made for the Syrian revolution, Hizbut - Tahrir mentions the killing of one of its activists in Syria -- Yasser Nouhad (Abou Ammar) who was killed in Al Kusair battle on May 19, 2013. Other sacrifices include repetitive assaults on the residence of the head of media office in Syria, in addition to the torture that many of the party's activists in the prisons were subject to. It is worth noting that due to necessary precaution in Syria in the past decades and because of the secretive nature of its work, there is a very limited amount of resources pertaining to the party's activity prior to the war. Although the party in Syria dates back to the 1950s, it isn't until very recently that it has made an appearance on the Syrian scene through its publications which entail the party's views on all developments in the Syrian civil war (Al Baba, 2013).

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<sup>15</sup> The Geneva 2 conference was held in January 2014 in Montreux and Geneva and spanned nine days. The conference aimed to bring opposing Syrian parties together to negotiate for peace and put an end to the Syrian Civil War. No consensus was reached and another conference will be planned.

The conflict in Syria produced ripple effects in the form of assaults and bombings of the southern suburb of Beirut. These assaults were targeting Hezbollah strongholds and came as an answer to that party's involvement in Syria whereby it is supporting Al Assad's regime. This is biased. It reflects the views of critics of Hezbollah. Although Hizbut – Tahrir has suffered plenty at the hands of the Syrian regime and Hezbollah, it condemned the assaults on the southern suburb because killing innocent civilians – irrespective of where and how – contradicts the principles of Islam (A. Al Kasas, personal communication, January 27, 2014).

Hizbut – Tahrir's publications in Syria, indicate that the party is urgently warning against the dangerous foreign interventions in Syria. These include mainly the French and American interests in the area, whereby the party considers that France and USA are exploiting some leaders from the opposition to control the revolution in Syria and set forth their preferred rules and agenda in the Arab region. The party's media office in Syria declared in a bulletin published on January 23, 2013 -- and that came in response to Laurent Fabius's invitation to Hizbut – Tahrir, other members of the Syrian opposition and representatives of countries supporting the national opposition coalition to meet in France and discuss the situation in Syria -- under the title of: "France in Syria as in Mali, fighting Islam and Moslems," "We at Hizbut Tahrir address the Syrian opposition and remind them that the West built their coalition to reach its goals and not to save the Syrian Muslim people, and to remind them as well that the West will not give them money or weapons unless they (the opposition) become their instruments to impose colonial politics and combat Islam and loyal Muslims," (Al Baba, 2013).

Commenting on the Syrian People Friends' Conference, Hicham El Baba wrote: "The US is drowning in its conspiracy against the Syrian people and in its support for

Al Assad's murderous and butcher regime. This conference is similar to the others where the USA and the countries of Western Europe have tried to take control over the incidents in Syria in order to achieve their interests and consolidate their sovereignty in the region." During and before this conference, the national coalition made serious promises to arm the opposition; at the same time, the US prevented other participating countries from providing weapons with the pretext that these weapons might be captured by the extremist Islamists. The US secretary of foreign affairs department John Kerry asserted that the USA is attempting to reach a political solution and added: "The opposition coalition could help in achieving a peaceful change." The party, in fact, considers the USA the main catalyst behind the catastrophe in Syria, so how is it then logical to seek its assistance in finding a solution? USA is the fierce enemy of Islam and the greatest supporter of Israel. Hizbut – Tahrir considers that on the outside, it appears that the US and the Syrian regime are highly antagonistic. However, both have shared interests in putting out the Syrian struggle and the Islamic flavor it has adopted and thereby – indirectly – protecting Israel's border from the ripple effects of the Syrian crisis. The New York Times reported on February 28, 2013 from US officials that the administration ordered them to train fighters from the opposition in an undetermined location. The newspaper also reported, from the same source, that the current training mission represents the deepest form of US interference in the Syrian conflict. It adds that the US aspires to weaken the extremist groups through supporting the Syrian opposition coalition (Al Baba, 2013).

In conclusion Hizbut – Tahrir – Wilayat Syria refuses to take part in any dialogue or conference asking for any form of settlement with the "criminal" regime of Bachar Al Assad. Briefly, Hizbut - Tahrir considers that the United States is conspiring

against the Syrian revolution, thereby subordinating the Arab rulers who support US policies in the Mideast, and taking advantage of the Russian – Chinese attitude for its interests. Furthermore, America is mobilizing the Islamic regime in Iran and its followers in Iran and Iraq -- who have been employing their armies to defeat the revolutionists -- by giving them ammunition support. All these actions aim to force the revolutionists to accept their terms and surrender to them.

#### **4.3.3 The Arab Spring and the Case of Egypt – First Revolution**

On the second commemoration of the revolution of the 25<sup>th</sup> of January in Egypt, Charaf Zayed, Hizbutb –Tahrir’s spokesman in Egypt wilaya, confirms in his press release the following:

“Two years after the revolution, the situation didn’t change, it didn’t overthrow the regime nor end the corruption; despite the fact that some Islamists reached the positions of power, political Islam is still far away from power. During these past two years, the nation only witnessed different parties battle it out over who would attain. On one end, we see the so-called Islamists claiming to apply Sharia’a (the Islamic law) and from the other side we see the laics screaming for democracy and frightening the adherents of the Sharia’a. The only thing the various party leaders care about is attaining posts and power while USA is heavily interfering in all of Egypt’s affairs. The current American ambassador meets regularly with the president of the elections high commission and none of the parties object to this as if it is something usual. US delegations of all American institutions of power, regularly visit Egypt to for monitoring purposes. Surely, the people who overthrew Mubarak and his followers cannot remain silently accepting of the regime which ruled through Mubarak – the very same regime that protected Israel for thirty years while American

continues to interfere in the country's economic affairs as Egypt the International Monetary Fund (IMF) dictates its terms on the Egyptian economy," (Zayed, 2013)."

In further criticism of the revolution, Zayed adds that the post – revolution regime is following in the steps of the pre-revolution regime and mentions the report of: "Terrorism Progress for the year 2013" (issued by the US department of state on May 30, 2013) which considers that the Egyptian government continues to oppose violent extremism and that Egypt is persevering its efforts to improve security on the boarder lines with the assistance of the US. The report mentions that the Egyptian officers on the boarders closely monitor the list of the extremists who are committing violence. It must be clarified here that these extremist (as they are dubbed by Egypt and the US contain members of the political Islamic community to which Hizbut – Tahrir belongs). The report indicates that the US encourages Egypt to cooperate with it in order to stop the contraband of weapons and explosives to Gaza strip and to focus on securing the border and banning the transfer of weapons. It also points out that the US maintains a strong bond with Egypt and Israel to ensure security in Sinaa -- especially after the terrorist assault on Egyptian soldiers in Rafah on May 8, 2013). The media office of Hizbut Tahrir in Egypt replied to this report by stating: First, it is known that what US considers as fighting terrorism is fighting Islam. Second, when the US talks about improving security procedures on the boarder lines, it means the eastern boarders to secure the continued well-being of the Jew state. Third, Egypt's post regime's interjections between Palestinians and Israelis and the mediation operations it commenced mirror those previously executed by the pre revolution regime of Mubarak (Zayed, 2013). One notable example of post regime mediation is the interjection of Morsi to secure a cease fire between Gaza and Israel on the November 21, 2013. Fourth, indeed, the US has strong ties with Egypt and Israel to

reinforce security in Sinaa, however, this cooperation does not aim to find out who killed the Egyptian soldiers on May 8, 2013, but it is pioneer cooperation in which the actual regime outdid its predecessor. Such contact, with an enemy of the Umma, is unacceptable especially one whose hands are still polluted with Muslim blood in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Levant. Furthermore, this relationship does not secure Egyptian interests and aims mainly at protecting the Jewish. Fifth, and lastly, Zayed asks the Egyptian government “Do you really want to consolidate and preserve peace with the Jews? It is obvious that you have no will in front of America’s demands (Zayed, 2013).

#### **4.3.4 The Arab Spring and the Case of Egypt – Second Revolution**

The Egyptian revolution’s initial success quickly waned as the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood failed to address the reform which the revolution had promised. In light of the Egyptian population’s dissatisfaction with Morsi’s rule, the former minister of defense, Abdel Fattah Al Sissi, who is now a presidential candidate, declared on Wednesday, July 3, 2013 what he called “The future map of the country.” This map includes working under the constitution on temporary basis, dismissing the democratically elected president and running early presidential elections provided that the head of the constitutional court be in charge of the country’s affairs during the provisional phase until a new president is elected. The head of the high constitutional court shall be given the authority to issue constitutional declarations during the provisional phase. He pointed out the forming of a competent national government. This is how the army would have turned against the so-called democracy, which made Morsi a legitimate ruler for the country in the first place and as they claim. This coup d’état occurred under the pretext of refusing the public administration “harming the national and the religious state institutions” along with frightening and threatening all

the citizens. How could they call themselves democratic after they closed religious channels and arrested hundreds of Islamic movements' members? Therefore there is no doubt that it is the army who had the real power during the last phase while the president and his followers were nothing more than puppets for the US backed military institution. It is also obvious that Islam cannot reach power through that democracy and its laic voting systems -- as if they didn't learn from what happened to the rescue front (Jabhat al Inkaz) in Algeria. Let us hope that they finally learn and realize that truth (Zayed, 2013).

Hizbut –Tahrir considers that the government of Dr. Hazem Al Bablawi was formed under the approval of the US, and in coordination with the Egyptian Military Board and many of the parliamentary members that it included were adherents of Mubarak's regime. For example, Nabil Fahimi, the Egyptian minister of foreign affairs in this government was a diplomat who served in New York as either as ambassador of Egypt to the States or as a representative to the United Nations. It is worth noting that Fahmi holds an American passport and is thereby an American citizen (Zayed, 2013).

The entire Arab world knows that the Americans are brewing a conspiracy in Egypt to turn all against the movements that support the ousted president Mohamad Morsi. Further supporting such efforts is Abdul Fattah Al Sissy's crack down on the Muslim Brotherhood's demonstrations. Hizbut - Tahrir considers here that the last military decisions on April 24, 2013 in Egypt hold dangerous indicators that must be revealed. In fact, Al Sissy clearly demonstrates that all the designations of provisional president, prime minister and government are only a formal aspect for the coup d'état that occurred on June 30 and that the true ruler is AL Sissy and all these people are puppets who support him. Al Sissy's efforts to empower himself succeeded as Morsi

was ousted and currently facing trial for the very accusations that Hizbut – Tahrir is subjecting Al Sisy too (violent persecution of demonstrators) As a response to the developments in Egypt, the Jew entity radio channel stated on Monday June 24, 2013 Israeli president Shimon Perez expressed again his concern over what he described as then potential catastrophic results on Israel had the military coup d'état – spearheaded by Al Sisy -- failed in Egypt. All these recent developments in Egypt attest to the nation's deviation from then rightful path of Islam and demonstrate how the revolution had been hijacked by opponents of Islam and the ideologies that Hizbut – Tahrir supports. At the end, Hizbut - Tahrir warns from following this criminal planning that would cost the nation huge losses and killing of people and will only be beneficial for the nation's awaiting enemies (Tibi, 2013).

This chapter attended to Hizbut-Tahrir's stances regarding the latest developments on the Arab, Islamic and International fronts and its view on the possible solutions that accompany the unraveling chain of events in the region. The most notable topics tackled in this chapter are the party's view of the Palestinian cause and the most recent occurrences on the internal front -- including the Palestinian reconciliation between various political groups and Hizbut-Tahrir's view on the two-state solution. It offered an overview of current party leader Abu Rashta's life and expanded into his and the party's interpretation of the neighboring revolutions. Furthermore, this chapter related the party's views regarding the early stages of the "Arab Spring," and how those events allowed for the party to develop its views by which complements the convictions and principles of Hizbut-Tahrir and its consideration for the priority of setting up the Islamic caliphate. Moreover, the chapter zooms in on the party's stances pertaining to Tunisia, Syria and Egypt (first and second revolutions) and discusses how the party interpreted the political development of each crisis.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusion

This study represents a small contribution to the burgeoning literature on Islamist movements. It is focused on one specific movement that has received scant attention from researchers: Hizbut-Tahrir (Islamic Liberation Party). The study opens with a discussion of the career and thought of the party's founder, Sheikh Taquiddin al Nabhani, from his early beginnings in Palestine until his death in Lebanon. A broad timeline of his political career and intellectual oeuvre is also presented. Beyond situating the life of the party founder in its proper historic and ideational context, considerable space is allocated to the socio-political environment that influenced his thought and his many writings. Indeed, Al- Nabhani evolved in a rich environment of piety and great historical change. Such strong figures as his grandfather, Sheikh Youssef Al Nabahni – an eminent Islamic scholar in his own right – and Sheikh Mohamad al-Khodor Hussein – an Islamic scholar whose ideas would be incorporated into the party that al Nabhani would later establish, were also part of the journey. More so, Al Nabahni was influenced with several other pious members of his family and various religious intellectuals.

The political events leading to the 1948 Palestine war and the rise of the “Zionist state” also shaped his thoughts and future endeavors. British rule and imminent Zionism in the region left a strong negative impression on al Nabhani. In his youth, he bore witness to the forceful development of the state of Israel, which had led to the marginalization of an entire Arab population and from the point of view of most Palestinians “a bitter betrayal from various neighboring Arab states who failed to

provide the necessary support that would have rescued Palestine and its people.” Al Nabhani considers this last point a conspiracy conducted by the Arabs against Palestinians and a grave treachery. His life’s mission, and that of the party he founded, had then been linked to the disaster that befell Muslims and Arabs; and he was committed to avenging the victims of this most unfortunate turn of events.

Due to the difficult situation in Palestine, the party’s founder relocated to Syria where he also faced heavy opposition from the government. Finally, he settled in Lebanon, which he considered the most suitable option since Lebanon was more liberal than neighboring nations as freedom of speech is much more tolerated in this country than other nations of the Middle East. It was in Lebanon that the party survived and spread to other parts of the region and then the world. Hizbut Tahrir – Wilayat Lubnan flourished despite (at least according to al Nabhani) Lebanon’s failed democracy and unfair persecution of the party’s leading members. The thesis pauses here to examine the flaws that al Nabhani attributes to the Lebanese system. For instance, al Nabhani considers that Lebanon’s democracy is defective and unsustainable; his party does not even recognize it as its own separate entity. Instead, Lebanon is understood to be a state, or wilaya, within the realm of the Islamic Umma. The thesis goes on to discuss at length the uneasy relationship between Hizbut Tahrir on one end, and the Lebanese security system – within the larger and more influential backdrop of Syrian hegemony – on the other. There are several accounts that describe how members of Hizbut -Tahrir were persecuted by the Lebanese system and jailed or banned from engaging party activities because they expressed an opinion that did not please the authorities. Hizbut – Tahrir maintains that throughout all these persecutions of the party by the Lebanese and Syrian authorities, the party maintained a pacifist approach and did not ever perform violent acts in any of its activities. In fact, the

party denounces violence as a means of imposing its views and is instead guided by the “peaceful way of Islam” in achieving its goals.

The thesis also includes sporadic anecdotes of some of the notable individuals and events relevant to the party. Such accounts aim to give the reader important background information to better grasp the party’s work and development. Echoing this approach is a short chapter on Palestine, the birthplace of both al Nabhani and his party, as this chapter creates a wider understanding of the relationship between what the party is trying to achieve and what the regional political players (in Palestine) are doing – which often contradicts the party’s plans. An informative representation of leadership in both the Gaza strip and the West Bank aims to shed more light on how governance in the Palestinian territories deviates from the party’s vision for Palestine and the Arab world.

A detailed overview of the party’s ideology and principles was also presented in this thesis. This part includes the terms and conditions under which Muslims and the Caliph must interact and operate. There are rules for how the caliph’s election should take place and who is eligible to compete. Other rules pertain to the duties of Muslims and Non-Muslims within the Caliphate state. The work provides a comprehensive overview of party thought for anyone looking to understand how this Islamic movement operates. With the omnipresent goal of re-establishing the Islamic caliphate, Hizbut – Tahrir’s views and work are put into perspective. The thesis demonstrates how the party ties this most “noble goal” to regional and international developments. Its political analysis of the still unraveling Arab revolutions is a prime example of how it employs its Islamic-based views to politics. As Hizbut – Tahrir is active on the regional and international front, it is expected that its views on regional developments will be catered to in this thesis. Therefore, when discussing the Arab

spring, the thesis stops at each of Tunisia, Syria and Egypt to address the ramifications of each revolution in terms of plans for setting up Islamic rule. The party continues to make the argument that the prospect of creating sound Islamic rule, which was such a strong possibility at the beginning of the respective revolutions, has been severely compromised with the development of events during each revolution. Even in Egypt, where the Muslim Brotherhood had taken over, a second revolution ousted Morsi and military rule seemed once again imminent. This, the party considers, was a grand American scheme to keep Egypt (much like other Muslim-majority nations) away from the true path of Islamic rule.

The diverse scope of themes in this thesis represents an in-depth review of Hizbut-Tahrir in a historical and political context that has not been addressed before. It has given the reader a breadth of information about a relatively obscure party and from all aspects too. Having read the thesis, the reader would have been exposed to the party from various angles including how it defines itself and how it identifies (or clashes) with other Islamic movements and how other entities regard the party as well. The party's global reach has been highlighted in terms of its role in regional events as well as international participation in conferences and activities. Moreover, all the big names and notable figures that have emerged within the party, since its launch in 1953 until the present day, have been introduced. The journey has spread across the three reigns that have ensued since party launch in Palestine; the journey from al Nabhani to Zalloum to Abu Rashta's time has been a rich and enlightening trip. The core values of the party which revolve around the restoration of the caliphate have not changed. It remains to be seen whether the rapidly unfolding situation in the region will contribute to a more hospitable environment to achieve the party's overarching goal. A selection of party activists who were interviewed for this thesis maintain that

the prospects of achieving the party's principal goal are better now than at any point in the past. The fluidity of the regional situation, the presence of many Islamic movements with competing programs, and the resurgence of civil society movements -- especially in Tunisia and Egypt -- that are skeptical of further attempts to Islamize society make it very difficult to predict the future with any certainty. This definitely applies to the prospects of reestablishing the Islamic caliphate.

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